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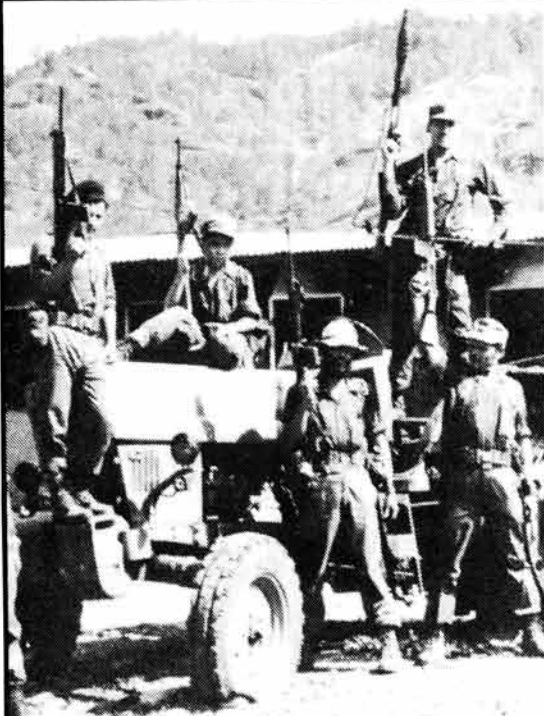
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Devastating Blow to  
Grenada Revolution  
— page 608



CIA-armed "contras" at Honduran border.

## Worldwide Protests Needed

# Major Step-up in U.S. Terror, Sabotage Against Nicaragua

## Argentina

# Labor Struggles on Rise as Junta Heads for Exits



Buenos Aires: Striking teachers on the march.

# U.S. hands off Nicaragua!

By Steve Clark

The sharp escalation now under way in U.S. imperialism's war of terror and sabotage against the Nicaraguan people requires an immediate outpouring of protest by the international labor movement and its allies.

In recent weeks, Washington has stepped up efforts to:

- Destroy Nicaragua's fuel supplies and shut off further shipments to the country, which is totally dependent on imported oil.

- Cut off transportation to and from Nicaragua at both ends of the Pan-American Highway, the main overland route connecting the country with the rest of Central America.

- Set the stage for the Honduran army to invade Nicaragua, possibly with direct U.S. military participation. The United States currently has thousands of troops, along with warships and aircraft, stationed in Honduras under the pretext of carrying out war games. (See news articles on pages 598 and 600.)

Moreover, Washington is consciously making Pentagon and CIA involvement more brazen and open. In doing so, it hopes to take another step in legitimizing the use of U.S. military might in Central America and test the response to such overt moves in the United States, Latin America, and internationally.

The U.S. imperialists' aim, as Nicaraguan leader Daniel Ortega told the United Nations at the end of September, is to isolate and destroy the revolution and thereby "undermine the struggles of the people of the region and, in particular, the struggle of the people of El Salvador."

"Crushing the Nicaraguan revolution," Ortega said, "would mean crushing the possibilities of change in Central America and would maintain the system of injustice and lack of freedom."

The Nicaraguan people and their leadership are determined that Washington's counter-revolutionary onslaught will not succeed. Tens of thousands of Nicaraguan workers, farmers, and students have mobilized in response to the latest attacks — both in massive demonstrations and in redoubled enrollment in the Sandinista army and militia or in other defense tasks.

The U.S.-sponsored sabotage has compelled the revolutionary government to announce stringent measures to conserve fuel and other scarce necessities and to minimize disruption of the vital coffee and cotton harvests. Nicaraguan leaders have also publicly announced that the new attacks require that they "formally solicit, from different governments of the world, the military means needed to defend our coastlines and airspace."

Should Nicaragua be compelled to develop a jet-fighter force to defend itself from further attacks such as those in past weeks, Washing-

ton has already threatened "surgical air strikes" to destroy the planes.

As they steel themselves for the next round of U.S.-organized terror, the Nicaraguan people must not find themselves alone. Thus far, the response to Washington's escalation among bourgeois forces such as the Democratic Party presidential candidates and members of Congress in the United States has been silent acquiescence. Nor have the Social Democratic governments and opposition parties in Western Europe condemned the stepped-up U.S. war.

The responsibility of the workers movement internationally is all the more paramount.

## Reagan threatens Syria, Lebanon

By Fred Murphy

As the 179th cease-fire in Lebanon's ongoing civil war grew precarious in early October, the Reagan administration made increasingly serious threats against Syria.

Because the Syrian regime lends military and diplomatic support to Lebanese opponents of the rightist, proimperialist regime of President Amin Gemayel, Washington views Syria as a major obstacle to its plans for consolidating Gemayel's rule.

In a radio speech October 8, Reagan declared that in light of the Soviet Union's shipments of military equipment to Syria "we have to wonder aloud about Syrian protestations of their peaceful intentions." Quoting what he asserted was a letter from one of the 1,200 U.S. marines stationed in Lebanon, Reagan said, "It is our duty as Americans to stop the cancerous spread of Soviet influence wherever it may be."

### Imperialist military build-up

If Syria has found it necessary to reinforce its defenses, it is because of the massive imperialist military build-up in and around Lebanon today.

The U.S. Sixth Fleet has 14 ships just off the country's coast, including a battleship and an aircraft carrier. More than 10,000 U.S. sailors, pilots, and marines are attached to this flotilla, in addition to the 1,200 marines ashore. The latter form part of the so-called peacekeeping force in which 2,000 French, 2,050 Italian, and 90 British troops also take part. Warships and planes from these countries have also been stationed in the area.

On top of all this are the 15,000 Israeli troops who continue to occupy southern Lebanon — the largest imperialist contingent in the country. From their positions in the south, the Israeli forces are within easy striking distance of Damascus, the Syrian capital.

Marches, picket lines, and rallies should be organized around two central demands:

- That the U.S. government put an immediate end to its operations of sabotage and terror against Nicaragua and pull all its troops, advisers, planes, and warships out of Central America.

- That governments around the world provide emergency economic aid to Nicaragua to offset the losses suffered in the U.S. attacks.

An important example of the kind of actions necessary is the November 12 march on Washington against U.S. intervention in Central America organized by a coalition of U.S. solidarity, trade-union, political, and religious groups. Demands against Washington's war in Central America should also be placed at the forefront of the demonstrations planned for coming weeks against the deployment of U.S. nuclear missiles in Western Europe. □

The imperialist forces have repeatedly been involved in combat, helping Gemayel's embattled army hold off the militia fighters of the oppressed Muslim and Druse communities. Two more U.S. marines were killed in action October 14 and 16, bringing U.S. casualties to six dead and more than 50 wounded since the current intervention began in September 1982.

In the south, Shi'ite Muslim leaders have called for "total civil resistance" to the Israeli army. Israeli patrols are continually ambushed. The occupiers have begun carrying out reprisals by demolishing the houses of the families of alleged "terrorists." On October 16, Israeli troops opened fire on a crowd of 50,000 Muslim worshippers in the south Lebanon town of Nabatiyeh. One was killed and 10 wounded.

Reagan's threats against Syria came as his right-wing Christian clients in the Lebanese regime hardened their stance in opposition to political concessions to the majority Muslim and Druse communities.

Under a system that is the legacy of French colonialism's divide-and-rule policy in Lebanon, Christians have always been guaranteed the presidency and a six-to-five majority in the parliament and the government bureaucracy. Sixty percent of the army officer corps is Christian also, with a still higher percentage in the top posts.

The strongest Christian faction is the fascistlike Phalange Party, which has imposed its will by force on the rest of the Christian community. The Phalange is headed by Pierre Gemayel, father of the current president. The elder Gemayel terms the 1943 agreement among Lebanese leaders that established the discriminatory system "a guarantee of civilization."

Talks involving the Phalange and other political currents from Lebanon's major religious communities were scheduled to begin October

20 under the recent cease-fire agreement. Pierre Gemayel spelled out his party's stance in an interview with the *Christian Science Monitor*. "I personally, who represent the Phalange and the Lebanese Forces [militia], which are forces that count in Lebanon, I want this formula of '43,'" he declared. "If anyone says anything against what I have said, we will reject it."

President Amin Gemayel himself, whom the imperialist news media have sought to paint as a figure relatively independent of his father and the Phalange, termed the so-called reconciliation talks "a camouflage, a distraction" in an October 12 interview with the *New York Times*.

Before being badly mauled in the recent fighting, the Phalange's Lebanese Forces were a more powerful military unit than the official army itself. "Most outside observers believe there is continuing close cooperation between the Phalangist militia and the Army," the October 3 *Washington Post* reported.

"Phalangist spokesmen still believe the militia has a major role to play in bolstering the government and Army. 'We are the only homogenous force which the government can depend upon,' one said. 'We are still the backbone of the central government.'"

Washington and its imperialist allies are well aware of this fact, and thus are not likely to lean very hard on the Gemayels to make concessions to the Muslim and Druse communities in the negotiations. Indeed, a key reason for the imperialist military presence around Beirut has been to force the Muslim and Druse fighters into reducing their demands and accepting the authority of the pro-imperialist regime in Beirut.

#### Pressure on PLO

An additional aim of the U.S. and allied intervention in Lebanon is to complete the task the Israeli army began last year of driving the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and its fighting units out of the country altogether. In this regard, Washington has welcomed the efforts of Syrian President Hafez al-Assad to subordinate the PLO to Syrian dictates and force defenders of the PLO's independence out of Lebanon. The U.S. military threats and other pressures on Syria are aimed in part at encouraging such attacks on the PLO.

The Syrian army units operating in Lebanon have forced all the PLO fighters loyal to PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat into two refugee camps near Tripoli on the country's northern coast. Two Syrian divisions were moved into the area in early October and took up menacing positions. According to the October 1 *Washington Post*, "U.S. officials have been watching events in Tripoli with intense interest and have hinted at their satisfaction that the Syrians might get the PLO under control."

In Syria itself, the offices of Arafat's Fatah organization were shut down October 2, and on October 8 the PLO's publicity offices there were raided and their staff and records seized.

With the aid of certain PLO officials who have lined up with Syria for factional reasons,

the Assad regime has tried to create the impression that a majority in the PLO opposes the Arafat leadership. But a meeting of the PLO's Central Council in August, attended by 79 of the council's 81 members, reaffirmed support for Arafat and set up commissions charged with seeking a settlement of the PLO's internal disputes.

According to the October 15 *Economist*, the leaders of two other major organizations in the PLO, George Habbash and Nayef Hawatmeh, have "made it clear that they continued to sup-

port Mr Arafat and the PLO's 'independence of decision-making', which has become the [Arafat] loyalists' battle-cry."

The Syrian regime's moves against the PLO play into the hands of Washington and its allies. By hampering the PLO's ability to function as an independent, revolutionary-nationalist organization, Damascus is weakening the entire Arab fight against imperialism. In particular, it is weakening Syria's own defenses against Reagan's mounting threats of war. □

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# Unions mobilize urban and rural workers

*New labor militancy in midst of rebel offensive*

**By Steve Wattenmaker**

El Salvador's urban labor movement and the country's largest farm workers' union are mounting fresh resistance to the government's repressive economic and political policies.

This current labor upsurge is another sign that the Salvadoran working class is recovering from the massive blows it suffered in 1979-80. Its renewed ability to mobilize, through the unions, will be an important factor in strengthening the broader revolutionary struggle of the Salvadoran toilers.

These labor protests are taking place against a backdrop of new guerrilla victories by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). Since the beginning of September, the rebels have staged more than 50 major attacks throughout the country.

Meanwhile, the Salvadoran dictatorship, backed by Washington, has unleashed its paramilitary death squads for a reign of heightened terror and moved toward burying the country's already enfeebled land reform program.

## Strike wave in San Salvador

On August 30, government workers at the state-run Urban Housing Institute (IVU) began a walkout. Each day, according to the September 30 *Christian Science Monitor*, about 700 of the 1,300 IVU workers show up but refuse to do their jobs.

The IVU workers earn \$2.50 a day. They are demanding a 25 percent wage increase and a twice-yearly bonus to compensate for inflation that has tripled the cost of consumer goods in the last few months. They are also demanding the release of the union's secretary-general, Rosendo Mejía. One of three union leaders kidnapped by armed men at the end of September, Mejía turned up in police custody.

The union also called the strike to protest a serious deterioration of public services in San Salvador's poor neighborhoods, according to the September 18 issue of the Salvadoran news magazine *Proceso*. In mid-September some 90,000 working-class residents of the capital were left without drinking water for a week.

"The government refused to negotiate with us," said acting IVU head Esteban González. "We have written letters to the Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Public Works, President [Alvaro] Magaña, and the Constituent Assembly for help in resolving this dispute, but no one has answered."

By mid-September the IVU workers had been joined by striking bank workers, and

workers at the Salvadoran Institute for Social Security, the Institute for Basic Commodity Regulation, and a sugar refinery.

On September 27 the largest demonstration in almost three years took place in the streets of San Salvador. The 15,000 farm workers and their supporters on the march were demanding land reform. They marched 14 blocks through the center of the city and held a rally. According to march organizers 10,000 government workers struck the day of the demonstration, in solidarity with the farm workers.

The Nicaraguan daily *Barricada* reported the chants of the demonstrators were, "We

want peace, we want agrarian reform, and we want better jobs."

The focus of the protest was the current discussion in the Constituent Assembly over three amendments to the draft constitution designed to junk the 1980 land redistribution law. The law, originally passed to head off a revolt by the country's farm workers, had enough loopholes to ensure that it posed no fundamental threat to El Salvador's landed oligarchy. Nonetheless, the large landowners continue to bitterly oppose the reform.

On the other hand, the law raised the hopes of El Salvador's farm workers that they would

## PLO and FMLN-FDR condemn reopening of Israeli embassy in El Salvador

[The following is the text of a joint press communiqué issued in Havana, Cuba, on September 14 by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) embassy in Cuba and the Cuba representative of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front-Revolutionary Democratic Front (FMLN-FDR) of El Salvador, in response to the reopening of the Israeli embassy in El Salvador. The text has been taken from the September 25 issue of the English-language weekly edition of *Granma*, the organ of the Communist Party of Cuba.]

\* \* \*

For many long and difficult years, the Palestinian people have had to endure constant Zionist aggression which has always been fully backed by U.S. imperialism. Both seek to oppress, exploit, attack, and destroy, in order to assure their political and economic domination.

This hard experience of the Palestinian people is a fitting example for the peoples of the world who are trying to overthrow the yoke of U.S. imperialism and for those subjected to Zionist aggression. It is no accident that imperialism and Zionism have now joined hands in their sinister plans to destroy the Salvadoran revolutionary movement, fittingly represented by the FMLN-FDR. Thus the enemies of freedom serve to link the peoples struggling for national liberation. Palestinian and Salvadoran revolutionaries repudiate and totally reject imperialist and Zionist plans in El Salvador. The reopening of the Israeli embassy in San Salvador paves the way for

greater military, economic, and political intervention by imperialism and Zionism in El Salvador and other nations of Central America. This means even greater suffering for these heroic peoples, greater social and material costs. All this notwithstanding, victory for the Salvadoran people is certain. It is assured by the participation of the people, which is more than demonstrated in the difficult geographical conditions of El Salvador, not at all favorable to the development of a guerrilla army fighting such a powerful enemy as U.S. imperialism.

In the end, Zionism and imperialism will have to endure the humiliation of being identified by world public opinion as the aggressors of both the Palestinian and Salvadoran peoples struggling for freedom and peace. Both peoples have received world support that would reject their being further trampled on by the United States and Israel.

The struggles of both people recognizably have justice on their side: the Palestinian people have the inalienable right to self-determination and the creation of an independent state under the leadership of the PLO, their sole, legitimate representative, and the Salvadoran people are struggling for real, lasting independence, in defense of human rights, peace, and social justice.

Before the democratic peoples of the world, we denounce this joint plan for intervention by Zionism and imperialism and call on all those who espouse peace and social justice to reject and denounce this new scheme prepared by the enemies of humanity. □

finally be able to own the land they tilled. Of the 120,000 farm workers entitled to claim land under the law, however, only about 52,000 had done so by March 1983. Others were intimidated by the landowners' terror campaign carried out by the death squads and local army troops.

Large landholders have also employed systematic terror to recover land turned over to farm worker cooperatives under another section of the law. The landed oligarchy, represented by the ultraright National Republican Alliance (ARENA) party, is now pushing in the Constituent Assembly to formally dismantle the law. ARENA is headed by death-squad chief Roberto D'Aubuisson, who also serves as president of the assembly.

The September 27 farm workers' demonstration was organized by the Peoples' Democratic Union (UPD), an umbrella federation that represents some 200,000 unionized farm workers. The UPD is closely allied with El Salvador's Christian Democratic Party, architects of the 1980 agrarian law. The UPD is also supported by the strongly anticommunist American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD). For years AIFLD has been embraced by the top leadership of the AFL-CIO and funded by the CIA.

The UPD, however, has come out in favor of the call by the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) and the FMLN for a dialogue without preconditions between the government and the rebels. The overwhelming majority of Salvadoran unions support such peace efforts. After a few meetings with the FDR-FMLN in September, the Salvadoran government increased its isolation by announcing October 7 that it was breaking off any further negotiations.

#### **FUSS leader murdered**

A massive campaign of workers' struggles rocked El Salvador in 1979-80 and was finally crushed by outright government terror. Between 1979 and 1981 a total of 5,123 union members were assassinated, 1,875 disappeared, and 539 were imprisoned. Another 793 were wounded when troops opened fire on union demonstrations.

"The major labor confederations of the last decade are fighting now to survive," said a leader of the United Federation of Salvadoran Unions (FUSS), a major leftist-led union federation. "We have had our office bombed and hundreds of our members have been killed or disappeared." Trade union membership overall is down by 40 percent since 1980.

The leader of FUSS, Santiago Hernández Jiménez, was one of 100 trade unionists kidnapped by right-wing death squads in September. His body was found October 7 near a market in San Salvador. He had been strangled along with three other opposition leaders: Victor Manuel Quintanilla Ramos, identified in news reports as an FDR-FMLN leader; Dr. Dora Muñoz Castillo, and José Antonio García Vásquez.

Notes attached to their bodies identified



15,000 peasants march in San Salvador to protest government sabotage of land reform.

their assassins as the Maximiliano Hernández Anticommunist Brigade.

The pronounced upswing in death-squad murders and kidnappings of labor leaders and opposition figures is embarrassing Reagan administration attempts to portray the human rights situation in El Salvador as steadily improving. After the death squads kidnapped the third-ranking official of El Salvador's Foreign Ministry, U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering met with D'Aubuisson and "really leaned on him," according to U.S. embassy sources quoted in the October 7 *Wall Street Journal*. D'Aubuisson reportedly was unimpressed with the lecture.

The AFL-CIO leadership has been particularly miffed by D'Aubuisson's charges that AIFLD funds are not being used to combat communism, but ending up being channeled to the guerrillas.

Four days after the farm workers' rally, ARENA held a rally at which D'Aubuisson accused a central UPD leader, Samuel Maldonado, of having ties to the FMLN. A public denunciation by D'Aubuisson usually signals a visit from the death squads. At the time, Maldonado was in Miami meeting with the Kissinger commission on Central America, and U.S. officials were forced to advise him not to return to El Salvador.

Several days later the Kissinger commission, which includes AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland, met with D'Aubuisson in San Salvador during their swing through Central America. D'Aubuisson said later that he had an "interesting" meeting with the commission. Kirkland declined to comment on the encounter.

The UPD organized a news conference in San Salvador calling attention to the threat to Maldonado and D'Aubuisson's links with the terrorists. UPD leader Miguel Ángel Vásquez read a statement calling on the Salvadoran government to state publicly whether they are investigating the escalation of right-wing violence.

The FMLN's military victories over the past month are a big factor encouraging and sustaining the morale of the urban and rural workers.

During a lull in FMLN actions that began in June, U.S. military advisers to the Salvadoran army crowed that their Vietnam-style "pacification" program in San Vicente and Usulután provinces had turned the tide of the war in the government's favor.

#### **FMLN opens new offensive**

A massive FMLN attack on government troops in the city of San Miguel September 3 shattered Washington's bravado. The San Miguel operation initiated a new national military campaign the FMLN named "Independence, Liberty, and Democracy for El Salvador."

Since the offensive began, FMLN units have launched one attack after another. At the end of the last week of September, the rebels began a coordinated series of twelve attacks in different parts of the country that inflicted 200 casualties on the Salvadoran army.

The guerrillas' Radio Venceremos announced that in only 24 days of the offensive, the FMLN had occupied 20 towns, taken 107 prisoners of war, and killed or wounded 696 government soldiers.

Responding to an attack on government forces in the city of Tenancingo, the Salvadoran Air Force bombed the town of 8,000, killing 100 civilians and destroying 60 percent of the buildings.

The FMLN explained that the increased bombing and air attacks by the Salvadoran armed forces demonstrate the government's growing impotence on the ground — despite Washington's claim that its training of Salvadoran soldiers at U.S. and Honduran bases is giving the government troops an edge over the rebels.

"More and more," said one guerrilla, "this is becoming an air war. It's a sign of the Army's desperation." □

# Springboard for U.S. aggression

### Workers and peasants protest virtual military occupation

By Steve Wattenmaker

A top Pentagon official confirmed October 3 that Washington plans to use Honduras as a permanent base for U.S. military operations in Central America.

Thousands of U.S. soldiers are already in Honduras for "maneuvers" scheduled to end next March. But the official, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Néstor Sánchez, revealed that more war exercises are slated for later next year and that the Pentagon is going forward with plans to build a \$150 million U.S. Navy port facility on Honduras' Caribbean coast.

From Washington's point of view, Honduran territory has already proven an ideal military staging ground for mounting attacks against the rebels in El Salvador and against the Nicaraguan revolution.

Honduras shares a common border with the provinces in El Salvador most securely under rebel control. In 1982 the Honduran army crossed into El Salvador to participate in a major antiguerrilla sweep with the Salvadoran army. And along Honduras' border with Nicaragua, CIA-backed counterrevolutionaries use protected bases to launch murderous raids against the Sandinista revolution.

U.S. policy planners are also convinced that Honduras is Washington's most pliant and politically stable ally in the region. After 18 years of military rule, the Honduran army returned the government to nominal civilian control in 1982. In practice, Gen. Gustavo Álvarez Martínez, head of Honduran armed forces, is the country's strongman, overshadowing President Roberto Suazo Córdova.

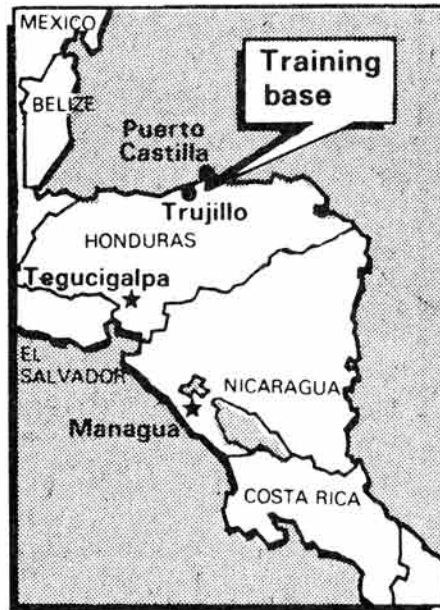
Close allies of Álvarez recently took over firm control of Honduras' second largest party, the National Party. The leaderships of the largest labor union and peasant confederation have been similarly manipulated by pro-Álvarez forces.

Nonetheless, resistance to the virtual U.S. military occupation of Honduras among workers, small farmers, and other sectors of society is on the rise. Protests have filled the streets of the Honduran capital, Tegucigalpa, and Honduran revolutionaries recently formed a united front of six organizations.

#### U.S. embassy is nerve center

Although the Reagan administration has dramatically expanded the scope of its military build-up within the last year, Washington began escalating its intervention in Honduras shortly after the victory of the Sandinista revolution in July 1979.

Since then the U.S. embassy in Tegucigalpa has grown from a sleepy diplomatic outpost to



a Class II institution — the State Department's designation for the second highest level of embassy activity. In Latin America, only Mexico City and Brasília have larger U.S. embassy staffs. Ambassador John Negroponte directs 110 diplomatic personnel, 250 Peace Corps volunteers, and a U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) program run by a staff of 100. The AID operation is among the top five in the Western Hemisphere and has grown from \$30 million annually to \$96 million this year.

Beginning in November 1981, the embassy became the nerve center for directing the \$40 million a year, CIA-backed *contra* invasion of Nicaragua. Negroponte reportedly oversees the operation and directs a contingent of 150 CIA agents.

The cross-border raids have taken the lives of more than 700 Nicaraguan teachers, farmers, government officials, and soldiers since 1981. The raiders have gotten logistical support from the Honduran army, which regularly provides mortar and artillery fire to cover the *contras'* advances across the border.

#### Maneuvers cover escalation

Early in 1983 the Reagan administration began accelerating preparations for direct military intervention in Central America. An important part of Washington's strategy was developing a sophisticated military infrastructure and stockpiles of weapons in Honduras.

• During the first week of February, some 1,600 U.S. troops joined 5,000 Honduran soldiers for war games staged only 10 miles from

the Nicaraguan border. Not only were the "exercises" intended as a threat to the Sandinistas, but they also served to cover the transfer of U.S. war matériel to the *contra* army.

• At about the same time U.S. Air Force technicians began operating a powerful radar station near Tegucigalpa. Another radar station is now operating on Honduras' Tiger Island in the Gulf of Fonseca. The stations are capable of monitoring not only all of Honduran airspace, but Nicaraguan and Salvadoran as well.

• Army Corps Engineers are modernizing six airbases. After the work is completed, giant U.S. C-141 and Hercules C-130 military transports will be able to land at key points throughout the country.

• Some 125 Green Beret advisers are training 3,000 Salvadoran soldiers at a U.S.-constructed base near Puerto Castilla on Honduras' Caribbean coast.

• Washington is using the current round of war games to further entrench its position in Honduras. The maneuvers involve up to 6,000 U.S. ground troops, backed up by a naval task force cruising off Nicaragua's coasts. During the eight months they are in Honduras, U.S. forces will practice amphibious landings and train the Honduran army in the use of heavy 105-millimeter artillery pieces.

• As part of the exercises, called Big Pine II, Pentagon engineers are building roads in strategic areas, drilling wells for a permanent water supply at U.S. camps, and setting up medical facilities — including a military hospital at Comayagua staffed by 18 U.S. surgeons.

Under the guise of providing humanitarian relief as part of the military exercises, Washington is also continuing to resupply the Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries. U.S. forces shipped some 500 tons of food to *contra* camps near the Nicaraguan border, according to the October 5 *New York Times*.

• The CIA has requested \$80 million for fiscal year 1984 to bankroll a *contra* force of between 12,000 and 15,000. The CIA activities in Central America already constitute Washington's most extensive covert operations since the Vietnam War.

In fact, the use of Honduras as a military staging area is directly analogous to Washington's development of Thailand as a secure, rear staging area during the war in Vietnam. Like the Honduran government, Thai officials provided the Pentagon with air bases and other military support facilities key to the U.S. war effort.

The U.S. military build-up in Honduras has

been met with strong protests, especially from the workers movement. Napoleón Acevedo Granados, head of the United Workers Federation of Honduras (FUTH) called on the Honduran people to repudiate Washington's plan to install the training center for Salvadoran troops at Puerto Castilla. FUTH is one of the major labor federations in the country, representing 17 unions.

On May 1 some 200,000 workers and peasants marched in Tegucigalpa and three other cities. The demonstrators demanded the Honduran government stop cooperating in attacks on Nicaragua and called for an end to repression against trade union leaders — including a growing number of assassinations.

The Honduran Committee of Families of Disappeared (COFADEH) also called several demonstrations in early May to protest the kidnappings of labor leaders, political activists, students, and others by government security forces and right-wing paramilitary death squads.

#### Revolutionary groups unify

Another consequence of Washington's and Tegucigalpa's war moves in the region was the unification in April of six revolutionary organizations into a single front.

Honduras, they said in a statement announcing the unification, "has been turned into a blind instrument of the Reagan administration's policy of intervention and war in Central America."

The revolutionaries explained they had "exhausted the 'democratic' roads of popular struggle" and called on the Honduran people "to rise up with courage and determination in a revolutionary people's war."

A central leader of one of the revolutionary organizations, the Honduran Revolutionary Workers Party of Central America (PRTC), was killed by the Honduran army September 18. The army reported that Dr. José María Reyes Mata was killed during an antiguerrilla sweep of Olancho Province near the Nicaraguan border. (See accompanying article.)

In coordination with the Big Pine II maneuvers, the Honduran armed forces sent four army battalions to the remote eastern province to conduct counterinsurgency operations. U.S.-piloted helicopters were used to transport the Honduran troops.

According to the Honduran Defense Ministry, the army intercepted a column of 96 guerrillas that had entered the province from Nicaragua and killed 49 of the rebels, including Reyes Mata. The army announced that in another eastern zone, New Palestine, an additional 26 guerrillas had died and 23 more, "weakened by hunger," had surrendered to the armed forces.

The army claims a total of 800 rebels have infiltrated into Olancho Province. The insurgents, they say, are Honduran communists who have been declared "disappeared" within the past five years, but in reality have been training in Cuba and Nicaragua.

To justify its self-serving claim, the Hondu-

ran government has presented a string of young Hondurans within the last month who it says were either rebel deserters or had been captured by the army in Olancho.

In carefully orchestrated news conferences they all told identical stories of being "lured" into Nicaragua by people promising them job training and then sent against their will to Cuba for military training and political indoctrination.

#### Army terrorizes civilians

Apart from actual combat with guerrilla forces, the Honduran army and their U.S. advisers are using the sweep through Olancho Province to terrorize the civilian population and quell any opposition to U.S. war moves against Nicaragua.

An incident that exemplifies the government's real aims in Olancho was reported in the September 15 *Washington Post*.

Honduran newspapers reported, based on army sources, that the guerrillas had attacked the health center in the Olancho village of Arimis. The rebels, according to the army version, stole all the medicine and kidnapped the town's only nurse.

## Reyes Mata: A life of struggle

The October 3, 1983, issue of the Sandinista daily *Barricada* announced that José María Reyes Mata, secretary general of the Honduran Revolutionary Workers Party of Central America (PRTC), was killed in combat with the Honduran army September 18.

At the time of his death he was commander of the Peoples Armed Forces (FAP), the armed wing of a united front of Honduran revolutionary organizations. *Barricada* published a brief biography of Reyes Mata, whom they described as an "extraordinary patriot and Honduran revolutionary."

José María Reyes Mata was born in 1943 to a humble family in San Francisco de Yojoa, Honduras. As a student at the teachers college in Comayagua he led a powerful student strike that forced the government to negotiate over student grievances.

After graduating and serving as a school administrator, Reyes Mata began collaborating with the Guatemalan guerrilla movement, the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR). He traveled to Cuba in 1962 and took up the study of medicine. He graduated medical school among the top three in his class.

Dr. Reyes Mata disappeared from Cuba one day in 1968, turning up in the Bolivian mountains as part of the National Liberation Army (ELN), which had been led by Che Guevara. After fighting as the only Central American with the ELN forces, he was eventually captured by the Bolivian army, tortured, and jailed in La Paz.

After nearly a year in prison he was freed in an amnesty, returned to the eastern mountains

In Arimis, the villagers angrily contradicted the army's account. The nurse had indeed been kidnapped, they said, but by government forces, not "subversives."

According to witnesses, a group of armed men surrounded the health center and dragged out the nurse, Andrea Martínez, 29, who had lived in the village for two years. Some of the villagers recognized one of the kidnappers as a policeman from a neighboring town. Friends of the nurse drove to the nearby town and denounced the kidnapping to the police, who at first denied any knowledge.

After repeated demands, arguments, and inquiries, the villagers finally spotted their nurse, in a building of the 126th Infantry Battalion. She was standing up with her hands and feet tied, her eyes blindfolded, and her mouth stuffed with a gag.

The villagers finally petitioned to get her released after a night in army custody. Neighbors who saw her on her return testified she had been raped, beaten, and tortured with electric shocks that left burns on her hands and feet. The army at first claimed she was a rebel, but later denied any knowledge of the incident. □

of Bolivia, and eventually led a "long march" across the Andes into Chile. He became a militant in Chile's Revolutionary Anti-imperialist Front, organizing among the Chilean working class and exiled Bolivian revolutionaries.

After the 1970 election of Salvador Allende, Reyes Mata again began practicing medicine, devoting himself to raising the level of public health in Chile. Marked for death during the 1973 Chilean coup, he obtained refuge in the Honduran embassy and eventually returned to Central America.

Seeing the revolutionary movement in Central America on the upswing, Reyes Mata again threw himself into activity. He was elected as a delegate of the Union Federation of Workers in Northern Honduras (FESINTRANH) and was jailed various times.

He was a founder of the PRTC, which originally was a regional organization to coordinate revolutionary forces throughout Central America. He was elected secretary general of the Honduran PRTC at its second congress.

Toward the end of 1980 he also participated in guerrilla actions in El Salvador.

*Barricada* noted that those who knew Reyes Mata described him as "a daring, optimistic, determined, and audacious man, with great confidence in others, generosity, and a frank and forthright manner. . . ."

"He fell in battle only to be raised up forever in the hearts of the Honduran people."

Although Reyes Mata has fallen, *Barricada* pointed out, his comrades-in-arms are continuing their campaign in the mountains of Olancho Province. □

# Major step-up in CIA war

## Sandinistas appeal for military aid

By Michael Baumann

MANAGUA — "We want peace but we are ready for war!"

This was the overwhelming response at a massive demonstration here October 15. It was called in support of defense and austerity measures announced the day before to confront a sharp escalation of the U.S. war of aggression against this country. Some 150,000 people — a fifth of the city's population — mobilized in Managua to tell visiting Henry Kissinger that Nicaragua, like Vietnam and Palestine, would never surrender.

Tens of thousands more demonstrated in provincial capitals in the north and south.

### 'Offensive by CIA'

The march was called on less than 24 hours' notice, following a dramatic speech at midday the previous day by coordinator of the revolutionary government, Commander Daniel Ortega.

Following repeated failures by the *contras* (counterrevolutionaries) to gain a foothold inside Nicaragua, Ortega said, "beginning in October, the CIA has launched a new offensive."

"They are regrouping and mobilizing their Somozaist National Guard, mercenaries, and traitors," he said. "Battalions of the Honduran army are being deployed all along our borders. Pressure is being stepped up through sabotage and the U.S. naval presence, with the main aim, among others, of cutting off our oil supplies."

In an effort to bring the economy to a halt, five major blows have recently been struck at the country's oil. They come just as Nicaragua is preparing to harvest its two main cash crops — coffee and cotton — for which large amounts of fuel will be required.

The biggest blow came when a sea-borne commando squad hit the country's main fuel storage depot in the northern port city of Corinto October 10. Rockets fired on a diesel storage tank caused a 36-hour fire that destroyed 1.6 million gallons of fuel in four tanks.

Had the fire spread to nearby aviation fuel and chemical tanks, the entire population of this city of 25,000 could have perished. Only mobilization of firefighters from across the country and emergency international assistance from Mexico, Colombia, and Cuba prevented the blaze from turning into a holocaust.

The sophistication of the high-speed launch from which the rockets were fired gave the operation an unmistakable stamp of "Made in U.S.A."

The craft, known by the U.S. military designation "Sea Rider," was equipped with special

ballast tanks that take in sufficient sea water to give the vessel added stability for pinpoint marksmanship. Powerful pumps then expel the water, and twin 400-horsepower engines kick in for immediate escape — presumably to U.S. warships located only 12 miles off the coast.

In two additional attacks, September 8 and October 14, CIA-organized sabotage teams blew up off-shore oil tanker-unloading facilities in the Pacific coast city of Puerto Sandino.

On October 14, in Mexico City, the U.S. oil giant Exxon delivered the follow-up blow. Citing increasing "danger," its tanker affiliate, Esso, announced that it would no longer rent tankers to the Mexican government for the shipment of oil to Nicaragua.

As Mexico has no tankers of its own and is the main supplier of crude oil to Nicaragua, this "business" decision is clearly intended to be equally as damaging as the rocket attack.

### Pastora strikes from south

On Nicaragua's Atlantic coast, on October 2, some 500 *contras* based in Costa Rica and led by ex-Sandinista Edén Pastora briefly occupied the city of Benjamín Zeledón. Before being driven out, they destroyed the port's fuel-storage facilities. Four hundred thousand gallons of gasoline and diesel fuel were lost — the entire reserve supply for Atlantic coast cities, the country's gold mines, and the inland Miskito Indian settlements.

Despite Pastora's public claims that his group has nothing to do with National Guard-led *contras* in the north, the Honduran army, or the CIA, the fact is that all four enemies of the Sandinista revolution are increasingly coordinating their actions.

In a joint attack at the end of September, Pastora's forces and the Honduran-based Somozaists hit Nicaragua at both ends of the Pan American Highway, north and south. The fighting disrupted travel and commerce for several days, destroyed two key customs facilities, and forced the relocation of 1,000 civilians in the north.

Eyewitnesses to the combat in the north, at the El Espino border checkpoint, reported that the *contras* were openly supported by the Honduran army.

One of the most ominous aspects of the attack in the south, at Peñas Blancas, was the fact that after the initial attack was repelled, the *contras* moved half a kilometer into Costa Rican territory and continued shelling Nicaraguan positions.

At that point they were operating virtually in the Costa Rican customs facilities. There is no way this could have occurred without the

knowledge of the authorities of supposedly "neutral" Costa Rica.

However, no action was taken by Costa Rica to stop them. To the contrary, the Costa Rican Foreign Ministry accused Nicaragua of attacking Costa Rica and removed the *contra* wounded to government hospitals.

### Emergency measures

To meet the new level of aggression, Commander Ortega announced nine immediate tasks. According to Ortega, the steps, which will be filled out more concretely in the days ahead following discussions with the mass organizations, are to:

1. Take measures to conserve energy.
2. Establish stricter rationing of fuel.
3. Assure the supply of basic food-stuffs, clothing, shoes, and medicines to soldiers and to workers in the productive sector.
4. Complete the organization of production battalions, which must be prepared to get out the harvest from all areas and with their own means, should that be necessary.
5. Concentrate *vigilancia* (night watch) around strategic economic installations, organized by institutions and the people.
6. Complete the organization of the Infantry Reserve Battalions and the Territorial Sandinista People's Militias, in accordance with the plan and objectives of the Sandinista People's Army.
7. Update and concretize plans for civil defense.
8. Take concrete measures to conserve hard currency.
9. Do not allow the enemy to open an internal front! We must combat this with decisiveness and energy!

In addition, Ortega announced that Nicaragua has begun "to formally solicit, from different governments of the world, the military means needed to defend our coastlines and airspace."

In the past, the U.S. government, while masterminding the attacks that make such a step necessary, has stated that it would view the arrival of Soviet MIGs or other jet fighters as a "threat to peace."

### Kissinger visit

The visit here by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, head of Reagan's bipartisan war commission, did nothing to dispel the conviction that further defense preparations are necessary. Kissinger made a nine-hour stopover October 14, part of a visit to each country in the region.

Declining to answer any questions from the press about the U.S. war against Nicaragua, Kissinger stated publicly only that he was "not here to negotiate."

Following a 45-minute meeting with Kissinger and the U.S. delegation, Ortega announced that little had been accomplished.

"It is up to the United States to decide if they are going to continue the policy of war we are living through, or seek the road of detente," Ortega said. "While we do not have great expectations of this commission, we do not discard the possibility of a peaceful solution to the problems. But we confront a situation of declared war with the United States." □



# The road of the Sandinista revolution

## Interview with Commander Daniel Ortega

[The following is an interview with Commander Daniel Ortega, the coordinator of the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction of Nicaragua. It is taken from the July 18 English-language edition of *Barricada International*, published weekly in Managua. Footnotes are from the original text.]

\* \* \*

*Question. Some of the political groups that supported the Revolution at the time of its triumph are now among the opposition or have joined the counterrevolution. To what extent might this situation be due to a shift from the original program of the Sandinista Popular Revolution, which everyone supported in one way or another?*

*Answer.* At the time of the triumph, we had at hand a program which had been proposed, drafted, developed, and then made public and guaranteed by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). It's important to make clear that the program which we are calling the "original" program was entirely prepared, discussed, and approved by the FSLN. This completely refutes the maneuvers made by some groups to give the impression that the original program was the result of pacts and agreements made with other political groups and in the presence of foreign heads of state.

That is to say, at no time was any agreement or political pact made with another political force; even the composition of the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction was not decided as the result of any pact or agreement made with another political group.

Rather, we called upon persons who were well-known nationally, and naturally they were involved in some political activity.

In this way, we called upon Violeta Barrios de Chamorro as well as Alfonso Robelo, Sergio Ramírez, and Moisés Hassan. In the case of Sergio Ramírez and Moisés Hassan, they were representing social and political groups which adhered directly to the FSLN line.

Sergio Ramírez was the head of the Group of 12 and Hassan was one of the leading figures of the United People's Movement. They were asked: "This is the Sandinista Front's program, do you support it?" It was the same program which was later applied immediately after the revolutionary triumph on July 19.

Of course, in the application of a program the interests of different sectors participating in the country's political life come into play. And the FSLN, in this case, was going to apply a program which had the national interest at heart, the people's interests, the Revolution's interests. This clashed with the interests of people such as Mr. Robelo, who tried to steer the government in a direction which was more in line with his own interests.

When we began confiscating all of Somoza's properties and those of his associates, as outlined in the program, contradictions emerged. There was no problem with Somoza's personal properties, but among the Somocistas there were people closely linked to Mr. Robelo, who had a personal relationship with him; when the application of the specific provisions contained in the program were discussed, Robelo's personal economic interests came to the fore.

This conflict arose on repeated occasions, in relation to different matters. When the nationalization of the banks was put forth, which was a significant measure, and the nationalization of exports, they prompted heated discussions.

From that moment on, conflicts arose within the Government Junta. And Mr. Robelo, above all, was the most belligerent. There was a time when he opposed a whole series of measures but always accepted the Junta's majority decision in the end.

The minutes of the Junta's meetings show that from the very beginning, when the revolutionary program went into effect, Robelo opposed it. And this had to do with his economic interests, with his understanding of political pluralism and mixed economy, since he actually wasn't viewing the program as a means to transform, to change the existing structures of the country, to improve it substantially, and to seek justice in the distribution of wealth.

He was fighting to maintain the existing forms of exploitation, and this totally violated the spirit of the revolutionary program. We mention Robelo because he was the prototype of this kind within the country's highest governmental body, and he represented — although not formally nor as a result of any alliance or agreement — the interests of the sector of Nicaraguan society which refuses to accept revolutionary change which benefits the majority. On the contrary, he was in favor of getting rid of Somoza but controlling the Revolution.

From that point on, Robelo did nothing more than gather that sector's criticisms, which were logically in complete agreement with the criteria of the Revolution's external enemies. In other words, the arguments Robelo raised within the Junta were those of the political and economic groups here in the country and were the same arguments used by the ousted Somocistas residing outside the country. They were also the same arguments echoed by the Revolution's enemies in the U.S., Latin America, and other places.

A campaign was developed to portray the Revolution as betrayed, as having cast aside the spirit of the original program, and as having radicalized the process to its own detriment.

In reality, the original program demands a radicalization of the process — that is, a deepening of the process. Measures such as nationalizing exports and banks are radical; striking blows at the large economic holdings of Somocistas and at latifundistas with idle lands, by means of the agrarian reform, are all profound measures which logically come into conflict with the interests of those who had another type of program in mind.

The FSLN has consistently applied the original program. It has not been diverted from its course for a moment.

*Q. The State of Emergency decreed in March of last year imposed a series of restrictions on civilian life. To what extent was this measure really necessary? Don't you think there might be a serious risk involved in maintaining a measure like this?*

*A.* I think the FSLN's great desire to achieve stability in the country immediately was demonstrated a few months after the revolutionary triumph, while there were still barricades in the streets and signs of the insurrection were still fresh; it began to normalize life in the country and suspended all the existing emergency measures; the administration of cities and towns were transferred from the

### Wheelock on Nicaragua's 'Great Challenge'

Beginning with the next issue, *Intercontinental Press* will be serializing, in three parts, the complete text of an interview with Commander Jaime Wheelock, Nicaragua's minister of agricultural development and a member of the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

Published in book form in Nicaragua as *El Gran Desafío* (The Great Challenge), the interview gives one of the most thorough presentations by a Sandinista leader on the current stage of the Nicaraguan revolution, the strategy and orientation of the FSLN, and the problems and opportunities facing the revolution.

Read it in *IP*.

FSLN military commands to local governments; censorship of the mass media was lifted; and full freedom was given to political parties. Legal requirements were observed, to the degree possible, in the trials of all the detained Somocista criminals captured by the people.

But what happened? That effort to normalize life in the country began to be frustrated almost immediately as armed activity against the revolutionary process was unleashed. The first such actions occurred in 1980 and were directed against the literacy teachers.

With great effort, we launched a literacy campaign. Young Nicaraguans went to the countryside to teach the people to read and write. And they became the first victims of armed counterrevolutionary attacks.

But the situation had not yet become highly dangerous. It began to be so as groups of Somocista guards in exile, already linked to the CIA, developed ties with groups of Nicaraguans inside the country who opposed the Sandinista Revolution and were often members of political parties, trade unions, or coffee growers' associations: for example, businessmen like Jorge Salazar.<sup>1</sup>

When an administration determined to give open support to these enemies of the Nicaraguan people took office in the U.S., the situation became even more dangerous. This foreign interference began to be evident in the concentration and regroupment of Somocista guards in Honduran territory, the incursions of Somocista bands, and the formation of conspiratorial groups inside the country. These were organized by the CIA to carry out terrorist activity — such as the bombing of two bridges,<sup>2</sup> and concrete criminal actions against the civilian population and production activities.

For that reason, we were obliged to make a series of decisions in order to defend the revolutionary process and with it the people's conquests. And that led us to establish the State of Emergency in the military and economic spheres, since we are suffering both economic and military aggressions from the United States. The Reagan administration's hostilities against Nicaragua are well known.

We are a very small country confronting a truly colossal force — U.S. power — and, honestly, the only way to resist those attacks is to close ranks, strengthening the country's defense at all levels.

1. Jorge Salazar was a leader of a small counterrevolutionary group who was killed in a confrontation with the authorities while he was transporting arms in 1980. At the time of his death, he was president of the Agricultural Producers Union of Nicaragua, an organization of the country's large-scale agriculturalists. His widow is presently one of the heads of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, a counterrevolutionary organization mostly comprised of Somocista ex-guards.

2. On March 14, 1982, two bridges near the Honduran border were blown up by CIA-armed and trained commandos.

*Q. Do you think it will really be possible to carry out elections in 1985, since neither a prompt solution to the Central American crisis, nor the possibility of lifting the emergency measures established in Nicaragua is in sight?*

A. In spite of the state of aggressions, of the war, we are committed to continue the process of institutionalizing the Revolution. We will have to take into account the immediate conditions at the time of elections in 1985. We believe that the efforts of the Revolution's enemies are aimed at making us say: "Because of the terrorist activities, the destabilizing activities, we will suppress elections." But we're not going to fall for that provocation.

While conditions permit, we will continue building schools, hospitals, sugar mills, and hydroelectric and geothermal plants in this country, and we will continue defending the Revolution with arms. As the aggressions become more serious, to the extent that they affect all these economic and social efforts, we will have to adapt ourselves to those conditions and confront the difficulties of development and, ultimately, of survival.

*Q. To what extent might the decisions made by the revolutionary government be affected by the shortage of certain basic food items? Do the economic problems work in favor of the counterrevolution?*

A. In the first place, we have to take into account that the crisis that affects Nicaragua must be seen within the context of world economic problems, the greatest victim of which are poor, third world nations. The countries of Central America are the main victims of the world economic crisis. Large, market-economy nations unload the weight of their crisis on countries like ours and make us pay with the blood of our peoples. This is a central element necessary to understand the crisis Central American nations are enduring.

The problems of high prices and scarcity of foods are problems that other countries are feeling acutely. But there is a substantial difference in the case of Nicaragua: here, there is a Revolution, and this has allowed the population to become aware of these problems and familiar with them, to discuss them, and make demands and criticisms.

The situation is totally different in other countries where the people are not aware of those problems, and government policy is not aimed at resolving them. Rather, the people are sacrificed to safeguard the interests of those who enjoy better economic conditions.

So, in Nicaragua there is a different situation, where criticism and even discontent produced by shortages are expressed *within* the Revolution.

Here, there are very concrete factors that have worked to worsen this situation. This year, above all, climatic problems have taken their toll. We suffered a drought that seriously affected the production of basic grains, plants, and other products which are needed by

the population. On top of this, demand increased automatically, given the government's decision to guarantee the consumption of basic foods to large sectors of the population which previously did not have access to them. We are speaking of the high percentage of our population who are campesinos, farmworkers, and rural workers who previously lacked the benefits of basic nutrition.

Then, we must add the aggressions and the mobilization of the country in order to confront them. Human resources are involved in defense activities. Many join reserve battalions and often have to leave their lands for several months.

On the other hand, all these thousands of mobilized men and women must eat, and there goes another large amount of resources. The economic crisis is compounded by the U.S. government's determination to damage the Nicaraguan economy, to affect the Nicaraguan people's possibilities of consumption in order to turn the population against the Revolution.

The aggressive economic pressures the United States has unleashed against the Nicaraguan people are common knowledge. They decided to cut off our wheat and cooking oil supplies, then they reduced the sugar quota, which, at its advantageous price, was a source of foreign exchange for the country.

On the other hand, the United States decided to block all loans and aid to Nicaragua in international bodies and it has cut all forms of economic support it had maintained in the past for the Somocista regime.

On top of this complex situation, there is another destabilizing factor: trade. This plays a negative role in terms of price increases, and, logically, this provokes discontent within the population. But, as I said before, what is important is that this population criticizes, shouts, complains, and expresses discontent, but within the Revolution.

Only a minority is shouting in discontent outside of the Revolution and against the Revolution. A superficial viewer might speak of discontent upon observing this active population that criticizes and makes demands, but the Revolution also teaches that one must criticize and make demands, and organize to do so.

Yes, there is discontent with this situation, and we are all discontented. But this is a nation which, faced with Somocista guards and the United States' hostile military and economic policy, in the face of all this, responds as one clenched fist. It supports the Revolution.

*Q. Also in the framework of the economic situation, there are those who refer to the Nicaraguan Revolution as state-controlled. Others, however, speak of the need for a larger state participation in the economy. What is the future of the Nicaraguan economy, of the economic sectors which today exist in the country: the private sector, the mixed sector, and the state sector? What role will these be given in the future?*

A. The guidelines that the Revolution has set in that sense are aimed at achieving a

unified direction for the economy. We cannot function here with a fragmented economy, acting anarchically and responding to the interests of merely utilitarian factors, which were what carried the most weight in the past, instead of development factors, which are the most important.

So, there are some guidelines that have the purpose of setting the bases for an economic take-off in the country. This means transforming the bases of the economy and mobilizing all sectors to carry out transformations in agriculture, in industry, in construction, in all areas required for the country's development.

This, of course, to a certain degree affects the false freedom that these groups had — and here, we're speaking of the private sector — to get involved in any business, without concern for whether it might be detrimental to the country's future, to development, without thinking about popular sectors, the working class. In the past, there really wasn't even an economic policy that favored strengthening a truly national bourgeoisie; that sector was totally neutralized, splintered, anarchic, and served as a mere instrument of foreign economic interests.

Now the Revolution proposes to drastically change this situation. It proposes to develop a planned economy that will respond to the need for change and development in the country. There is a place in these plans for small, medium, and large-scale producers, industrialists, artisans, etc. The private sector at large has the opportunity to play an active role in the development of this economic model.

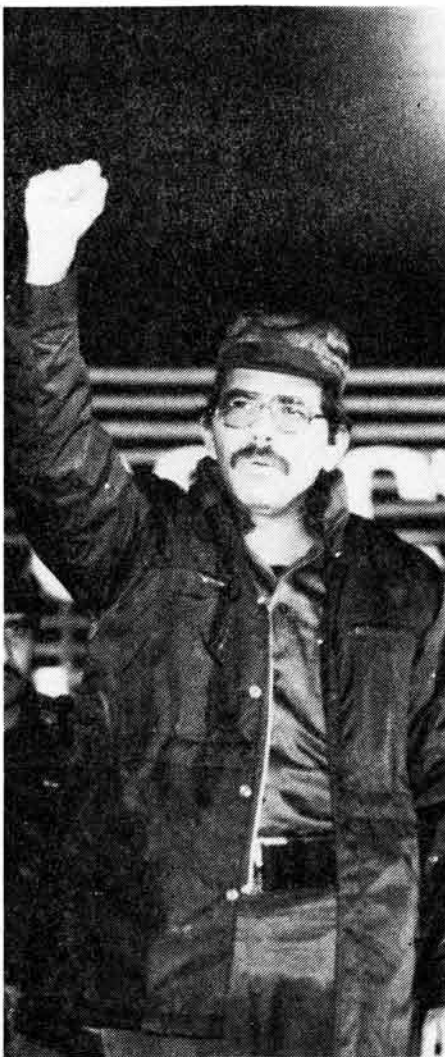
*Q. Exactly what kind of role? One of their main complaints is that they are denied the opportunity to participate in decision-making.*

A. That complaint must be viewed from a political perspective. Some private producers are linked to political groups which oppose the Sandinista Front, and it often becomes hard to tell whether they are speaking as producers or as politicians. They generally speak as politicians. They say they're excluded, but in reality a series of mechanisms has been established here in the various sectors of production, particularly in the agricultural and commercial sectors, in which they all participate directly.

They are able to participate as representatives of an economic force in the nation. As politicians, they can go argue and complain in the Council of State, where they have a place. As producers they can form part of the different commissions that have been created.

The private sector is present on all these commissions. This is where their demands for foreign exchange are considered, to see if these demands respond to the country's development needs.

In any case, the underlying problem here is the huge limitations the country faces in its efforts to reactivate the economy. These limitations are imposed, in part, by the continuous U.S. aggressions which affect the economy, as well as the world market structure. While developed nations buy our export products at the prices they choose, we have to buy their prod-



Michael Baumann/IP

DANIEL ORTEGA

ucts at their ever-increasing prices.

On the other hand, we are vulnerable to powerful U.S. economic aggressions, which include pressures to cut off the loans and aid that constitute an important source of foreign exchange for the country. Distribution of this foreign exchange is a very difficult and complicated matter, but we are just as strict with state enterprises as we are with private businessmen.

We find that those businessmen are manipulated politically or they intentionally act in a negative manner, even though they are aware of these problems, simply because they want to give the impression that the state is denying them foreign exchange and thus is harming private enterprise, seeking to make the private sector disappear.

But the truth is that if someone is harming the private sector here and dealing it a hard blow, for example, by cutting off the sugar quota, that someone is the United States government. It is harming everyone in the country equally, including the private sector.

*Q. Nicaragua has declared itself a nonaligned nation. However, in international*

*forums as well as in its economic, political, and diplomatic affairs, it has deepened relations with Socialist countries. Nicaragua is accused of having joined the Socialist bloc. To what extent has Nicaragua maintained its original policy of nonalignment? To what extent does government policy respond to that principle?*

A. Nicaragua really does sustain and defend the policy of nonalignment. This is so evident, so clear, that Nicaragua has achieved a leading role within the Nonaligned Nations Movement, and is greatly respected among its members.

How else could you explain Nicaragua's election to the United Nations Security Council, in spite of the U.S. opposition and campaign to block that election. The fact that Nicaragua has established relations at various levels with the countries of the Socialist community does no harm to its policy of nonalignment. On the contrary, it reinforces that policy; the past regime was completely aligned with the United States and rejected relations with the Socialist, Arab, and African countries.

When the Revolution triumphed, it never considered breaking relations with the United States, but, at the same time and consistent with its policy of nonalignment, Nicaragua sought to open itself up to all the countries of the world.

The extensive relations with various countries of the world have brought about a diversification in our economic and trade relations. That means we are beginning to break our traditional dependence on the United States and to maintain our own identity on the international level.

Naturally, for a country which in the past could not even imagine having relations with a Socialist country, this step sounds extremely significant, but it is something Nicaragua set out to develop since July 19, 1979.

This fourth anniversary is demonstrating the possibility of establishing and consolidating a revolutionary process in Central America. But we are also celebrating this anniversary at the most critical moment for the Central American region; this moment requires responses soon: responses that will help us overcome the confrontation promoted by the U.S. government. We must develop a new kind of relationship with the United States.

The crisis we mentioned reflects the fact that the policy promoted by the United States in the region is really obsolete and worn-out and should thus be replaced.

The U.S. government is not yet conscious of this. On the contrary, it desperately clings to its policy, trying to revive a corpse, and cannot see the need for a change, which is the only way to save the future relationship between the Central American peoples and the United States. This has been demonstrated in the recent case of the Malvinas Islands, where U.S. policy was made totally clear; it is a policy that does not adapt to the new mentality, to progress, to development. □

# Third general strike in 10 months

*Workers' militancy mounts in face of economic crisis*

By Fred Murphy

For the third time in 10 months, Argentine workers shut the country down from one end to the other on October 4.

The general strike was called jointly by both factions of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), which represents the vast bulk of the Argentine working class.

Industry, commerce, public transportation, banking, and government activity were all brought to a near-total halt. Hospitals offered only emergency services, the stock exchange was closed down, and radio and television announcers halted their broadcasts for 10-minute periods four times during the day to show their support for the strike. Even movie theaters and other entertainment facilities were largely closed down, leading the Buenos Aires press to comment that the day saw even less activity than a national holiday.

The massive participation was comparable to that of the general strike held Dec. 6, 1982, and surpassed the one that took place March 28 of this year.

The central demand of the work stoppage was for wage hikes to offset a new round of increases in utility rates and public transportation fares imposed by the military government in mid-September. Those increases had wiped out wage gains conceded by the regime at the end of August.

## Massive strike wave

The October 4 shutdown came amid a massive wave of strikes that began in August. Some 2.4 million workers — more than 20 percent of the work force — have been involved.

Among those halting work for higher wages and related demands during this strike wave have been textile, rail, cement, telephone, health, and postal workers; school teachers; government employees at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels; bank employees; and even the police forces of Córdoba, La Pampa, and Santa Cruz provinces.

These have often been wildcat strikes, without the authorization of the official union leaderships. In a cover story on the strikes in its September 23 issue, the leading Buenos Aires newsmagazine *Somos* posed the question: "Can the traditional trade-union leadership control this ferment, or will it be bypassed by the ranks?"

The leaders of the CGT responded to this pressure by calling the October 4 general strike. In doing so, they also sought to reassert their authority over the unions. This aim was reflected in a statement by Jorge Luján, a top CGT official, who said the general strike had



September 8 demonstration by public employees striking for higher wages.

"constituted a plebiscite of the people in support of the trade-union leadership."

Both factions of the CGT bureaucracy are closely tied to the bourgeois Peronist party. They are apprehensive that the current upsurge of struggles could raise workers' expectations and complicate matters for the Peronists if they should win the general elections scheduled for October 30.

## Deep social crisis

While the elections will enable the discredited military regime headed by Gen. Reynaldo Bignone to hand power over to civilians, they will not begin to solve Argentina's deep social and economic crisis.

The country hovers at the brink of default on its \$40 billion foreign debt, the world's third highest. Harsh austerity measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund, such as the September rate hikes, continue to be imposed. In August, the annual rate of inflation stood at 571 percent, with officials predicting 1,000 percent for September. Purchasing power of wages has fallen by 57 percent since 1975.

Argentine industry is in an advanced state of collapse — 30 percent of the manufacturing enterprises that existed in 1974 have gone out of business, and those still in operation are running at 50 percent of capacity. Some 400,000 former industrial workers are now reduced to street peddling, driving taxis, or seeking odd jobs to survive.

According to the September 23 *Latin Amer-*

*ica Weekly Report*, conditions in the interior of the country have "regressed to levels Argentines previously associated with 'the rest of Latin America,' a situation best illustrated through its social consequences, most notably the spread, since 1975, of endemic diseases such as dysentery, *mal de Chagas* [trypanosomiasis, a parasitic infection], and tuberculosis."

## Dictatorship's 'amnesty' repudiated

Further spurring Argentines' discontent is the outgoing dictatorship's persistent refusal to account for the up to 30,000 persons who were kidnapped and "disappeared" by the armed forces or by rightist paramilitary gangs since 1973.

Tens of thousands of Argentines have demonstrated repeatedly in the streets of Buenos Aires and other cities to demand a full accounting of the fate of the "disappeared" and the punishment of the officials responsible.

But on September 23 — one day after 15,000 people had marched in the capital to press these demands — the regime decreed a sweeping "amnesty," absolving all the crimes its own personnel committed during the campaign to physically crush leftist opposition and trade-union militancy. The junta cynically termed this measure a "gesture of reconciliation."

"The effects of this law cover authors, participants, instigators, accomplices, and those

who covered up, and apply to related common crimes and related military crimes," the text of the decree said. "No one can be interrogated, investigated, called to corroborate, or summoned in any way for charges or suspicions of having committed crimes or participated in the actions referred to in this law."

This sweeping attempt by the regime to grant itself an "amnesty" met with universal repudiation. Both the leading presidential candidates in the October 30 elections vowed to overturn the decree if elected. Thirteen judges hearing cases involving the "disappeared" rejected the law as unconstitutional and defied the regime by allowing the proceedings in their

courts to continue. Even Ministry of Justice prosecutors are reportedly rejecting orders from their superiors to implement the decree.

The military regime proved powerless to stop the general strike, which under its laws was illegal. It is unable to make its self-amnesty decree stick. It could not even block the October 3 arrest of its own Central Bank president, Julio González del Solar, which was ordered by a nationalist-minded provincial judge outraged by the onerous terms of a debt agreement between foreign banks and the Argentine national airline.

Under these circumstances, what the top generals and admirals mainly want is to get out

of the line of fire as quickly as possible and start to mend the disarray in their own ranks. On October 9 it was reported in Buenos Aires that the regime would shortly accelerate plans for turning the reins over to civilians. Instead of waiting until the scheduled changeover next January 30, the regime was said to be preparing to leave office in early December.

As for the Argentine bourgeoisie and its imperialist creditors, the hope is that an elected civilian regime will enjoy enough credibility and popular support to be able to impose at least some of the bitter economic medicine that the dictatorship could not. But the Argentine workers are in no mood to swallow it. □

# Defeated dictatorship bows out

*But October 30 elections will not resolve bourgeoisie's crisis*

**By Marcelo Zugadi**

**BUENOS AIRES** — Defeated, divided, repudiated by the population, the armed forces are returning to their barracks. Argentina approaches the October 30 elections in a situation marked by the total collapse of the military regime, an economic crisis that is out of control, and vigorous social mobilizations.

The dictatorship draws to a close, having failed utterly to achieve the three main aims the bourgeoisie sought through civil-war methods:

- to destroy the political and ideological continuity of the workers movement;
- to overhaul the foundations of the economy and open the way to a new period of growth;
- to alter the political spectrum by building two big bourgeois parties capable of guaranteeing political stability and social control.

The attempt cost 10,000 dead, 30,000 "disappeared," thousands tortured and buried in jails for years, thousands of exiles, and fear and misery for the bulk of the population.

But the military finally had to bend its knee in face of working-class and popular resistance. More than seven years after the 1976 coup, the leading figures of the bourgeoisie now find that the weak points of their system of domination have multiplied.

The withdrawal of the armed forces from the government marks the end of the latest attempt at military bonapartism. The ferocity of the generals has proven incapable of controlling or containing a total social crisis, the deepest in the country's history and one that is irreversible in the framework of the capitalist system.

The bourgeois parties and the armed forces have proven during the last 25 years that they cannot govern. Each in its turn has limited itself to plunder, and the plunder has become more extensive as the inviability of any long-term policy has become clearer.

Even before the elections, the military has been forced to acknowledge its defeat by

reinstating the leaderships of the trade unions and of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) that were removed in 1976, by revoking the antistrike laws and the decree banning national union federations, and by granting broad freedom of action to the labor movement and the movement for democratic rights.

Three parties that are based in the workers movement and declare their programs socialist are being allowed to function openly and legally. This, along with the regime's inability to continue the practice of kidnappings and "disappearances" on a large scale, means that the armed forces have conceded even more than they took away in 1976. At that time the working-class vanguard was under attack by paramilitary gangs and could barely exercise its formal legality.

These gains are the genuine result of the struggle of the masses.

At the same time, the upcoming elections are a diversionary maneuver to enable the armed forces to withdraw in good order, avoiding a clash with reality that would risk turning their internal conflicts into open armed confrontations, the starting point of a civil war.

The reality that the generals do not dare confront in the present circumstances can be summed up as follows:

- their responsibility for the disappearance of 30,000 people;
- the scandalous looting that multiplied the country's foreign debt from \$5 billion in 1976 to \$50 billion today;
- the theft of another \$5 billion from the workers, whose wages were reduced by 50 percent;
- the elimination of any prospect of economic stability (during the first 15 days of September, for example, food costs jumped 50 percent and the peso's value fell by 27 percent against the dollar); and
- their responsibility for the ignominious defeat and unpardonable betrayal of Argentina

in the war with Britain over the Malvinas Islands in 1982.

The bourgeois parties are no more capable than the military of facing up to this legacy. For much less than this they voluntarily turned over power in 1976. But for the moment they do serve to channel the crisis, to buy time, and to make possible a purge of the military that can restore its usefulness as a weapon against the workers movement and the oppressed.

Thus the calling of the elections reflects both the victory of the working-class and popular resistance to the dictatorship as well as the bourgeoisie's still-remaining room for political maneuver. The latter flows from the workers' inability to put forward their own political alternative. It will no doubt get the bourgeoisie through the immediate conjuncture, but in no way will it be enough to overcome the economic disaster, stem the social anger, or guarantee political stability.

## **Elections without a choice**

For the first time since its appearance in 1945, the Peronist movement is not certain of winning the elections. The campaign of the Radical Civic Union (UCR), which is traditionally the party of the big ranchers with support from the upper middle class and the U.S. State Department, has drawn the support of both the right wing and the spectrum of "independent" voters. Because the president is to be selected by an electoral college, UCR presidential candidate Raúl Alfonsín could receive fewer votes than the Peronists but still come to power.

The greatest possibilities, nonetheless, remain with Italo Luder, the Peronist candidate. But even the possibility of his defeat shows the decline of a movement that in 1973 came to power with 65 percent of the vote and the explicit support of the UCR, today its main rival.

The reorganization of the Peronists' Justicialist Party has had unequivocal results. The right wing has seized control of the party ap-

paratus and the key places on the electoral ticket. These are the same right-wingers who first set the death squads in motion in 1973 to eliminate their rivals inside the Peronist movement. Luder, who has a liberal image, is simply a puppet of the right who gained the top spot on the ballot by ostensibly remaining independent of the various contending factions. As provisional president of the country in 1975, Luder imposed a state of siege and put Tucumán Province under military rule.

The key representatives of the right-wing faction are the trade-union bureaucrats, headed by de facto party chief Lorenzo Miguel. Their role points up the fact that it is impossible to maintain mass support for the Peronist movement without the trade unions. However distorted and perverted by the bureaucracy this union role is, it is still disturbing to the bourgeoisie.

The left-wing Peronists, who chose to remain inside the movement, suffered a total setback. Obligated to vote for the very ones who in the past 10 years organized the systematic extermination of their militants, the left Peronists have been reduced to an innocuous, minimal role in the party apparatus and on the electoral ticket.

So the workers have no real choice. The main candidates do not differ in their programs and are scarcely distinguishable in their methods. Nor do they differ in the distrust they generate, both among the bourgeoisie and among the workers. Still, most workers will vote for the Peronists — that is their only point of political reference. The underground factory committees, the opposition currents that defy the bureaucrats in the unions, the women and men who defeated the dictatorship, will express themselves only by voting for the Peronists.

#### The role of the left

Because of its opportunism and sectarianism, the Argentine left has proven incapable of presenting a viable alternative in this situation.

The left-wing Peronists rejoined their party, subordinating their program to the reorganized apparatus controlled by their enemies, with the results outlined above.

The Communist Party put forward its own candidates for president and vice-president early this year — a construction worker and a woman telephone employee. The CP thereby stirred broad interest for its socialist propaganda campaign in the mass movement. But the CP withdrew its presidential ticket in August in order to lend unconditional support to the Peronist candidates.

The Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) is the new name taken by the Socialist Workers Party (PST).<sup>1</sup> It deepened its opportunist course

1. Until 1979 the PST was a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International. On the eve of the international's Eleventh World Congress in November of that year, the PST split from the international as part of the Bolshevik Faction led by long-time PST leader Nahuel Moreno. The chief political difference



Relatives of "disappeared" protest in Buenos Aires.

by calling for a party like the ruling Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE). Besides reproducing all the reactionary features of the PSOE, the MAS adds the detail of having only the scantest support in the workers movement.

The MAS candidates are Luis Zamora, an attorney who has defended political prisoners, and Silvia Díaz, a student leader in the 1960s who was later jailed and exiled.

A third tendency, Workers Politics (PO),<sup>2</sup> chose to present itself as a caricature of a mass working-class party by changing its name to the Partido Obrero (PO — Workers Party). From sectarianism, the PO passed over into opportunism by proposing an electoral front to the bourgeois Intransigent Party (PI) and to other organizations on the left. When this tactic failed as well, the PO put forward its own ticket: for president, Gregorio Flores, a class-struggle union leader with a combative record; and for vice-president, Catalina Raimunda de Guagnini, a woman who has played a significant role in the struggle for the disappeared and for human rights.

The rest of the left, largely dispersed and disoriented, has opted either for entering bourgeois parties such as the UCR or the PI, or for trying to lay the basis for a real workers party.

Despite their small forces, the MAS and the PO together obtained more than 100,000 registered supporters to comply with the electoral

reflected in the split was the Bolshevik Faction's extreme sectarianism toward the Nicaraguan revolution and its leadership. — *IP*

2. Until the mid-1970s the PO formed the Argentine section of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI). Deep differences between the PO and OCRFI leaders in France over policy toward the Peronist-led Argentine trade unions led to a split. Today the PO is part of a small international current known as the Fourth Internationalist Tendency. — *IP*

law. This achievement and the legalization of these two groups, along with the growth of the CP and the support for the Peronist left among that party's ranks, show that the formation of a workers party based on the numerous trade-union formations in which militant workers are active is a serious possibility. But the left's opportunism and sectarianism have resulted in the workers movement and its allies coming to the elections without any real alternative.

The overall situation in the country, the bourgeoisie's incapacity to resolve the most pressing problems facing the people, the ferment in the workers movement, and the deep-going dissatisfaction of the masses foreshadow a prerevolutionary situation that will take shape as mobilizations grow.

The new, elected government will not be able to stem this tide. It may indeed divert it for a while or delay its explosion. But bourgeois stability, recuperation of the economy, and control over the workers movement by political means are excluded. The armed forces and the paramilitary gangs will be kept at the ready. And the vanguard of the workers movement, drawing conclusions from the errors that weaken it today, will need to build a workers party capable of offering the masses a solution to the acute crisis through a workers government and socialism.

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## Prensa obrera

"Workers Press", weekly newspaper of the Partido Obrero (PO — Workers Party) of Argentina. Published in Buenos Aires.

Issue No. 24 of *Prensa Obrera*, dated July 14, carried the text of an open letter from PO leaders addressed to the Intransigent Party, the Communist Party, the left-wing Peronist current known as Intransigence and Mobilization, the Movement Toward Socialism, and other left groups. The open letter said, in part:

"The membership drives, public meetings, democratic mobilizations and demonstrations, and workers and people's struggles have shown that the Argentine left has become a weighty force with more and more of a mass character. All together, the left has achieved more than 500,000 registered supporters, and has been able to bring out some 150,000 persons to its official rallies in the capital and greater Buenos Aires. . . .

"The most important thing, however, is the fact that the left in this country has a programmatic stance that clearly differentiates it from all of the traditional forces. While the latter propose compromises with imperialism, with the International Monetary Fund, and with the international banks, all the forces of the left call for the nationalization of the banks and of foreign trade, as well as the investigation of fraudulent indebtedness, before complying with payments on the foreign debt. While the traditional forces want to reach some kind of agreement with U.S. and British imperialism putting off indefinitely the question of sovereignty over the Malvinas, the left has called for struggle at all levels against the usurpations of imperialism. While the parties of big capital . . . have not taken up the national demands of the mothers and relatives [of the "disappeared"], the left has been in the streets on various occasions shouting those demands. Only the left has spoken out against the Yankee aggression against Nicaragua in a real and not a hypocritical way."

The PO's letter drew the conclusion from this that a basis existed for forming "an anti-imperialist front, taking advantage of the coming elections but giving it the character not of an episodic electoral apparatus but rather of a movement of political mobilization."

The letter further stated that in the PO's view, "the anti-imperialist front is not a single-class front but rather one that includes the various oppressed classes, in the first place the proletariat and the various layers of the petty bourgeoisie. . . . In our view the anti-imperialist front must be distinguished by its political function as the leadership of a great national uprising against imperialism, that is, as a factor of independent mobilization of all the exploited."

Subsequent issues of *Prensa Obrera* published large numbers of statements from individual working-class militants and activists in the struggle for democratic rights lending support to the PO's proposal. Nonetheless, an article in the August 12 issue reported that "the majority of the parties of the left have accelerated their decisions and efforts in favor of a front with Peronism, more precisely, of *unconditional* support for the Peronist candidates." Therefore, supporters of the PO were called upon to continue efforts to form anti-imperialist fronts at the local level or to include supporters of that perspective on the slates of candidates that would be presented under the name of the PO on the October 30 ballot.

The August 26 issue of *Prensa Obrera* announced the PO's candidates for president and vice-president: Gregorio Flores, a leader of the militant SITRAC-SITRAM auto workers union at the Fiat Concord plant in Córdoba in the late 1960s; and Catalina Raimundo de Guagnini, a longtime activist in the struggles of teachers and educators and a member of the National Secretariat of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared.

"The choice is clear," the PO's paper said in presenting these candidates. "Either national collapse under bourgeois leadership, or national emancipation and socialism under the leadership of the proletariat. . . .

"Along these lines, [the PO] calls for the election throughout the country of worker and activist candidates, whether affiliated to the PO or not, so long as they commit themselves to a class-struggle platform."



"*Socialist Solidarity*," weekly newspaper that supports the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) of Argentina. Published in Buenos Aires.

Issue No. 32 of *Solidaridad Socialista*, dated July 7, carried reports and photographs of a public rally of some 15,000 persons held by the MAS at Luna Park, a sports auditorium in Buenos Aires, on July 1. One article stated, "It is no accident that, for the first time since its launching in September 1982, the MAS has received broad coverage in the daily press, on the radio, and even on television. To have filled Luna Park places the MAS among the political parties with a real presence at the national level.

"In particular, it establishes the MAS as one of the three big forces of the Argentine left. The MAS rally had a slightly smaller attendance than the one held by the Communist Party in the same auditorium, and surpassed the one held a week before by the Intransigent Party."

The MAS rally had two main themes, the paper said: "the suspension of foreign debt payments, as the necessary condition for the Second Independence of our country and Latin America; and the need to put forward a socialist alternative to the range of bosses' candidates being presented in the electoral process. . . .

"The speeches by the orators, as well as in the chants and slogans from the platform, reflected the great objective summed up in the phrase carried on the big red banner of the MAS above the stage: 'For a socialist Argentina without generals or capitalists.'"

The September 8 *Solidaridad Socialista* reported on the holding of the MAS's constituent congress in Buenos Aires on September 4, which the paper said was attended by 94 delegates from all provinces of the country and by some 3,000 invited observers.

The congress nominated as MAS candidates for president and vice-president Luis Zamora, a lawyer who has defended political prisoners, and Silvia Díaz, a socialist student leader in the 1960s who was jailed and exiled by the dictatorship.

A supplement to the September 8 *Solidaridad Socialista* carried the MAS's election platform, which centered on the demand that Argentina's huge foreign debt be repudiated. "If the parties that come to power are not ready to confront imperialism and stop paying back the debt," the MAS said, "the country and the people will be ruined so that the imperialist bankers can get fat. So before voting, ask yourself, is the party or candidate I prefer in favor of or against paying the foreign debt? The MAS opposes doing so and calls for a struggle to defend the country and the people from this imperialist aggression. We call for a workers and people's mobilization for not paying the foreign debt."

Another section of the platform tied the question of the debt to revolution in Latin America, drawing a parallel to the united struggles of the peoples of the continent against Spanish colonialism in the early 1800s:

"Today, in 1983, we barely remain a nation, because we are exploited and colonized by Yankee imperialism. The time has come to make another great revolution together with our Latin American brothers and sisters to conquer our Second Independence! . . .

"At this moment, the sharpest battle of this Latin American revolution is being waged in Central America, above all in El Salvador and Nicaragua. . . .

"The outcome of this battle is very important for us, even though it is occurring thousands of kilometers away. San Martín and Bolívar also fought thousands of kilometers apart, but one day they embraced each other in the center of the continent. If our Central American brothers and sisters defeat the Yan-

kees, our struggle in Argentina will become easier. . . .

"Let's defend Nicaragua and the heroic Salvadoran people, the same way the Nicaraguans put themselves at our side in the Malvinas War!"

The September 15 issue of *Solidaridad Socialista* reported the MAS had opened some 500 public headquarters in cities, towns, and neighborhoods throughout Argentina, and the circulation of the newspaper had reached 110,000.

The September 29 issue reported on a public statement by the Argentine Socialist Workers

Party (PST) hailing a recent court decision that the regime's 1976 decree "dissolving" the PST had been unconstitutional. The statement was signed by veteran PST legal adviser Enrique Broquen; by Nora Ciapponi and José Páez, PST vice-presidential candidates in the two 1973 elections; and by Ernesto González and other PST leaders. The statement also urged "all the compañeros who have accompanied us in one way or another in the struggle to regain the PST's right to function legally, and all the workers who recognize it as their party, to actively support the Movement Toward Socialism in this election campaign." □

## Grenada

# Devastating blow to revolution

*Bishop, five other leaders killed*

By Steve Clark

OCTOBER 20 — Following our closing news date but prior to going to press, a report over Radio Free Grenada indicated that six top leaders of the revolution and of the New Jewel Movement, including Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, were shot and killed October 19 by the Grenadian army.

Since October 14 there have been vague and often conflicting reports in the big-business media of a deepgoing split in the leadership of the Grenadian revolution. Despite efforts to gather reliable information since these reports began, *Intercontinental Press* has not established any independent sources.

Whatever additional facts may come to light, there can be no doubt that these events, culminating in the killing of Prime Minister Bishop and other leaders, deal a devastating blow to the revolution and to the hopes and aspirations of the toilers of that country and all those who have shared their determination to consolidate and advance the social and economic gains that have been made since the dictatorship of Eric Gairy was toppled in 1979. Bishop and the other leaders who were killed were looked to for political leadership and inspiration by tens of thousands of Grenadian workers and farmers and others around the world.

The announcement of the killings came in a radio address by army commander Gen. Hudson Austin. Austin charged that the six were killed during fighting after they had taken the military headquarters and distributed weapons to a crowd of their political supporters; other reports from Grenada challenge the truth of this account.

The other five New Jewel Movement leaders killed were: Unison Whiteman, the foreign minister; Jacqueline Creft, the education minister; Norris Bain, the housing and construction minister; and trade union leaders Vin-

cent Noel and Fitzroy Bain. Numerous other Grenadian citizens were also killed or injured in fighting the same day, according to accounts by Austin and others.

In the radio address by Austin, he announced the formation of a military council to govern the country until the return of "normalcy." Austin also announced a round-the-clock curfew for four days until October 24; he warned that violators would be "shot on sight."

The deaths of Bishop and the other Grenadian leaders come at a time when U.S. imperialism is sharply escalating its attacks against the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, the Salvadoran freedom fighters, revolutionary Cuba, and the struggles of working people throughout the Caribbean and Central Amer-



Ernest Harsch/IP

MAURICE BISHOP

ica. Washington has targeted the Grenadian revolution and its gains ever since the March 1979 victory there, and the U.S. rulers are already exploiting the latest developments to escalate their propaganda in preparation for intervention against revolutionary struggles throughout the region.

The claim by Washington and counter-revolutionary forces throughout the Caribbean region that they can be of assistance to the Grenadian people at this time is not only cynical and hypocritical, but a dangerous lie. All those who support the Grenadian revolution must oppose any U.S. intervention in the affairs of the people of that island.

U.S. government spokespeople and the capitalist press have also sought to use the events in Grenada to smear Cuba and bolster their false claims that it and the Soviet Union pose a threat to the peoples and governments of the Caribbean and Central America. These charges must be rejected and exposed for what they are — an effort to justify U.S. military action against Cuba because of its exemplary internationalist solidarity with all those struggling against tyranny, oppression, and exploitation in the Americas.

As the *IP* obtains further reliable information, we will report it to our readers in upcoming issues. □

## 'French troops out of Chad!'

Several thousand people demonstrated in Paris September 7 against French military intervention in Chad. Marchers chanted slogans such as "French troops out of Chad," "No intervention in Chad or Lebanon," "Not a penny, not a weapon for the colonial army," and "Whether from the right or the left, imperialism is the same."

One slogan recalled President Mitterrand's support of the French colonial war in Algeria: "From the war in Algeria to the war in Chad, Mitterrand always the colonialist."

The demonstration was sponsored by the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), Workers Struggle (LO), the Communist Party Marxist-Leninist, and the Internationalist Communist Party (PCI).

LCR leader Alain Krivine called on the marchers to "demonstrate again and in larger numbers against this colonial war." Arlette Laguiller, a leader of Workers Struggle, blasted the Communist Party, which is in the government coalition, for restricting its criticisms of the intervention in Chad to a few quibbles.



# Pinochet's political prisoners

## Interview with leader of detainees' families

[The following interview with a representative of the Organization of the Families of Political Prisoners was obtained in Santiago, Chile, by a correspondent of *Intercontinental Press* during the first week of September, before the mass protests against the Pinochet regime that took place September 8-11.]

\* \* \*

*Question. When was your group established and how is it organized?*

*Answer.* The families of people who had been arrested and detained began to meet very soon after the coup in 1973. But it was not until 1975 that we got together as an organization, and at that time it was fairly loose.

In 1976 the government announced that the concentration camps had been abolished. This was not true — the concentration camps still existed, and they even exist today. It was around that time that we thought we needed to get better organized, because the problems of the political prisoners were getting worse.

By 1979 we had consolidated our organization. There are four sections within it. The first deals with providing aid to the prisoners and their families. This is quite a big task, as the food provided to the prisoners is not fit to live on, and the government provides no means of support to the prisoners' dependents.

The second section has the task of getting out information about the prisoners and their families to all the popular organizations, the trade unions and community organizations, and with coordinating our work with these groups.

The third section produces pamphlets and publicity for both national and international distribution.

And the fourth deals with all the legal aspects — finding lawyers for the prisoners and following up all legal avenues for gaining their release.

We have done a lot of legal work, including appeals and letters to the highest courts. Most of these appeals have received no response. The legal section also takes up the problems the prisoners have inside the prisons.

The prisoners themselves are also organized within all the prisons. They have their own systems of communicating among themselves.

*Q. How many political prisoners are there in Chile today, and what are conditions like in the prisons?*

A. There are about 300 political prisoners throughout Chile today, both men and women. This figure includes those still waiting to go on trial (the waiting period can be quite long), and it also includes those in internal exile in the

south, at a penal colony on the island of Chiloé.

The figure does not include those detained for only a short time, of which there are a great number. The latter figure is growing rapidly with the people arrested following the recent protests. Every two months we publish a list of all political detainees.

The conditions of the prisoners deteriorated sharply in 1981. In 1978 a United Nations report had recognized the existence of political prisoners in Chile, but in 1981 this was retracted. The consequence in Chile was that all the political prisoners, who had been grouped together in one prison in 1978, were separated and scattered. Their families were not informed of their whereabouts.

At the same time, the repression was again stepped up. Prisoners all suffered humiliation, beatings, and torture — such as electric shock, cigarette burns, and the tearing out of fingers and toenails. Women prisoners were subjected to sexual humiliation.

Problems of overcrowding and lack of water and medical attention also increased. One example of this is that in December 1981 there was a case of food poisoning in the central jail in Santiago. Both common prisoners and political prisoners were affected. Two common prisoners died, and four political prisoners were in comas for four days. As a result, they suffered damage to their central nervous systems; their vision and respiration are permanently impaired. This example shows that the

food brought by the families often never reaches the political prisoners.

Prison authorities also often try to turn the common prisoners against the political prisoners, but generally this is not successful because of the consciousness of the common prisoners. Most of them are from the poor neighborhoods and are struggling themselves. One recent case of this was a hunger strike begun by the common prisoners in the Santiago Central Jail on August 16. They were protesting a case of mistreatment and filthy living conditions.

Two political prisoners who joined in the strike, Romelio Pérez Vargas and Alejandro Vargas Valencia, were taken to another prison a week later. This is called "rehabilitation," but it really means worse repression. These prisoners now have to perform an hour of "gymnastics" every day, which includes such exercises as kissing the guards' feet.

It is also important to point out that the repression doesn't stop when a prisoner is released. For example, in 1981 a political prisoner named Hugo Riveres, a painter, won release. A few months later he was taken away from his house and then was found dead.

So even if one does get out of jail one is still watched and has no security. The families are also all being watched — their houses are kept under surveillance and anyone who communicates with them is also watched.

*Q. Have you been able to organize any international solidarity?*

A. What we can do is limited by financial difficulties, but we do try to send information out. We see international solidarity as very important. In many cases it has helped to free prisoners. It also raises the morale of the prisoners' families, because they know they are not alone. It gives them courage to keep fight-

## 40,000 hit streets in Santiago

More than 40,000 Chileans rallied near the center of Santiago on October 11, in what news reports described as one of the largest and most militant antigovernment protests in Gen. Augusto Pinochet's 10 years of dictatorial rule.

The rally marked the beginning of the sixth in a series of organized monthly protests demanding the ouster of Pinochet, free elections, and the restoration of democratic rights.

In subsequent days, further demonstrations were held in neighborhoods and on university campuses.

The October actions were initiated by the Democratic People's Movement (MDP), a recently formed coalition that includes neighborhood and trade-union organizations as well as the Communist Party and the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), both of which remain outlawed by

the regime.

The MDP's call gained the support of the National Workers Command (CNT), which groups Chile's main labor federations. But the bourgeois opposition parties that had backed previous protests refused to do so this time.

The crowd at the October 11 rally repeatedly chanted the name of President Salvador Allende, who was slain resisting the 1973 military coup that brought down his elected government. The Pinochet dictatorship had tried to write Allende and his regime out of Chilean history, but his name has become a symbol of protest in the current upsurge. More and more discussion is taking place in Chile on the experiences and lessons of the period of Allende's government and the popular upsurge that accompanied it.

ing. Financial support is also very important.

I would like to stress the fact that harsh sentences are still being handed down. For example, in October 1981 Guillermo Rodríguez was sentenced to life imprisonment. At present, Fernando Valenzuela Espinoza, 20 years old, is on trial and could be sentenced to a life term as well. Carlos García Herrera and Víctor

Zúñiga Arellano are on trial and could be sentenced to death.

The latter is an especially important test case because there have been no death sentences in the last two years. We want all supporters of human rights to know about these cases because the dictatorship would like the world to believe that it is changing. The only changes

we have seen are more political prisoners and worse repression.

*Q. What are the prospects for the future?*

A. The things that the political prisoners are suffering are but one aspect of the repression under this fascist regime. The only hope for the future is for this regime to be overthrown. □

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## Philippines

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# The dictatorship in crisis

## *Response to Aquino slaying shows Marcos regime's isolation*

By Paul Petitjean

[The following article is taken from the October 3 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a fortnightly magazine published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

A murderer fired a bullet into the head of former Philippine Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino on Sunday, August 21, 1983, as he was disembarking from a flight at Manila's international airport.

The alleged assassin was immediately gunned down by the soldiers escorting Aquino. So he is not going to do any talking.

But no one, either in the Philippines or internationally, has been convinced by the official account of this spectacular murder, that is, that it was the act of a "well-known" professional killer hired by someone unknown, maybe a Communist.

All the indications are, in fact, that this political murder could only have been engineered by a faction in the regime, if not President Marcos himself.

Even the identity of the assassin is being questioned. Who was it that killed Aquino? Was it the hired killer who was shot by the soldiers, or one of the soldiers themselves?

The circumstances of the murder point to a conspiracy going high up. The behavior of the authorities in the hours and days following the crime has raised troubling new questions, which have been pointed up by the big international press.

The climate of suspicion has grown to such an extent that Premier Cesar Virata has had to acknowledge publicly that "some elements in the government" may have been involved in the murder.

### Impact of the killing

The murder of Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino has highlighted the political conflicts developing in the Philippines. This is for a number of reasons. One is the circumstances in which the murder was committed. Another is the former senator's personal prominence. He was the

principal figure in the bourgeois, pro-American opposition to the Marcos regime.

Moreover, the killing touched off a wave of mass indignation that was impressive in its breadth and its depth. Giant demonstrations accompanied the cortege taking Aquino's body to his native village and then back to Manila, reaching their culmination at his burial. On August 31, hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, followed the funeral cortege. It was an unprecedented mobilization, a resounding condemnation of the regime. And during the student demonstrations in front of the presidential palace, the "forces of order" opened fire, killing one demonstrator and wounding a number.

After a brief letup, street demonstrations resumed in September in the capital city, with the demonstrators calling openly for President Marcos' resignation.

Clearly, Aquino's murder has opened a new stage in the crisis of the Marcos regime and is going to have a deepgoing impact on the course of the political and social struggles in the country. This is what gives the event its importance in the Philippines and internationally.

The economic situation in the Philippines is very bad. Mass democratic and revolutionary struggles are under way and growing. While the bourgeois liberal opposition is badly organized, the communist left — represented mainly by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) — is leading a guerrilla movement that is spreading, and it is also leading significant mass movements both in the urban centers and in the countryside.

What is more, this chain of islands, inhabited by 53 million people, holds a very special place in U.S. Asian strategy.

### A pivot of imperialist policy in Asia

The strategic role of the Philippines in the lineup of U.S. forces in Asia is clear. There are two very large military bases on the island of Luzon — the Clark air base and the Subic Bay naval base.

The relative importance of these installations has increased since Washington lost its main bases on the continent of Asia, owing to the fall of the Saigon regime in 1975 and the

shutting down of the Thai bases under the pressure of mass nationalist demonstrations in 1976.

The U.S. bases in the Philippines, which are among the largest bases Washington has anywhere in the world, are located at the heart of a key strategic area. After Indonesia, the Philippines control the straits linking the Pacific to the Indian Ocean. They face the Vietnamese coast, where the Soviet fleet can now dock.

In fact, Southeast Asia is certainly one of the regions where the confrontation between revolution and counterrevolution has been the sharpest and the most sustained since the Second World War. Let us just recall the major episodes:

- The Japanese intervention on the Asian continent and the subsequent victory of the Chinese revolution.
- The successive Indochinese wars waged by the Japanese, French, and Americans from 1940 to 1975.
- The emergence of Communist-led guerrilla movements in the Philippines and Malaya in the late 1940s and early 1950s, which suffered defeats.
- The struggle for national independence in Indonesia, the growth of the Indonesian Communist Party, and then the mass slaughter of Communists in 1965–66.
- The rise and the crisis of the Communist movement in Thailand in 1973–82.

And now to this list has been added the present ripening of revolutionary struggles in the Philippines themselves.

From the standpoint both of the overall military relationship of forces between the "blocs" and the capacity of the imperialists to intervene against revolutionary movements in the region, the U.S. bases in the Philippines have an essential role to play.

Moreover, this role is not limited to Southeast Asia. The Clark and Subic Bay bases are kingpins in the deployment of the U.S. Navy and Air Force from the coast of Korea to the Near East. They are central to the strategic system the U.S. has set up to link the north Pacific bases (in South Korea and Japan, including Okinawa, the Marianas, and Guam) to those in

the Indian Ocean (in particular, Diego Garcia).

Facing crises at both ends of this chain of bases, (e.g., the Kwangju insurrection in South Korea in 1980 and the dispatching of U.S. commandos to Iran in the same year), the Pentagon's policy relies on being able to shift air and naval forces rapidly from one sector to the other. In this context, the U.S. installations in the Philippines assume an importance that goes far beyond Southeast Asia itself.

The importance of the Philippines in the Asian policy of the U.S. is not just military. It is not by chance that this is where Washington has its last big bases in Southeast Asia.

#### **A bulwark of U.S. neocolonialism**

For historical reasons, the Philippines are more closely linked to the U.S. than any other country in the region. Colonialism came early in these islands, beginning in the sixteenth century. (The other major countries in the region did not become direct colonies or semicolonies before the eighteenth century or the nineteenth century.)

With the exception of the Muslim sultanates in the southern part of the archipelago, which were founded in the fifteenth century, colonial domination was imposed more easily in the Philippines and put down deeper roots than in the other Asian countries.

This was because of the relative backwardness of this island chain, which seems to have still been in a slow process of transition to class society when the colonialists arrived. In these conditions, the resistance to Christianization was broken. For a long period, the Spanish Catholic church served as the underpinning of the colonial society. Within the Spanish empire, the Philippines were commercially linked to the kingdom of Mexico.

After 350 years of Spanish domination, the islands were "sold" to the U.S. as a result of the Spanish-American War in the New World. But the Americans were able to occupy them only after sending an expeditionary force that had to wage a bloody struggle.

The Philippines thus became one of the rare direct colonies of the U.S., along with Puerto Rico. In fact, it was the U.S.'s biggest colony. And this situation lasted until the aftermath of the Second World War.

The Philippines are a bit like a Latin Asia. The history of the archipelago offers many analogies to that of the Latin American countries. It is the only Christian country in Asia. U.S. economic interests have traditionally been dominant, although today they are facing stiff competition from the Japanese.

The growth of national consciousness was set back and profoundly distorted by the extent of colonial penetration and the pressure of neocolonial attitudes. The feeling of being part of Asia was blunted, and this helped to cut the Philippine people off from the political developments in the region.

Of all the states that belong to the ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] alliance, the Philippine government is certainly the most directly dependent on Washington.

The vicissitudes of Philippine political life also have more impact in the U.S. This is one of the factors that explain why Aquino was assassinated, as I will show in more detail further on.

Historically, politically, economically, and militarily, the Philippines are the neocolony most firmly controlled by the U.S. in Southeast Asia.

#### **Marcos regime and its contradictions**

Ferdinand Marcos, a brilliant lawyer and a good politician, was elected to the presidency for the first time in 1965. Reelected in 1969, he could not constitutionally run for a third term.

However, on September 22, 1972, claiming that the country faced the threat of "extremism from the right and from the left," Marcos clamped down martial law and maintained it for eight years. In fact, Marcos established a dictatorship with the active support of the World Bank and Washington.

Personal ambition certainly played a role in Marcos' decision to hang on to the presidency by decreeing martial law and later changing the constitution. His government is a regime of one-man rule. But there is more to it than that.

Under martial law, important political and economic changes were initiated under the auspices of the World Bank. At the start of the 1970s, the country was in poor economic shape, with a large foreign debt. The political situation was unstable.

There was an upsurge of anti-imperialist feeling. (Marcos himself was obliged to use nationalist themes in his electoral campaign, although he dropped them as soon as he was reelected.)

Divisions were growing in the bourgeois forces as a result in particular of the crude electoral fraud and massive vote-buying that accompanied Marcos' campaign in 1969. Peasant struggles were starting up again. The student movement was veering to the left and heading up mass mobilizations and street demonstrations.

#### **Drastic changes under Marcos**

Once martial law was established, the regime instituted a series of measures that transformed the framework of Philippine politics.

First of all, the mass movement was harshly repressed. It was forced into a retreat that lasted for several years. The state apparatus was unified and centralized. The power of the local notables who had previously ruled the roost was cut down to size. The private armies were broken up and replaced by the national army and police.

The old parties were pushed to the sidelines. Then, after a few years, Marcos launched a political movement that became all-pervasive — the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL), or New Society Movement.

In the economic sphere, big public works were undertaken to promote the penetration of foreign capital into industry, mining, and agriculture. Free-trade zones were set up, starting with the one on Bataan (the BEPZ or Ba-

taan Export Processing Zone) at the entrance to Manila Bay.

New regulations "protecting" foreign investment were adopted, and repression helped to keep the cost of labor down in industry.

In response to pressure from the peasants, especially in the rice-growing areas, an agrarian reform was decreed. The so-called Green Revolution got under way. (That is, the use of special seed, the introduction of new technology, increased capital investment, and the generalization of market relations.)

In fact, the International Research Institute for agronomy is located in the Philippines. This is the institute that develops better strains of rice and tests new growing techniques.

Agribusiness is taking off in areas not touched before, as in the case of the fruit plantations on the island of Mindanao. The fishing industry (dominated by the Japanese) is opening up fishing areas.

Martial law was justified as a basis for driving through the modernization of the country. Officially, it is supposed to prepare the way for a restoration of constitutional rule, which was continually put off. The regime asked to be judged by its results — order, security, and economic development. But in all these areas, the balance sheet of the Marcos regime is far from favorable, even from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie.

#### **Marcos family's monopoly**

After a marked drop (following the breakup of the gangs and private armies), the crime rate started to shoot up again. Very often military officers and police officials are found to be behind the rackets and crimes decrined in the press.

Far from stopping the growth of the revolutionary left, the imposition of martial law has contributed to the radicalization of new sections of the youth and the church. The Communist-led guerrilla movement is stronger than ever, and the mass influence of the CPP broader and more deepgoing.

Over the last decade, the Philippines has had the lowest economic growth rate of all the ASEAN countries — about 5 percent. Industrialization has lagged behind that in most of the neighboring countries. On the other hand, the spiral of foreign debt has not stopped. Alongside South Korea, the Philippines is probably the biggest debtor in East Asia. Its foreign debt exceeds \$12 billion.

Still more grave, the policy followed by the Marcos regime has generated new social and political tensions and conflicts, not just between the state and the mass movement but also among various bourgeois circles and leaders.

The Marcos regime means not just one-man rule. The state apparatus and a number of national resources have been taken over by one family — the family of the president and his wife, Imelda Romualdez — and their cronies.

The old propertied oligarchy has been shoved out of the major areas of the economy by particularly brutal methods, such as threats

of repression on the charge of subversion. Today these old moneyed elements have formed a broad bourgeois opposition to the regime. While this bourgeois opposition has not been able to build a powerful political movement, it has widened the field of action for the forces challenging the regime and promoted an anti-Marcos lobby in the U.S. In fact in a general way it is helping to legitimize "subversion."

The Marcos clan has taken over a number of businesses and monopoly positions with the help of forms of political protection that have been disclosed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in their confidential documents.

In recent years, most of these businesses have failed as a result of incompetent management and have avoided bankruptcy only with the help of state aid.

#### Case of the 'coconut lobby'

Through a specialized bank (supported by the state), a government agency overseeing exports, and a tax levied on all producers, the minister of defense, Juan Ponce Enrile, and a private businessman, Cojuanco, have acquired control of the sale of coconut products.

This sector accounts for 23 percent of the land under cultivation and 20 percent of exports. A very large section of the population depends economically on it. Like all other agribusiness industries, in particular fruit and sugar, the coconut industry is essentially export-oriented, and for some years has been hit by crisis and declining sales.

Obviously under these circumstances, the drop in the standard of living of the producers — who include wage workers, leaseholders, and small and medium-sized producers — has generated social struggles aimed directly against the Marcos clan and the state.

#### Ambitions of the military

Moreover, during the eight-year rule of martial law, the army had become for the first time in the Philippines a leading force within the state, even though the government remains ostensibly a civilian one.

This is a new factor in a country that has not had a tradition of military regimes, unlike Thailand, where the army has run the country for 50 years.

There is the unmistakable possibility now that the army may try to take over to succeed the present regime, presenting itself as the only force that can maintain order in the aftermath of Marcos. But this is a particularly disquieting prospect for the significant sections of the bourgeoisie that are waiting for the president to leave the scene to retake the political initiative.

It also poses a problem for the church hierarchy, whose power might be challenged. The clerical authorities fear, moreover, that the imposition of an outright military regime would accelerate the slide of the country toward civil war.

And the prospect of a military regime is certainly not arousing any enthusiasm either in



Huge crowds demand Marcos' resignation.

important circles in the U.S. administration or the World Bank.

So, the picture in the Philippines is a somber one for the imperialists. The economy is in an overall bad state. Mass struggles are growing and becoming more radical and guerrilla warfare is spreading. The Marcos clan's businessmen are manifestly incompetent. Dangerous monopolies are being concentrated in the hands of leading figures in the regime. And the army is playing an increasing role.

This picture is made more threatening by the fact that the regime seems to be at the end of its rope, incapable of any new and innovative policy, incapable of overcoming the contradictions created by its previous orientation.

The crisis is deep. It is being aggravated today, moreover, by persistent rumors that the president's health is failing. It seems in fact that struggle to determine his successor has already begun. This indicates both why Benigno Aquino decided to go back, although he knew that his life would be in danger, and why he was killed as soon as he set foot on Philippine soil.

#### Power struggle and Aquino's murder

Like any prolonged dictatorship by one family, the Marcos regime has created a political vacuum around itself and has not prepared the way for passing on power. For some years now, cries of alarm about this have been being raised in international business circles, as evidenced by articles in *The Economist* of London and the *Far Eastern Economic Review* of Hong Kong.

Various observers pointed out that unless something was done to assure a constitutional transition, Marcos' Philippines could face the same fate as the shah's Iran or Somoza's Nicaragua.

The U.S. found itself in a dilemma. It could support Marcos to the end and run the risk of going under with him. Or it could change horses in midstream and risk drastically aggravating the crisis.

Under Carter, the U.S. administration essentially maintained its support for the regime, although it formally took some distance from Marcos in the name of "human rights diplomacy."

Under Reagan, these more or less superfi-

cial qualms were abandoned, and full and undisguised support was given to the Marcos regime. But the problem remains, in particular when preparations can no longer be delayed for making the transition to the post-Marcos period.

In response to international pressure (and pressure from domestic sources such as the Catholic hierarchy), Marcos formally lifted martial law in January 1981 throughout most of the country. (An exception was made for the Muslim southern provinces where the Moro National Liberation Front has been waging a long struggle for self-determination that Manila has not been able to decisively defeat.)

A parliament was elected. A new constitution was drawn up. But basically nothing changed. The government continues to rule by decree, and this enables it in fact to do what it likes. The repression has intensified instead of decreasing. The National Assembly has no authority. The elections have no credibility for anyone. The state is still in the hands of the Marcos clan.

#### Factions within the regime

Within the regime itself, no credible successor to Marcos seems to be shaping up, except for the army, and there is deep-seated resistance to that.

One section of the regime — represented by Defense Minister Enrile, his "coconut lobby" colleague Cojuanco, and Foreign Affairs Minister Carlos Romulo — seem at the moment to be in decline.

The "technocrat" faction, represented most prominently by the former finance minister and present premier, Cesar Virata, owes its place in the government to the support of the World Bank. It has no political base of its own in the country.

The third faction includes the "sugar lobby" (that is, Marcos' friend Benedicto); the president's wife, Imelda; and the military chief of staff, Major Fabian Ver.

It represents continuity: the army; one of the businessmen who owes most to his connections in high places; and Imelda, who controls important networks of power and money. (She is the governor of Greater Manila, minister of social institutions, and head of the KKK, a body that covers the rural areas and is an effec-

tive instrument for all sorts of patronage.) But because of her high spending in particular, Imelda is very poorly regarded in international circles.

This third faction seems in the best position today in the race to succeed Marcos. But to support it would mean running the risk of a rapid worsening of political and social tensions.

The church has not been off the mark in stressing this, and in the Philippines it is still a state within a state. It is the only nationally organized body that has been able to hold up against the Marcos regime's steamroller and martial law, except of course for the underground movements.

The archbishop, Cardinal Sin, has long laced his support for the regime with a modest dose of criticism. For some time in his public interviews he has been calling for Marcos' resignation and for the regime to change its course "so as to head off the threat of civil war." And today he is refusing to take part in the commission of inquiry that is supposed to look into Aquino's murder. He fears becoming the hostage of a commission controlled by Marcos' friends.

#### **The bourgeois opposition**

Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino no longer had any coherent political force behind him. His old party, the Liberals, no longer exists. The main bourgeois opposition grouping is UNIDO (United Nationalist Democratic Organization), an alliance of 12 parties whose main leader is Senator Salvador Laurel. It has not yet made any real demonstration of effectiveness.

Nonetheless, Aquino could have had an effect on the power struggle. Aquino had charisma and considerable ambition. He would probably have defeated Marcos in the 1969 elections, if the vote had not been heavily rigged. After the imposition of martial law, he was jailed for seven years (on charges of murder, rape, and subversion) and then condemned to death by a military court before being allowed to leave for the U.S. "for health reasons."

Much younger than Marcos, the murdered senator could have provided a focus for the hopes for a return to democracy as well as political guarantees for Washington. He could have offered an alternative to the various factions within the regime.

This is probably why he was killed before he could really get into the power struggles to determine the post-Marcos government. If he decided to go back to the Philippines when he knew that his life was in danger, if he was able to get out of the U.S. when he had to travel on false papers, he probably had reason to hope that he would get the necessary support when the time came.

The fact is that Aquino's murder removed Washington's best card — perhaps the only one, because he will not be easy to replace — if the factions within the regime prove to be too compromised or unable to keep control of events.

The gigantic demonstrations that accompanied the interment of Aquino's body showed the profound isolation of the regime. The government's servile press did everything possible to lessen the impact of this assassination. Repression was threatened. But nothing could hold back these largely spontaneous demonstrations.

It is still difficult to predict how rapidly struggles may grow. If the president's health takes a turn for the worse, that could precipitate things. The resumption of street demonstrations in mid-September shows that Aquino's murder will not be forgotten. The regime is now in an open crisis. But the opposition formations do not seem prepared to undertake an all-out struggle for power.

UNIDO must have gained an increased sympathy as a result of the murder of a figure with whom it can identify itself. It has launched an appeal for civil disobedience, and its deputies have resigned from the National Assembly. It was in response to the call of the UNIDO leaders that street demonstrations resumed in the Makati business district.

However, UNIDO has neither the national organization, nor the orientation, nor the activist forces on the ground to be able to take full advantage of the powerful upsurge that has developed around Aquino's death.

#### **The fighting opposition**

On the other hand, the CPP, along with the National Democratic Front in which it plays the leading role, and the New People's Army can offer a perspective and a means for organizing to those who are convinced that Aquino's murder offers the final proof that the survival of the mass movement depends on the ability of the revolutionary movement to resist a dictatorship that is capable of anything.

However, the CPP, for the time being, maintains a perspective of gradually building up its social, political, and military power. It does not seem prepared to undertake in the

near future a decisive struggle for power and for overthrowing the regime outright. It is likely that, at least initially, the CPP will take advantage of the new opportunities to build its mass network rather than launch spectacular struggles.

During the recent events, the CPP has kept a "low profile." But the student movement has played a very radical role. And on August 22, the National Democratic Front issued a short statement condemning the murder of Aquino. It noted that it had proposed to the senator that he take refuge in an area held by the New People's Army, and went on to say:

"Senator Aquino became a martyr to the cause of democracy and freedom. . . ." But "his assassination signals the death of all well-meaning but vain efforts to achieve national reconciliation.

"There can be no national reconciliation under a rabidly brutal regime. There can only be people's unity in the fight against the oppression and the injustice perpetrated by this regime.

"Ninoy" had prepared a speech for his arrival in the Philippines in which he advocated national reconciliation, identified himself with Gandhi, and declared that he was for nonviolent struggle. Cardinal Sin did not fail to point this up.

However, for the youth, for trade-union activists, for the social volunteers engaged in the dangerous day-to-day work of defending the exploited, for the sections of the clergy that take to heart the interests of the impoverished masses, for the peasants subjected to repression, for the many who have had a friend or loved one kidnapped, tortured, or shot down by the "forces of order" and the paramilitary groups, Aquino's death probably had a much more concrete message than the speech he was unable to read. It is the lesson that the NDF drew in its communiqué. It is vain to seek reconciliation with such a regime. You have to be prepared to fight it. □

## **Lebanese revolutionist falls in battle**

Afif Obeid, a member of the Revolutionary Communist Group (GCR), the Lebanese section of the Fourth International, was killed in combat in September. He was helping to defend his village, Kabr Chmoun (near Suk al-Gharb), against attacks by the ultrarightist Phalangist militia and the army of the imperialist-backed Gemayel regime.

According to a communiqué by the GCR, Obeid, who was also known as "Fahd," had likewise participated in the earlier stages of the civil war against the Lebanese reactionaries and led the GCR's participation in the resistance to the 1978 Israeli invasion.

"Arrested by the Zionist troops during the second invasion in 1982," the communiqué continued, "he was held several months in the notorious Ansar concentration camp.

"After he was released, comrade 'Fahd' returned to his village, where he took part in the fight against the fascist 'Lebanese Forces,' as well as in activity against the Zionist occupiers.

"With the Israelis looking for him again, he was forced to go underground."

The GCR concluded that Obeid's "devotion and courage can be a source of inspiration for all revolutionists."

# 'Southeast Asia still enjoys no peace'

## UN Speech of Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach

[The following speech was given by Nguyen Co Thach, minister for foreign affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, to the General Assembly of the United Nations on October 7. This English translation of the speech (which was given in French) has been supplied by Vietnam's permanent mission to the UN. We have deleted Thach's opening greetings.]

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Mr. President,

The 38th session of the UN General Assembly takes place at a time when tensions in the world have seriously aggravated. The terrible threat posed by huge nuclear arsenals hovers over the whole of mankind. The arms race has been accelerated to an extent unknown in history, and U.S.-Soviet relations have become very strained.

Hot spots in various parts of the world, especially in Central America and Lebanon, are highly explosive. Military maneuvers and shows of force occur everywhere, particularly in Central America, the Middle East, and the Pacific, along with intervention, threats to "teach a second lesson," and threats of aggression against the independence and sovereignty of nations.

The world economic crisis has become increasingly serious. Trade and monetary wars have fiercely erupted. Foreign debts have escalated to an extent unprecedented in developing countries, leading many of them almost to the point of desperation. The gap between developed and developing countries has been increasingly widened, while all negotiations to settle problems of world economic relations remain deadlocked.

The three aspects of the world situation mentioned above are closely linked and inter-related, causing a very serious, sensitive, and explosive situation. Just one irresponsible act of a state leader can lead the world into a global crisis with unpredictable consequences. This situation, therefore, demands that world leaders show a high sense of responsibility for peace and the security of nations.

Mr. President,

Until the end of last August, mankind had witnessed small progress in U.S.-Soviet relations and placed much hope on the meetings between U.S. and Soviet leaders. Suddenly, the South Korean airline incident took place, causing a serious global crisis, subverting the U.S.-Soviet meetings and confronting the 38th session of the UN General Assembly with a frantic cold-war atmosphere.

It is regrettable that civilians were killed in this incident. These civilians have been used to camouflage a large-scale espionage mission,

and their death has been used for political ends. For people of conscience and sanity, a question arises: Why have the U.S. authorities reacted so quickly with a world-wide frenzied campaign, leading mankind onto the brink of a global crisis?

We may recall that the "Tonkin Gulf incident" of August 1964 was fabricated and used as a pretext for launching aggression against Vietnam. This deceitful act was exposed in the Pentagon Papers made public in 1968. It is, therefore, quite understandable that in the hysterical atmosphere over the KAL incident, the U.S. Congress has passed the biggest military budget ever adopted in peacetime.

True, to cause tension and crisis is the policy pursued by the United States in furtherance of its global strategy. It has concluded that the relaxation of tension in the 1970s was not beneficial to the United States. Since the late 1970s, the U.S. has pursued a policy of causing tension, undermining East-West detente, and escalating the arms race in order to reap the maximum political and economic benefit. It is trying to restore the hysterical anticommunist atmosphere and increase global tension, thus bringing the world back to the cold-war brinkmanship of the 1950s.

In the economic field, the U.S. authorities are making every effort to maintain the existing unfair international economic order. They have opposed North-South global negotiations, wrecked the 6th UNCTAD [United Nations Conference on Trade and Development], and refused to sign the convention on the law of the sea. To the extent the U.S. economy has recovered, it has accomplished this recovery on the backs of all the other countries.

Obviously, the U.S. does not want to embark upon the path of negotiation to eliminate the inequality in international economic relations. It wants only to use its economic superiority to force other countries to accede to the existing international economic order.

In the political and social fields, who is protecting the dictatorial, pro-U.S. regimes in the world and opposing peoples' struggles for the elimination of social injustice, for independence and freedom? Who supports Israel against the Palestinian people? Who backs the apartheid regime against the South African and Namibian peoples, Angola, Mozambique, and other frontline states? Who supports the blood-thirsty junta of Pinochet against the Chilean people? Who supports the blood-thirsty junta of El Salvador against the Salvadoran people? Who is threatening the Republic of Cuba, the Republic of Nicaragua, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya?

The answer to these questions is crystal clear!

The U.S. policy of promoting its own political and economic interests in the world at the expense of other countries will certainly face strong opposition.

But the United States does not want to find a negotiated solution to the political and economic problems in the world on the basis of equality and respect for others' independence and sovereignty. Its basic policy, which found

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### The U.S. Congress has passed the biggest military budget ever adopted in peacetime . . .

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its most vivid expression in the Vietnam War, is "the stick and the carrot," utilizing mainly the stick.

The United States ranks first in terms of gross national product (GNP) in the world. The Soviet Union ranks second, and its GNP accounts for only 60 percent to 70 percent of that of the United States. Given its economic and technological superiority, only the United States can allocate a large portion of its GNP to military expenditures in order to obtain military superiority in the world. Its 1984 military budget is the largest ever in peacetime and in the world. With the much lower GNPs, other countries cannot allocate such a large budget as the United States to the arms race.

The United States has now created the myth of "Soviet military superiority," just as it invented the so-called "missile gap" in the early 1960s to push the American Congress into irrational increases in military expenditures.

It is obvious that the accelerated arms race represents a longstanding U.S. policy, even in the 1950s when the United States had a nuclear monopoly and superiority. That is the reason why talks on the limitation and reduction of strategic weapons and intermediate missiles remain at a standstill. This policy is also at the root of world tension.

Mr. President,

With the existing nuclear arsenals and the accelerated arms race, mankind is now standing at the brink of extermination.

Almost all speeches made during the general debate have highlighted the international community's deepest concern about the imperative need to prevent the nuclear arms race from getting out of control and from reaching the point of no return.

Strengthening their solidarity and determination to defend peace, the socialist countries,

nonaligned countries, peace-loving governments, and the world people as a whole will certainly be able to repel the danger of a nuclear war of extermination. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam fully supports their proposals aimed at putting an end to the arms race, promoting disarmament, preventing a nuclear war, and defending world peace.

While resolutely struggling against a new world war, the people of various countries must also struggle against local wars. The world people have, since the end of World War II, enjoyed the longest-lasting peace of this century. However, in spite of the absence of world war for nearly 40 years, the greatest amount of bombs and ammunition in the 20th century has been used against the Asian, African, and Latin American peoples' struggles for independence and freedom.

The bombs and ammunition used in the Vietnam War alone far exceeded the amount used during the first and second world wars combined, not to mention the weapons used in the aggressive war against Korea, in the Israeli war against the Arab people, and in the racist Pretoria regime's oppression of the South African and Namibian peoples and aggression against the frontline states.

What is particularly dangerous is that the U.S. authorities have used their absolute military superiority to intimidate, threaten, directly intervene in, and invade those countries that have been struggling for independence and freedom, but are militarily many times weaker than the United States.

At the end of the Vietnam War, the United States declared that it would not get involved in a second Vietnam. But in reality, it is embarking on that very path. After the Korean War, it stated that it would not get involved in another war in continental Asia.

However, only ten years later, it embarked upon the Vietnam War, a war in continental Asia more bloody than the Korean War. Ten years after the end of the Vietnam War, the U.S. authorities are now repeating that which led to the Vietnam War.

In the early 1960s, the U.S. administration slanderously accused Vietnam of being a "tool" of the Soviet Union and China, and claimed that the Vietnamese people's struggle for independence and freedom was "communist expansion." The U.S. considered it its duty to defend the "free world."

Today, it also regards the struggle for independence and freedom waged by the peoples of Nicaragua, El Salvador, and other countries in Central America and the Caribbean as "communist expansion" and "East-West rivalry." The U.S. Department of Defense declared that a military victory must be scored, and the line of the free world in Central America be clearly marked out.

It is obvious that the fabrication of "communist aggression" is aimed at distorting the nature of the Central American people's struggle for independence and freedom and at finding pretexts for intervention and aggression.

Unfortunately, this has also been echoed by

the Chinese authorities who claim that the two superpowers are attempting to exercise their rivalry and confrontation through the situation in Central America.

The Vietnam War has been stongly condemned by public opinion in the world and even in the United States. However, attempts are being made in the United States to portray the Vietnam War as a "noble cause." All this aims at inciting chauvinism and pushing American youth to fight a second Vietnam War.

Twenty years ago, the U.S. authorities started by giving military aid to the puppet regime in South Vietnam and sending military advisers to train the puppet army. They sent the Seventh Fleet to patrol and carry out maneuvers along Vietnam's coast. The same thing is now taking place in Central America.

They concocted the "Tonkin Gulf incident" and used it as a pretext to bomb North Vietnam and send air force and missile units to South Vietnam. Then, they argued that the U.S. Marines had to be sent to South Vietnam to protect U.S. air and missile bases. Then came the argument that U.S. Marines had the right to defend themselves if attacked. And then they had the right to attack whoever and whatever they considered potential dangers to them.

That is the logic of military escalation that led the United States to the bloody war in Vietnam. Each of these scenarios is being repeated in Central America and Lebanon.

It is, therefore, necessary to stop the intervention and aggression in Central America, the Middle East, and other parts of the world.

Vietnam fully supports the just struggles of Cuba, Nicaragua, Grenada, Suriname, and of

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### **The U.S. authorities are now repeating that which led to the Vietnam War . . .**

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the peoples of El Salvador, Puerto Rico, and Latin American countries for peace, independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. It welcomes Nicaragua's six-point proposal and the efforts by the Contadora group, aimed at peacefully settling the problems in Central America.

Vietnam fully supports the struggle of the Arab people and the Palestinian people under the leadership of their legitimate representative, the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] against Israeli aggression.

We fully support the struggle of the peoples of South Africa and Namibia led by the ANC [African National Congress] and the SWAPO [South West Africa People's Organisation] respectively and the struggle of Angola, Mozambique, and the other frontline states, against the South African apartheid regime. We fully support the struggle of the people of Western Sahara under the leadership of the Polisario, for their right to self-determination.

We fully support the struggle of the Korean

people for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea and for the peaceful reunification of their country. We strongly support the struggle of the people of Cyprus to recover their territorial sovereignty. We fully support the struggle of the Afghan people for the defense of the fruits of their April Revolution.

Mr. President,

Southeast Asia is the only place on earth which has been torn apart by successive wars in the last 40 years, with the Vietnam War being the bloodiest. At present, it still enjoys no peace and stability. This situation is deeply rooted in history.

For 2,000 years, Chinese administrations have considered Southeast Asia a part of China's traditional sphere of influence, with Vietnam the main object of its conquest.

In the 13th century, Thai people moved southward from southern China, in the process invading most of the Khmer kingdom of the Angkor period and the kingdom of Laos. They set up the present-day kingdom of Thailand. For the last millenium, Thailand has always seen Kampuchea and Laos as its vassal states and has invaded Vietnam three times.

In the last 40 years, Thailand has acted as the principal ally of militarism, colonialism, and imperialism against the three Indochinese countries.

For the same period of time, China had always sought to subjugate the three countries; in so doing it compromised with France and the United States against the independence and sovereignty of the Indochinese countries.

For the last five years, China and Thailand, the traditional expansionists and hegemonists with designs on the Indochinese countries, have colluded with each other and with the United States and Japan, the former aggressors of Indochina, to jointly oppose the Indochinese countries.

The three Indochinese countries are the victims of aggression. As history shows, they have never invaded China or Thailand or any other country. Any problems which may exist between the three countries as a result of historical factors are trivial compared with the historical crimes committed by China and Thailand against them.

The last hundred years in particular indicate that the three peoples, who shared the same fate in being colonized, being victimized by aggression and by Pol Pot, have united together. They have assisted one another in regaining their respective independence and have helped the Kampuchean people save themselves from genocide under Pol Pot.

The Vietnamese volunteer troops have come to Kampuchea on three occasions, fighting alongside the people there against the colonialists, the imperialists, and the genocidal Pol Pot gang — China's henchmen. And they have twice withdrawn from Kampuchea. This time, Vietnam will also withdraw all its volunteer troops once the security of the People's Republic of Kampuchea is assured.

The crux of the Kampuchean issue, as well as of the question of peace and stability in

Southeast Asia, lies in China's use of Pol Pot and in its collusion with Thailand against the Indochinese countries.

In the last Vietnam war of aggression, the GIs led the aggression, followed by the Thai and South Korean troops. The United States was thereby clearly exposed as the aggressor.

Now, however, China hides its face, staying behind the scenes. It uses Pol Pot and pits the ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] nations, with Thailand as the front-runner, against the three countries. It is an open secret that Pol Pot is the henchman bred and nurtured by China. China is, at present, the main obstacle to a peaceful solution in Southeast Asia.

To cover up its expansionism and hegemonism in Southeast Asia, China fabricated the so-called "expansionism" of the Soviet Union and Vietnam in the region. After Vietnam and Kampuchea undertook two yearly, partial withdrawals of Vietnamese volunteer troops from Kampuchea, the Peking authorities again spread the allegation that Vietnam is sending "massive numbers of settlers" into this country in an attempt to "Vietnamize" Kampuchea.

Everyone knows that the number of Vietnamese residents in Kampuchea after the two massacres by Lon Nol and by Pol Pot was reduced to one-tenth of those who had previously lived in Kampuchea, an even smaller number than the number of the Hua Chiao (people of Chinese origin) presently in that country.

It is also known that there are over 20 million Hua Chiao in Southeast Asia. These people control most of the economies of these countries, and there exists a country where the Hua Chiao make up the overwhelming majority of the population. So the Chinese threat not only comes from mainland China but from within the Southeast Asian countries as well!

Any solution at all must lead to the termination of the state of affairs in which the Indochinese countries, for the last 40 years, have always been the victims of aggression and intervention.

It must be replaced by the assurance of a long-lasting peace, by respect for the independence and sovereignty of the countries in Southeast Asia, and by an end to outside interference in their affairs. A solution that favors only one side will neither settle anything nor bring about peace and stability in the region. Such a solution is unacceptable.

The three Indochinese countries are of the view that:

a) The total withdrawal of the Vietnamese volunteer troops from Kampuchea will be carried out concurrently with the total elimination of the threat from China and their use of Pol Pot to try to impede the recovery of the Kampuchean people and the end of the use of Thai territory against the Indochinese countries; it also goes along with the disarming of the Pol Potists and the punishment of the genocidal Pol Pot criminals. The People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Socialist Republic of Viet-

nam have decided on yearly, partial withdrawals and will effect a total withdrawal once the peace and security of Kampuchea is assured.

b) The Indochinese countries and China must sign a treaty of nonaggression and noninterference in each other's affairs. The two groups of the Indochinese and ASEAN countries will agree on establishing a zone of peace and stability in Southeast Asia, based on ASEAN's ZOPFAN [Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality] proposal and that of the Indochinese countries.

c) All countries must respect the sovereignty of the Kampuchean people and their right to determine their own affairs.

d) All sides should discuss international guarantees to assure the implementation of the agreements they will have reached.

ASEAN's position demands that Vietnam unilaterally withdraw all its volunteer troops from Kampuchea, while China, Thailand, and Pol Pot are free to act. This means that the Pol Pot gang, recognized by the UN as the legal government, would come back to take control of Kampuchea and reimpose on the Kampuchean people the yoke of genocide. And Pol Pot would continue to serve as China's instrument in carrying out its hegemonist policy against the Indochinese countries.

For the past 40 years in Southeast Asia, Thailand has allied itself with various foreign countries, and its territory has been used by those countries as a staging base for their aggression and intervention against the Indochinese countries. The Indochinese countries in general, and Kampuchea in particular, have fallen victim to this aggression and intervention for the last 40 years.

The ASEAN countries demand that Kampuchea be "neutralized," while Thailand and some other ASEAN countries are still used in the service of aggression and intervention against the Indochinese countries. It obviously

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### **Vietnam will withdraw its volunteer troops once the security of Kampuchea is assured . . .**

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is aimed at tying the victim's hands while encouraging the aggressor. Such a demand is again unacceptable.

From 1945 to 1975, foreign countries unleashed 30 years of war against the struggle of the Indochinese countries for independence and freedom. But they were doomed to failure. In the last five years, China, in collusion with the United States and Thailand, has forced the ASEAN countries into a policy of confrontation, bringing pressure in all military, economic, and diplomatic fields to bear on the Indochinese countries in an attempt to impose a solution beneficial only to China, the United States, and the other ASEAN countries.

This policy has jeopardized peace and stability in Southeast Asia. It has further sharp-

ened the memory of their crimes against the Indochinese peoples throughout their history as well as in the last 40 years. Again this policy has failed.

It is now high time to end the confrontation and to negotiate a peaceful settlement of all the differences on the basis of equality and mutual respect. The Indochinese countries are pleased to note the gradual steps toward a dialogue between the ASEAN and Indochinese countries and the desire by both sides to end the confrontation and to enter into negotiations.

Regrettably only China rejects all the proposals to carry out negotiations to put an end to the conflict between China and Vietnam. It also rejects the proposals for signing treaties of nonaggression and noninterference between the three Indochinese countries and China. China has invaded Vietnam; it now continues to threaten to "teach Vietnam a second lesson." This is an expression of China's hegemonism!

In our time, all countries, big or small, are equal — there are neither "master" and "pupil" countries nor "father" and "son" countries. Such concepts are only the wild dream of former Chinese emperors!

China claims that the so-called "Kampuchea issue" is a matter between Vietnam and ASEAN. If this is so, why does it oppose their engaging in dialogue? If this is so, why does it consider the Kampuchea issue the main obstacle to Sino-Soviet relations and demand to discuss the issue with the Soviet Union, instead of leaving it for the ASEAN and Indochinese countries to decide?

In 1954, China bargained with France in order to end the Indochina war on the backs of the three countries. In 1971–1972 it bargained with the U.S. to try to resolve the Vietnam War on the backs of the three countries. Now it continues to pursue its hegemonist policy, demanding to negotiate the Kampuchea issue again on the backs of these countries. The Soviet Union, however, has categorically rejected this.

At present, there are two different approaches toward the Southeast Asia question, including the Kampuchea issue, which are reflected in the resolutions of the United Nations and of the Nonaligned Movement summit conferences.

For the last four years, the United Nations has adopted some erroneous resolutions on the representation of Pol Pot at the United Nations and on the Kampuchea issue. These resolutions have recognized the genocidal clique, have supported the erroneous position of only one side, and have opposed the rebirth of the Kampuchean people and the interests of the Indochinese countries, as well as of peace and stability in Southeast Asia. They are, therefore, not implementable. If the United Nations continues to adhere to these erroneous resolutions, it will get itself deeper into the present impasse over the Kampuchea issue.

China, as a founding member of the United Nations and also a permanent member of the Security Council, has loudly demanded the im-



plementation of these United Nations resolutions on Kampuchea. One may recall that in 1950, when China sent one million Chinese volunteer troops into Korea to help the people against U.S. aggression, the United States abused the UN majority to pass Resolutions #498(V) on February 1, 1951, and #500(V) on May 18, 1951, which condemned "China's aggression in Korea," demanded that China withdraw all its armed forces, and called on other countries to impose an embargo on China. At that time, one may further recall, Vietnam and other socialist countries, together with all the peace-loving countries, supported China in rejecting these resolutions.

And now, after China has used Pol Pot to launch a war of aggression against Vietnam from the southwest and even engaged 600,000 Chinese troops in a war of aggression against Vietnam from the north, it has conspired with

## The UN has recognized the genocidal Pol Pot gang . . .

the United States to abuse the United Nations to pass erroneous resolutions on the presence of the Vietnamese volunteer troops engaged in helping the people of Kampuchea, exactly the same way as the U.S. did against China at the United Nations. We hope that China, as a big nation, will not adopt such a wanton attitude toward an international organization such as the United Nations.

Most of the ASEAN countries played a direct or indirect role in the U.S. aggression against Vietnam; now they have joined China and the United States in demanding that Vietnam execute these erroneous resolutions on Kampuchea.

Yet they have supported Indonesia's occupation and annexation of East Timor and supported its defiance of the Security Council resolutions #384 on December 22, 1975, and #389 on April 22, 1976, and other relevant resolutions on the question of East Timor adopted by the General Assembly since 1975. They have supported Indonesia's rejection of the resolutions passed by the summit and foreign ministers conferences of the Nonaligned Movement.

In the last four years, while the United Nations maintained its erroneous resolutions on the Kampuchea issue, the sixth summit conference in Havana (1979), the seventh summit conference in New Delhi (1983), and the foreign ministers conferences of the Nonaligned Movement since 1981 have adopted correct resolutions on the question of Kampuchea's representation and on the Southeast Asia question, including the Kampuchea issue.

These conferences have, since 1979, decided to leave Kampuchea's seat vacant and endorsed a resolution on a comprehensive solution to the Southeast Asia question, including the Kampuchea issue. These resolutions were unanimously adopted. The ASEAN and the In-

dochinese groups have both welcomed and accepted them.

We are faced with the reality that, on the one hand, the UN resolutions support only one side while opposing the other and, on the other hand, the Nonaligned Movement resolutions are accepted by both sides in Southeast Asia. It is our view that the only way to expedite the negotiations between the two groups of Southeast Asian countries is to base the negotiations on the principles of equality and mutual respect and on the Nonaligned Movement resolutions.

The international community, particularly all peace-loving nations including the Asian, African, and Latin American countries which have just rid themselves of the colonial yoke, have pinned their hopes on the United Nations in the search for "peace, stability, and justice." But as the secretary-general, His Excellency Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar remarked in his annual report, "1983 has, so far, been a frustrating year . . . for those who believe that the United Nations is the best available instrumentality to achieve these ends."

The remark by the secretary-general is not only true with regard to the role the United Nations played in Southeast Asia in 1983, but also to the entire history of this region in the last 38 years. The reality of these years points to the UN's incompetence in face of the successive and bloody wars of aggression against the three Indochinese countries, even though a great number of its members had voiced their condemnation against those wars.

From 1945 until now, the UN majority has been silent in the face of the thunder of millions of tons of bombs and shells used by the aggressors against the three Indochinese peoples. The aggressors, instead of being punished, retain their seats as permanent members of the Security Council, while the victims are kept out of the United Nations, without its protection. It must be said that four permanent members of the Security Council have committed aggression against the Indochinese countries.

The Soviet Union is the only permanent member of the Security Council that has, together with other peace-loving countries, supported our struggle for independence.

In the last five years, China has abused a majority of the United Nations to oppose the Indochinese countries. Instead of upholding the banner of safeguarding human rights, the UN has recognized the genocidal Pol Pot gang, which ought to have been brought to trial and duly punished by a Nuremberg-type international tribunal.

Vietnam, as a UN member, sincerely hopes that peace and stability in Southeast Asia will be established with the active participation of the United Nations. We do not want to see that peace and stability will be restored in Southeast Asia without its participation or regardless of the opposition by a UN majority.

We are not opposed to the United Nations. But the main problem is that it continues to recognize the illegal Pol Potists and oppose the

right to life of more than half the Khmer population who survived the genocide and that most of its humanitarian aid is given to the genocidal gang, which enables them to undermine the re-birth of the Kampuchean people. That explains why, so far, all solutions to the Kampuchea issue within the UN framework have had to be based on a premise of legality for the criminal Pol Pot group.

If the United Nations continues its present policy, then the question of peace and stability in Southeast Asia will be settled outside the UN framework. This will surely create an unfortunate precedent for the United Nations. The first and second Indochinese wars were settled outside of the UN framework. The Indochinese countries, however, highly appreciate the role and the contribution of the UN secretary-general to promote an understanding among countries in the region.

Mr. President,

Since the Russian Revolution, the world has witnessed the emergence of countries with different social systems and hundreds of independent countries breaking out of the colonial system. This is the evolution of history. A number of state leaders have thus far raised their voices regarding the freedom and pluralism of their societies, but they at the same time cannot accept the pluralism and the freedom of other countries in the world. They want their old international order to be inviolable and they resort to force to defend it.

Hot wars, like the Second World War and the Vietnam War, and cold wars, like those in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1980s, cannot stop the evolution of history. The gunboat policy of the few last centuries is completely outmoded nowadays, and it only results in failure.

There is only one way — peaceful coexistence among countries with different social systems, respect for the right of all peoples to self-determination, and peaceful settlement of all differences on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

This is true with regard to all the problems in the world, true for all regions, and true for Southeast Asia as well!

Thank you, Mr. President.

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# Sun setting on British colony

## *Chinese firm on return of sovereignty*

By Will Reissner

Until World War II, it was literally true that the sun never set on the far-flung British empire. Britain's colonial holdings spanned the globe, encompassing Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, and the Pacific.

Since then, British imperialism has been driven out of most of its colonies and the empire has shrunk to a pale shadow of its former self.

But London tenaciously clings to its remaining colonies — Northern Ireland, the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands, Gibraltar, Bermuda, Hong Kong, and several other small territories around the world.

British rule is under challenge in these places as well. Argentina demands the return of the Malvinas. Spain wants Gibraltar back. The Irish people have never accepted the British partition of their homeland.

And the Chinese people and government have long favored the return to their sovereignty of that part of Chinese territory that is still held by the British imperialists — Hong Kong.

Taking advantage of the fact that the British lease on most of the colony runs out in 1997, the Chinese authorities have stepped up their calls for Hong Kong's return to China by that date, a demand that is in the interests of workers and oppressed peoples around the world.

### Most populous colony

Hong Kong is the most populous of Britain's remaining colonies, with more than 5 million residents, 98 percent of whom are Chinese. It has been ruled by Britain since 1842.

In September 1982 Chinese and British officials began meeting to discuss the terms of a resumption of Chinese rule. The Chinese government has stated that when it regains Hong Kong, the former colony will have self-rule as a Special Administrative Region.

But it became clear in the second round of talks, which began in July 1983, that the British hope to retain effective control over the colony after the lease expires. London proposed a plan under which Chinese sovereignty would be formally acknowledged but the British would continue to administer the colony. In effect, only the flag would change.

The British also demanded that any change in the colony's status must be acceptable to the British Parliament. The British authorities maintain that the treaties yielding Hong Kong, which were forced upon China in the mid-19th century, remain "valid according to international law." (See box.)

London also claims that the British govern-

ment is the valid representative of Hong Kong's population in any negotiations and that Hong Kong's prosperity can only be maintained if British administration continues past 1997.

Hu Yaobang, general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee, explained China's position to journalists on August 15. The present negotiations, Hu stated, can have only one aim: to establish mechanisms insuring a smooth transition to restored Chinese rule between now and 1997.

### Unequal treaties

The British arguments ring hollow. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, imperialist powers imposed unequal treaties on colonial and semicolonial countries throughout the world. On the basis of a 1901 treaty, the United States still maintains a naval base in Cuba against the wishes of the Cuban people. A 1903 treaty gave Washington perpetual control over the Panama Canal Zone.

The British retained control over the Suez Canal after Egypt gained full independence in 1922.

The degree to which colonial enclaves can be maintained depends not on international law, but on the relationship of forces between the colonized and colonizers.

Egypt was able to nationalize the Suez Canal in 1956, and the subsequent British-French-Israeli invasion could not permanently restore imperialist control over the canal.

Through negotiations, India secured the return of five French enclaves on its territory by 1954. But India had to march its army into Goa and other Portuguese colonies in 1961 to take them back.

London's claim that it represents the interests of Hong Kong's population in the negotiations is ludicrous.

### 'Not ready' for elections?

Hong Kong is directly ruled as a colony from London. The people of Hong Kong have no decision-making powers. The British governor's appointed Executive Council makes all important decisions. Yet a government-sponsored survey in January 1982 found that half of Hong Kong's adults did not even know the council exists.

## A prize from the Opium Wars

British rule over Hong Kong dates back to the 1842 Treaty of Nanking, which ended the first of the infamous Opium Wars that Britain fought to force China's Qing dynasty to open the country to British opium exports.

British traders began exporting the narcotic to China in large quantities as a way of overcoming the big Chinese surpluses in trade between the two countries.

The amount of opium the British shipped into China rose steadily throughout the early 19th century. China's rulers, concerned with the pernicious social effects of the British opium trade, repeatedly banned imports of the substance, only to see English traders defy the bans.

In March 1839, Chinese officials seized and destroyed 20,000 chests of opium in Canton. The British retaliated militarily. Warships arrived in Hong Kong to force China to reopen its borders to opium traffic. And in May 1841 British troops attacked Canton. They seized Shanghai and other cities the following year.

In August 1842 the Chinese rulers were forced to sign the Treaty of Nanking, turn-

ing over control of Hong Kong to the British and opening five other cities to British traders. The Chinese also had to pay an indemnity of \$21 million.

Additional territory was added to the colony of Hong Kong after the Second Opium War, waged by the British and French against China beginning in 1856. After British troops occupied Peking, London forced the Chinese government to sign the Convention of Peking in 1860, which surrendered the southern part of the Kowloon peninsula to Britain.

Another piece of territory was added to the colony in 1898, following the Chinese defeat in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894. China was forced to grant the imperialist powers numerous concessions. The British used the opportunity to force the Chinese to sign a Sino-British Convention for the Extension of Hong Kong, yielding new areas to the British. These areas, known as the New Territories, were taken by the British on a 99-year lease, which expires on June 30, 1997.

The present British government argues that all these treaties remain valid today.

That is not surprising. Under its rules, the Executive Council conducts all its business behind closed doors. Its minutes are sealed from the public for 30 years, and members are sworn to secrecy. One member of the council told the *Far Eastern Economic Review* why this system was necessary. "Hongkong is not ready for free elections," he stated.

The claim that Hong Kong's prosperity depends on continued British administration is also false and self-serving.

As the only safe deep-sea anchorage between Shanghai and Southeast Asia, Hong Kong is a natural transshipment center for trade throughout southern China and the western Pacific.

It owes much of its economic vitality to the fact that it functions as one of China's key ports, and has been the main gateway for trade with China for the capitalist countries.

Furthermore, as the September 26 *Beijing Review* pointed out, Hong Kong's prosperity is

also due "to the hard work, talents and assiduous efforts of all the [Hong Kong] residents, over 90 percent of whom are Chinese."

Writing in the September 26 *Beijing Review*, Jin Fu pointedly asked: "if British rule had such a magical effect, why [do] so many other British-administered areas in Asia, Africa, and Latin America which were under British rule for decades or even hundreds of years remain in poverty and backwardness without much change even to this day?" □

## DOCUMENTS

# For Hong Kong's democratic self-rule

## Position of 'October Review'

[The following appeared as an editorial in the October issue of the Chinese Trotskyist monthly *October Review*, published in Hong Kong. The English translation, which we have slightly edited, has been provided by *October Review*.]

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At the invitation of the China National Students Union, the Hong Kong Federation of Students sent a delegation to Peking, Shanghai, and Guangzhou from July 9 to 23. On its return to Hong Kong, the delegation issued a press communiqué that revealed "China's policies concerning Hong Kong's future," as explained to the delegation by "the authorities concerned with handling Hong Kong affairs."

According to the communiqué, "the authorities concerned stressed that ... these policies were not the promise of one or two persons, nor the decision of low-level officials or institutions, but were the basic national policies."

Before reacting to the policies of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) revealed by the communiqué, it is necessary to express appreciation of the efforts of the delegation of the Hong Kong Federation of Students.

There have been quite a number of people from upper or middle strata who, having been invited to China, reflected the CCP policies; but their accounts were vague and imprecise and limited to concern for the interests of the propertied people. The students, on the other hand, based themselves on concern for the country, putting questions to the Chinese authorities and afterwards publishing the results of the visit.

In this way, the public can come to a better understanding of the CCP's policies on Hong Kong's future, and in particular of the CCP's orientation on questions related to the improvement of Hong Kong citizens' conditions (such as elections, lifestyle, and social reforms).

According to the communiqué, the authorities concerned elaborated two aspects of



the CCP's policies: on the question of sovereignty during its talks with the British and on the relationship between China and Hong Kong after the recovery of sovereignty.

On the first question, the communiqué said, "The authorities concerned revealed that the recovery of sovereignty over Hong Kong means the resumption of rule in Hong Kong; sovereignty and rule are inseparable. ... Entrusted rule or joint rule are impossible." The delegation also learned that "the 'appropriate time' for recovering sovereignty refers to the year 1997."

According to newspaper reports, Hu Yaobang recently said to the director of Japan's *Mainichi Shimbun* newspaper, "Concerning the so-called Three Agreements on Hong Kong,\* we consider them unjust. But the agreements are a fact, and it was explicitly stated in the agreement that the expiry date is June 30, 1997. Therefore, we do not intend to advance or postpone the date. We will take

\*Agreements between the Chinese and British governments in 1842, 1860, and 1898 that ceded control of the present territory of Hong Kong to the British.

Hong Kong back on July 1, 1997. For China, it is our attitude of respecting history." (From an August 15 dispatch from Peking, published in the August 16 *Hong Kong Wen Hui Bao*.)

So, the people at last learn when the CCP intends to recover sovereignty, and are informed that the CCP will not concede the rule of Hong Kong to foreigners via "entrusted rule" or "joint rule."

However, the Chinese government must respect the people's power before it can announce to the world: China's recovery of sovereignty over Hong Kong is for the whole nation to resume rule over its former territories, while the people of Hong Kong have the right to self-rule.

It is only when sovereignty is placed with the people that sovereignty and rule are not separated and there is genuine self-rule. Only then can the Chinese government obtain the support of the people of China and Hong Kong, and the oppressed all over the world, in its struggle with the imperialists to recover sovereignty and gain victory.

But, precisely because the CCP deprives the people of all their rights to manage and rule the country and monopolizes all power, and because of its failed policies, the people have come to equate the CCP's recovery of sovereignty over Hong Kong as the extension of the CCP's dictatorial rule to Hong Kong.

### Wait-and-see attitude

Thus, today when Britain is unable to continue its forced occupation of Hong Kong, the majority of the people in China and Hong Kong still adopt a wait-and-see attitude. Only a minority of intellectuals, youth, and toilers and the revolutionary Marxists stand up against colonial rule. And the bourgeoisie, in alliance with the colonialists, can talk about "maintaining the status quo" and strive to extend colonial rule.

In demanding sovereignty back from the British, the CCP's position is very shaky. Although it claims that it does not recognize the agreements, it in fact recognizes the New Ter-

ritories Agreement. Hu's speech stated this clearly. The CCP's position on recovering sovereignty has been based on the expiry of the New Territories Agreement, under the name of respecting an historical fact — the bullying of China by the British imperialists.

With such a position, it is very likely that the CCP will make concessions to the British at the negotiating table, so that the latter will be able to preserve the interests it has gained "historically," except that rule over Hong Kong will be handed over to the CCP.

Such a very probable compromise, unfavorable to China, can only be achieved through secret negotiations. The Chinese people, especially the Hong Kong residents, *must oppose the secret talks!* Secret talks mean that the two parties are using the interests of the people as bargaining counters for their under-the-table deals. Today, when the people of Hong Kong are deprived of even the most fundamental right to know, how can they become masters to rule Hong Kong?

#### 'Special administrative zone'

Concerning the future relationship of Hong Kong and its residents with China (more precisely with the CCP), the communiqué revealed that "when China recovers sovereignty . . . it will, according to Article 31 of the constitution, designate Hong Kong as a special administrative zone" to "practice high-level local self-rule."

There are 10 points related to the so-called local self-rule. (See the reprint of the communiqué in the July 29 *Wen Hui Bao*.) In summary, they are: the ultimate right to rule will be controlled by the CCP, but the capitalist system will be maintained, the economic interests of the colonialists will not be violated, and the colonialists may be integrated in the structure of a "Hong Kong ruled by the people of Hong Kong."

In other words, the CCP is asking the masses of Hong Kong, in the *initial* period of the recovery of sovereignty, to change from subordination to colonial rule to subordination to the joint rule of the CCP and the bourgeoisie (including the colonialists), without any change in their oppressed state.

But this does not exclude the possibility of direct rule of Hong Kong by the CCP *in the future*. (The authorities concerned spoke of their "highly principled position" and "great flexibility," which implied that the CCP may deploy its armies to Hong Kong when necessary to place Hong Kong under its direct control.)

Although the CCP promised "nonintervention in Hong Kong's internal affairs, which will all be decided and managed by the Hong Kong people" and stressed that this was China's basic national policy, the people of Hong Kong do not have confidence, since they know about the CCP's previous vacillations and broken promises.

In order that the people of Hong Kong can have confidence in the CCP, the following conditions are necessary:

1. When the people of mainland China demand democratic reforms and when the na-

tional minorities demand self-determination, the CCP will *in action* express its sincerity in handing power to the workers and peasants and allowing the minorities self-determination; first there must be a release of all political prisoners, freedom of speech, and freedom for the workers and peasants to organize political organizations and parties, that is, the practice of socialist democracy.

2. The CCP, as the biggest political party in China at present, must at once encourage and assist people from the lower strata in Hong Kong to organize and act in order to grasp Hong Kong's rule in the hands of the laboring masses. At the same time, it should dissociate itself from the bourgeoisie. Only then can the broad laboring masses gain confidence and "high-level local self-rule" be realized.

But reality tells us that the CCP cannot do this. Its intensified repression against the democratic movement in China shows that it is not sincere about democratic reforms.

As for the urgent democratic reforms that Hong Kong now needs — people's participation in politics, formulation of laws, and the legal system, as well as social reforms — the CCP shifts the responsibility to the people of Hong Kong.

At the same time, the CCP maintains that "except for those that are contrary to sovereignty, Hong Kong can continue to have its present laws." That will mean the bourgeoisie and the colonialists can continue to use their financial power to control legislation, jurisdiction, and administration, and that there will be no change in the oppression and exploitation of the laboring masses, even after the recovery of sovereignty, unless they have their own strength to fight for changes.

Hong Kong's self-rule can be realized only when the masses themselves create the conditions for it. The laboring masses must mobilize and organize, while also helping in the rise of the laboring masses in China, so that the two can join hands and advance on the road to people's self-rule.

The urgency and correctness of that road is becoming ever clearer. In fact, all who favor China's unification but reject bureaucratic privileges propose democratic reforms in the mainland, Hong Kong, and Taiwan at the same time. The nation's true integration can be realized only through the people's struggle for self-rule. Such ideas have found expression in the political documents of some student organizations and political bodies.

The majority of Hong Kong's laboring masses prefer to remain silent on Hong Kong's future: they find colonial rule repugnant but are unwilling to live under bureaucratic rule; yet they lack the confidence to fight for self-rule and do not feel any support from the mass movement in China.

#### Social struggles

At the same time, however, they are in fact striving for improvements in their living conditions and political status, as reflected in the expanding and intensifying workers struggles,

struggles of neighborhood organizations, opposition to increases in prices and fares, and efforts to gain more participation in politics.

Further mobilizations to unite the scattered forces and a clear direction for their struggles are necessary to raise the social movement to the level of a general fight for self-rule.

Progressive elements have a duty to define their own political position, as well as to link democratic reforms with the urgent needs of the broad masses. Through the struggle to improve their living conditions, the masses' consciousness and confidence can be heightened. This means that progressive elements must stand on the side of the masses to push ahead the national and democratic movement *from below*.

Since both the CCP and the British government in Hong Kong are obliged to claim the representation of the people's will and both maintain a stance of "respecting" the people's will, the people of Hong Kong can and should exploit these verbal promises in order to concretize their rights.

Applied to the question of a "special administrative zone," this means:

1. As students organizations have pointed out, reform of the present situation is the precondition of China's recovery of sovereignty. Otherwise, sovereignty and rule can only go to those who maintain the unjust status quo. The Chinese government must encourage the Hong Kong people to participate in politics and support changes in the present conditions.

The progressive masses of Hong Kong are now fighting for democratic reforms that include:

- Abolition of all laws and ordinances that violate human and civil rights, and the elaboration of laws and ordinances to guarantee these rights.

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In a word, the masses are now fighting for the right to rule, and are not simply waiting for the recovery of sovereignty.

2. At present, the Hong Kong government and the bourgeoisie are intensifying their transgressions against the people of Hong Kong through their system of private property. Faced with the government's attempt to appropriate public wealth, it is necessary to demand that all movable and fixed assets under the name of the Hong Kong government should belong to the public, the reserve fund should be transferred back to Hong Kong, and public utilities should be forbidden to become private.

Faced with the attempts of the foreign corporations to control the people's livelihood through their monopoly positions in major economic sectors, it is at least necessary to demand that all public utilities be operated publicly.

3. The vague statement that "all internal affairs of Hong Kong should be decided and managed by the people of Hong Kong" must be made concrete: the "democratic rule of Hong Kong by the people of Hong Kong." It should be concretized through the democratic establishment of a fully empowered congress of deputies and a government that is under the supervision of the citizens. This means:

- A general mobilization of the people to participate in politics through general elections and the outlining of the people's rights to participate in decision-making, supervision, and the recall of government officials.

- Establishment of channels for the people to put forward all kinds of ideas through exercising full freedoms of speech, publication, assembly, organization of political parties, etc.

- Curtailment of the coercive actions of the police organs, limiting them to dealing with real criminals; the people's day-to-day order is to be maintained by self-discipline and self-management, mainly by neighborhood organizations.

- All proposals concerning legislation, jurisdiction, administration, and social security will first be democratically discussed by the people and ultimately decided by a fully empowered people's congress of deputies, emerging from a general election. Officials of the highest administrative organs may also be appointed by the congress.

#### Democratic reforms in China

4. At the same time that Hong Kong's return to China is strived for, democratic reforms

must be conducted in China. The Chinese in Hong Kong want a democratically elected, fully empowered congress of deputies of workers, peasants, and soldiers in China. They are willing to have the Hong Kong people's congress subordinated to the national people's congress. But they are very reluctant to have it subordinated to an "assembly" or government that tramples on the people's rights, is manipulated by the bureaucracy, and is in opposition to the people. If there is no democratic reform in China, the people of Hong Kong have the right to decide when and how Hong Kong will return to China.

Those who equate the party with the country may charge that the above position is "separatist." But, as some political organizations in Hong Kong have pointed out, identification with a country or nation is not tantamount to identification with a regime. There may be democratic reforms in China before the recovery of sovereignty (that is, before 1997, the date set by the CCP). If so, there is no worry about "separation." In fact, the CCP's present scheme allows the bourgeoisie to have the right to separate from China's economic system.

According to the communiqué, the CCP said that "the rightists, the Trotskyists, and all religious personalities" can run in elections and that "the Kuomintang, the Trotskyists, and anyone with a particular political background

will not have their activities restricted if they do not engage in sabotage."

The reason the CCP said this is, on the one hand, due to its need to recruit adversaries and, on the other, a reflection of the pressure of the masses. (Concerning the Trotskyists, the CCP has to admit they are a force because they have for many years maintained their position and have had a certain influence among the masses.)

This should give the masses some confidence, but they should not have any illusions, since there are still innumerable dissidents in jail in China. The people's democratic rights can be guaranteed only through the people's efforts.

It is necessary to understand that the CCP's tactic is to rope in the top layers in Hong Kong by promising to protect their substantial interests. Toward the intellectuals, youths, and broad laboring masses, it knows only how to use "nationalism" to get them to accept the new rule.

To counter these CCP tactics, it is necessary to set up a united front of all oppressed forces — all people's groups and all parties and organizations — to stand under the common banner of "democratic rule of Hong Kong by the people of Hong Kong." There must be joint action for this common goal, and other differences among these forces should not hinder this alliance. □

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(signed)  
Sandra M. Sherman  
Business Manager

# Afghanistan's dead end

## Position of Socialist Party of Sweden

[The following editorial, under the above headline, appeared in the August 4 *Internationalen* (The International), a weekly published by the Socialist Party, Swedish section of the Fourth International. The August 18 issue of *Internationalen* reported that the SP's Central Committee adopted the line of this editorial by a big majority in August. The translation of the editorial is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

"The leftists who are against the invasion can scarcely hint at their political affiliation without risk of getting their throats cut."

These words come from the newspaper *Gnistan* [The Spark] which recently (July 14) published a unique interview with a representative of a pro-Chinese guerrilla organization in Afghanistan, Sazman-e Rehayee. In contrast to the six profoundly reactionary Afghan exile parties in Pakistan, Sazman-e Rehayee holds socialist views.

In the interview, the spokesman captures the tremendous dilemma in the Afghan developments:

"The only possibility for us is to show what we are for in practice. Until then we must hide that we are communists."

The April 1978 revolution in Afghanistan brought to power the pro-Moscow Communist Party — the PDPA [People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan] — which began carrying through a radical reform program. However, under an orthodox Muslim cloak, sheer terrorist activity was soon opened against the regime's literacy drive, medical teams, those responsible for the land reform, and so on.

The reactionary groups — economically and politically supported by imperialism — became, by means of their armed attacks, an ever-increasing problem for the fragile PDPA regime, whose base was primarily located in the towns. Under the pressure from the resistance, the torn ruling party, in cutting off opposition, was compelled to trust more and more in sheer armed might to maintain its position.

The Soviet troops marched in at Christmas time in 1979 because the Kremlin feared the regime's imminent collapse which would have drastically strengthened imperialism's position.

Recently, a leading Soviet representative disclosed in an interview in *Dagens Nyheter* that the Kremlin had feared an American invasion of Iran. The perspective of imperialist positions being reestablished in Iran, together with the emergence of a proimperialist regime in Afghanistan — where even before the April

revolution the Soviets faced a friendly government — triggered the Soviet entry.

Certainly the entry marked a setback for imperialism. The counterrevolutionary guerrilla groups were thrown back for a while. Imperialism's position could not be strengthened.

But the respite was not utilized to further the April revolution's progressive program of social advances, national rights for the country's different peoples, and so on.

Today we are convinced that:

- *The reform efforts have been interrupted.* Not only owing to acts of war, but also to the regime's attempts to conclude alliances with conservative groups in a "national front."

- *There is an embracing of terror warfare against civilians in the countryside.* Instead of winning the poor people in the countryside away from the right-wing groups, they use the guerrilla presence as a pretext for mass bombings of cities, destruction of crops, and other reprisals against civilians.

- *The resistance against the regime and the Soviet troops has widened.* It is not only the six reactionary Muslim exile movements in Pakistan that are fighting. On the contrary, many accounts report that the influence of these groups among the resistance inside Afghanistan is limited. National minorities, local townspeople, and tribes are organizing the struggle themselves. Expressed socialist strength within the resistance is evident to a small extent, yet clear. The way forward for the Afghan workers and peasants lies neither in continued Soviet occupation nor with the counterrevolutionary, rightist groups in Pakistan.

- A perspective of incorporating Afghani-

stan into the Soviet Union in order to produce, in this fashion, economic and social progress would be inconceivable and catastrophic. Such a development would — as shown in the Baltic states — mean institutionalizing national oppression that sooner or later must explode in revolt. On such a basis no society fit for human beings can be built.

- To support the "national liberation struggle" of the rightist groups and imperialism would likewise be catastrophic. Their aim is not freedom for workers and the rural people, but reintroduction of a medieval-type society fettered to imperialism.

The future lies instead with that opposition that unites the national minorities and the rural people who are driven to resistance against the war of terror. Against the Stalinist tyranny as well as the rightist groups.

*Internationalen* wrote in June 1981:

"The PDPA leadership, or what remains of it is not carrying the Afghan revolution further. The goals from the April revolution are being taken up by other forces among urban workers, farming people, and the national minorities.

"In the struggle to carry through these necessary reforms, they are compelled to struggle against both imperialist-armed reactionary terrorist groups and against the present Stalinist regime's security forces and the Soviet troops."

Two years have gone by since then. Today the task is clearer. The Soviet troops no longer are primarily fighting the rightist groups, but the masses of the countryside. They must, therefore, be immediately withdrawn from Afghanistan!

Not a finger of support can be given thereby to the reactionary terrorist groups in Peshawar [in Pakistan]. Imperialism's support for them must be *exposed and combated*.

The Soviet weapons today are not pointed primarily against imperialism's threats in the region. They are aimed against every possibility of progress for Afghanistan's working people in the city and the countryside. □

## Danish dock workers leader freed

The attempted frame-up of Danish dock workers leader Karl Jørgensen fell apart in the first day of his trial, September 7, and Jørgensen was released the same day.

Jørgensen, who had been a leader of a nationwide six-week dock strike at the beginning of the year, was charged with the burning of a warehouse at Esbjerg harbor toward the end of the strike. He had been imprisoned since May, facing a possible life sentence.

Both of the government's witnesses against him recanted their earlier testimony in the opening day of the trial, explaining that police had pressured them into lying to implicate Jørgensen. One witness explained he had been given a copy of the other's perjured testimony to insure that their lies at a pretrial hearing

would match. The judge dismissed the case even before the government witnesses were cross-examined.

The case was an important focus of working-class opposition to the government because the dockers' strike that it arose from had been the first major struggle against the austerity program of the newly elected right-wing government of Poul Schlüter. The strike had been fiercely repressed.

The campaign to defend Jørgensen was also seen as an answer to antiunion legislation introduced by the government allowing for "preventive detention" of people suspected of being "likely to promote violence." Thousands of Danish workers had signed petitions demanding Jørgensen's release. □

# Mobilize against U.S. missiles and NATO

[The following declaration was issued by the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on September 12.]

\* \* \*

When the leaders of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) took the decision in September 1979 to build new missile bases and to deploy the new 572 American missiles in Europe at the end of 1983, they did not expect such a massive response by the peoples and workers all over Europe.

But last autumn, there were more than three million of us demonstrating against cruise, Pershing, and NATO. There will be still more of us out this year to force a retreat on Reagan-the-warmonger and the capitalist governments that have agreed to his crazy demands.

## No to NATO! No to War Budgets!

Ronald Reagan and his NATO allies were the instigators of the arms race now threatening the whole of humanity. They are the chief warmongers.

They are perpetrating their criminal acts in Africa and the Middle East, in Chad and Lebanon. In Central America in particular, American imperialism is supporting the dictatorships ensconced there, is preparing for war against Nicaragua, and is already giving direct aid to the Somocista mercenaries. It has no qualms about drowning in blood peoples that are fighting for their freedom.

The imperialists can cynically contemplate transforming the European continent into a battlefield and are prepared to cause tens of millions of deaths.

They think that one of the ways out of the capitalist crisis is gigantic arms spending. The fundamental aim of this is to maintain the domination of the bourgeoisie.

They are following a policy of militarization that is inextricably linked to the austerity policies being imposed by all the capitalist governments in Western Europe.

While there is still time we have to act to stay the hands of these murderers!

Workers must struggle first of all in each imperialist country to disarm their own bourgeoisie.

Reagan can do nothing without the agreement of the governments concerned. The primary objective of the demonstrations this autumn must be to force them to refuse to deploy the NATO missiles. They must be presented with a choice: to abide by the unambiguously expressed wish of the people or resign.

Not one single new American missile must be deployed. Not a single new NATO base must be built, and those that already exist must be dismantled. This is the simple and forceful

message of the astounding mass antiwar movement that has developed in capitalist Europe.

## Solidarity with the peace movements in Eastern Europe

For their part, the first demonstrations of the independent peace movement in Eastern Europe, in the USSR, in Czechoslovakia, in Hungary, and above all in the German Democratic Republic, constitute an opposition to the military policy of the bureaucracy, which denies every elementary democratic right to the masses and particularly "the right to work for peace in an independent fashion."

In addition, the Soviet bureaucracy has not hesitated to respond to the deployment of American missiles by the threat to deploy new missiles in Eastern Europe, in contempt of the sovereignty of the people. This policy can only cut down the mobilization of the antiwar movement in the West.

This is why we stand in full solidarity with those in Eastern Europe who are struggling against the arms race and its murderous implication. They reject a militarization policy which weighs more and more heavily on the economy of the Soviet Union and the other member states of the Warsaw Pact. They reject a militarization policy that is contributing to the deterioration of the conditions of existence for the peoples living under the yoke of bureaucratic dictatorship.

By demanding the right to organize independently, by demanding the right to know and give an opinion about decisions regarding armament and military spending, the independent peace movements in Eastern Europe are challenging the bureaucratic order.

The growth of mobilizations in these countries will stimulate the whole of the antiwar movement in the capitalist countries and at the same time strengthen the struggle against the imperialists — the chief warmongers.

## All together in the autumn mobilizations

The American imperialists have every interest in giving the impression that they are negotiating. In this way, they can better conceal their aggressions and their huge war effort. At the same time, they can retain, through secret diplomacy, at the least cost, a decisive military superiority that enables them to threaten the peoples fighting for their liberation.

The antiwar movement can have confidence in neither the capitalist government nor the Kremlin bureaucrats. Both sides negotiate in secret and on the backs of the masses.

The united action of young people and workers does more for peace than interminable

negotiations behind closed doors around a baize-covered table.

Only powerful demonstrations independent of the state, in the East and West, based on the active strength of the workers movement, can put an end to the inexorable course of the arms race and nuclear terror.

The demonstrations this autumn, a few weeks before the first scheduled deployments of U.S. missiles in Europe, will be crucial. So, no possibility can be neglected to build these actions and assure their success, since they will weigh heavily in the balance when the capitalist governments have to take stock.

The Fourth International and its sections in Europe will lend all their forces to this struggle against militarization and capitalist austerity, for peace and socialism.

From Comiso in Sicily to Greenham Common in Great Britain, no to the deployment of cruise and Pershing missiles!

Out with the NATO bases! Dismantle the American forward bases in Europe! Down with the dictatorship that makes Turkey a fortress maintained by imperialism in the region!

No to the French and British nuclear strike forces, which are part and parcel of the imperialists' military array!

For a nuclear-free Europe, from Poland to Portugal, from Sicily to Scandinavia!

For a massive reduction in military budgets, complete nationalization and reconversion of the arms industry — jobs not bombs!

Support the democratic rights of soldiers conscripted into the bourgeois armies; support the workers who are victims of special laws on employment and trade-unionization in the armament industry!

End imperialist intervention in Central America!

United Secretariat  
of the Fourth International  
September 12, 1983

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# Workers' anger erupts

## Massive strike against austerity budget

By Will Reissner

A September 9 wildcat strike by a handful of locomotive drivers in the town of Charleroi triggered a mass walkout by most of Belgium's 900,000 public-sector workers, which lasted nearly two weeks. It was one of the most massive movements yet seen in Western Europe against the employers' austerity drives.

Rail, bus, and tramway workers were the first to join the walkout, leaving their jobs on September 13. This brought much of the country to a grinding halt. The following day, teachers, firefighters, garbage collectors, air controllers, and civil servants in the capital and the provinces also walked off their jobs.

Workers in sections of a steel mill in Liège went out, and the port of Antwerp, the country's busiest, was shut down.

As the strike paralyzed transportation, a number of large factories, including the Volkswagen plant in Brussels and the General Motors factory in Antwerp, had to close or curtail operations for lack of parts and raw materials.

### Government austerity plan

The strike by public-sector workers was an expression of their anger against Prime Minister Wilfried Martens' new austerity budget. That budget cuts wages and benefits of state employees by \$175 million.

The budget also eliminates automatic 3 percent wage increases paid every two years and cuts vacation allowances by 12 percent. New employees will have a 20 percent shorter workweek, with a correspondingly lower pay packet.

The austerity plan also makes cuts in social security and in pensions for early retirees. Early retirement has been encouraged as a way of easing unemployment, which is nearing 15 percent of the workforce, the highest figure in northern Europe.

Even before the latest austerity measures, public workers in Belgium were paid far less than their counterparts in neighboring countries. For example, they earn 40 percent less than public-sector workers in the Netherlands and 50 percent less than those in West Germany.

### Major unions join in

A significant feature of the strike wave was the involvement of all the major union federations. For the first time since Martens took office two years ago, unions that are linked to the right-wing Liberal Party and to the Social Christian Party, both of which are in the government coalition, participated in a strike alongside unions allied with the Socialist Party.

The participation of the Social Christian trade union federation was crucial to the spread

of the strike from the traditionally more militant French-speaking region of Belgium to the Flemish areas, where working-class combativity has been lower and the Catholic union federation is dominant.

The anger of Belgian workers can be gauged by the way the strike began. Several locomotive engineers in one train station in Charleroi began discussing a pamphlet their union had issued on the contents of the government's austerity plan.

According to a report in *La Gauche*, the French language fortnightly newspaper of the Revolutionary Workers League (LRT), the Belgian section of the Fourth International, the train drivers then decided among themselves to go out. "Within five minutes they got the support of the switch operators," and "within half an hour, a whole series of station and yard personnel followed," *La Gauche* reported.

Then they contacted an official of the Socialist Party-dominated Belgian General Confederation of Labor, telling him: "We're fed up. We read the information you put out. We're stopping work."

Although the initial walkout was totally spontaneous and unorganized, the train drivers were able to draw all the country's public-sector workers and important sections in private industry behind them.

This walk-out was the latest in a series of mass struggles against the successive austerity plans introduced by Belgian governments in recent years.

In February and March 1982 the country was rocked by a general strike and mass demonstrations against government austerity policies.

In May and June of this year, a seven-week general strike of municipal workers took place in Liège, one of the main cities in the French-speaking part of the country. The Liège workers were forced back to work without gaining their demands.

### Union bureaucrats give in

In the middle of the second week of the September walkout, the union leaders began negotiations with the government, which made a proposal containing some minor concessions.

The opening of these discussions cleared the way for the more conservative unions, especially the one linked to the Liberal Party, to pull back.

After that union withdrew from the strike, the Social Christian union federation rescinded its strike call on September 21, and the momentum of the strike rapidly waned.

With the other federations now out of the strike, the Socialist union federation voted on September 23 to end its participation, and the train workers returned to work the following day.

Though this latest round in the Belgian workers' fight against austerity failed to win any real gains, it did underline their growing anger and combativity. The ranks of the unions are making their voices heard. □



Strikers block customs post on border with West Germany.