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Kissinger Report: Prescription for Wider U.S. War in Central America



**Kampuchea Five Years
After Fall of Pol Pot**

**Sinn Féin Charts Course
for a Reunified Ireland**

U.S. SWP Launches Presidential Campaign

End sanctions on Poland

By Ernest Harsch

The Reagan administration, on January 19, announced the lifting of two of the U.S. sanctions that have been in effect against Poland since December 1981. Now, Polish vessels will again be allowed to fish in U.S. waters, and some charter flights will be able to land in the United States.

But in the very same announcement, Reagan's press representative, Larry Speakes, stressed that the more stringent U.S. sanctions against Poland would remain in effect. These include a freeze on trade credits and the denial of "most-favored-nation" trading status to Poland.

The maintenance of these sanctions is an outrage to working people, within Poland and around the world.

Although the Reagan administration claims that it supports the outlawed Polish union movement, Solidarity, these continued restrictions on Poland fly directly in the face of Solidarity Chairman Lech Walesa's call for an end to all sanctions against his country.

While welcoming Washington's lifting of the two sanctions, Walesa declared in a telephone interview with the Reuters news agency, "I was in favor of lifting all the sanctions against Poland, of financial assistance and things like that."

When the Polish authorities declared martial law in December 1981 and moved to crush the Solidarity union with massive repression, the Reagan administration and other imperialist governments seized on these events as a political cover for new blows against the workers and farmers of the world. They imposed severe sanctions against Poland's already weak economy. They stepped up their deployment of new nuclear missiles in Western Europe, missiles aimed against the working people of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. They launched new military interventions in Central America, the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East, and elsewhere. They escalated the anti-communist propaganda campaigns directed against working people within the imperialist countries themselves.

To justify such attacks, Reagan hypocritically claimed to be acting in defense of "democracy" and in the interests of the Polish workers. To bolster this lie, he seized on the fact that some exiled Solidarity leaders had urged or supported the imposition of sanctions against Poland as a way to protest the imposition of martial law.

Reagan was also given valuable political cover from the anticommunist officialdom of the AFL-CIO union federation, which hailed the sanctions and other reactionary attacks against Poland. These bureaucrats eagerly joined in the campaign to inflict as much damage as possible against Poland and other work-

ers states, while at the same time seeking to portray the union-busting, imperialist government in Washington as a champion of world peace, democracy, and workers rights. If anything, the AFL-CIO tops complained that the Reagan administration was not going far enough in its attacks against Poland.

The imposition of U.S. sanctions in no way aided the just struggle of the Polish workers for democratic rights and against bureaucratic mismanagement and abuses. In fact, they harmed Solidarity's fight by weakening the Polish workers state, a tremendous conquest of the Polish toilers that was won in the late 1940s. The Polish workers' struggle is to advance the socialist revolution in Poland — through the elimination of bureaucratic misrule and the establishment of a government of workers and farmers — not to undermine it.

But the imposition of sanctions did just that. The restrictions on trade and credit, as well as Washington's freeze on the rescheduling of Poland's large debt to the imperialist governments, cut Poland off from much-needed financial assistance and trading opportunities. Production in a number of Polish industries dropped even further. Important economic projects had to be abandoned or drastically scaled back. Because of the cut-off of U.S.

credits for grain purchases, poultry production plunged by 74 percent after the imposition of sanctions.

All this translated into lower living standards for Poland's workers and farmers.

Initially, Solidarity's leaders failed to clearly repudiate the imposition of imperialist sanctions and the accompanying anticommunist propaganda. This served to deepen the confusion among Polish workers over how best to advance their struggle and who their real allies and enemies are.

Walesa's explicit call for a lifting of all sanctions against Poland is thus a welcome one.

At a December 5 news conference in Gdansk he declared that the sanctions were causing serious damage to the country's economy. "Sanctions should be ended because what Poland needs at the moment is not losses of millions of dollars but aid of billions of dollars."

A day later, in a telephone conversation with an exiled Solidarity figure, Walesa stressed that the standard of living in Poland had fallen by 30 percent over the two years that sanctions have been in effect.

In his statement sent to the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in Oslo December 11, Walesa declared, "My country is in a state of severe economic danger. This is causing tragic consequences for the livelihood of Polish families. . . . Poland needs and deserves assistance." □

U.S. targets Grenada's unions

By Fred Murphy

Three months after the U.S. invasion of Grenada, the Reagan administration has yet to complete the destruction of the gains made by the island's working people during the four and a half years of the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) led by murdered Prime Minister Maurice Bishop.

Among Washington's key aims are the dismantling of the state-owned farms and enterprises the PRG set up to provide jobs for thousands of Grenadians, the crushing or neutralization of the trade unions that workers were able to organize under the PRG, and the consolidation of a stable, proimperialist regime.

A recent report by a U.S. investigating team shows how "economic aid" from Washington is to be used to further these aims. The report, entitled "Prospects for Growth in Grenada: The Role of the Private Sector," was drawn up by a delegation composed largely of personnel from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The report's recommendations center on enhancing the profit-making possibilities for U.S. and other capitalists on the island. It proposes revising Grenada's investment and tax codes to favor private business; developing a

new labor code; selling off state-owned enterprises to private owners; and eliminating the government's role in the marketing of imports.

All these steps involve reversing gains made by the Grenadian people under the workers and farmers government headed by Bishop. The PRG had replaced the antilabor legislation of Eric Gairy's U.S.-backed dictatorship with laws designed to facilitate union organization. Union membership leaped from 30 percent of the work force to 90 percent under the PRG. Bishop's government took the lead in fostering economic development by launching agricultural projects and businesses like the Agro-Industry plant. Thousands of jobs were created, bringing unemployment down from 50 percent to 12 percent.

Since the U.S. invasion, most of these jobs have been eliminated. The Agro-Industry plant has been shut down, and construction on the Point Salines airport project has been halted.

On January 13, the first delegation of private U.S. capitalists to visit the island since the invasion returned to Miami and announced plans to purchase the government-owned Grenada Bank of Commerce for \$2.5 million. They said other such U.S. investments in Grenada would follow. The U.S. invasion, a

member of the delegation said, had "removed one area of instability that was keeping many businessmen from venturing forth" into the eastern Caribbean.

A central proposal in the report by USAID and other officials is the need to "restructure" the Grenadian labor movement. This task is to be assigned to the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), a joint operation of the U.S. AFL-CIO labor bureaucracy, the Central Intelligence Agency, and U.S. corporations with investments abroad. The AIFLD's main function since its creation in 1960 has been to subvert militant unions in Latin America and the Caribbean or to create divisive rivals to them. In Grenada, its agents bolstered conservative union officials under the Gairy regime and helped them to blunt a developing labor upsurge in early 1974. After Gairy's overthrow, AIFLD spread slanders against the PRG and sought to block efforts by the New Jewel Movement (NJM, the Marxist party led by Bishop) to spur revolutionary consciousness among the more privileged sections of the working class. An AIFLD representative in the United States recently made known that some of the discredited officials who held union posts under Gairy would now be returning to Grenada.

The former dictator himself announced in mid-January that he would soon return to the island from exile in the United States. Claiming to represent the "last elected government," Gairy told the *New York Times* he expected to be escorted from the airport by some of the 300 U.S. occupation troops still in Grenada. He described the invasion as "the answer to a lot of prayers" and said U.S. troops should remain on the island indefinitely.

The U.S. invasion of Grenada was aimed at making sure the workers and peasants did not have a chance to restore a revolutionary government after the overthrow of the PRG and the killing of Bishop by a secret gang of state functionaries and military officers headed by ex-Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard. Washington has succeeded in this regard, but Bishop's legacy continues to haunt the occupiers.

"Bishop was the masses; the masses was him," a waitress in a small rural restaurant told a *New York Times* correspondent in early January.

The regime put in place by the U.S. occupiers, on the other hand, has little respect among the population and is seen as a mere facade for U.S. rule. Nicholas Braithwaite, who heads the "advisory council" appointed by Governor General Sir Paul Scoon after the invasion, had to begin his Christmas Day radio address with the words, "Many of you do not know me; many of you have never heard my voice."

Meanwhile, revolutionary cadres of the New Jewel Movement remain in the country and are viewed warily by the occupiers and the regime. "We have their names, and some of them have recently been released from detention," Braithwaite told the *New York Times* in

late December. "The record of these people convinces one that we cannot ignore the possibility of subversive action."

In order to blunt opposition to continued occupation and the attacks on the unions that are being planned, Washington and its Grenadian quislings hope to parlay popular hatred of Bernard Coard and his followers into opposition to the accomplishments of the PRG, Bishop, and the NJM. Coard and his supporters have been held in prison without charges since the invasion. Because most Grenadians justifiably despise them for their role in overthrowing the PRG, there has been no protest on the island over their detention and inhuman treatment.

But the majority of Grenadians do view the PRG's achievements as a big step forward. They want to preserve the gains working people made under the NJM's leadership. They want the airport completed. They want to maintain the adult education program. They

want to continue making use of their right to organize unions and fight for better wages and working conditions.

They also want jobs. Rising unemployment and other problems stemming from the invasion are causing stepped-up discontent on the island, something even the *New York Times* has had to admit. On January 9 the *Times* carried an article based on interviews with young unemployed workers on the St. George's waterfront. "They call it a rescue mission," a 19-year-old said, referring to the U.S. invasion, "but they haven't rescued me yet."

Another youth, 23 years old, told the *Times*: "If there's no work after a while, you know what will develop. If there's no work, you'll see another revolution."

Quelling this unrest and preventing the emergence of a leadership that can organize and mobilize it is the problem still facing U.S. imperialism in Grenada. □

—IN THIS ISSUE—

Closing news date: Jan. 22, 1984

CENTRAL AMERICA	36	Kissinger report paves way for wider U.S. war —by Steve Wattenmaker
KAMPUCHEA	38	Five years since ouster of Pol Pot —by Will Reissner
IRAN	42	Attack on Tudeh Party mounts — by Cindy Jaquith
U.S.A.	43	SWP fields presidential ticket —by Steve Wattenmaker
IRELAND	46	Sinn Féin charts course — by Will Reissner
CUBA	50	Economy registers new gains — by Ernest Harsch
	51	How average Cuban lives — by José M. Norriella
GRENADA	54	The revolution's betrayal and overthrow —by Steve Clark
TUNISIA	64	Mass revolt ends price hikes — by Ernest Harsch
SELECTIONS FROM THE LEFT	53	
DOCUMENTS	62	Nationalize U.S. Steel!

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Report paves way for wider U.S. war

Kissinger commission purveys lie about 'Cuban-Soviet threat'

By Steve Wattenmaker

The Kissinger commission report on Central America, released January 11, has added another prop to Washington's preparations for direct military intervention against the revolutions in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

The commission of six Democrats and six Republicans — appointed last July by President Reagan and headed by former secretary of state Henry Kissinger — provided new cover for Washington's plans to use whatever force is necessary to try to check the socialist revolutions unfolding in the hemisphere today.

The Kissinger report endorsed the administration's policy on all key questions:

- Nicaragua, it said, is being used as a base for "Soviet and Cuban efforts to penetrate the rest of Central America." This involvement of "aggressive external forces" poses a challenge to the security of the United States.

- Congress, therefore, should authorize a boost in military aid to the Salvadoran regime to \$400 million for the rest of 1984 and 1985 — a sixfold increase over the \$65 million previously appropriated for 1984.

- The CIA should continue funding the Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries trying to overthrow the Sandinista government. The report calls the bloody *contra* attacks "one of the incentives working in favor of a negotiated settlement."

- Yet the report advises Washington to reject the unconditional negotiations proposed by El Salvador's Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and sidesteps peace proposals offered by the Nicaraguan government.

'Blue ribbon' panel

President Reagan formed the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, as it was officially called, ostensibly to recommend a broad framework for U.S. policy in the region. The commission's real task, however, was to give Washington's already-existing policy toward Central America a veneer of bipartisan respectability. The White House used similar "blue ribbon" panels in early 1983 to help blunt criticism of unpopular proposals to slash social security funding and push development of the MX missile program.

The makeup of the commission was carefully considered to include a number of Democratic Party liberals. Among them were Robert Strauss, former chairman of the Democratic Party during the Carter administration, and Henry Cisneros, the mayor of San Antonio, Texas.

A particularly important member of the panel was Lane Kirkland, president of the

AFL-CIO labor federation. Kirkland's presence in the group, the White House hoped, would make it easier to sell the reality of U.S. military intervention to millions of working people who are opposed to a new Vietnam in Central America.

A national opinion poll released January 19 illustrated the administration's continuing problems in trying to gain a measure of public support for its Central America policy.

By 76 percent to 17 percent, a majority of those interviewed said they were opposed to the Kissinger commission proposal to increase military aid to the Salvadoran regime. A similar majority also opposed increasing aid to the other U.S.-supported dictatorships in Central America. And 60 percent to 24 percent condemned CIA aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*.

That general sentiment is beginning to be reflected in differences within the leadership of the U.S. labor movement itself. While Kirkland praised the commission's findings, Jack Sheinkman, head of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, said the report "recommends more of the same policy, which will not work."

The invasion of Grenada clearly demonstrated that Washington will directly intervene with military force regardless of U.S. public opinion. But the Kissinger report and similar White House propaganda efforts are nonetheless viewed as important ways of undermining the antiwar sentiment of U.S. working people, in order to minimize the political price Washington will inevitably pay for sending troops to El Salvador or invading Nicaragua.

'Soviet-Cuban threat'

The heart of the report was an echo of the administration's position that more military aid is needed to counter a Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan threat to U.S. national security.

While social and economic grievances may have given rise to the rebellions in Central America, the document said, without "support from Cuba, Nicaragua, and the Soviet Union, neither in El Salvador nor elsewhere in Central America would such an insurgency pose so severe a threat to the government."

"The Soviet-Cuban thrust to make Central America part of their geostrategic challenge is what has turned the struggle in Central America into a security and political problem for the United States and the hemisphere," the report claimed.

And, the report said, not only is U.S. national security threatened in the Central American-Caribbean region, but Washington's "credibility worldwide is engaged. The triumph of hostile forces in what the Soviets

call the 'strategic rear' of the United States would be read as a sign of U.S. impotence."

"The use of Nicaragua as a base for Soviet and Cuban efforts to penetrate the rest of the Central American isthmus, with El Salvador as the target of first opportunity, gives the conflict there a major strategic dimension," the report concluded.

Big lie technique

The fact that the entire 132-page report failed to present a shred of evidence to back up these assertions even caught the attention of conservative Democratic Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. He complained to the *New York Times* January 12 that the commission had taken a "doctrinal position" on supposed Cuban-Soviet involvement in the region rather than presenting any facts.

There is, however, a simple explanation why the commission did not offer any proof — there is none. There are no Cuban or Soviet bases in Nicaragua, and President Reagan has never been able to support his claim that the Nicaraguans supply the Salvadoran rebels with arms.

From beginning to end, the Kissinger commission report used the classic "big lie" technique of portraying the criminal as the victim. For the last century, continuing up to today, the "external force" that has "penetrated" and plundered Central America has been U.S. imperialism.

While there are no Soviet or Cuban combat troops in Central America, there are 5,000 U.S. soldiers — backed up by a naval task force — conducting "maneuvers" in Honduras. In addition, the Pentagon has a permanent force of 10,000 troops stationed in the Panama Canal Zone, military "advisers" in El Salvador, and CIA personnel providing logistical support for the *contras* on the Nicaraguan border.

And, if any doubt remains who is the aggressive "external force" in the region, Washington settled that question by sending thousands of U.S. Marines to invade and occupy Grenada last October.

The Kissinger report also intentionally falsified the long history of U.S. imperialism's intervention in Central America. The document brushed aside the repeated U.S. military forays earlier in the century as efforts by Washington to restore "stability" to Nicaragua and other countries in the area.

President Theodore Roosevelt, the commission said, defined U.S. policy toward Central America in the early 1900s as a desire "to see all neighboring countries stable, orderly and prosperous." Roosevelt, in fact, was one of

U.S. imperialism's most notorious jingoists and early proponents of sending the U.S. Marines any time U.S. economic interests were threatened in the hemisphere.

Exploitation, not cooperation

The history of Washington's relationship with Central America has been fundamentally a "history of cooperation," according to the commission. Especially since 1961, U.S. policy has concentrated on encouraging "a wide array of social, political, tax and land reforms." And the growth of direct private investment by U.S. firms "has contributed substantially to the region's growth."

In fact, decades of U.S. domination of Central America have not produced reform, peace, democracy, or prosperity. The real history is not one of cooperation, but one of exploitation.

U.S. corporate investment in Central America has grown dramatically over the past half century. It has benefited Wall Street and a tiny layer of rich capitalists, landlords, and military rulers in the region while greatly strengthening Washington's overall domination. For the workers and poor farmers of Central America, U.S. dominance has brought intolerable poverty, tyranny, national humiliation, and backwardness.

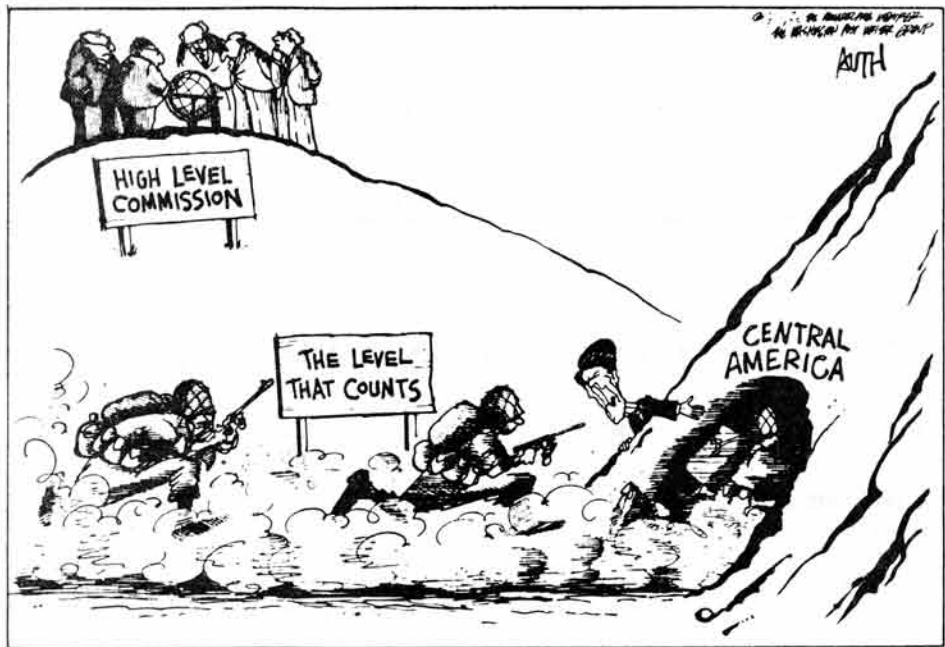
For example, in his book *The World Economic and Social Crisis*, Cuban leader Fidel Castro points out that for every dollar U.S. corporations invested in Third World countries between 1970 and 1979, they repatriated \$4.25 to the United States. And to guarantee a compliant urban and rural workforce for U.S. corporate ventures in Central America, Washington actively discouraged literacy, improvements in health care, trade union rights, and other social reforms.

The Kissinger commission report was forced to admit that while U.S. investment ran high, "not nearly enough was done to close the gap between the rich and the poor, the product of longstanding economic, social, and political structures."

Claiming to address these inequities, the commission recommended a multi-billion dollar program of economic aid to the region. The plan would consist of increasing levels of direct economic assistance, liberalizing U.S. trade and credit arrangements with Central American nations, and promoting improvements in education, health, and land distribution.

Past experience has shown that even in the unlikely event Congress authorized such a large "humanitarian" expenditure, the funds would end up enriching the capitalists, landlords, and oligarchs of Central America. Moreover, millions of dollars earmarked for civilian assistance would be diverted to military use — as it is in El Salvador today.

The enormous wealth of the United States should, of course, be used to help improve the lives of workers and small farmers throughout Latin America. But that is not the intention of the Kissinger report; its goal is solely to rein-



force imperialist control in the region and mask Washington's military aggression.

Revolutions advance

The Kissinger commission report also turned the big lie technique against the revolutionaries in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

The rebels of the FMLN, the report asserted, have been unable to win over the Salvadoran people to the revolution. "Although their absolute numbers have not increased over the last three years, and although they have not attracted the wide popular support they hoped for," the insurgents have shown a capacity for military maneuver, the report conceded.

"They maintain sporadic control over areas in the eastern provinces" through attempts to "intimidate and coerce local populations with shootings, abductions, and other strong-arm tactics."

Once again the commission intentionally turned the facts on their heads. It is the desperate Salvadoran regime that relies on "strong-arm tactics" to survive. The Salvadoran revolutionary struggle is strong and growing stronger because it *does* have the support of the masses in El Salvador. That support is based on the experience of seeing the FMLN fighting for the basic interests of El Salvador's workers and peasants against a tiny handful of wealthy oligarchs and their U.S. backers.

In the zones where the rebels have been able to exert control, popular measures like land reform, higher wages, literacy classes, and health brigades are organized in the midst of war-time conditions.

For example, FMLN forces operating near Jucuapa in Usulután province distributed leaflets to peasants harvesting coffee demanding that the absentee landowners pay higher wages, according to the December 13 *Miami Herald*. "Workers of the field," the leaflet read, "if these demands are not respected, you

should seek out one of the revolutionary combatants. They will come to your farm to make sure there is justice!"

On the other hand, the Salvadoran government, which could not survive without massive U.S. military aid, is increasingly isolated. Its death squads murder thousands, it has blocked any meaningful land reform, it has stepped up its repression of urban workers, and its economy is in collapse.

The Nicaraguan revolution, the commission said, has been "captured by self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninists" who have betrayed the promise of democracy and, through establishing "close ties with Cuba and the Soviet Union," have added a "menacing new dimension" to U.S. national security.

But even the Kissinger commission, while lying about the Nicaraguan government's commitment to democracy — national elections have been announced for next year — is forced to admit grudgingly that "Nicaragua's Government has made significant gains against illiteracy and disease."

The workers and farmers government in Managua, in fact, has organized to virtually wipe out illiteracy and has made sweeping progress not only in health, but in every area of social welfare. Along with Cuba, it serves as a glowing example to other oppressed peoples of Central America who are held in enforced underdevelopment by Washington's economic domination. That is the real reason why the commission concluded that the Sandinistas "will pose a continuing threat to stability in the region."

Cuba and Nicaragua demonstrate that real economic and social progress is possible. The accomplishments of these revolutions go unmentioned in the commission's report — and for good reason. The workers and farmers in those two small nations succeeded in breaking the power of the imperialists and their local

agents. They established revolutionary governments that have begun to overcome their historic domination by Washington by taking steps toward the construction of socialism.

Cuba, in just 25 years, has brought an end to unemployment, outlawed discrimination

against Blacks and women, and eliminated homelessness, widespread disease, and illiteracy. And, contrary to the Kissinger commission's assertion that "poverty is on the rise everywhere in Latin America," Cuba's planned economy has experienced steady growth. (See

article on page 50.)

That is what Washington really means by a "Cuban-Soviet threat" — the example of socialist revolution that has inspired workers and poor farmers around the world since the 1917 Russian revolution. □

Kampuchea

Five years since ouster of Pol Pot

Washington keeps up pressure against Indochinese revolutions

By Will Reissner

The celebration of the fifth anniversary of the People's Republic of Kampuchea on January 7 marked an important milestone for the workers and peasants of that country in recovering from their terrible ordeal during the 1970s.

The 1970s in Kampuchea (formerly Cambodia) was one of the most trying decades endured by any people in world history. Between 1970 and 1973, the country was pounded by U.S. warplanes. With the end of a five-year civil war in April 1975, the Kampuchean people came under the rule of a murderous government headed by Pol Pot, which lasted until January 1979, when it was overthrown by Kampuchean insurgents and Vietnamese troops.

Overthrow of Prince Sihanouk

Kampuchea's agony began soon after the U.S.-sponsored overthrow of Prince Norodom Sihanouk's government in March 1970. Sihanouk's landlord-capitalist regime had steered clear of direct collusion with Washington's war efforts in neighboring South Vietnam, and Sihanouk tolerated the presence of forces of Vietnam's National Liberation Front (NLF) in Kampuchea's eastern border provinces.

The new, U.S.-installed regime headed by Gen. Lon Nol reversed this policy. Lon Nol invited Washington and the Thieu regime in South Vietnam to send in troops to wipe out NLF base camps and hospitals.

U.S. troops launched an invasion of Kampuchea in May 1970. Although massive protests in the United States forced the withdrawal of ground troops the following month, the Nixon administration stepped up the war from the air. Between 1970 and 1973, U.S. warplanes dropped more than 400,000 tons of bombs on Kampuchea, systematically destroying communications, transport, and irrigation systems, and killing hundreds of thousands of draft animals and livestock.

The actions of the Lon Nol regime put wind in the sails of a guerrilla movement that had begun in 1967 under the leadership of Pol Pot.

Although Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge* guerrillas had only about 4,000 fighters when Sihanouk was overthrown, this force grew rapidly after 1970. Sihanouk threw his support behind the Khmer Rouge, and the Vietnamese NLF began providing arms and training.

By 1975 the Khmer Rouge had built an army, overwhelmingly peasant in composition, of 50,000 or more fighters and controlled most of the countryside.

Despite massive U.S. military aid and support, the Lon Nol regime was overthrown in April 1975. But Lon Nol's repression and the U.S. bombing had taken a terrible toll: about 600,000 of the approximately 7 million Kampuchean were killed. A similar number were wounded in the fighting. Millions of refugees had fled to the cities seeking escape from U.S. bombing. The population of the capital, Phnom Penh, had swollen from 600,000 to nearly 3 million.

Most city-dwellers eked out a meager existence on the proceeds of U.S. food aid programs. When it became apparent to Washington that Lon Nol's days were numbered, the U.S. government cut off rice shipments. Several thousand people starved to death in the final months of the war.

Joy turns to horror

When the first contingents of Khmer Rouge fighters entered Phnom Penh, they were enthusiastically greeted by workers, students, refugees from the countryside, and rank-and-file Lon Nol troops. The population celebrated an end to the half-decade of warfare and hoped that a new era of social justice and independence from imperialist domination had opened.

An Associated Press dispatch on April 18, 1975, reported that "three hours after the surrender [of Lon Nol's government], thousands of students paraded along the main boulevards, waving banners to greet the Communist forces. Communist troops reportedly em-

*Red Khmer. Khmer is the name of the majority nationality and language group in Kampuchea. Although Prince Sihanouk originated the term to refer to his opponents, Pol Pot's forces soon adopted it as their own.

braced Government soldiers and lifted them aboard personnel carriers for a victory parade along the waterfront."

Patrice de Beer, writing in the Paris daily *Le Monde*, reported "the popular enthusiasm is evident. Groups form around the insurgents, who often carry American weapons. They are young, happy, surprised by their easy success. . . . Processions form in the streets and the refugees are starting to go home."

But the middle class leaders of the Khmer Rouge, having come to power on the crest of a revolutionary peasant upsurge in the countryside, were deeply hostile to the urban population.

Within hours, joy turned to horror in Phnom Penh. When the main units of the Khmer Rouge entered the city, they forced, at gunpoint, all inhabitants to leave immediately.

New York Times reporter Sydney H. Schanberg, who was in Phnom Penh when the Khmer Rouge entered, described the scene.

"Using loudspeakers, or simply shouting and brandishing weapons, they swept through the streets, ordering people out of their houses. At first we thought the order applied only to the rich in villas, but we quickly saw that it was for everyone as the streets became clogged with a sorrowful exodus."

"In Phnom Penh two million people suddenly moved out of the city en masse in stunned silence — walking, bicycling, pushing cars that had run out of fuel, covering the roads like a human carpet, bent under sacks of belongings hastily thrown together when the heavily armed peasant soldiers came and told them to leave immediately. . . .

"Hospitals jammed with wounded were emptied, right down to the last patient. They went — limping, crawling, on crutches, carried on relatives' backs, wheeled on their hospital beds."

Within hours the capital city was a ghost town. Similar scenes took place in other major cities.

Workers and other urban residents were not the only ones subjected to such brutal treatment. Poor peasants, too, were forcibly relocated to agricultural labor camps throughout the country.

But by making the former city-dwellers into

a pariah layer, called the "new people," the Khmer Rouge were able to further weaken and divide any resistance to their rule.

Not building socialism

The regime established by Pol Pot used the vocabulary of socialism, but the reality was far different. A government cannot begin building socialism unless it implements policies that benefit the workers and peasants and mobilizes them to carry out democratic, anti-imperialist, and anticapitalist measures. Pol Pot's course led in the opposite direction.

The fundamental economic strategy of those who led the Khmer Rouge was to maximize the exploitation of the working people and minimize their personal consumption in order to accumulate large agricultural surpluses that could be sold on the world market. The proceeds, they theorized, could be used to begin underwriting industrialization later on.

To that end, living conditions were reduced to the bare minimum necessary for the survival of the fittest, most productive members of the workforce. In addition, the Khmer Rouge apparatus eliminated most public education; nearly abolished professional health care and hospitals; closed libraries and other cultural institutions; ended telephone and mail service; stopped publishing books or newspapers; and slashed recreational outlets and entertainment.

A twelve-hour day and seven-day workweek became the norm. Child labor became universal.

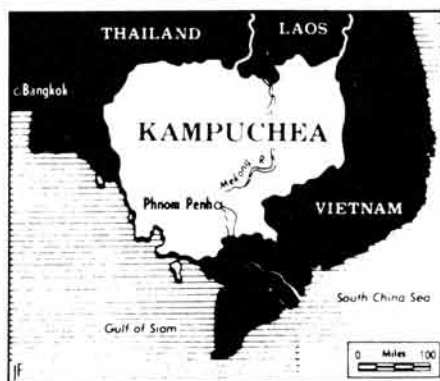
In January 1976, the Khmer Rouge leadership, in its drive to minimize living standards, decreed an end to personal stocks of food under the guise of introducing "communal dining." Subsequently, all inhabitants were given a skimpy daily ration in communal dining halls and were not allowed to keep any food stores for their own use. Cooking and eating utensils were confiscated.

Circulation of money curtailed

Another drastic step in this enforced impoverishment of the population was the restriction on the circulation of money. Although prices continued to be calculated in terms of the former currency, and accounts between enterprises were balanced in monetary terms, the regime declared an end to private circulation of paper money and coins. The Pol Pot leadership claimed these steps represented an advance beyond capitalist commodity circulation.

In the context of the world capitalist market and Kampuchea's low level of economic development, of course, it was impossible to suppress commodity circulation. But the Khmer Rouge's measures did deprive the majority of the population from access to money, thereby furthering the regime's goal of reducing personal consumption to the barest minimum and maximizing the accumulation of wealth in its own hands.

As time went on, the Khmer Rouge fostered a limited revival of urban life and industry. By the end of 1978, the Pol Pot regime claimed that there were 200,000 residents in Phnom



Penh. Reporters who visited the city in late 1978, shortly before the overthrow of the regime, found that a number of factories had been reopened, and makeshift schools and hospitals had been established in some areas to provide a more skilled workforce.

But the labor force in the reopened factories was made up of Khmer Rouge soldiers, peasants fresh from the countryside, and children. This relatively inexperienced working class was viewed as more readily adaptable to militarized discipline and intensive exploitation.

In order to maintain their rule under these brutal circumstances, the Khmer Rouge leaders instituted a permanent reign of terror. Although all Kampuchean suffered from this all-pervasive totalitarianism, special targets of Pol Pot's murder apparatus were former city dwellers, anyone with education, national minorities, and Buddhist monks.

It is impossible to determine with any certainty how many people died under the Khmer Rouge regime. But most estimates agree that several million perished through execution, starvation, or disease.

Washington's attitude

When the Khmer Rouge defeated the Lon Nol government in April 1975, Washington initially adopted a stance of extreme hostility to the new government. It exploited the exposés of the barbarities committed by Pol Pot to stoke the fires of its anticommunist propaganda aimed at justifying continued economic and military pressure against the entire Indochinese revolution.

Washington never reconciled itself to the defeats it suffered in Indochina, and the Vietnamese revolution was the special target of its hostility. When the Vietnamese freedom fighters won on April 30, 1975, the U.S. government slapped an economic embargo on Vietnam and sought to isolate it diplomatically and economically.

But Washington's military options in Indochina were limited. The U.S. population was strongly opposed to further use of U.S. troops, and the continuing political shocks from the 1974-75 depression and the Watergate revelations made the political price for any direct military action by the Pentagon prohibitively high.

Washington therefore looked for others to

wield the stick. It stepped up military aid to the Thai dictatorship, which had been a faithful neocolonial ally throughout the Indochina war. U.S. imperialism also stepped up overtures for collaboration with the counterrevolutionary caste of bureaucrats who govern the Chinese workers state.

Peking had already proven more than willing to sacrifice the Vietnamese revolution in return for diplomatic and economic favors from the U.S. capitalists.

In its hostility to the Vietnamese revolution, Washington also found an ally in an unexpected quarter — the Pol Pot regime.

Within weeks after taking power, the Khmer Rouge regime began launching attacks against Vietnam, hoping to seize Vietnamese territory that had once been part of the ancient Khmer empire. The first attacks took place just after the National Liberation Front liberated Saigon.

These clashes escalated into large-scale fighting in 1977, when Pol Pot's troops mounted several invasions of Vietnam's Mekong Delta provinces. The Kampuchean regime broke off diplomatic relations with Vietnam on Dec. 31, 1977.

Mending fences with imperialism

In that same period, the Khmer Rouge were cementing better relations with reactionary capitalist regimes in the region. Incidents along the border with Thailand receded as Pol Pot's troops stepped up their attacks on Vietnam. Trade and diplomatic relations were established with Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. There were also moves toward establishing diplomatic relations with Australia, and the Japanese government announced plans to begin providing economic aid to Pol Pot.

All the while, the imperialist and neocolonial regimes in the area maintained their hostility to Vietnam, despite Hanoi's efforts to establish normal relations with all these governments.

As Pol Pot's forces stepped up their military attacks against Vietnam, the U.S. government and big-business media began to soft-pedal publicity regarding the atrocities in Kampuchea. The fire of the U.S. propaganda machine was now turned almost exclusively on alleged human rights violations in South Vietnam and the threat of "Vietnamese expansionism" in Southeast Asia.

As U.S. imperialism and its neocolonial allies in the region were giving *indirect* encouragement to Pol Pot's anti-Vietnam course, China's misleaders were directly encouraging and aiding the Khmer Rouge attacks on Vietnam. Peking was anxious to hasten diplomatic and trade relations with Washington by demonstrating to the Carter administration that China could be useful as a regional partner.

To that end, the Peking regime had urged the National Liberation Front of Vietnam not to finish off the Thieu regime in 1975. When its advice went unheeded, Peking began actively aiding Washington's policy of bleeding and

punishing Vietnam.

The Vietnamese government sought to ease the mounting tensions. Anxious to concentrate on reconstructing their country after three decades of war, and with no desire to interfere in Kampuchea's internal affairs, Vietnam sent several delegations to Kampuchea and to China in 1975 and 1976 to seek a peaceful solution.

Kampuchean exiles organize

But as the situation deteriorated inside Kampuchea, and as the Pol Pot regime's military attacks against Vietnam increased, the Vietnamese government stepped up its own political and military efforts of self-defense.

In late 1977 Vietnam began allowing refugees from Kampuchea to remain in the country. Soon, 150,000 Kampuchean refugees were on Vietnamese soil.

When revolts against Pol Pot's rule were put down in 1977 and 1978, leaders of these uprisings also made their way to Vietnam. There they organized the Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation (FUNKSN).

As 1978 progressed, the Chinese and Kampuchean regimes increased their pressures on Vietnam's northern and western borders. Peking opened a slander campaign against Vietnam falsely charging that the 1978 measures expropriating the holdings of capitalist merchants and traders in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) were actually racist attacks on the Hoa, as the Chinese population of Vietnam is called.

Peking began threatening to intervene militarily in defense of the Hoa. It also called on them to flee to China, but closed its border with Vietnam in July 1978.

This propaganda barrage caused panic among the Hoa and fed the exodus of so-called "boat people" from Vietnam, 85 percent of whom were ethnic Chinese.

In December 1978, with the aid and encouragement of Peking, Pol Pot threw 19 of the 23 divisions in his army into an invasion of southern Vietnam. The Vietnamese saw this move as the opening gambit in a two-sided pincer attack against them from China in the north and Kampuchea in the southwest.

Vietnam's fears were heightened by the escalating hostile acts by the Carter administration and the growing signs of its direct collusion with Peking in tightening military pressures against Vietnam. On Dec. 15, 1978, President Carter announced that Washington was finally recognizing the People's Republic of China, almost thirty years after its establishment.

In that speech Carter also announced that Chinese Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping would visit Washington in January.

The Vietnamese responded to the invasion by Pol Pot's forces with a counterattack on December 25, 1978. The Vietnamese army quickly surrounded the 19 divisions that had taken part, leaving only 4 Pol Pot divisions at large inside Kampuchea.

By Jan. 7, 1979, units of the Vietnamese army and Kampuchean opponents of the Pol Pot regime had entered Phnom Penh. From there they moved rapidly toward the Thai-Kampuchean border, driving the remaining Khmer Rouge forces out of the country.

A new Kampuchean government was established, headed by Heng Samrin, a former Khmer Rouge military commander who had fled Kampuchea in 1977.

Despite the defeat of the Pol Pot regime, the

counterrevolutionary Chinese bureaucracy remained intent on proving its usefulness to Washington.

On Feb. 17, 1979, some 600,000 Chinese troops crossed the border into Vietnam. For four weeks they remained in northern Vietnam, destroying roads, rail lines, bridges, and other facilities in what Chinese government officials described as an effort to "punish" Vietnam.

Although Washington issued "for the record" denials of involvement, it did nothing to hide what was obvious to the entire world — that it had instigated the renewed aggression against revolutionary Vietnam. Not only did the U.S. government admit some months later that it had known of Peking's invasion plans in advance, but during the four-week invasion the Carter administration went out of its way to publicly embrace the Chinese regime. The ceremonies establishing full U.S.-Chinese diplomatic relations went on as scheduled in Peking, as did high-level negotiations of trade and economic agreements there.

On the diplomatic level, while Washington had demanded the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea, it now linked Chinese withdrawal from Vietnam to a reciprocal Vietnamese withdrawal from Kampuchea.

Despite the extensive damage inflicted by the Chinese invaders, however, Vietnam did not have to go to the negotiating table to force a pull-back by Peking. As they had done repeatedly throughout the previous half century, Vietnamese troops resisted the new aggression heroically. By the time Peking withdrew in March, 20,000 Chinese troops had been killed or wounded.

(Ironically, as the people of Phnom Penh were celebrating the fifth anniversary of their liberation, another top Chinese government delegation — the first since 1979 — was on its way to Washington to cement its relations with the Reagan administration. In greeting China's Prime Minister Zhao Ziyang on January 10, Reagan said that Zhao's visit symbolized "the growing trust and cooperation" between them and their shared "common ground" in foreign policy.

(Actually, since Peking's humiliation at the hands of Vietnam in 1979, U.S.-China relations have been far from smooth sailing.)

Incensed by the overthrow of the Pol Pot regime and Vietnam's success in repelling the Chinese invasion, Washington responded by trying to tighten the military, economic, and diplomatic pressure against Vietnam and the new Kampuchean government.

The U.S. rulers stepped up military aid to the Thai government, which allows the remnants of Pol Pot's forces to operate from bases along the Thai-Kampuchean border.

In addition, under the guise of refugee relief, Washington began shipping huge quantities of food and medicines to Pol Pot's forces, who had retreated into Thailand.

The Carter administration also pressured its allies and international relief agencies to cut



Oxfam America

Threshing rice in Kompong Cham province, December 1980.

off humanitarian aid to Vietnam and to the new government in Kampuchea, despite the emergency situation in Kampuchea following Pol Pot's ouster, which reached the point of widespread famine in 1979 and 1980.

Washington has also led the effort in the United Nations to leave Kampuchea's seat in the hands of a Pol Pot representative.

Emergence from nightmare

When Kampuchea emerged from the Khmer Rouge nightmare, it was a shattered country. The structures of the national economy had been destroyed. The educational and medical systems had been dismantled. All aspects of social life had been dislocated. Many fields and remaining roads, buildings, and factories were destroyed by the retreating Pol Pot forces.

Following the 1979 liberation, an exhausted, malnourished, traumatized people took to the roads on foot to try to make their way back to their native areas in hopes of finding surviving family members.

Hunger stalked the country. Although considerable amounts of international aid arrived in Kampuchea, hunger remained the general rule until September 1980, nearly two years after the fall of Pol Pot.

Distribution of the aid that was received was hampered by the destruction of the road and river transportation systems. Huge amounts of the aid supposedly destined for the relief of Kampuchea were actually sent to the Khmer Rouge bases in Thailand.

The physical exhaustion following years of hard labor and malnutrition led to the spread of epidemics, which took many lives because of the weakened state of the populace and the destruction of the medical system.

Initial efforts to revive society were handicapped by the lack of trained personnel, who had been a special target for execution during Pol Pot's rule.

Aid from Vietnam

In those difficult first years, aid from Vietnam was crucial to the survival of the Kampuchean people. Although Vietnam itself was suffering the effects of disastrous weather that had ruined much of the 1977 and 1978 harvests, it provided large amounts of food aid to the people of Kampuchea. A program was established whereby Vietnamese provinces were twinned with counterparts in Kampuchea to provide food and technical, educational, and medical aid to the Kampuchean people.

By 1981, the situation in Kampuchea had improved greatly. Although reconstruction efforts had barely begun, at least the emergency was over.

Solidarity teams

In the countryside, the rural population was organized into "solidarity-for-production" teams composed of 12 to 15 peasant households to begin to reorganize the shattered society and economy.

These solidarity teams are the basic eco-

nomic unit of the countryside, providing mutual assistance in irrigation and plowing. This cooperation is vital to production due to the widespread destruction of draft animals.

The teams also help individual families to rebuild housing. They look after the aged and orphans, provide aid to widows with young children, and carry out rural hygiene and literacy programs.

Through the solidarity teams, agricultural production has developed rapidly and Kampuchea is again basically self-sufficient in food. In 1979 Kampuchea produced only 556,000 tons of rice. By 1982 production had increased to 1,915,000 tons, and the 1983 harvest was expected to be 2,100,000 tons (660 pounds per capita).

But rice production is still below the levels reached in the 1960s, before the beginning of the civil war and U.S. bombing of the countryside. During that decade, when rice was a major export crop, harvests ranged from a low of 2.2 million tons to a high of 3.5 million tons.

The catch of fish, traditionally the main source of protein in Kampuchea, has also increased dramatically. During the Pol Pot years the fish harvest had plummeted. Historically, the fishing population had been largely made up of members of the Cham and Vietnamese ethnic groups, both of which were singled out for extermination by the Khmer Rouge.

In the first year after the overthrow of Pol Pot, the catch of fish was barely 20,000 tons, compared to 105,000 tons in 1960.

Solidarity-for-production fishing teams were established to revive the industry. The government provided these teams with rice, materials to rebuild boats and nets, and loans. Significant progress has already been made, as seen by the fact that 72,000 tons of fish were caught in 1982.

The number of water buffalo and cows has more than doubled since 1979, although the current number (almost 1.5 million) is still woefully inadequate given the importance of water buffaloes in Kampuchean agriculture.

There has also been a revival in industry, which has never been a significant part of the Kampuchean economy. Fifty-nine factories have been rebuilt, and in Phnom Penh there are now 50 functioning factories and 1,500 handicraft workshops producing goods for the domestic market.

Rebuilding social services

The revival of the educational system had to contend not only with the legacy of underdevelopment and colonialism, but with the fact that most schools had been closed during the nearly four years of Khmer Rouge rule. Many children who had begun school before 1975 had reverted to illiteracy.

Today more than 1.7 million Kampuchians are attending primary and secondary schools, although the schools suffer from shortages of teachers and supplies. Literacy campaigns are also being carried out among adults, 480,000 of whom had learned to read and write

by 1983.

Medical care has been extended to virtually the entire population, with 94 percent of the local administrative areas having health care stations. In 1982 there were 11,820,000 visits to hospitals and clinics. Preventive medicine is being stressed in local clinics, which carry out vaccination programs and urge the population to boil water, build sanitary latrines, and sleep under mosquito nets to avoid the endemic malaria.

The prevention program is having a big impact. In 1980, 614,789 people were treated for malaria. By 1982 the number had fallen to 225,217.

In late 1979 the College of Medicine and Pharmacy was reopened with an enrollment of 700 students.

Considerable progress has also been made in reconstituting the political and administrative structures. Elections were held in all 1,373 local administrative units, with People's Committees elected to three year terms. A National Assembly of 117 members (including 21 women) was also elected in 1981.

Mass organizations have been established. The Youth Union has grown to 220,000 members, the Women's Union to 150,000 members, and there are 49,000 people in trade unions.

Urban life is being revived. Phnom Penh now has a registered population of 480,000, and it is estimated that another 50,000 people live in the city unofficially.

Breaking international isolation

Despite Washington's efforts to isolate the People's Republic of Kampuchea, the new government is recognized by 32 countries and national liberation movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

At the time of the Vietnamese intervention in Kampuchea five years ago, many organizations and prominent individuals who had previously opposed Washington's war policies in Indochina fell victim to its propaganda barrage and joined in the call for the immediate withdrawal of Vietnamese troops. Many organizations and political currents in the workers movement in the imperialist countries condemned Vietnam and echoed the false charge that the Kampuchean people's right to independence and self-determination was being trampled under foot.

But as the facts about the horror of Pol Pot's regime and its attacks on Vietnam have become known, some of these organizations and individuals have acknowledged that their original view was mistaken.

At the United Nations, however, the Pol Pot forces still retain Kampuchea's seat with the support of Washington, the neocolonialist regimes of Southeast Asia, and Peking. It is particularly ironic that the government of the Chinese workers state, which was itself denied China's UN seat by a U.S.-organized effort between 1949 and 1971, is now taking part in this reactionary charade.

The progress Kampuchea has made in

emerging from the hell of the Pol Pot years has been possible because Vietnamese troops provide a shield against the return of the Khmer Rouge forces now based along the border with Thailand. The vast majority of Kampuchean view the Vietnamese troops not as occupiers but as protectors and want them to remain in the country as long as the danger of a Pol Pot return to power exists. The prevalence of this view has even been acknowledged by visitors to Kampuchea who can hardly be described as friends of Vietnam or of the new Kampuchean government.

The Khmer Rouge's international backers are now trying to improve its image. To that end they have put together a "Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea" to provide a more palatable facade to Pol Pot's supporters.

This shotgun wedding has joined former Prince Sihanouk, Lon Nol's former prime minister Son Sann, and Pol Pot's assistant Khieu Samphan — all of whom openly express their mutual loathing. The union was consummated in June 1982 at the insistence of their respective foreign patrons.

Pol Pot's forces and the other rightist guerrillas could not survive without foreign backing. It has been estimated that since 1979 the Thai army's Task Force 80 has delivered one-half million tons of supplies from China, the

United States, and elsewhere to the rightist border camps.

Despite the military and political backing that the Khmer Rouge and its new partners receive, it has been unable to seriously disrupt the reconstruction of Kampuchea. The improving security situation in the country has made it possible for Vietnam to withdraw contingents of its troops from Kampuchea in 1982 and 1983.

Hanoi has pledged it will withdraw all its troops from Kampuchea if outside aid to Pol Pot's forces is halted.

The Kampuchean people have much to celebrate in their five years of liberation and reconstruction. But they would have been able to accomplish far more if they had not been forced to contend with Washington's unremitting hostility.

Working people and all opponents of U.S. war policies should demand that the U.S. government:

- End its campaign of military, economic, and diplomatic pressure against the Kampuchean and Vietnamese governments;
- Halt all military aid to the Pol Pot forces and other rightists based along the Thai-Kampuchean border;
- Provide massive reconstruction aid to help the Kampuchean and Vietnamese peoples rebuild their war-torn countries. □

Iran

Attack on Tudeh Party mounts

Government seeks to intimidate masses

By Cindy Jaquith

[The following article is taken from the January 27 issue of the U.S. revolutionary socialist newsweekly *Militant*.]

* * *

In early December 1983, the Iranian government conducted closed-door military trials of individuals arrested in the crackdown on the Tudeh Party (Communist Party) last spring. The trials mark a major new blow to the Iranian revolution, at a time when that revolution is under steady military assault from Iraq and is a target of stepped-up attacks from the imperialists in Washington and Paris.

Last February, the central leadership of the Tudeh Party, the oldest and largest party in the Iranian workers movement, was arrested. In May the party was banned, and thousands of its members thrown in jail. This coincided with the expulsion of 18 Soviet diplomats from Iran.

The Iranian government forced top Tudeh leaders, including the party's first secretary, Nureddin Kianuri, to go on television and "confess" to charges of espionage for the Soviet Union, illegal harboring of weapons, recruiting supporters for espionage in Iran's armed forces, and other activities.

The Tudeh "confessions" also included denunciations of Marxism and the Soviet Union. Tudeh writer Mahmoud Etemadzadeh was quoted as saying, "Marxism has come to a blind alley in Iran. It has nothing to offer us against Islam's well-defined doctrine accepted by millions of the Iranian masses."

These fake confessions and the escalating assault on the Tudeh Party serve a broader purpose, that of promoting anti-Soviet, anti-Marxist views among the Iranian masses. This is in order to justify the government's repressive drive to force the few workers organizations remaining intact in Iran to completely dissolve and cease all functioning that is in any way independent of the ruling Islamic Republican Party.

This anticommunist campaign reached a new stage with the December 1983 trials of Tudeh supporters. Based on the crimes they are charged with, the most likely possibility is that they will be executed. This would not only lay the basis for severe repression against others in the Tudeh Party and other working-class organizations, but would have the effect of further intimidating all revolutionary-minded Iranians, whether in the factories, villages, army, or schools. □

The December Tudeh trials involved former officers in the Iranian army, navy, and air force. Among them was Bahram Afzali, a former commander of the navy, who was charged with "espionage against the Islamic Republic and membership and activity in a secret organization with the aim of overthrowing the Islamic Republic," according to the Iranian government news agency IRNA. Afzali and the other defendants were accused of belonging to what the regime calls a secret Tudeh organization in the military and of passing military information to the party, which the government says was turned over to the Soviet Union.

The prosecutor in the trials, according to IRNA, claimed "the final objective" of this alleged activity "was to push the Islamic Republic towards a close relationship with the Eastern bloc and eventually seize power at an appropriate moment."

Since the defendants were denied the right to a public and civilian trial, the right to choose their own attorneys, and the right to a jury, the only information available on their trials comes from the Iranian government. IRNA press releases claim the majority of defendants "confessed" to guilt on all charges. A few, however, denied involvement in espionage, the press releases say. IRNA also reported that Tudeh First Secretary Kianuri sat in on the trials and offered information to corroborate the prosecution's case.

But none of the IRNA releases offer a shred of evidence of the supposed Tudeh-Soviet plot to overthrow the Iranian government. Instead, a string of "confessions" is put forward as proof. "Testimony" by one defendant is then used against the next defendant, and so forth.

The charges against the Tudeh Party and Soviet government represent a dangerous escalation of the anti-Soviet propaganda campaign the Iranian government has carried out for some time. While the government remains in conflict with imperialism, it has increasingly sought to present the Soviet Union as an equal danger to the Iranian nation. This has been accompanied by continual diatribes against Marxism, which — through the Tudeh trials — is now explicitly equated with treason.

The implications are obvious for the Iranian working class. Any worker who is attracted to the path followed by the Russian workers and peasants in carrying out a socialist revolution, or, by extension, to the Cuban, Nicaraguan, and Grenadian revolutions, is a "subversive," the "agent" of a foreign power.

While Iranian workers have not mobilized to support the anti-Tudeh trials, no organization in the workers movement has been strong enough, in the face of stiffened repression, to mount opposition to the anticommunist attacks and frame-up of the Tudeh Party. This can only embolden those in the government who want to move to further weaken, if not dismantle, all the factory committees that continue to exist and sharply increase the pressure on the rights and living standards of the Iranian working masses. □

A socialist campaign for working people

SWP fields candidates for president and vice-president

By Steve Wattenmaker

The Socialist Workers Party kicked off its entry into the 1984 U.S. presidential election campaign at a spirited rally December 30 in St. Louis, Missouri. The SWP's presidential candidate, Mel Mason, and vice-presidential candidate, Andrea González, both spoke at the event. The rally took place during a national convention of the Young Socialist Alliance.

Mel Mason, 40, is a socialist city council member from Seaside, California. He is a veteran of the Black liberation movement and a national committee member of the Socialist Workers Party. Andrea González, his running-mate, is a former transit worker, steelworker, and shipyard worker who has been a fighter for Puerto Rican independence since her teens. She currently serves as national chairperson of the Young Socialist Alliance.

In his speech to the rally, Mason sounded what he said would be a major theme of the socialist campaign. "What the rulers of this country are doing is making us pay for their economic crisis," Mason told the audience of 600 campaign supporters. "The domestic policy of this government — which is a government of the rich and not of us — is to attack the working class in this country by busting its unions, stepping up racism and sexism to divide our class against itself, drive down our wages, take away our job security and benefits, and then pound us into submission.

"I think people in the U.S. are beginning to see that the flip side of this government's domestic economic policy is the same on an international scale," Mason said. "While they are making us here at home pay for their crisis, they are trying to force workers and farmers in other countries to do the same thing. That is why the U.S. government provides military aid to dictatorships like El Salvador and Guatemala. That is why it is funding counter-revolutionaries trying to overthrow the Nicaraguan government. That is why they invaded Grenada to make it 'safe' again for free enterprise. That is why the U.S. Marines are in Lebanon."

'Panel of fighters'

Mason and González were joined on the platform by representatives of some of the battles that form the cutting edge of the U.S. class struggle today — a picket captain from the recent Greyhound interstate bus strike, a representative of El Salvador's liberation forces, a striking copper miner from Arizona. Others included a veteran farm activist, an antiwar GI who just won an honorable discharge from the Marines, a woman unionist fighting govern-

ment-employer victimization, and a long-time defender of Black rights in the South.

Some of the speakers came to endorse the Mason-González campaign, while others took the opportunity to explain their struggles to the rally and thank the SWP for its solidarity.

Mason told the rally that the "panel of fighters" sharing the platform with him would inspire the SWP as it campaigned on the picket lines and the unemployment lines, at factory gates and mine portals, on the streets of the Black and Latino communities, and in rural areas where farmers and farmworkers are fighting to defend their livelihoods.

The SWP campaign, Mason pledged, would be a tool to help publicize and organize solidarity for working-class struggles in the United States, in Central America, and throughout the world. And, as an "instrument of international workers solidarity," the campaign would fight to win workers to the view that the root problem was capitalism itself.

The campaign will speak, in particular, to those vanguard workers who are beginning to think about and discuss what political road they need to take to overcome the fundamental problems they face under capitalism. It will offer socialist solutions.

In a more limited sense, Mason explained in an interview with the socialist newsweekly *Militant*, which supports the SWP campaign, that was the strategy he carried out during his three years as a city council member in Seaside, a city of 37,000 in central California.

Mason hammered away at Washington's war policies from the floor of the city council chambers, insisting that war is as much a local issue as jobs or housing. The only way to stop new Vietnams, he would say, is for workers to reject Washington's foreign policy designed to benefit corporate profit and fashion their own based on the common interests of workers and small farmers throughout the world.

"I think since I've been in office it has helped raise the general political consciousness in the community," Mason said. "I've used my office to organize struggles against police brutality, struggles around jobs and housing. We've taken on landlords."

In addition, he said, the position he held was useful in helping to build solidarity for strikes by public employees and construction workers, and taking a stand in defense of Black soldiers at a nearby Army base from Ku Klux Klan attacks.

"In the course of these fights," Mason said,

YSA holds convention

From December 28 through January 1, more than 600 young workers and others gathered in St. Louis, Missouri, for the 23rd national convention of the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), a revolutionary Marxist youth organization that is in political solidarity with the Socialist Workers Party.

A central theme of the YSA convention was the advancing socialist revolution in Central America and the Caribbean, the Marxist leaderships at the head of this process, and the role of U.S. socialists in mobilizing opposition to the escalating U.S. war in the region.

The discussion by delegates reflected the progress the YSA has made in rooting itself in the industrial proletariat. This process began in 1979, when the YSA voted to have the majority of its members get jobs in basic industries organized by the major industrial unions. Of the delegates at the St. Louis convention, 67 percent were working in industry. Twenty-two percent were members of oppressed nationalities, and 52 percent were women.

The experiences of members working in industry greatly enriched the four days of discussions, which covered topics ranging from Washington's war drive in Central America and its attacks against workers at home through the problems and prospects facing activists in particular unions.

The YSA convention voted to endorse and build the 1984 SWP presidential election campaign.

Climaxing the convention, hundreds of people attended a spirited rally held to mark the 25th anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban revolution. Speakers at that rally included representatives of the SWP, the Revolutionary Workers League (section of the Fourth International in Canada), the African National Congress of South Africa, the Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement, the Organization in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala, and other groups. Don Rojas, former press secretary for murdered Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, sent a message to the meeting by videotape, since he has been barred from entering the United States by the U.S. government.

"we explained why these occur, that capitalism is responsible. And that the only way we are going to be able to guarantee health care, housing, and jobs is with a society that makes these things a priority — and the only society which will do that is a socialist society."

Attacks mounting

The SWP is launching its 1984 election campaign at a time of deepening class polarization in the United States. In the last few months of 1983 nearly 300 U.S. soldiers died in Lebanon and in the invasion of Grenada. And Washington's steady escalation in Central America is leading toward an inevitable bloodbath there on the scale of Vietnam.

That course is destined to run up against the deep antiwar sentiment of U.S. workers. A nationwide poll released January 19 showed the U.S. population opposed to increasing military aid to El Salvador by a 76 to 17 percent majority. A similar majority also opposed continuing CIA backing for Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries trying to overthrow the Sandinista government.

Washington will not wait for a favorable public consensus before sending troops to Central America, but U.S. imperialism's ability to pursue a war in the region will be seriously affected by the resistance of a new antiwar movement drawing in more and more industrial workers as the war escalates.

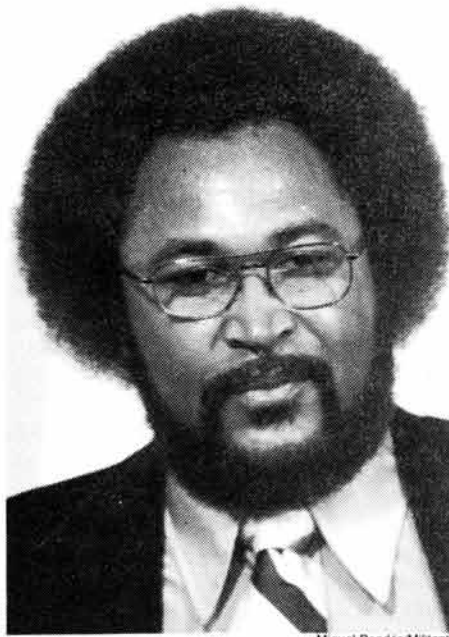
On the domestic front, despite the upturn in the business cycle, working people and small farmers are still under fierce economic attack from the employers and the government. The January 8 *Washington Post* reported that 1983 was the worst year for labor bargaining in many years. Major collective bargaining settlements in the first three quarters of 1983 averaged the lowest since the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics began compiling records 15 years ago.

In late December the nation's largest steel producer, U.S. Steel, announced the permanent layoff of 15,000 steelworkers around the country.

In a number of instances, workers have put up stiff resistance to union-busting drives. The Greyhound workers' militant picket lines sabotaged the company's plans to run the bus line with scab drivers, and the company was finally forced to partially back down on its demand for a 14 percent pay cut and settle the strike.

When Phelps-Dodge tried to operate its Morenci, Arizona, copper mine with scabs last August, the strikers organized mass picket lines that forced the company to shut down all operations for 10 days. The mine was eventually started up with nonunion labor, however, only after hundreds of troops and police with helicopters and armored personnel carriers occupied Morenci.

Some employers, notably Continental Airlines, have tried a new tactic — declaring bankruptcy as a means of breaking existing union contracts. Continental pilots ignored the company's phony poverty plea and struck the airline after management demanded a 50 percent pay cut.



MEL MASON

Miguel Pendas/Militant

Various contract talks coming up in 1984 will also give rise to sharp conflict between employer demands for deeper concessions and the desire of rank-and-file unionists to recoup what they lost in wages, benefits, and job security during the recession. Unions representing 3 million workers in auto, rail, coal, construction, aerospace, food, textile, and other industries have contracts that expire this year.

Automobile workers at General Motors and Ford, whose contracts expire in the fall, are especially determined not to hand the auto barons even fatter profits through more contract givebacks. The increasingly militant union rank and file are already wearing buttons reading "Restore and More in '84."

Bureaucracy's obstacle

In all of these attempts by workers to resist the rulers' offensive, however, rank-and-file trade unionists have been, and will continue to be, hamstrung by the conservative bureaucracy of the labor movement. On all major foreign policy questions, the top AFL-CIO leadership solidly backs U.S. imperialism. AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland, for example, recently gave his blessing to Washington's war preparations in Central America by serving as a key figure on the Kissinger commission.

At the same time the top labor officialdom has done nothing to launch a counterattack against the economic and union-busting assault by the corporations and the government. The AFL-CIO leadership's sole strategy has been to lead workers down the dead-end road of "dumping Reagan" in favor of the equally anti-labor Democrat Walter Mondale in the 1984 elections.

SWP vice-presidential candidate Andrea González told the St. Louis rally that the labor movement and its natural allies — Blacks, women, Latinos, small farmers — have plenty

of potential power to turn that situation around.

"We have the organizations — powerful unions, civil rights and women's rights groups," González maintained.

But rather than helping, the leadership of these organizations — especially the trade unions — stand in the way of progress, she explained. "They act as if they gave us the unions and we work for them. . . . We have to fight to take control of them again, to make them work in our interests — not only on the job, but in the fight against war, for women's rights, for Black rights, and to extend solidarity to embattled workers at home and internationally."

'All out war' on farm workers

Farm workers, among the most brutally exploited members of the U.S. working class, are facing an assault as well. Although the United Farm Workers Union grew during the 1970s, the overwhelming majority of farm laborers remain unorganized. Cesar Chávez, president of the UFW, declared in May 1983 that the union was facing one of the most concerted grower-government attempts to destroy the union in its history. He called efforts by the California legislature to gut farm worker protective laws a declaration of "all-out war" against the union.

Workers in related agribusiness industries are in similar straits. In December, Mel Mason visited the picket line at Maggio, Inc., located in California's agriculturally rich Salinas valley. Maggio is the biggest shipper of carrots in the world. The workers there, mostly Latinos, have been on strike since July 1983 to win a union contract.

For small family farmers the recession was more devastating than any economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Despite the "recovery," nearly 20 percent of all farmers are still in danger of defaulting on their bank loans, and Washington's answer has been to propose cutting back on already inadequate farm relief measures.

Farm activists are continuing to use militant tactics to block farm foreclosures, at the same time working to forge links with industrial trade unions. Three organizers for the American Agriculture Movement in Missouri and a member of the North American Farm Alliance from Iowa attended the SWP campaign rally in St. Louis. The escalating attacks against the working class as a whole are also spawning a corresponding rise in racist and sexist actions, as the U.S. rulers search for ways to weaken the unity among different sectors of the working class and its allies.

State governments resumed the routine use of the death penalty in 1983. Hundreds of prisoners, disproportionately Black and Latino, await execution in 1984. This legal lynching has emboldened racists of every stripe. Police murders of Black youth are on the rise, and violent racist outfits like the Ku Klux Klan have gotten wind in their sails.

An Alabama Klansman went on trial in De-

ember 1983 for the random lynching of a Black teenager. Another participant in the murder testified that the Klansmen beat the youth to death, slit his throat, and left him hanging from a tree.

Even overshadowing these acts of violence is the government and employer racism practiced against the Black and Latino communities. The unemployment rate among Blacks is still more than twice that of whites, with Black youth suffering even greater joblessness. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 2 million people are homeless. And presidential adviser Edwin Meese recently embarrassed the White House by unsuccessfully trying to ridicule reports that hunger is reaching epidemic proportions in the United States.

Looking for a way to resist this rising tide of racism, half a million people responded last August 27 to a call by civil rights leaders for a march on Washington to demand "Jobs, Peace, and Freedom." While the march was predominantly Black, dozens of trade unions, along with the National Organization for Women, joined the march. Women, especially, saw the event as an opportunity to voice their protests over the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment and attacks on abortion rights.

Democrats offer no alternative

The 1984 election year, then, opens in the context of the U.S. government's preparations for war in Central America and the potential for further attacks on powerful sectors of the trade-union movement, working farmers, oppressed nationalities, and women.

By and large, the front-runners among the eight Democratic Party candidates have expressed broad agreement with the measures President Reagan — who is expected to announce his candidacy at the end of January — has taken to press the rulers' offensive against workers at home and abroad. Walter Mondale, who was James Carter's vice-president, and Mondale's chief Democratic rival, former astronaut John Glenn, were both quick to jump on the bandwagon in support of the administration's "rescue mission" in Grenada.

Both candidates also praised the bipartisan endorsement of President Reagan's Central American war plans contained in the recently released Kissinger commission report. The heart of the commission's analysis was a crude justification for Reagan's lie that U.S. national security is threatened by Soviet-Cuban aggression in the region.

Among the announced Democratic Party candidates, only the entry of the Rev. Jesse Jackson stirred some interest among working people. Jackson, a powerful and persuasive speaker, is a veteran of civil rights struggles and has been in the forefront of a renewed effort to register Blacks to vote, especially in the South. He has already won significant support among the masses of Blacks in cities across the country.

Jackson's appeal as he began his campaign



ANDREA GONZÁLEZ

rested on the perception that he is the only Democratic candidate sharply opposing the Reagan administration's prowar, anti-Black, antiunion, and antiwomen actions.

Jackson has stated his opposition to direct U.S. military intervention in Central America. He condemned the U.S. invasion of Grenada and has called for the withdrawal of U.S. Marines from Lebanon. His image as a peace candidate was further enhanced by his success in arranging the release of a Black Navy pilot held by Syria after being shot down over Lebanon.

But as the campaign has progressed, Jackson's positions have become less and less distinguishable from those of the other Democrats. For example, a few years ago Jackson came under heavy criticism from Zionists for meeting with Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yassir Arafat. Today, Jackson is claiming that Washington has a vital interest in the Middle East and should support Israel's right to exist.

On El Salvador, rather than simply calling for a cutoff of all U.S. backing to the dictatorship, Jackson states that Washington should use its "strength" and aid money as "leverage" to promote negotiations in the country. Echoing Washington's efforts to get its allies in Western Europe and Japan to shoulder a greater proportion of the cost of imperialism's military buildup, he has called on those governments to "pay their share of defense."

Labor party

In contrast to the strategies proposed by the Democratic and Republican candidates, the SWP campaign will be arguing for a perspective that seeks to point workers and their allies in the direction of independent political action.

"The Democrats and Republicans represent a government opposed to the deepest aspirations and needs of the overwhelming majority

of people in the United States and around the world," Mason said. "Our campaign is saying that we need a new kind of government, one that acts in *our* interests.

"We need a workers and farmers government that would begin to reorganize society on a totally different basis."

To get such a government, Mason stressed, workers have to begin looking to their own class for solutions to the political problems they confront.

"We need to march, rally, and actively protest against the racist, sexist, antilabor policies of the employers and their government," Mason said. "We need to reform our unions into fighting organizations that not only defend our living standards, but champion the demands of Blacks, Latinos, the unemployed."

In the political arena, Mason maintained that revitalized and combative unions could provide the base for a labor party in the United States that would challenge the domination of the Democrats and Republicans. "And not just an electoral party," Mason added, "but a labor party that fights in the interests of working people 365 days a year."

This road, he said, "and not the AFL-CIO officialdom's support for Democrat Walter Mondale, is the way forward for labor. This — not the backing many Black leaders and the National Organization for Women have given Mondale — is the way to go for Blacks and women."

The emergence of a mass-based Black party independent of the Democrats and Republicans would also push forward the struggle of all working people, Mason explained. A Black party with a social and economic program in the interests of the millions of oppressed and exploited U.S. Blacks — calling for an end to imperialist war, for full civil rights, for affirmative action hiring and a massive jobs program — would express the interests of *all* workers.

On a small scale, Mason said, the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP) is a good illustration of the political road such a party should take. Mason is the far western regional coordinator of the NBIPP. The example of a Black party, Mason feels, would not only be an advance in and of itself, but would also inspire and hasten the formation of a labor party.

Among the specific points Mel Mason and Andrea González will be raising are demands that the U.S. government pull out all its troops from Grenada, Central America, and Lebanon. They call for a cutoff of funds to the counter-revolutionaries trying to overthrow the Nicaraguan government and a halt in all aid to the racist South African regime. They are speaking in favor of abolishing draft registration.

To remedy massive unemployment, the socialist candidates are proposing using the money in the Pentagon budget for a massive public works program, coupled with a reduction in the workweek to 30 hours with no cut in pay.

In addition, Mason and González will argue in favor of a moratorium on repayment of debts plaguing family farmers and guaranteeing

them an adequate income.

On other questions of vital importance to Blacks, Latinos, and women, the SWP is demanding the complete desegregation of schools, including the use of busing; legislation for across-the-board affirmative action in hiring, including mandated quotas; the restora-

tion of federal Medicaid funding for abortion; a halt to all deportation of undocumented workers; and passage of an Equal Rights Amendment for women as part of the U.S. Constitution. The candidates also call for an end to attacks on democratic rights.

Are these ideas practical ones for working

people to consider today?

"Definitely," Mason told the *Militant*. "In fact, given the depth of the problems we face here and around the world, bold new solutions and fundamental changes from a working-class perspective are the only kind of ideas that are practical." □

Ireland

Sinn Féin charts course

Orients toward building mass anti-imperialist struggle

By Will Reissner

The deaths of 10 young Irish freedom fighters in a British prison in Northern Ireland during the 1981 hunger strike fundamentally transformed politics on both sides of the British-imposed border dividing Ireland.

In the British-ruled six counties of Northern Ireland, the hunger strike galvanized the nationalist community into political activity.

And the mass movement in support of the demands of the hunger strikers extended into the formally independent 26 counties of southern Ireland as well. The National H-Block/Armagh Committee was active in all 32 counties of Ireland, bringing together political and labor organizations, cultural and sporting groups, and thousands of unaffiliated individuals.

In Northern Ireland, hunger striker Bobby Sands was elected to the British Parliament from his prison hospital bed. His victory demolished the British government's claim that the prisoners were isolated terrorists without support in the population.

And in the south of Ireland, two hunger strikers were elected to the Irish Parliament while on their fasts. One of them, Kieran Doherty, died on his hunger strike.

The outpouring of support for the prisoners and the election victories on both sides of the border focused international attention on the situation in Northern Ireland. In Britain, the hunger strike opened a breach in the previously solid bipartisan support for British policy in Northern Ireland. Important sectors of the left wing of the British Labour Party began reexamining the situation there.

The changed political situation in Ireland has been dramatically illustrated by the growth in the influence of Sinn Féin (Ourselves Alone) on both sides of the border and by its increased stature internationally.

Sinn Féin is the largest political organization involved in the struggle for Irish independence and reunification. It has close political ties to the outlawed Irish Republican Army (IRA), which is carrying out an armed struggle to end British rule in Northern Ireland.

Since the hunger strike, Sinn Féin has won a series of impressive election victories in Northern Ireland and has expanded its influence in the south. It has also opened a dialogue

with important sectors of the British labor movement and oppressed communities.

Figures like Ken Livingstone, the chairman of the Greater London Council, have visited Northern Ireland at Sinn Féin's invitation. Other delegations, most recently a group of Blacks from London's Brixton ghetto, have come to Belfast to see the results of British rule first hand. A Sinn Féin delegation to the British Labour Party conference in October was able to present the case for Irish freedom to many of the delegates.

Ard Fheis

The changing situation was reflected in the 79th *ard fheis* (national convention — pronounced "ard-esh") of Sinn Féin, held November 12 and 13 in Dublin.

The gathering focused on the need for Sinn Féin to increase its participation in social, political, and economic struggles in order to provide an alternative to all facets of British rule in the north and neocolonialist capitalist rule in the south. It set two key goals for Sinn Féin: to consolidate its position as the most important political organization within the nationalist community in Northern Ireland; and to expand its influence and build a mass base in the south.

In order to do that, declared Sinn Féin's newly elected president Gerry Adams, Sinn Féin had to reorient its policies "towards the radical roots of our republican ideology."

The election of Adams, a 34-year-old activist from Belfast, reflected the emergence of a new generation of leaders, many of whom are committed socialists, forged and tested in the mass struggles during and since the hunger strike. This transition of leadership that took place at the *ard fheis* symbolized the political changes unfolding within Sinn Féin.

Equally symbolic of the changes was the conference's decision to eliminate the declaration that Sinn Féin bases its objectives on "Christian principles." That phrase was replaced with the words "Irish republican socialist principles."

The conference decided to run candidates in the elections to the European Economic Community's parliament in May and in the local elections in the south scheduled for the same

time. It discussed the need for Sinn Féin to increase its participation in the Irish trade union movement, and took steps to expand the role of women in the struggle.

Northern Ireland

The party's new, northern-based leadership has assimilated important lessons about the role of mass political action in the struggle for the reunification of Ireland.

At the Dublin conference, Adams reaffirmed Sinn Féin's support for the military fight against British rule led by the IRA. "Armed struggle is a necessary and morally correct form of resistance in the six counties against a government whose presence is rejected by the vast majority of Irish people.

"In defending and supporting the right of the Irish people to engage in armed struggle it is important for those so engaged to be aware of the constant need and obligation they have to continuously examine their tactics and strategies. Revolutionary force — and this excludes sectarian violence — must be controlled and disciplined so that it is clearly seen as a symbol of our people's resistance."

Adams also acknowledged, however, that for many years supporters of the freedom struggle in the north had been relegated to the role of passive spectators who could do little more than cheer on the actions of the IRA against the British forces.

Adams argued that in the mid and late 1970s "anti-imperialist politics and the struggle for Irish independence had become, to a large extent, isolated and restricted to its active base."

Noting that the six-county British enclave in the north has a 21.5 percent unemployment rate, the worst housing in Western Europe, and the highest infant mortality rate in all of Europe, Adams pointed out that the population is being further ravaged by the British Conservative government's cuts in spending on health care, social services, education, and housing.

In the north, Adams stated, Sinn Féin must "become the focal point for all those who suffer under British rule." This includes all the "victims of a decadent social and economic system which is geared not in Irish interests but in the interests of foreign and native capitalists or in the military and strategic interests of a

British government and its super-power allies."

Adams made a special appeal to the Protestant majority in Northern Ireland to abandon support for continued British rule and to recognize that their future lies in a united, socialist Ireland.

Protestant workers, he acknowledged, "have justifiable, if misguided, fears about their future in an independent Ireland." Because of the historic connection between the Irish national struggle and the Catholic Church, "political Protestantism is based partly on the fear that Irish 'Home Rule is Rome Rule,'" Adams noted.

"Protestants need to be reminded," he said, "that the Catholic Hierarchy has seen fit to attack Sinn Féin more often this past year than it has ever attacked rabid anti-Catholic demagogues such as Ian Paisley."

He continued: "Republicans do not seek a sectarian state. On the contrary, we seek a secular, or at least a pluralist, society. We in Sinn Féin remember with pride that our republicanism grew from the separatist roots of the mainly Presbyterian United Irishmen. . . ."

"We have, despite the imposed divisions, tragedy, and suffering of the last 60 years [since partition], more to unite us than to divide us."

'Beat the SDLP'

Prior to the 1981 hunger strike, the most influential electoral grouping in the nationalist community in Northern Ireland was the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), formed in 1970. The SDLP, which receives support and encouragement from the main bourgeois parties in the south (Fianna Fail and Fine Gael), gives lip service to the eventual reunification of Ireland but focuses much of its attention on attacking the IRA.

Many nationalist voters in Northern Ireland, faced with a choice between a pro-British candidate and an SDLP candidate, held their noses and voted for the SDLP candidate. The SDLP claimed its electoral victories represented the real sentiments of the nationalist community against the IRA. Bobby Sands' victory showed that this was not true.

A second electoral challenge to the SDLP came during the hunger strike, not from Sinn Féin but from two smaller socialist organizations. In the May 20, 1981, Belfast City Council elections, People's Democracy and the Irish Republican Socialist Party ran candidates supporting the hunger strikers. When the votes were counted, two members of PD and two from the IRSP had won seats. In the process, SDLP leader Gerry Fitt, who had refused to support the hunger strikers, went down to humiliating defeat.

Three months later, Sinn Féin member Owen Carron, running under an "Anti H-Block" designation, was elected to the seat in the British Parliament that became vacant when Bobby Sands died. Since then, Sinn Féin has run in its own name, winning two seats on local councils and five in the Northern Ireland



Sinn Féin supporters at demonstration in Dublin.

Assembly. In June 1983, Gerry Adams himself was elected to the British Parliament from West Belfast. (Sinn Féin candidates run for the Northern Ireland Assembly and the British Parliament on a platform of refusing to take their seats in those colonial bodies if elected.)

Sinn Féin's share of the nationalist vote has risen to 43 percent, and the SDLP's credibility has been heavily damaged, despite the best efforts of the British and Irish governments to prop it up and inflate its importance.

The November Sinn Féin *ard fheis* outlined a plan to finish off the SDLP's pretension to a major role in the nationalist community in Northern Ireland by challenging SDLP candidates in the 1984 elections to the European parliament.

In a break with tradition, the Sinn Féin conference decided that its candidates will take their seats in the EEC body if they win, despite the party's staunch opposition to the EEC.

Candidates will run, explained Kevin Burke in the November 17 issue of Sinn Féin's weekly *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, on an "anti-imperialist policy of opposition to the EEC" and "with the declared intention of working for the disbandment of the EEC as a European capitalist power bloc."

In response to those conference participants who urged that the campaign be fought on a plank of refusal to take seats, Derry Sinn Féin leader Martin McGuinness argued that to run in "the EEC election on an abstentionist basis would be madness when it provides the best opportunity ever to beat the SDLP."

Building in the south

The newly elected Sinn Féin leadership is acutely aware of the need to increase the party's influence in the south. Gerry Adams focused on the importance of this in his inau-

gural speech to the conference.

Adams explained that he had initially been reluctant to accept the post as president. "Emphasis needs to be upon the 26 counties," he said, "and thus I would have a preference for a leader who was based in this area."

Adams called for reorganization of Sinn Féin in the south. "First of all," he said, "self-inflicted isolation must be ended in a determined and planned fashion. Internally this means reconstruction of the organisation to achieve maximum efficiency at present membership levels coupled with the ability to successfully cater for and absorb a new and expanded membership in the future."

"At a practical level it means shaking up and extending the Sinn Féin publicity machine in Dublin and providing it with the resources necessary for a serious political party."

In the 26 counties of the south, Adams reminded the delegates, Sinn Féin has been almost exclusively identified with its role in the national liberation struggle against British rule in Northern Ireland. Although it has been able to mobilize people in the south during times of heightened nationalist awareness, as during the hunger strike, he acknowledged, "outside of its nationalist policy Sinn Féin has, to a great extent, been isolated in the twenty-six counties and . . . we have failed to develop the social and economic momentum which our party began during the '60s."

Adams added that "between 1961 and 1982 we took no part in general elections, whilst the vast majority of the people in the twenty-six counties, long accepting the institutions of this partitionist state, even though prepared to criticise them severely, voted for the establishment parties, seeing and thinking of their politics in electoral terms."

The key to breaking through Sinn Féin's rel-

ative isolation in the south, Adams explained, is the ability to concretely explain how the British-orchestrated partition of Ireland was carried out to protect imperialist political and economic interests on both sides of the border and how the question of partition is concretely linked to the current crisis of capitalism in the south.

Socialist alternative

"The potential social and economic revolution that could have followed the nationalist upheaval of the 1916-21 period," Adams told the conference, "was successfully blocked by the partition of the country and the creation of a state controlled by the native beneficiaries of the capitalist system."

Today, one-third of the population in the south lives below the official poverty-mark, and 200,000 workers are jobless. They languish on the unemployment lines while there is a huge need to build new housing, hospitals, and educational facilities for the population.

But by themselves these terrible conditions will not generate revolt, Adams told the *ard fheis*. "The reality is, of course, that things are bad enough without taking a mass plunge in the dark, and this situation will remain unchanged until a credible alternative emerges.

"There is a duty, therefore, on those of us who are striving to build such a radical and revolutionary alternative to put those policies before the people in the clearest and most understandable terms to win support and confidence for the logic of the socialist alternative republicans offer," he stated.

Adams explained that the party's aim must be "the creation of a totally new system in a united democratic socialist republic. . . .

"It means a planned economy which is controlled by its workers, which can set its own aims and divide its own wealth with justice and equality, an independent economy which can exploit and develop its own extensive natural resources, process its own food and feed its own people. An economy serving not the profiteer but the people, providing work for all, along with the satisfaction of the social needs of all."

Adams contrasted the possibilities for Ireland with the dismal situation that now exists. In the economic arena, the 26-county statelet has opened the country to the exploitation of the imperialist corporations and has turned over to them control of the country's economic development and destiny.

'Not even a potato republic'

"The multinationals," Adams pointed out, "have followed a predictable pattern, using up their benefits, pillaging natural resources, and then leaving for pastures new, leaving jobless and demoralised communities behind them."

Sounding the themes of the EEC election campaign, Adams pointed out that since Ireland joined the EEC, locally-controlled industry has collapsed, while the supposed benefits to the farming sector have gone only to the largest farmers. The state in the south, he com-

mented, "has so little control over its own economic destiny that its farming sector is in such chaos that it not only cannot feed itself, but has potatoes as one of the largest Irish food imports.

"How far have we come in this so-called independent state?" he asked. "Not even a potato republic!"

Workers Party

One obstacle Sinn Féin must contend with in the 26 counties is the growing strength and influence of the Workers Party, which originated in a split from Sinn Féin in 1970. The Workers Party, which developed from what was called the "Official" IRA, has since become totally hostile to the national struggle in Northern Ireland, claiming that it divides Catholic and Protestant workers and is an obstacle to building a socialist movement.

Leading members of the Workers Party, such as Cathal Goulding, have even justified the British use of paid perjurers to railroad republicans to jail in Northern Ireland and supported stronger laws against republicans in the south.

Turning its back on the nationalist struggle,

the Workers Party has concentrated almost exclusively on day-to-day, bread and butter issues.

With Sinn Féin having been largely absent from social and economic struggles in the south, and with the Irish Labour Party increasingly discredited due to its participation in anti-working-class coalition governments headed by the right-wing Fine Gael party, the Workers Party has been able to expand its influence in the south as the economic crisis has deepened.

Workers Party leaders hope that, with the crisis in the Labour Party, the Workers Party could become the third largest force in the Irish Parliament in the next general election.

The fact that the Workers Party is a formidable obstacle was graphically illustrated in a parliamentary by-election held in Central Dublin shortly after the Sinn Féin conference. Sinn Féin candidate Christy Burke received 7 percent of the first preference votes in the district, up from 3.2 percent in the February 1982 election. Although Sinn Féin correctly hailed this as a significant gain, it was not lost on anyone that in the same period the Workers Party's vote in the district climbed from 3.7 percent to

IRA denies terrorist charges

In recent years, the leadership of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) has modified its policy of armed struggle to focus against British military and political targets. It has repeatedly stated that its aim is not to kill or injure innocent civilians.

In an effort to obscure this orientation and to brand the IRA and Sinn Féin as terrorist organizations, the capitalist media in Britain and Ireland seized on the Dec. 17, 1983, bombing of Harrods department store in London. Although the IRA fighters who planted the bomb gave the police a 40-minute warning, the bomb exploded, killing five people and wounding 91 others.

A day later, the Army Council of the IRA issued a statement saying that the bombing had not been authorized and that steps had been taken to "insure that there will be no more repetition of this type of operation again."

This was followed by an interview in the January 5 issue of *An Phoblacht/Republican News* with "an authorised spokesperson for the Irish Republican Army."

The IRA representative explained that in IRA operations in Britain "our policy is to inflict damage against enemy political and military targets and to bring to the attention of the British public that their government is engaged in a war in Ireland, that their government will not allow the Irish people their national rights and that is why a barracks gets blown up or those involved in politically administrating, in some way, are attacked.

"Such a strategy relies on the premise

that the British people do not support British government-sponsored murder in Ireland, that they want their troops withdrawn from Ireland as indicated in all opinion polls, and that they have the potential to eventually force the British government, because of the cost of the war or the attrition rate or because of demoralisation and war-weariness, to withdraw from Ireland."

The representative reconfirmed that an inquiry was being carried out into the Harrods operation. While stating again that the operation was not authorized, the spokesperson added that "we do not believe that the Volunteers involved set out to deliberately kill civilians."

The IRA representative noted that some people in Ireland, "out of desperation," favored bombings against civilian targets. "However, regardless of these emotional tendencies and reactions, the republican leadership does not advocate or support such a strategy," the spokesperson said.

The IRA representative also dealt with another controversial incident involving IRA members. The day before the Harrods bombing, an Irish soldier and a policeman were killed in a shoot-out in the Irish Free State, after a group of troops and police attacked an IRA unit that had kidnapped British businessman Don Tidey.

Noting that the shoot-out was being used by the Dublin government to suggest that the IRA was out to overthrow by force of arms the twenty-six-county state, the representative reaffirmed that the IRA had no such intention.

13 percent.

Before the *ard fheis* opened, there was considerable speculation in the media about a possible change in Sinn Féin's constitutional ban on taking seats in the parliaments of Britain, Northern Ireland, and the 26 counties of the south. While no one in Sinn Féin favors participation in the Northern Ireland Assembly or the British Parliament, some forces want to reassess the ban on participation in the Irish Parliament, usually known as Leinster House.

Sinn Féin's constitution bans even discussion of participation in Leinster House or the British or Northern Ireland parliaments. A motion to reaffirm that ban was voted down by a 180 to 140 margin, and another motion that "no aspect of the constitution and rules be closed to discussion" was passed 208 to 98.

Outgoing Sinn Féin President Ruairi O'Bradaigh argued that to discuss taking seats in Leinster House would be "as alien as the IRA discussing surrender or laying down its arms." He and Vice-president Daithi O'Connaill both declined to run for reelection. They noted that for the past two years they had been on the losing side of a number of internal votes on key questions, which placed them in an untenable position as the party's public spokespersons.

Gerry Adams was less categorical than O'Bradaigh on the question of abstentionism. He noted in his address to the conference that "my election as president has, as is to be expected, led to media speculation of a 'Northern takeover' or domination of Sinn Féin and to quiet little rumours that I am about to lead you into Leinster House. My election means neither of these things."

Adams stated that "on the question of Leinster House: we are an abstentionist party; it is not my intention to advocate a change in this situation. The retention or rejection of this policy, as with all others, lies with the *ard fheis* and I am happy to abide by party policy on this issue, as on any issue."

Trade union work

Recognizing that "Sinn Féin, as a serious revolutionary organisation, has to take its politics into the mass organisation of the working class," Sinn Féin leader Paddy Bolger stressed the need for the party to play a more active role in the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU).

The conference sharply criticized the ICTU's failure to provide "effective leadership as a distinct working-class organisation on social and economic matters or the national question," and it called on the ICTU to return to the socialist policies of James Connolly.

Connolly, a founder of the Irish labor movement, was also leader of the Irish Socialist Republican Party. He was executed by the British army after the failure of the Easter 1916 insurrection for independence.

Sinn Féin members in the trade union movement, the gathering determined, must fight for republican positions inside the ICTU along "with all progressive and national forces and individuals."

A number of Sinn Féin members are already active in their unions. One of Sinn Féin's vice presidents, Phil Flynn, is acting general secretary of the Local Government and Public Services Union, the largest white-collar union in the country.

Role of women

Women must be encouraged to fully participate at all levels in the organization and in the struggle as a whole, the conference decided. At the *ard fheis* Sinn Féin mandated that at least one-quarter of the seats on the organization's leading body be filled by women.

The conference recognized the need to run more women as candidates, and urged male members of Sinn Féin to participate in child care at political functions so that more women would be freed to participate.

The question of a woman's right to choose abortion was the subject of heated debate, as it has been at previous conferences. Reflecting the strong influence of Catholicism in Irish life, the conference voted down a motion to strike the statement "we are totally opposed to abortion" from the party's platform. But by a two-to-one majority, the conference amended the section to eliminate the word "totally."

There was considerable discussion of the September 1983 referendum in the south, which passed an amendment to the constitution strengthening the ban on abortion. Many delegates expressed frustration at Sinn Féin's inability to become involved as an organization in the campaign against the amendment. Because Sinn Féin does not recognize the Irish constitution, it took no position on the referendum.

But the conference decided this had been a mistake and agreed that in the future issues and referenda will be assessed on their economic, social, and political merit.

The *ard fheis* also passed a motion that "in the event of any individual woman, group, planning clinic or Well-Woman Centre being prosecuted as a result of the eighth amendment to the Free State constitution [outlawing abortion], Sinn Féin should take an active part in any broad defence campaign."

'Useless Victorian notions'

In his inaugural address to the conference, Gerry Adams blasted the "useless Victorian notions imported and accepted a century ago as economic and social controls of the subject nation," which "remain enshrined in conservative confessional brainwashing which inhibits the natural spirit of the Irish people."

"The disenfranchisement of women, the right to family planning and contraception, the question of divorce and marital breakdown, the invidious social distinctions which surround the question of illegitimacy, one-parent families and so on, are questions which we should be mature enough as a people to decide and settle for ourselves, without fear of crozier [bishops' staffs] waving in the background and without pretending that such problems cannot exist in Ireland."

Coming out of the conference, Sinn Féin has

gained greater self-confidence. Strengthened by its political discussions and the lessons it has drawn in recent years, it is now furthering its efforts to broaden its basis of activity and its appeal throughout Ireland, and especially in the south.

But the organization also faces serious obstacles on both sides of the border. In the 26 counties, the neocolonialist government has stepped up its collaboration and joint operations with the British authorities in the north. Sinn Féin is a special target of governmental and police harassment throughout the south, particularly targeted on intimidation of new members.

In addition, Section 31 of the Irish constitution bans any mention of Sinn Féin's activities by the state-run radio and television monopolies, and media *self-censorship* goes beyond even what is required by the constitution.

This makes it far more difficult for Sinn Féin to get its program out to the masses and combat anti-republican propaganda. Following Gerry Adams' election to the British Parliament, for example, Irish radio and television interviewed every single losing candidate, while blacking-out the winner of the race.

In the north, Sinn Féin must contend with the thousands of British troops occupying the country, as well as the "Loyalist" paramilitary squads that have murdered many leading republican activists.

The British authorities have developed a gigantic repressive apparatus to deal with supporters of the freedom struggle. Although internment without trial has been ended, special juryless courts still operate in Northern Ireland against suspected members of the IRA. Recently the British have expanded the use of show trials where paid perjurers finger people as "terrorists." The testimony of these agents is the only evidence required for conviction in the juryless courts.

The British government's determination to remain in Northern Ireland was graphically illustrated by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's refusal to even consider the demands of the prisoners during the 1981 hunger strike, despite the deaths of 10 young men and the international condemnation of her intransigence.

Further evidence of the British government's position came only two days before Sinn Féin's conference opened. On November 10, British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland James Prior warned a Conservative Party gathering that under Sinn Féin's rule Ireland could become "a Cuba off Britain's west coast."

Stressing the arduous road ahead of the Irish republican movement, Gerry Adams told the Sinn Féin conference: "There is no magic formula nor short-cut in the struggle we have been forced into. On the contrary, there is only patient, well-planned and sometimes mundane work which will in time create an irreversible thrust towards independence and the restoration of an Irish democracy." □

Economy registers new gains

In midst of world capitalist crisis

By Ernest Harsch

Despite a world capitalist economic crisis that has devastated most of Latin America — and despite a continuing U.S.-led economic embargo — the Cuban economy has made new advances over the past year.

In fact, the Cuban economy's performance in 1983 surprised even Cuba's own economic planners. While a growth rate of 2.5 percent had been projected for 1983, it actually reached 5 percent. The living standards of Cuba's workers and farmers also improved.

Thus while countries like Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Mexico, and the United States itself have been plagued by large-scale unemployment, inflation, and a general drop in the standard of living, Cuba has been able to maintain its impressive economic performance.

It is no wonder then that Cuba's socialist revolution — which has made possible such economic and social progress — continues to serve as an example to all the oppressed and exploited of Latin America and the rest of the world.

Aggression on the airwaves

Fearful of this example, the U.S. imperialists have waged a relentless campaign of aggression, threats, and provocations against the Cuban revolution and against those elsewhere who would seek to apply its lessons to their own countries. As part of this drive, Washington's propaganda mills have churned out the most abject lies and distortions to try to slander and deface the revolution's achievements.

On January 5, President Reagan made his own small contribution to this effort with a

five-minute broadcast over Voice of America, beamed in both English and Spanish to Cuba and the rest of Latin America.

Noting that it was 25 years since the beginning of the Cuban revolution, Reagan claimed that "the promises made to you have not been kept.

"Since 1959, you've been called upon to make one sacrifice after another. And for what? Doing without has not brought you a more abundant life. It has not brought you peace. And most important, it has not won freedom for your people. . . ."

Since no one in Cuba itself will be taken in by such wild accusations, Reagan's intended audience is among working people in the rest of Latin America. But even outside Cuba some of the basic facts of Cuba's overall progress have become known, and Reagan's speech is likely to have little impact.

The London *Economist*, a big-business journal that is hardly known for favoritism toward Cuba, was forced to take note of some of Reagan's glaring inaccuracies. In a dispatch from Cuba in its January 14 issue, it reported:

"By third-world standards, Cubans live well. They are well clothed, and enjoy free education and health care. President Reagan alleged in a radio broadcast to Cuba last week that Mr Castro had lowered the Cuban standard of living, but this is true mainly of the middle and upper classes, who have mostly moved to Miami. For Cuba's poor majority, life has improved, though it remains austere."

In contrast to larger countries in Latin America like Brazil and Chile, the *Economist* noted, "a quarter of a century of socialism has brought Cuba an average annual growth rate of 4.7%, one of the highest in Latin America."

U.S. tightens embargo against Cuba

In November, the Reagan administration aimed another blow at the Cuban — and Soviet — economies by banning the importation into the United States of semifinished nickel products from the Soviet Union, which is a major buyer of Cuban nickel ore.

The intention was to further tighten the U.S. economic embargo against Cuba that has been in effect for more than 20 years.

Officials of the Treasury Department stressed the political nature of the move, accusing Cuba of "exporting violent revolution to this hemisphere and other parts of the world."

Cuba exports 46 percent of its nickel to

the Soviet Union, where it is processed into various products. One Treasury official claimed that the move was not directed against the Soviet Union and that Soviet exports of such products to the United States could resume if Moscow could "verify" that no Cuban nickel was used in their production.

Similar U.S. bans had earlier been imposed against French and Italian nickel products, but were lifted when those governments certified that they did not contain nickel from Cuba. The Japanese government signed a similar agreement with Washington in June.

Details of Cuba's economic performance during 1983 were made public at a two-day session of the National Assembly of People's Power, Cuba's highest state body, held in Havana December 21-22.

In addition to a number of other reports that were presented and discussed by deputies to the assembly, Humberto Pérez, a vice-president of the Council of Ministers and the president of the Central Planning Board, outlined the outcome of the 1983 economic plan.

Increased production

Pérez began by noting the considerations that had led to last year's projection of a 2.5 percent growth rate for Cuba, a figure considerably below the Cuban average. These included an unfavorable world economic situation, "the blockade and specifically heightened imperialist pressure against our country," and the bleak economic prospects facing Third World countries in general, particularly in Latin America. Cuba's planners thus expected the country's economic problems to be even worse than in the previous year.

Despite all this, overall economic growth was double the anticipated figure.

"To what do we owe these economic gains?" Pérez asked. "They are simply the product of organizational progress made in the last few years and specific measures taken by our Party and government since the end of last year and the start of this to make the most of our resources." As well, Pérez went on, they were made possible through the support of Cuba's trade unions, the National Association of Small Farmers, and other mass organizations. Above all, Pérez stressed, they are the product of "extraordinary efforts on the part of our working people."

The one key area of production that fell below projections was the sugar industry. This was largely due to bad weather conditions, which resulted in a drop in production of more than 1 million tons, compared with the previous harvest. Some other sectors of agriculture suffered as well.

But most industrial production targets were surpassed, particularly in fuel, mining, ferrous metallurgy, nonelectrical machine construction, construction materials, clothing, leather, and food. Construction and trade as a whole also increased, with nonsugar exports rising by 60 percent.

Overall investments, most of them undertaken in conjunction with the Soviet Union and other members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon), reached the highest level ever.

One factor in this increased production was

a concerted effort to conserve scarce resources and tighten up on efficiency. Oil consumption, for instance, was considerably below projections. A greater amount of raw materials and spare parts was recycled.

Labor productivity, expected to increase by about 2 percent, actually rose by 3.5 percent.

Standard of living up

Cuba's overall economic gains have been reflected in an increase in living standards for most Cubans. During 1983, this has meant:

- An improvement in food supplies, per person, especially of rice, root vegetables, beans, eggs, and fish. The average daily calorie intake rose to 2,970 calories, and the protein intake to 78.8 grams.

- A rise in the possession of durable goods. The index per 100 families rose 6% for television sets and refrigerators, 11% for washing machines, and 2% for radios.

- An increase in the number of hospital beds per 1,000 inhabitants, and a rise in the number of doctors and dentists: there is now one doctor for every 524 inhabitants and one dentist for every 2,249.

- A further drop in the already low infant mortality rate, to 17 in every 1,000 live births.

After discussing and assessing the results of

the 1983 economic plan, the deputies to the National Assembly then debated and approved the 1984 plan, which had been drawn up following months of discussion and consultation with the Municipal and Provincial Assemblies of People's Power, the workers in enterprises around the country, the central state administrative agencies, and the local leaderships of the Communist Party.

The outline of the 1984 plan, which was also presented by Humberto Pérez, projected a 4-4.5% increase in the Gross Social Product, a 4% rise in trade, and a 2.5-3% increase in productivity.

"We are sure the plan we now present to you," Pérez concluded, "will be tackled with the same determination, work spirit, economizing and efficiency that we have seen in 1983, and that when we report on the results next year they will be equally encouraging, in line with the spirit of our people and the superiority of our socioeconomic system, even in a situation of world crisis.

"While countries of the capitalist world face insoluble problems of economic decline, unemployment, hunger and all sorts of difficulties, our people are successfully taking on tasks demanded of the times in the face of imperialist aggression." □

point out that the figures are averages. We shall illustrate examples with an average family given the name of Liborio.

Considering that the male-female ratio in Cuba is 102-100 and the average number of members in a family or occupants per dwelling is 4.1, we can take Liborio's family to be composed of father, mother and two children (a boy and a girl), living in a dwelling with at least two bedrooms.

We can locate this family's dwelling in an urban area with 70 percent certainty. And considering average statistics we can further limit it to one of the 41 cities with a population between 20,000 and 500,000 where 40 percent of the population lives.

Housing

Cuba has 2,368,453 dwellings, of which 2,291,077 are permanent households. Eighty-two percent of these dwellings are either houses or apartments, so it's likely that the Liborio family lives in one of these.

Liborio's dwelling has electricity, since 83 percent of Cuba's housing units — 99 percent in urban areas — have electric service. The Liborios cook with gas or kerosene since 94 percent of households use these types of fuel. Cooking is also done with electricity (although rarely, only 2 percent); charcoal or wood (generally in the rural areas, 2 percent). Eighty-five percent of the households have running water treated with bactericides and 70 percent have interior plumbing. Ninety-six percent have private toilet facilities.

Of every 100 Cuban households, like the Liborio family's home, 83 have a radio; 73 have a TV set; 65 have refrigerators; 53 have sewing machines; 36 have electric washing machines; and 47 have electric fans. Only 6 percent of Cuban homes lack all of these durable goods. Therefore, it is quite likely that the Liborios have at least one of them.

Cuban houses are generally built of concrete, cement blocks, or wood, but lately prefabricated houses are more common. Over 47 percent of dwellings in Cuba were built after the triumph of the Revolution in 1959, and of these between 54 percent and 62 percent are in the eastern provinces. If the Liborio family lives in one of these dwellings built by the state, the rent does not exceed 10 percent of the

How the average Cuban lives

A statistical portrait

By José M. Norriella

[The following are excerpts from a special supplement published in the Dec. 18, 1983, issue of the English-language weekly edition of *Granma*, the newspaper of the Communist Party of Cuba.]

* * *

In its 24 years of existence the Cuban Revolution has made a systematic effort to improve the people's living and working conditions.

The development of a sound social infrastructure together with the achievement in producing material goods enabled the Cuban Revolution to improve the people's living standard, especially in the last ten years. According to official data, Cuba has made remarkable progress in this respect despite the worldwide capitalist crisis, galloping inflation, the onerous credits granted to underdeveloped countries, and the dramatic drop in the price of raw materials. For example, Cuba's GNP grew by 12 percent in 1981 and this was reported in ECLA's [Economic Commission For Latin America] yearly report on the Latin American economy.

The basic, programmatic goals of socialism are to satisfy man's growing material and spiritual needs and to develop a new type of social relations based on fellow feeling and mutual assistance which guarantee man's overall development. The attainment of these goals is made possible by the social ownership of the

means of production, the elimination of the exploitation of man by man, a view of work as a creative activity and as a right and a duty of all, and the development of the national economy according to a single plan governed by the socioeconomic law of socialism.

The country's official figures throw light on this subject. (These figures are compiled and processed by the State Committee for Statistics on the basis of data furnished by 169 municipal statistics offices which gather their information from the records kept by all economic entities.)

In order to enumerate some facets of the Cuban people's living standard we should

Selected Standard of Living Indicators (percentages)

Indicator	1953	1970	1981
Schooling	56.4	88.0	97.3
6th grade completed	20.1	31.6	61.0
Homes with indoor sanitary facilities	74.9	82.0	91.0
Homes with electricity	56.4	70.7	82.9
Radio sets	49.0	61.0	82.0
TV sets	6.0	17.0	58.0
Refrigerators	16.0	24.0	51.0
Sewing machines	—	40.0	50.0
Washing machines	—	—	28.0
Electric fans	—	—	35.0

family income. If Liborio built his own home, purchased it, or inherited it, he pays no rent at all.

Life expectancy rises

Reviewing the ages of heads of families for the last three censuses (1953, 1970, and 1981), it is clear that most heads of families are generally at least 45 years old. Those 50 years old or more are overwhelmingly male, more than 80 percent. And so Liborio is probably between 50 and 54 years old.

According to the average number of live births of children per woman in the 15-49 age group, we see that in the eastern provinces the rate is about two. If we consider all Cuban women over 15 (approximately 3,371,000), 29 percent have no children and 37 percent have one or two children. This shows that the number of children of nearly two-thirds of all Cuban women is not high enough to maintain the current population. This rate is generally set at 2.1 children per woman. Most likely there are only two children in Liborio's home, and their mother is anywhere from 45-49 according to 1981 census data and is a high school or university graduate.

The average age of Cubans has increased in the last 30 years. In the 1953 census it was 26; in 1970 it was 27, and in the latest census it was 29.5 years. In the urban areas it is greater overall and slightly less for men than women. This rate is higher than in any nation in the hemisphere except for the United States where the figure is 32.3. The aging of the Cuban population is basically due to the lower mortality rate, which has dropped to under 18 per 1000, making life expectancy at birth about 73. Another factor is that people have had less children over the last 20 years, thereby increasing the percentage of elderly people.

The dependency ratio and the active-age population are two factors which shed further light on the Liborio family.

The dependency ratio is the number of people under 15 and over 65 (potentially inactive) for every 100 people whose age ranges from 15 to 65 (potentially active). For Cuba the ratio was 61, but in urban areas it is much less (57).

Advances in education

So in the Liborio family there are probably three people over 15 who are part of the active-age population, and two of those three are working. The other two (the children) are not working and still depend on their parents. The eldest is probably in the university, and the youngest has probably finished secondary school (the ninth grade is compulsory in Cuba) and is going to a technological school or some other intermediate-level institution.

The average grade level is 6.4. The number of school-age people who have not finished elementary school has been cut by half in comparison to 1953. In that year the figure was 80 percent; in 1970 it was 68 percent; and in 1981 it was 39 percent. This reflects the Revolution's progress in the educational field among



Harry Ring/Militant

Cuban working women can leave their children in low-cost daycare centers.

people born after 1959. We can see that in the 15-19 and 20-24 age groups there are differences of 69 and 62 percent respectively regarding the number of people who have not finished elementary school compared to 1953. The positive influence of the increase in the educational level of the Cuban people, due to the Revolution's work, is evident in all age groups of the population. In 1953, only 20 percent had at least six years of schooling; in 1970 it was nearly 32 percent; and in 1981 it was 61 percent.

Cuba's economically active population is 3.5 million. More than 79 percent have at least a sixth-grade education, and 40 percent a ninth-grade level. Three-fourths of the people live in urban areas where educational levels are logically higher, often notably so since the percentage of people with a ninth-grade education is nearly 86.

In order to fairly judge the standard of living in Cuba we must keep in mind that within the Cuban socialist economy, unlike market economy countries, salaries are not the only source of revenue which meets the needs of the population.

In Cuba, since the victory of the Revolution, educational services have been free, from elementary school to university, as well as medical and hospital care. There is free access to sports events and the practice of sports. Beaches, recreation centers, and some cultural and artistic events are free. Working women can leave their young children in day-care centers at an average price of 25 pesos a month, while caring for a child in such institutions costs the state 70-75 pesos a month. Some 85,000 women have their children in these

centers. One of every three women in the 17-55 age group works.

In the average Cuban family more than one person works, for an average monthly salary of 176 pesos. To this we must add bonuses, allowances, and other payments which increase the earnings of a family to 307 pesos a month. (In Cuba the official exchange rate for one peso was 0.8675 U.S. dollars in November.)

No one starves

In urban areas 38 percent per capita of a family's income goes for food, 11 percent for clothing and shoes and another 11 percent for cigars, cigarettes, and alcoholic beverages. Every Cuban saves 20 pesos a year in an account. Of the money which goes for food, 85 percent is spent on meals cooked at home, and the remainder eating out.

Every Cuban is assured of a diet which meets minimal international standards. Cubans do not suffer from vitamin deficiencies. This is accomplished by providing a number of basic products through a ration system. Other foods, less important from a nutritional viewpoint, are sold without limits at prices which even people with lower incomes can pay.

Both groups include such foods as rice, beans, lard, meat, milk, yogurt, butter, sugar, bread, crackers, pastas, eggs, fish, root and other vegetables, and fresh fruit. This accounts for monthly expenditures of 11-12 pesos per person for staples. But people also receive meals in school and at work at a price never greater than one peso and sometimes free of charge.

Thus every Cuban ingests an average of 2300 calories and 60 grams of protein daily. If we add restaurant meals and other products from the market whose prices are higher than those we have just mentioned, the total is 2880 calories and 76 grams of protein.

Regarding the Liborio family's diet, we can say that every week each family member eats 2.1 kilograms of grain, 1 kilogram of sugar, 1.5 kilograms of root vegetables, 0.2 kilograms of beans, 0.6 kilograms of meat or meat by-products, 4 eggs, 0.3 kilograms of fish, 2.9 kilograms of dairy products (in its equivalent of fresh milk), 0.3 kilograms of fats, 1.2 kilograms of vegetables, and 1.2 kilograms of fresh fruit. These indexes are expressed using international agencies' conventions.

Each member of the family visits the doctor five times a year and the dentist once, services which are free of charge. When a person is hospitalized, even his medicines are free of charge. The Cuban state spends 55 pesos per person for medical care each year.

The state also spends 145 pesos a year per capita to guarantee free education for all those of school age from elementary school to university.

The Cuban people are building socialism, and in the 24 years since the victory of the Revolution they have eradicated begging, prostitution, unemployment, drug abuse and trafficking, illiteracy, many diseases, and poverty. There are no hungry and neglected children or old people in Cuba. □

Bandera Socialista

"*Socialist Banner*," weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), Mexican section of the Fourth International. Published in Mexico City.

The Nov. 20, 1983, issue ran the text of a statement released the day before by the Socialist League (LS), announcing its decision to fuse with the PRT. The Socialist League was formed in 1982, following a series of expulsions and breaks from the Socialist Workers Party (POS), a group linked to the Bolshevik Faction, an international current headed by Nahuel Moreno that split from the Fourth International in 1979.

After analyzing the Mexican government's antiworker economic policies — which have been dictated by the International Monetary Fund — and its parallel attacks against democratic rights, the LS statement declared, "In order to confront this assault of the government and the bourgeoisie, the workers need the broadest unity, on the trade-union as well as political levels."

While some steps were being taken toward trade-union unity, on the political level there has been little progress toward "an organic unity that would permit a centralization of the dispersed forces of the organizations claiming to be of the workers and the left."

"It is in this context," the statement went on, "that the Socialist League and the Revolutionary Workers Party have decided to join our forces in order to advance more firmly toward the construction of a revolutionary party that has influence among important sectors of the masses. This unification is the product of deep reflection over our agreements and disagreements. It is clear that our disagreements are on both national and international questions. Nevertheless, we are convinced that we can resolve them within the framework of a unified organization."

The Socialist League statement continued by pointing out that in order to organize the majority of workers, peasants, and shantytown dwellers the party would have to "participate in the daily struggles, elementary as they may be, of all these social sectors." The participation of the party must "convey the idea of permanent mobilization of all the exploited and oppressed, completely independent of the bourgeoisie, its state, its government, [and] its parties," they said.

The statement also pointed to the need for "the broadest freedom of internal discussion" within the party, as well as "iron unity in action . . . and centralized application of the decisions that have been made."

In conclusion, the LS called on "other organizations that claim to be revolutionary

Marxist" to open discussions aimed at forging revolutionary unity. It also called on those who remain in the POS to leave it and join the PRT.

Rouge

"*Red*," weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International. Published in Paris.

A short item in the international news briefs column of the December 23–January 1 issue reported on the December 9 statement of the Central Committee of the People's Liberation Forces (FPL) of El Salvador.

The FPL statement had condemned the role of its former commander-in-chief Salvador Cayetano Carpio in the April 1983 assassination of Mélida Anaya Montes, then second in command of the FPL.

The news item, which was signed "S.J.," concluded: "This condemnation [of Carpio] by the unanimous decision of the CC of the FPL, was made public in the communiqué on the occasion of a split in the organization that gave rise to the Revolutionary Workers Movement–Salvador Cayetano Carpio (MOR).

"In the absence of basic information on the political differences at the root of this split or on what were the 'ideological deviations' [of Carpio] that are being denounced today, clearly this split — on the organizational level — is something that weakens the FPL and is a blow to the process of unification. It occurs just at the time when the military and political struggle is intensifying and when imperialism is stepping up its counteroffensive."

SOLIDARIDAD SOCIALISTA

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

Solidaridad Socialista, which reflects the views of a current led by Nahuel Moreno that split from the Fourth International in 1979, commented in its Nov. 8, 1983, issue on the positions taken by the Communist Party of Cuba and Fidel Castro on the counterrevolution in Grenada. The article first quoted the following paragraph from the Cuban CP's Oct. 20, 1983, statement:

"No doctrine, no principle or position held up as revolutionary, and no internal division justifies atrocious proceedings like the physical elimination of Bishop and the outstanding

group of honest and worthy leaders. . . ."

Solidaridad Socialista then commented: "All this is quite true. But Fidel Castro owes an explanation to the entire world socialist movement. Because the Grenadian leaders often recognized Fidel and Cuba as their teachers. And what did Fidel Castro teach them?"

"Unfortunately, he taught them with deeds that were the opposite of what he now affirms in his statement. In 1968, Fidel Castro supported the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, which imposed at gunpoint a change in the government and in the leadership of the Communist Party. At that time, he supported 'atrocious proceedings' that took a heavy toll in deaths, imprisonments, firings, and the suppression of the freedom to organize, meet, and express opinions.

"In 1981, when General Jaruzelski made a coup d'état in Poland against Solidarity and its 10 million workers, Fidel Castro again supported such 'atrocious proceedings.' He did not say then that it was 'atrocious' to kill and beat workers who defended their union, or to jail leaders democratically elected by the ranks.

"In Cuba itself there is no workers democracy that would allow the organization of parties other than the Communist Party. Nor do CP members have the right to form tendencies to democratically settle their internal differences.

"This bad example that Fidel Castro has given to the Grenadian leaders is not his own invention. It has a name: *Stalinism*, because its origin is in the dictatorship imposed by Stalin in the Soviet Union from 1924 on. Stalin and his successors, up to today, are *bureaucrats* and, in order to maintain their posts, have imposed a dictatorship based on thuggery. . . .

"Just like the trade-union bureaucracy, Stalinism and its antidemocratic methods are a cancer in the workers' and people's movement. They weaken it, facilitating its defeat by imperialism and the bosses. Just as has occurred in Grenada."

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The revolution's betrayal and overthrow

Part II of introduction to 'Maurice Bishop Speaks'

By Steve Clark

[In December 1983 Pathfinder Press published a new book, *Maurice Bishop Speaks: The Grenada Revolution 1979-83*. * The 400-page book contains speeches and interviews with the murdered Grenadian revolutionary leader as well as statements by the Cuban leadership on the events surrounding Bishop's overthrow and the U.S. invasion of Grenada.

[We are reprinting below, in the second of two parts, the introduction to the book, written by *Intercontinental Press* editor Steve Clark. Clark visited Grenada in 1980 and 1983. (In our last issue, we erroneously referred to Clark as the editor of the book. The actual editors are Bruce Marcus and Michael Taber.) The introduction is copyright ©1983 and reprinted by permission of Pathfinder Press.

[In the first part of the introduction, reprinted in our last issue, Clark discussed the development, strategy, and achievements of the Grenada revolution. That section concluded with a review of the accomplishments of the revolution in the areas of economics, health care, education, and workers' rights.]

* * *

These accomplishments set an example for the entire Caribbean and Central America, for Blacks and other working people in the United States, Britain, and Canada, and for the oppressed and exploited everywhere. They vindicated Fidel Castro's description of Grenada as "a big revolution in a small country." With each passing year, not only did Grenada's achievements grow, but also their power of attraction beyond its shores. Despite capitalist media efforts to blockade the truth, more and more people were learning about and being inspired by the Grenada revolution. Prime Minister Bishop's visit to the United States in June 1983 had a political impact on a small but important layer of U.S. working people and a vanguard section of the Black population.

In order to stop the spread of this example, Washington was determined from day one to crush the Grenada revolution by armed might. The military and political groundwork for such aggression began to be laid by Carter's Democratic Party administration and continued under the Republican Reagan. U.S. military forces staged a trial run on a tiny island off Puerto Rico in 1981. This mock invasion was transparently named Operation Amber and the Amberdines, to echo the actual island chain of Grenada and the Grenadines. Even the pretexts for the practice invasion were the same as Reagan's phony justification in October 1983 — alleged danger to U.S. citizens, influence from a nearby "Country Red" (clearly Cuba), and a government that had destroyed democracy on "Amber" Island and was exporting subversion throughout the region.

Despite U.S. claims that it was "invited" into Grenada by the Organization of East Caribbean States, Prime Minister Tom Adams of Barbados admitted that the OECS governments were contacted about the operation by U.S. officials at the time Bishop's house arrest first became known. The invasion would have been carried out by the bipartisan cabal in Washington regardless of how many East Caribbean states agreed to "ask for it."

Having now carried out this invasion that has been in the works for four years, U.S. imperialism is setting about to use whatever force is necessary to dismantle every trace of the political, social, and economic accomplishments of the workers' and farmers' government.

Several days following the invasion, Don Rojas, an NJM leader who was Bishop's press secretary, told a British newspaper that Grenada

would be "rapidly colonized" by the U.S. occupiers. "I think they will move very quickly to wipe out all vestiges of the revolution," Rojas said. "The local councils and other democratic structures that we put in place will be dismantled and kept that way by military force."

Washington intends to smash everything that remains from the revolution and to reimpose a puppet government directly subservient to U.S. imperialist interests. And that's exactly what it has been doing.

NJM cadres targeted

The central targets have been the cadres of the New Jewel Movement and mass organizations, whose consciousness remains the most durable conquest of the revolution. The occupiers are carrying out a systematic effort to intimidate and break these cadres, who numbered in the tens of thousands, especially in the working class and among the youth.

Support for the 1979 revolution and its gains remains strong on the island, posing a big problem for the occupiers. Due to the widespread disorientation caused by the Coard group's treachery and murderous violence against NJM leaders and the Grenadian people, many Grenadians mistakenly welcomed the U.S. troops as liberators. Even the big majority of these Grenadians, however, consider themselves supporters of Maurice Bishop and the People's Revolutionary Government — a fact that has perplexed reporters for the capitalist press.

"Will there still be free education in the schools?" asked one young Grenadian woman quoted by a U.S. newspaper. "Will there still be aid to buy [school] uniforms and books?"

"Some people here are beginning to ask themselves who is going to rescue us from our rescuers," another Grenadian reported.

The process of repression and dismantling began with the October 25 invasion itself — so much so that the U.S. government slapped a ban on press coverage of these initial days of terror. That has been followed by the arrest, detention, and grilling of more than 2,000 Grenadians, who were held in small wooden crates that they had to crawl into on their knees. Those who were released were given cards warning them to "refrain from participating in any anti-government activities." An unknown number have been jailed indefinitely.

Kenrick Radix, a leader of the New Jewel Movement who survived Coard's murder machine, was picked up by U.S. authorities and held for twenty hours in one of these isolation boxes. The occupiers claimed that Radix had been acting as "an instigator in spreading bad will among the people in public places." In other words, he had exercised his right to denounce the U.S. invasion and to call for immediate withdrawal of the occupiers in order to remove "the heavy boot of U.S. imperialism" from the neck of the Grenadian people.

A purge and blacklist of government employees has begun, based on CIA computer printouts. The U.S.-imposed puppet regime of British Commonwealth Governor-General Paul Scoon has curtailed political rights. The new government, allegedly needed to restore "democracy" to Grenada, quickly announced that even its trumpeted phony elections might not be held for several years.

The occupiers' degrading treatment of Coard and Gen. Hudson Austin, who are understandably hated by the Grenadian people, is nonetheless also aimed at intimidating supporters of the revolution. Coard and Austin were paraded half naked, blindfolded, and manacled on the island. U.S. military propaganda teams plastered Grenada with posters, printed in the United States, showing Austin with just a towel around his waist; below it was an anticommunist message. Coard and Austin deserve to be brought to justice for their crimes, but by the working people of Grenada, not in a kangaroo court set up by a U.S.-imposed puppet regime.

Along with this repression, initial steps have already been taken to

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strip the Grenadian people of the social and economic gains of the revolution. Free and low-cost distribution of milk and other necessities has ended. Adult education centers are shut down. Schools and hospitals have been deprived of teachers and doctors by the expulsion of Cuban and other overseas staff people. Unemployment has already doubled. And any remnants of mass organizations and democratic workplace and community councils are being crushed.

This is what it takes to try to stamp out the vestiges of Grenada's workers' and farmers' government and the popular revolution on which it stood.

Coard's treachery and betrayal

As already explained, Washington was able to carry off this counter-revolutionary onslaught with such apparent ease because the Grenadian workers' and farmers' government had been betrayed and overthrown. As surviving NJM leader George Louison put it, "the revolution was destroyed from within." Fidel Castro devoted a substantial portion of his November 14 speech to explaining the significance of this fact to the Cuban people and to revolutionists elsewhere in the Americas and throughout the world.

"Hyenas emerged from the revolutionary ranks," said Castro, referring to Coard's secret faction in the government, army, and New Jewel Movement.

"Were those who conspired against [Bishop] within the Grenadian party, army, and security forces by any chance a group of extremists drunk on political theory?" he asked. "Were they simply a group of ambitious, opportunistic individuals, or were they enemy agents who wanted to destroy the Grenadian revolution?"

"History alone will have the last word," Castro said, "but it would not be the first time that such things occurred in a revolutionary process."

Castro is correct. Many details of the secret plotting and motivations of those involved may never be known. But Castro is also correct to explain that the most important facts and lessons *are* already known and do not depend on yet unanswered questions.

"The fact is that allegedly revolutionary arguments were used," Castro said, "invoking the purest principles of Marxism-Leninism and charging Bishop with practicing a cult of personality and with drawing away from the Leninist norms and methods of leadership."

Castro correctly condemned these charges as "absurd." He explained how the capitalist press had made use of them to present the events in Grenada "as the coming to power of a group of hard-line communists, loyal allies of Cuba. Were they really communists?" Castro asked. "Were they really hard-liners? Could they really be loyal allies of Cuba? Or were they rather conscious or unconscious tools of Yankee imperialism?"

"Look at the history of the revolutionary movement," Castro said, "and you will find more than one connection between imperialism and those who take positions that appear to be on the extreme left. Aren't Pol Pot and Ieng Sary — the ones responsible for the genocide in Kampuchea — the most loyal allies Yankee imperialism has in Southeast Asia at present?"

"In Cuba, ever since the Grenadian crisis began," he said, "we have called Coard's group — to give it a name — the 'Pol Pot group.'"

Much of what happened in Grenada has been clarified in press interviews with surviving NJM and PRG leaders such as Don Rojas, Kenrick Radix, and George Louison, who have also given assessments of these events.†

Semisecret faction

A semisecret factional grouping or clique around Bernard Coard had managed, especially since mid-1982, to strengthen its influence and control inside the government apparatus, the officer corps of the army, and in the New Jewel Movement. It functioned more and more as a party within the party.

This grouping thrived on seeking to pin the blame for the revolution's

† Substantial quotations from interviews with Louison and Radix appeared in articles by Edward Cody in the November 9, 1983, *Washington Post* and by Thomas E. Ricks in the November 8 *Wall Street Journal*. Radix was interviewed

very real difficulties on Bishop and other NJM leaders not in their faction, rather than trying to solve these problems and iron out differences in the course of loyal leadership collaboration and common practical work. Instead of functioning on the basis of political, objective, frank, honest, and selfless relations inside the leadership, the Coard group consolidated its position through favoritism, buddyism, privilege, and administrative control.

Coard's ability to carry out his catastrophic bid for power, if only for a few weeks, was not a matter of Lucifer somehow running amok amid the heavenly host. A materialist explanation for what happened in Grenada cannot rise or fall simply on an assessment of the actions of a single individual — even an individual whose role was unquestionably decisive. These events reflected the social consequences of objective difficulties from imperialist pressure, poverty, and small size already described. Coard exploited these real difficulties to gain a hearing from



U.S. soldier holding Grenadian prisoner. Aim of U.S. invasion is to wipe out all vestiges of revolution.

layers of politically inexperienced cadres in the NJM for his explanation that "the problem is Maurice."

In any revolution confronting such obstacles, the resulting pressures bear down with a different intensity and results on various social classes and layers within the working class itself. A small hotel owner is affected differently from a working person; a farmer differently from a wage worker; a highly paid worker differently from one who has more directly benefited from the revolution's social achievements; and a person who has settled into a comfortable niche in the government apparatus differently from someone more closely attuned to the masses of the population. While there is no mechanical correlation between such underlying social differentiations and the lineup that developed inside the party, state apparatus, and army in Grenada, the strongest base of support for Bishop and the revolutionary government clearly came from working people, especially among the youth. Coard and his followers had become divorced from the Grenadian people and reflected attitudes of bureaucratism, careerism, and individual ambition characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie, not the working class.

It is important to add that CIA agents were undoubtedly operating at every level of the Grenadian government, army, party, and mass organi-

by Paul McIsaac for an article that appeared in the November 23 issue of New York's *Village Voice*. Articles in the October 31 *Washington Post* and October 30 *Sunday Sun* of Barbados centered on interviews with Rojas, and a major interview with Rojas appeared in the December 26 issue of *Intercontinental Press*. Articles by Morris S. Thompson interviewing Louison appeared in the November 6 and 7 issues of Long Island's *Newsday*. Articles based on interviews with Louison, Radix, and Lyden Ramdhanny, another PRG member, appeared in the November 6 issue of the *Sunday Guardian* of Trinidad. In addition, Louison conducted an extensive but yet-unpublished interview with a group visiting Grenada in mid-November sponsored by CUSO.

zations, as they always do in any revolution or revolutionary organization. Nonetheless, imperialism and its agents did not create the divisions inside the revolutionary leadership. Instead, they were able to take advantage of weaknesses already there to exacerbate tensions and turn divisions to their own advantage.

Petty-bourgeois modes of functioning

The petty-bourgeois and bureaucratic modes of functioning by the Coard faction in the government, army, and party — not any thought-out alternative political course for Grenada — were at the root of this group's trajectory. Nonetheless, Fidel Castro chose his words well November 14 when he spoke of this outfit as the "Pol Pot group."

The point is not to imply that Coard was hell-bent on a wholesale expropriation policy, let alone on the extraordinarily brutal anti-working-class, antipeasant, and antisocialist measures imposed by Pol Pot.

As Don Rojas explained, however, "Bernard and his people . . . said they were dissatisfied with the pace at which the process was evolving. . . . Somehow the notion that this process was not going fast enough entered into the ideological discussion in the party and led to a kind of cleavage. Some people said we needed to push it forward more rapidly. Others argued for a more rational, scientific, and less idealistic assessment of this question."

Rojas said that this criticism had emerged rather suddenly, and that Coard himself had previously argued against such notions as the government's chief economic planning official.

Rather than recognizing *politically* that objective material conditions and class relations were above all responsible for the problems confronting the revolution in Grenada, Coard's followers acted as if it were somehow possible to leap over these factors in an *administrative* way.

The Coard and Pol Pot groups also shared, to however different an extent, a similar ultraleft, antidemocratic, and authoritarian brutality toward the workers and farmers. Unlike Bishop and other NJM leaders, Coard's relations with the Grenadian workers and farmers were not based on promoting their organization, mobilization, and class consciousness, but on administrative dictates and persuasion of the gun.

Campaign of gossip

To justify its maneuvers against Bishop, Whiteman, Radix, and other NJM leaders who did not share its penchant for dictates and commands, the Coard group began a campaign of gossip alleging that these individuals were "less Marxist" and "less proletarian." Suddenly, Rojas said, "we hear Maurice Bishop accused of being petty bourgeois. We hear Unison Whiteman accused of being social democratic, of representing the right wing within the party. This was the first time we heard that there was a right wing within the party."

Rojas explained that the Organization of Revolutionary Education and Liberation, the name of the organization forming the core of Coard's faction, went back to before the NJM was founded. In the early 1970s it had merged with Bishop's MAP and Whiteman's JEWEL to form the party, Rojas said, but "always maintained a kind of clique, an OREL clique, within the New Jewel Movement during the 1970s and even after the 1979 revolution."

In any genuine fusion of political organizations, it quickly becomes irrelevant who among the leadership and cadres of the new organization had his or her origins in one group or another. No one makes political judgments or assignments on the basis of whether or not someone in the party used to be "one of our people." While the MAP and JEWEL cadres had carried out such a successful fusion, it is now clear that Coard's OREL grouping had never adopted this attitude toward the New Jewel Movement.

Coard's campaign against Bishop and other NJM leaders took several concrete forms.

On one level, capable leaders of the revolution who were not Coard's "kind of guy" were pushed out of the leadership. Kenrick Radix, for example, was removed from the Central Committee. At the same time, Coard gradually managed to get more and more of his supporters onto the leadership bodies and into the apparatus of the party, the government, and the army. "He did this in a very systematic way," Rojas said, "so that when he decided to make his move for leadership of the party,

he had already consolidated quite a power base."

In mid-1982, Coard and those around him began to complain about serious problems inside the party. In July 1982 Coard resigned from the Central Committee, attributing his decision to "slack and weak functioning" of the CC and the Political Bureau. He said that both leadership bodies were operating contrary to Marxist-Leninist principles of party building.

Charges began to be heard that Bishop's alleged political shallowness, lack of Leninist organizational skills and discipline, and insufficient grasp of party-building strategy and tactics were to blame for the "crisis" in the NJM. Coard himself, having stepped aside, never explicitly mentioned Bishop, leaving that to his collaborators. As Radix put it, "What he did was to hide behind his wife [Phyllis, who remained a CC member] and some of the younger fellows to work his way. Coard used slander, rumor, and deceit to slander Maurice. The worst of Stalinist tactics."

September 1983 Central Committee

This campaign went on for more than a year. Then, in September 1983, an emergency meeting of the Central Committee was called together by Maj. Liam James, a follower of Coard in the army officer corps and a member of General Austin's shortlived "Revolutionary Military Council." Bernard Coard was not there, since he had resigned from the Central Committee.

Lt. Col. Ewart Layne, another Coard supporter in the army and later RMC member, opened the meeting. Layne explained that there was a big crisis in the country — lagging popular support, problems in the party, bad roads and electricity services, a deterioration of the revolution's international prestige, and so on. Phyllis Coard and Minister of Mobilization Selwyn Strachan, who also emerged as a Coard supporter, again spoke of the weakness in the Marxist-Leninist ideological development of the Central Committee.

According to George Louison, the initial portion of the meeting did not involve direct criticisms of Bishop, but discussion later shifted in that direction. James, Layne, and Maj. Leon Cornwall, also a Coard supporter and later RMC member, got the ball rolling. Phyllis Coard chimed in that many NJM members were scared to criticize Bishop, because he had been "hostile to criticism."

According to Louison, however, it was not until the last day of the two-and-a-half day meeting that "out of the blue a proposal came out: The main problem within the Central Committee is Maurice's weaknesses." No alternative political policies were put forward by Coard's supporters, Louison said.

Instead, Liam James placed a motion on the floor calling for Bishop to relinquish part of his leadership responsibilities to Coard. Bishop was to handle mass work and international relations; his strengths were allegedly limited to those arenas. Bernard Coard was to take over internal party work and overall strategy, since he was the "only" person who could "push the process forward."

Whiteman and Louison argued that the Central Committee should take collective responsibility for the problems facing the revolution, not attempt to place the blame on Bishop or any other single comrade in the leadership. Along with Bishop, they pointed to the material conditions in Grenada as the source of many difficulties and stressed the need for more systematic efforts to strengthen relations between the party, the government, and the workers and farmers in Grenada.

When Louison asked how such an important change would be explained to the Grenadian people and to fraternal political parties, Coard's supporters answered that the decision would remain an internal secret of the NJM. Nothing would be said to the Grenadian people or other parties.

Of the thirteen members of the seventeen-person Central Committee in attendance, nine voted for this so-called joint leadership resolution; three abstained, including Bishop and Whiteman; and one — Louison — voted against.

Bishop's view on proposals

Several more Central Committee meetings took place during the latter half of September; Coard began to attend. It was agreed that Bishop

would take some time to consider the joint leadership proposal, and he did not attend most of these late September CC meetings. According to Louison, from that time on, Coard was actually "calling the shots." At a September 25 CC meeting, Bishop agreed to the joint leadership motion, "subject to clarification," Louison said.

Rojas, who although not a Central Committee member nonetheless worked very closely with Bishop, expanded on Bishop's attitude toward the CC proposal. "His position to the Central Committee," Rojas said, "and to the party was that he did not have any problems with the proposal in principle — that if it was a majority decision of the party, he would abide by the principle of democratic centralism and majority vote on this issue.

"But he would have liked more discussion of the practical application of this joint leadership proposal. He had difficulty understanding exactly how it was going to work, as did many members of the party. . . . And he felt, quite frankly, that the way it had been proposed would have effectively removed him from influence in the top decision-making organs of the party."

Bishop's attitude to the Coard group's talk about "more Leninist" functioning of the party was similar. "Maurice and the rest of the comrades had absolutely no difficulty in accepting the concept," Rojas said, "if it meant a more disciplined and more organized approach to party work; to the norms of party life; to study; to the application of the fundamental principles on which the party was built; to an understanding of democratic centralism," and so on.

"But I think Lenin was being used as a cover," Rojas said. "It appears that the call for a more Leninist organization was misused to cover up what was in its essence a bid for power."

At the end of September, Bishop, Whiteman, Louison, and Rojas left for Hungary and Czechoslovakia to try to obtain some additional electrical power generators for the island. It was then, Louison explained, that the Coard group took advantage of Bishop being out of the country to begin systematically disarming the militias. Coard and his followers knew what was coming, and they also knew that their base was in the army officer corps and a few trusted units, not in the armed workers and farmers of Grenada.

Bishop and the three other NJM leaders stopped in Cuba for a few days on their return trip from Eastern Europe. Castro explained in his November 14 speech that during this stopover, "In spite of his very close and affectionate links with our party's leadership, Bishop never said anything about the internal dissensions that were developing. On the contrary, in his last conversation with us he was self-critical about his work regarding attention to the armed forces and the mass organizations. Nearly all of our party and state leaders spent many friendly, fraternal hours with him on the evening of October 7, before his return trip to Grenada."

Contrary to all previous practice, only one other leader of the NJM and PRG was on hand at the airport to meet Bishop when he landed in Grenada October 8. For the next two days, Bernard Coard, who had served as acting prime minister during the trip, made no effort to contact Bishop about developments in the country during his absence.

'One-manism' charge

When Coard learned of the meetings in Cuba with Castro and other top CP leaders, however, he charged that Bishop, Louison, Whiteman, and Rojas had taken internal NJM affairs outside the party and had sought to obtain Cuban backing for their position. The four NJM leaders denied this charge.

Coard and his backers "went so far as to say Fidel had made himself a little god in Cuba," Louison reported, implying that this was happening in Grenada as well. This marked the opening salvo of a new campaign against Bishop, this one centering on his alleged "one-manism" and the dangers of a personality cult.

"That was perhaps the weakest charge of all," Rojas commented. "The people who knew Maurice Bishop knew him to be perhaps the most modest and least arrogant of all the top leaders of the party. He was the most accommodating and probably the number one adherent to the principle of collective leadership."

As a result of these developments, according to Louison, Bishop in-

formed other members of the Central Committee that he would like to schedule a review in the CC or the Political Bureau of the joint leadership proposal and its practical application and consequences.

October 12 events

Then, on October 12, a chain of events was set into motion that would result, before the day was out, in a de facto coup and the overthrow of Grenada's workers' and farmers' government.

Those events began just after midnight, when Bishop's security detail was awakened and brought together for a meeting while Bishop was sleeping. According to Louison, they were told that Bishop was "becoming a dictator" and that "their responsibility is to defend the working people and not to defend any leader." This was the set-up for Bishop's house arrest, which was to come later in the day.

At 7 a.m., the members of the New Jewel Movement in the army met and passed a resolution claiming that Bishop and Louison were trying to reverse the earlier Central Committee decision and demanding that these "opportunists" be expelled from the party.

At 9 a.m., the New Jewel Movement Political Bureau met. The two main points on its agenda were discussion of the armed forces resolution and a motion to expel Louison from the Political Bureau and Central Committee for alleged violations of democratic centralism.

Later in the day, the Central Committee met. It expelled George Louison, and members leveled yet another charge against Bishop. They claimed that Bishop was spreading a rumor that Bernard and Phyllis Coard were plotting to kill him. Louison stated that this "was a complete lie . . . made up by Bernard in order to try to justify his position." Rojas and Radix agree.

The Central Committee demanded that Bishop tape a radio statement that the alleged rumor was untrue, which Bishop did. At the end of the meeting, the CC voted to place Bishop under house arrest. His phones were cut off, and any security guards suspected of loyalty to him were disarmed and replaced. George Louison's brother, Einstein Louison — who as the army chief of staff was the highest officer not lined up with Coard's grouping — was also placed under house arrest.

As news of Bishop's detention began to leak out to the workers and farmers of Grenada, the walls began to be covered with the slogan, "No Bishop, No Revo." And that immediate and widespread sentiment among the masses reflected the reality. The workers' and farmers' government that they had established in March 1979 had been overthrown through a coup that day.

The next day, October 13, a meeting of 400 New Jewel Movement cadres was held. Bishop was brought before it, confronted with the false charges, especially the alleged rumor, and told to comment on them. Bishop strongly denied having spread the rumor.

Coard, who attended the meeting, did not speak. Once again, he let his supporters do the dirty work. One after another, they took the floor to denounce Bishop. "They called him a dangerous individual," Louison recalled. Rojas reported that proposals were made to expel Bishop from the party altogether, even to court-martial him.

"We all thought certainly the point of the meeting was to vote on the question and come up with some consensus within the party," Rojas said, "some line of march to explain to the masses why Maurice Bishop was being placed under house arrest."

But no vote was taken on the proposals. Coard's group on the Central Committee explained that the purpose of the meeting was to inform the members of actions already taken by the CC so they could begin taking these decisions to the population the following day.

The atmosphere at the meeting was "intimidating, really intimidating," Louison said. "Maurice's head has already rolled and so has mine. These would be good deterrents to further offenses."

Bishop was returned to house arrest following the meeting.

Reaction against Bishop's overthrow

On the next day, October 14, Coard's supporters began meeting with various groups from the mass organizations, workplaces, and other sectors to justify their actions. Selwyn Strachan, for example, tried to hold a public meeting in downtown St. George's to announce that Bishop had been replaced as prime minister by Coard. A crowd gathered and chased



Flax Hermes/IP

Three of surviving New Jewel Movement leaders (from left to right): Don Rojas, Kenrick Radix, George Louison.

Strachan off the street. A little later that day, Radio Free Grenada announced that Coard had resigned as deputy prime minister and finance minister in order to "clear the air" of the rumor that he was plotting to assassinate Bishop.

These events on October 14 were the first to be reported in the international press. From then on, Bernard and Phyllis Coard and Strachan evidently decided to lay low for a while, hoping to weather the storm of popular opposition — the depth of which they had misjudged — before making further public appearances. They were not heard about publicly again until the U.S. invasion and their subsequent arrest.

The following day, October 15, Kenrick Radix, together with union leader Fitzroy Bain, led the first street demonstration demanding the release of Bishop and his reinstatement as prime minister. And George Louison began a series of private meetings with Coard, hoping to find some way to resolve the worsening situation.

According to the Cuban government, Fidel Castro sent a message to the NJM Central Committee that day, as well. It was delivered directly to Coard. While Cuba had no intention of interfering in Grenada's internal affairs, the message said, Castro expressed his "deep concern that the division that had arisen could do considerable damage to the image of the revolutionary process in Grenada, both inside the country and abroad," including in Cuba. But Coard took no heed of the Cubans' concerns.

"This group of Coard's that seized power in Grenada expressed serious reservations toward Cuba from the very beginning," Castro explained in the November 14 speech, "because of our well-known and unquestionable friendship with Bishop."

On October 16, Gen. Hudson Austin gave a speech over Radio Free Grenada, attempting to diffuse and demobilize the mounting protest evidenced by the reaction to Strachan and the street demonstration. He now sought to reassure Grenadians that Bishop was not being challenged as prime minister, and that Bishop was just "at home and quite safe."

Then Austin got down to the actual point of the radio address — to present the slanders against Bishop for the first time publicly. The NJM, Austin said, had voted to expel Bishop from the party in order "to stop the steady growth of one-man rule in our party and country." The lie about the rumor and the other false charges were also repeated. Bishop had "disgraced" Grenada by these actions, Austin said, and had been expelled from the New Jewel Movement. At the same time, Austin stressed that "there has been no dispute" over the "political and econom-

ic policies of the party."

On October 18, Radix led a second street protest, following which he was picked up and jailed by Coard's backers. Unison Whiteman, who was foreign minister, returned to Grenada from the United States, where he had spoken before the United Nations General Assembly the previous week; he immediately began working with Louison, still in hopes of reaching a settlement with Coard. But the uncontrolled as well as controlled forces set in motion October 12 had already shattered that possibility.

'Completely contemptuous of people'

Coard and his group "were completely contemptuous of the Grenadian people," Louison later said. "They believed that no matter what action they took, they could eventually explain it away." The Grenadian people "are bound to get tired and hungry," Coard told Louison, and then they would stop marching and go back to work. Things would return to normal. Gairy had let people demonstrate every day for almost two months straight in 1973-74, Coard reminded him.

Up until that point, Louison said, "I still believed a peaceful solution was possible." On October 18, however, he became convinced that the opposite was the case. "There was a distinct wing of the Central Committee that wanted a military solution," Louison explained. "That I'm clear of because I discussed it with them."

Whiteman called a Caribbean press agency later that day and announced that he, Louison, housing minister Norris Bain, and education minister Jacqueline Creft had all resigned from the government. Shortly afterwards, George Louison was jailed.

Then came October 19 — Coard's Bloody Wednesday. Unison Whiteman and Fitzroy Bain led another demonstration, this one of 5,000, while another 25,000-30,000 waited in the market place for Bishop to speak. That amounted to some 25-30 percent of Grenada's entire population, comparable to 60-75 million in the United States. The demonstrators went to Bishop's residence and managed to free him. Rojas spoke with Bishop, the last living NJM leader to have done so. He reports that Bishop told him that "those criminals up on the hill" were going to turn their guns on the people and that the people "must disarm them" first.

Bishop asked Rojas to lead a contingent to the central telephone exchange and to communicate several messages to the world. He asked Rojas to call on Grenadians overseas and on trade unions and progres-

sive forces in the region to make known their support for the people's mass outpouring that day.

Rojas said that Bishop was concerned about efforts by a small handful of right-wingers in Grenada to use the protests against his house arrest as an opportunity to spread anti-Cuban and anticommunist propaganda. According to Rojas, Bishop "wanted the point made very clearly that President Fidel Castro and the Cuban people had absolutely no involvement in this crisis," and that nothing that might happen in Grenada should serve as a justification for U.S. intervention.

Soldiers join in protest

The mass demonstration marched to Fort Rupert, the army headquarters. Most of the soldiers in the garrison joined in the protest, turning over their weapons to members of the militia in the crowd. The plan was to arrange some kind of telephone hookup from inside the fort by which Bishop could address the Grenadian people over a public address system.

This was the last effort by Bishop, Whiteman, and other central New Jewel Movement leaders to salvage the revolution and restore a workers' and farmers' government to power. They sought to appeal to the army to refuse orders and, together with the people, to rise up and overthrow the illegitimate Coard regime that had strangled the revolutionary government. The response of the soldiers at Fort Rupert showed that this might well have happened if there had been sufficient time to get out Bishop's call for resistance and begin organizing on that basis. This attempt by Bishop was the only possible revolutionary course under the circumstances.

Shortly after the crowd arrived at Fort Rupert, however, Coard ordered three armored personnel carriers to the garrison. They fired automatic weapons into the crowd, killing an unknown number of participants and wounding many others. Bishop, Whiteman, Fitzroy Bain, Norris Bain, Jacqueline Creft, and union leader Vincent Noel surrendered themselves peacefully, in order to avoid a wholesale massacre. They were separated from the rest of the crowd and summarily murdered inside the fort.

"I am 100 percent sure [that Coard] ordered the killings," Louison later said. Radix agreed. Despite the fact that Coard dropped from public view hoping to deflect the Grenadian people's wrath, Radix said, "I want to make clear that the RMC [the Revolutionary Military Council officially headed by General Austin] was an extension of Bernard Coard. . . . He devised the thing."

'Handed on platter' to U.S.

These are the events, to the extent they are known at this time, that surrounded the overthrow of the workers' and farmers' government in Grenada. Coard's secret faction had moved from ambition and cliquism, to open treachery and betrayal of the revolution, and then to the murder of the revolutionary people and their leadership.

In the process, as Rojas put it, Coard handed Grenada "on a platter to the U.S. with all the trimmings." That is why the resistance by Grenadians to the U.S. invasion was limited — although, as Castro explained November 14, "despite these adverse circumstances, a number of Grenadian soldiers died in heroic combat against the invaders." Coard's actions are responsible for the confusion among many Grenadians about the counterrevolutionary goals of the U.S. intervention, as well for the fact that some Grenadians who had supported the revolution have now fallen for the lie, peddled both by Coard and the imperialists, that the betrayers were the "real Marxists."

With the arrest of Bishop, the U.S. rulers immediately recognized that this was the opening they had been waiting for, the chance to crush everything that was left of the revolution and the mass organizations. They had to move quickly to prevent a civil war from developing and the emergence of a new leadership of the New Jewel Movement that could topple the Coard regime and reestablish a revolutionary government. Radix, Louison, and Rojas are all convinced that the revolutionary majority in Grenada had at least a fighting chance of doing just that had Washington not invaded.

Of course, the United States government could have moved to crush the revolution militarily even if these events had not occurred. Perhaps

it even could have succeeded, although that was far from certain. But the strength of the revolution had stayed Washington's hands for more than four years, and an invasion was not inevitable in the foreseeable future. Moreover, the political and military price that U.S. imperialism would have paid for such an assault would have been very high. As anyone who had visited Grenada and witnessed the popular commitment to that revolution can testify, the workers and farmers would have put up a mighty battle to defend *their* government.

But that government had been overthrown, and the people disarmed and demobilized. Coard's factionalism and splitting operation threw a decisive and fatal weight into the balance, tipping it toward Washington.

Cuba's internationalist leadership and role

There is another important factor that would have weighed in favor of the Grenada revolution had not Coard toppled the revolutionary government. That is the help that Cuba could have rendered in the event of a U.S. invasion. The Cubans had long made clear their commitment to do whatever was necessary and possible to defend Grenada. Bishop told the May Day 1980 rally in Havana that, "Certainly we in Grenada will never forget that it was the military assistance of Cuba in the first weeks of the revolution that provided us with the basis to defend our own revolution."

At a press conference in Havana late at night October 25–26, just after the U.S. invasion, and again more briefly in his November 14 speech, Fidel Castro explained how the Cuban government had conducted itself in the days leading up to the aggression. Earlier, on October 20, the day after the murder of Bishop, the Cuban government had issued a public condemnation of the criminal actions by the so-called Revolutionary Military Council.

The Cuban revolutionists released these public statements not only to make clear their own position, but also because they recognized their responsibility to lead the working class and oppressed on a world scale, explaining these treacherous actions and laying out a perspective for supporters of the Grenada revolution.

While explaining that Coard's actions had made a U.S. invasion virtually inevitable, the Cubans conducted themselves in such a way as to make the U.S. imperialists pay the biggest possible price for such aggression. They sought to place the workers and farmers of Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Cuba in the best situation to defend their revolutions in the face of this escalation of U.S. military intervention in the region.

Despite the avalanche of bourgeois press smears throughout the Grenada events, the Cuban government and its leaders won international respect and recognition for their exemplary conduct. Many people today understand more clearly than before the revolutionary character and importance of the Cuban leadership in world politics. This has increased the authority of the Cuban revolution in sectors of the Black movement in the United States, for example.

Proletarian internationalist approach

Because of the significance of these October 20, October 25, and November 14 Cuban documents, all three have been reproduced here as appendices to this collection, *Maurice Bishop Speaks*. In these statements, the Cubans explained several fundamental principles of their proletarian internationalist approach to world politics.

First, the Cubans stressed that their international policy is based on the principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of other parties, governments, and countries. Whatever relations or agreements they enter into are only at the request of those parties and governments — with no political strings attached. The Cubans do not try to pick and choose among leaders, to pit them against each other, or to impose policies. They give advice with generosity, but only when it is asked for, and only as advice, never dictates.

"It is to our revolution's credit," Castro explained November 14, "that, in spite of our profound indignation over Bishop's removal from office and arrest, we fully refrained from interfering in Grenada's internal affairs. We refrained even though our construction workers and all our other cooperation personnel in Grenada — who did not hesitate to confront the Yankee soldiers with the weapons Bishop himself had

given them for their defense in case of an attack from abroad — could have been a decisive factor in those internal events.

"Those weapons," Castro explained, "were never meant to be used in an internal conflict in Grenada and we would never have allowed them to be so used. We would never have been willing to use them to shed a single drop of Grenadian blood."

Second, the Cubans explained that despite their own limited resources, they do whatever they can to aid peoples throughout the world who are oppressed by imperialism or engaged in struggle against it. In his speech November 14, Fidel Castro stressed that despite Cuba's attitude toward Coard's government in Grenada, "We could not accept the idea of leaving the Grenadians without doctors or leaving the airport, which was vital to the nation's economy, unfinished."

Especially after Washington's dispatch of its naval armada to the sea off Grenada, Castro said, the Cubans "couldn't possibly leave the country. If the imperialists really intended to attack Grenada, it was our duty to stay there. To withdraw at that time would have been dishonorable and could have even triggered aggression in that country then and in Cuba later on."

Under the impossible circumstances created by Coard's group, however, the Cuban government made the correct and necessary decision that Cuban personnel would fight only if attacked by U.S. invading forces. On October 22, the Cuban government sent a message with these instructions to its mission in Grenada, to be communicated to the Cuban construction workers and other personnel on the island. "We would thus be defending ourselves," that message said, "not the [new Grenadian] government and its deeds."

That same day Cuba sent a message to the Revolutionary Military Council, rejecting an appeal by General Austin for additional military aid. In a message to its embassy in Grenada the following day, the Cuban government explained its decision to reject this request. It pointed out that the members of the Revolutionary Military Council "themselves are the only ones responsible for the creation of this disadvantageous and difficult situation for the revolutionary process politically and militarily." (Coard's group was spreading the slanderous charge that blame for the impending U.S. aggression lay with Cuba because of its October 20 statement condemning the murder of Bishop.)

In its reply to the RMC leaders themselves, the Cuban government stressed that while rejecting the military request, Cuba would conduct a vigorous international political campaign to counter the U.S. threats. If the invasion nonetheless took place, the Cubans said, it would be the duty of the RMC officials "to die fighting, no matter how difficult and disadvantageous the circumstances may be" — a duty they showed no inclination to carry out. "It is noteworthy," Don Rojas explained, "that the fifteen members of the RMC and Coard, Strachan, and Austin all either surrendered to the Yankee invaders or were captured without resistance. This was the same group who . . . called on the Grenadian people to fight 'to the last man, woman, and child.'"

When the U.S. attack began, Cuban relations with the Coard-Austin government were so strained that there was no coordination between the Grenadian army and the Cuban construction workers. The Cuban volunteers, as instructed, began fighting only when attacked by the U.S. forces, and then they fought heroically and well. They gave their lives to provide Washington a small example of what would happen if U.S. forces invade El Salvador, Nicaragua, or Cuba.

'Not the first time'

As Fidel Castro explained in Havana November 14, what took place in Grenada at Coard's hands was not "the first time that such things occurred in a revolutionary process."

Cuban Marxists have had their own direct experience, in 1962 and again in 1966–68, with the types of methods employed by Coard and the dangers posed by them.

At the end of 1961, the July 26 Movement — which had led the workers and peasants to victory and to the consolidation of the first workers' state in the Americas — fused with the Popular Socialist Party (PSP), the traditional prerevolution Communist Party in Cuba, and with a third organization called the Revolutionary Directorate. The fused party took the name Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (ORI).

Aníbal Escalante, a longtime PSP leader, became organizational secretary of this new party. He abused his position by replacing cadres in the party and state apparatus almost exclusively with former associates from the PSP. Escalante then winked at the bureaucratic practices and the privileges and even corruption of these appointees.

Escalante also started a rumor-mill belittling the July 26 cadres and leaders. Fidel Castro, for example, was accused of not functioning as part of a collective leadership and of not being sufficiently Marxist. The popular support for Castro and other July 26 leaders was dismissed as signs of a developing personality cult. The PSP cadres, it was alleged, were the "real" party builders and Marxists.

To put a halt to these abuses, the ORI National Directorate held a series of discussions, removed Escalante from his positions, and instituted a number of other organizational changes. In March 1962, Castro presented a televised speech on behalf of the ORI leadership to explain to the people of the world what had happened, what had been done to correct it, and the lessons that could be learned from this experience. The speech became known in Cuba and around the world by the title, "Against Bureaucracy and Sectarianism."

Castro pointed out that under Escalante, the party was being converted from what it should be, "an apparatus of the workers' vanguard," into a "nest of privilege," "favoritism," "immunities," and "favors." The workers and party cadres, Castro said, were beginning to ask: "Was [the ORI] a nucleus of revolutionists?" Or was it a "mere shell of revolutionists, well versed in dispensing favors"?

If the party did not reverse this process, Castro said, it would no longer "enjoy the prestige which a revolutionary nucleus should enjoy, a prestige born solely from the authority which it has in the eyes of the masses, an authority imparted to it by the example which its members set as workers, as model revolutionists."

Bourgeois disinformation campaign

In light of the bourgeois propaganda campaign around Grenada, it is interesting to note Castro's reference in the 1962 speech to similar disinformation efforts at that time. "It is logical to expect that the enemy will take advantage of these errors [by the Escalante grouping] to sow confusion, to go about saying that the Communists have taken over in Cuba; that Fidel has been replaced by Blas [Roca, another PSP leader] or Aníbal, or someone else, and Raúl [Castro] by another."

Concerning the charge of a developing cult of personality, Castro had this to say: "Those evils have not been a threat in our country. The only danger there was was the one that we did not see. How blind we were! What a difference between theory and practice! What a good lesson!"

"If we have one leader, two, ten with prestige, we should have more leaders with prestige," Castro said. "We should not destroy those leaders who have prestige," which has been gained because of what they have done for the revolution. That only ends up destroying the prestige of the revolution itself, Castro said. The task should be to develop more leaders known for their selfless activity and hard work.

Escalante's campaign of rumor had taken a toll on the revolution, Castro said. "Clearly this discouraged the masses," he explained. "No, the masses did not turn against the revolution," he said, "they're always with the revolution. . . . But this cooled the enthusiasm of the masses; this cooled the fervor of the masses."

What's more, Castro said, Escalante's factional activity fueled anti-communism, which still had a foothold in Cuba in those early years of the revolution. The leaders of the revolution had worked hard to combat anti-communism through patient education and experience, Castro said. But, confronted with the bureaucratic practices of the Escalante grouping, "many people will ask: 'Is this communism? Is this socialism? This arbitrariness, this abuse, this privilege, all this, is this communism?'"

Castro also took up the charge that some ORI leaders were less "Marxist" than others because of their political origins. "The revolution is irrevocably defined as Marxist-Leninist," he said. "Let no one suffer from any fantasies or engage in any illusions on this score. Do not imagine that we are going to take a single step backwards. No, on the contrary, we are going to move forward!"

From "this moment on, comrades," Castro said, "all differences between the old and the new, between those who fought in the Sierra and



Bishop with Castro during visit by Grenadian prime minister to Cuba.

those who were down in the lowlands, between those who took up arms and those who did not, between those who studied Marxism and those who did not study Marxism before, we feel that all these differences between them should cease. That from this moment on, we have to be one thing alone." That is, every party cadre was part of a common organization seeking to advance the revolution based on studying and applying the Marxist program and strategy in light of the living class struggle in Cuba and worldwide.

Following Castro's speech, Escalante was sent abroad to serve as a minor diplomatic official. Over the next few years, imperialist economic and military pressures against Cuba intensified, exacerbating shortages and other difficulties on the island. Attempts to extend the revolution in Latin America through support to several guerrilla war efforts failed, capped by the defeat of Che Guevara's forces in Bolivia, and some domestic measures aimed at accelerating economic development proved to be overambitious and ill-suited to the country's actual situation.

In 1964 Escalante returned to the island to be with an ailing relative. Later in the decade, amid the heightened social tensions, he began to carry out renewed secret factional activity, using the same methods of innuendo and slander.

Again reminiscent of Coard's charges against Maurice Bishop, the Escalante supporters began "passing themselves off as heroes of a battle against petty-bourgeois leadership," as Cuban leader Carlos Rafael Rodríguez explained at a 1968 meeting of the party's Central Committee called to discuss the matter. One of Escalante's people complained to several lower-level Soviet officials in Cuba that, "Fidel wants Cuba to be the hub of the whole world . . . so that he can achieve a stature greater than that of Marx, Engels, and Lenin," and that in Cuba "policy is made by no one but Fidel Castro."

Stakes in combating Escalante

At the 1968 Central Committee meeting, Rodríguez — himself a former central leader of the PSP — explained what was at stake in combating Escalante's methods. The harm done by Escalante, Rodríguez said, "lies in the fact that he frustrated a process of unity that began by being, and could have been, a joyous, fraternal process in which comrades from various organizations, who had worked jointly or separately toward the same objective, were beginning to unite. He turned that into a bitter process, one that has since been painful."

The number of people involved in the second Escalante affair was

small, but in one respect their activities were even more serious than in 1962. Escalante and his supporters tried to capitalize on strained relations that had developed between Cuba and the governments of the Soviet Union and several Eastern European countries over differences concerning aid to Vietnam and other international issues. The Escalante grouping urged personnel in the Soviet and Czech embassies to get their governments to bring pressure on the Cuban leadership to change its policies. They even went so far as to propose the withholding of economic aid and military aid from Cuba as a factional club against the revolution's leadership. Some officials from these two countries — who were later ordered to leave Cuba — cooperated with Escalante's maneuvers.

In 1968 Escalante and the core of his grouping were tried for violations of Cuban law committed in the course of their factional activity; they were convicted and sent to prison.

From both these rounds of the battle against the Escalante grouping, the Cuban leaders drew important lessons about leadership methods, bureaucracy, and the relationship between the party, the state apparatus, the army, the mass organizations, and the workers and farmers.

During his March 1962 speech, Castro proposed a new procedure for becoming a party member. From that time on, the majority of nominees were accepted into party membership only after having been elected a model worker by an assembly of their co-workers. This included all the workers in a given workplace — party members and non-party members alike — who knew the individual and knew whether or not he or she was actually playing a leadership role as part of the communist vanguard of the Cuban working class. At the party's 1980 congress, Castro reported that the number of workers in the party had tripled since 1975, and that the party and its leadership bodies also had more women, more veterans of internationalist missions, and more peasants and agricultural workers. As a result, Castro said, the party had become "more Marxist-Leninist and more revolutionary," as well.

The 1968 events, in particular, drove home once more the principle that the Cubans have enunciated time and again in all their statements on Grenada — no interference in the internal affairs of other governments and other parties.

* * *

Combined with difficult objective circumstances, factional and administrative leadership methods such as those of the Coard grouping can split the vanguard party of the working class, separate it from the masses of working people, and lead to destruction of the revolution. In the process, the workers and farmers can be left wide open to direct imperialist intervention and repression.

As the example of Cuba proves, however, such a development is far from inevitable.

In his speech in Havana November 14, Fidel Castro warned the U.S. imperialists not to let their "victory in Grenada and their air of triumph . . . go to their heads, leading them to commit serious, irreversible errors. They will not find in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Cuba the particular circumstances of revolutionaries divided among themselves and divorced from the people that they found in Grenada."

Pointing to the determined resistance by Cuban construction workers at Point Salines, Castro asked the crowd of more than one million workers and farmers: "If in Grenada, the imperialists had to bring in an elite division to fight against a handful of isolated men struggling in a small stronghold, lacking fortifications, a thousand miles from their homeland, how many divisions would they need against millions of combatants fighting on their own [Cuban] soil alongside their own people?"

Nicaraguan leader Humberto Ortega told a gathering of Sandinista Youth in Managua, "The Yankees won't find us with our arms locked in storerooms. We have already distributed weapons and millions of bullets throughout the country."

And Vietnamese President Truong Chinh, after condemning the U.S. invasion of Grenada, warned that if Washington "were reckless enough to invade Cuba and Nicaragua, then many other Vietnams would emerge in Central America and Latin America."

Washington will certainly not find the job easy when it sends its troops and planes against the revolutionary peoples of Nicaragua and El Salvador, as it is right now preparing to do. As casualties mount and re-

verses accumulate, the U.S. capitalists will quickly find themselves fighting a second front at home, as well. U.S. workers don't want another Vietnam-style war. And they are growing increasingly angry over government and big-business attacks on their jobs, on their living and working conditions, on the rights of Blacks, Latinos, and women, and on democratic rights in general.

What's more, U.S. troops and firepower cannot erase the example and rich lessons of the Grenada revolution. Along with revolutionary Cuba and Nicaragua, the workers' and farmers' government brought to power in 1979 by the Grenadian people remains, as Fidel Castro once put it, one of the three giants of the Caribbean. Nor can the imperialists sweep away the contribution made by Maurice Bishop and the New Jewel Movement to the process of constructing a new revolutionary leadership of the working class and its allies in the Americas and internationally.

"Imperialism is bent on destroying symbols," Castro explained November 14, "because it knows the value of symbols, of examples, and of ideas. It wanted to destroy them in Grenada, and it wants to destroy them in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Cuba.

"But symbols, examples, and ideas," he said, "cannot be destroyed. When their enemies think they have destroyed them, what they have done is made them multiply. . . . Grenada has already multiplied the patriotic conviction and fighting spirit of the Salvadoran, Nicaraguan, and Cuban revolutionaries."

Our aim in making available these speeches and interviews of Maurice Bishop is to help multiply the example and the lessons of the Grenada revolution as widely as possible among workers and the oppressed throughout the English-speaking world.

December 1983

DOCUMENTS

Nationalize U.S. Steel!

How the labor movement can fight ruling-class attacks

[The following appeared as a front-page editorial in the January 20 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary socialist newsweekly published in New York City.]

* * *

The tiny handful of wealthy families who own and control the United States Steel Corp. have decided to shut down eight steel mills and a total of 30 company operations across the country. In doing so they are permanently firing more than 15,000 steelworkers.

While the owners of the giant corporation will reap big financial benefits from this action, steelworkers, their families, and working-class communities in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere will suffer devastating effects. Workers in the Monongahela Valley, South Chicago, and other areas were already plagued by high unemployment due to earlier shutdowns and longterm layoffs. Now they will feel more of the misery of mortgage foreclosures, expired medical benefits and unemployment insurance, inadequate diet and hunger, as well as the attack on human dignity and self-respect that so often accompanies joblessness in this society.

These devastating shutdowns once again demonstrate that capitalism is working in the only way it can — to maximize the profits and power of America's wealthy families, no matter what the results for working people. U.S. Steel Chairman David Roderick didn't pull any punches concerning this brutal, permanent fact about the "free enterprise" system. "You can never say it's the end of shutdowns," he declared.

Roderick is right. Neither the owners of U.S. Steel nor any other corporation will keep plants open and workers on the job unless it is profitable to do so. In order to protect workers interests, the labor movement should demand

that the government take this property out of the hands of private owners. *Nationalize U.S. Steel!*

U.S. Steel's latest action is part and parcel of a social crisis facing steelworkers and the entire U.S. working class. Tens of thousands have been tossed on the jobless heap, as the steel companies take radical measures to improve their competitive position and increase corporate profits. But steelworkers should not be forced to pay the price. The entire steel industry should be placed under government ownership and operated as a public service.

"We are in a society in which decisions are not being carried out with the sense of social responsibility to the workers involved, or to their families, or their communities," said acting USWA [United Steelworkers of America] President Lynn Williams. He called for "critical action by government," because "something has to be done."

No common interests

But what should be done? Williams proposes a "national industrial policy" and new restrictions on imports. Neither step will defend U.S. Steel's latest victims nor prevent further job cuts. These steps, however, are consistent with the approach of the top labor officialdom, which seeks to convince workers that they share common interests with their employers, including "saving the steel industry."

From the USWA's inception in 1942, union members have been urged by the top officials to cooperate with their own bosses and the rest of the capitalist class — including support to the employers' parties, the Democrats and Republicans. This has meant bargaining away real on-the-job control, accepting increased

government intervention and regulation of union affairs, and foregoing a political fight for government social measures to benefit the entire working class and the oppressed. In return, organized workers received wage gains, some fringe benefits, and a promise of job security and steadily improving living standards — as long as the capitalists were reaping huge profits.

The real payoff of this class-collaborationist policy has become clearer to growing numbers of workers over the past decade as the employers have tried to make workers pay for mounting capitalist crisis. Hitching workers' conditions to the bosses' profits is precisely what has disarmed the USWA and other unions, significantly weakening their ability to fight moves like those by U.S. Steel. The "experimental negotiating agreement" (ENA), which deprived basic steel workers of the right to strike for 10 years, and the March 1983 concession contract in basic steel are other painful reminders of the price steelworkers paid for this policy.

There is a realistic alternative. That is for the USWA and the entire labor movement to begin to act decisively in the interests of our own class, the working class.

This can begin today. In addition to demanding immediate, emergency nationalization, the USWA should take the lead in mounting a nationwide action campaign by the entire union movement and its allies — including marches, pickets, protests, and demonstrations — to demand of the government that no worker suffer the consequences of U.S. Steel's actions or others caused by the capitalist system.

Today the government can decree that unemployment benefits will be paid at union-scale wages to all who are seeking work, until they can find employment. Retraining for new jobs, also at decent — that is union-scale —

wages, should be provided.

A broad and bold campaign of public works should be fought for — not “make work,” but programs aimed at fixing the disrepair of communities of working people, especially the neighborhoods of Blacks and other oppressed nationalities. Decent schools, housing, hospitals, mass transit, roads, and bridges need to be built. If such programs were undertaken in a meaningful way, massive amounts of steel, as well as the productive labor of tens of thousands of workers, would be required.

The U.S. government bears responsibility for massive destruction in Vietnam as well; steel could be sent there to help rebuild that war-shattered country. Washington is financing tremendous destruction in its war against the people of Central America and the Mideast. They, too, are in need of steel and construction materials from the United States, not bombs and bullets.

Democratic and Republican politicians who serve the interests of the owners of the mines, mills, factories, and banks will cry that government budget deficits are too high already. What is actually too high, however, is the social price being paid by working people for the capitalist profit drive. The labor movement can answer: Don't send \$100 million more to reinforce the Salvadoran dictatorship and its crumbling army. Dismantle the entire war budget. Do away with the bloated government bureaucracy that only serves the interests of the rich. Use those billions instead to meet the needs of working people here and abroad.

Social crisis

Along with these immediate measures needed by working people, a broader social question is sharply posed by the jobs crisis. The labor movement should demand that legislation be enacted to shorten the work week to 30 hours with no cut in take-home pay to spread around available work.

At the same time that U.S. Steel dumped 15,000 workers, it announced modernization plans to boost the earnings of its owners. The time is long overdue for a massive, union-led fight to demand that workers, who produce the wealth, reap the benefits of such modernization by enjoying a decrease in their hours of work.

Public boards

Together, such steps can begin to ease the terrible effects of unemployment for working people. The fight for nationalization in particular poses the need to take decision-making power out of the hands of the owners of U.S. Steel and other corporate giants.

The call for nationalization of steel should be coupled with the demand to open the books of the steel companies and to establish some public control of this vital industry. The labor movement should demand that a nationalized steel industry be managed by boards directly elected by the public and closely watched over by the unions and consumer and environmental groups.

Every aspect of the industry should be open to public scrutiny. All books and records should be published and easily available. All meetings should be public and all decisions fully aired and accounted for. This is the opposite of the juggled and partial figures trumpeted by the steel barons last year to reinforce their poor-mouthing and bolster their demands for union concessions.

Workers control

No one knows how to run a steel mill better than steelworkers themselves. All aspects of administration of the industry should be subject to rigorous workers control.

Nationalizing the steel industry today will not eliminate capitalist competitive pressure or guarantee jobs. The nationalized British steel industry, for example, has cut 150,000 jobs permanently in the past 10 years. Working conditions have worsened.

Workers in all industries need to begin fighting right now to win veto power over health and safety conditions, the right to walk off any unsafe job, the right to shut down any production process that threatens the environment. They must exercise control over the hours and pace of work, with the unconditional right to refuse overtime — especially while millions remain jobless.

In fact, in a limited and partial manner this struggle is already under way. It is being fought by workers as they resist the conditions imposed by the bosses, including attempts to infringe on contract provisions. Using union power to organize and deepen this fight right now, while the mills remain in the hands of private owners, can strengthen the fight for nationalization that can lay the basis for a major expansion of workers control on the job.

Steelworkers must have the right to strike to force compliance with contract provisions and safety standards. The March 1983 concession contract, which weakened union rights and work rules, should be torn up and a new contract put to a vote of rank-and-file steelworkers themselves.

Through fighting for control over conditions

in their plants and throughout the industry, steelworkers can also strive to put an end to the racism and discrimination against women that has dominated life in the mills under private ownership. Firm control by workers and their union over hiring, promotion, and job assignments can be an effective answer to the bosses' attempts to use race and sex differences to divide and weaken the USWA.

Labor party needed

The measures needed to defend workers from U.S. Steel's latest action require a struggle that targets not only one corporation and its owners but the entire ruling class and their bipartisan government. The USWA and the entire labor movement should begin that battle right now — but to carry it through to a successful conclusion requires a political tool, a labor party based on the trade unions.

Such a party would fight to prohibit U.S. Steel from throwing workers out onto the street. It would demand that the current government act now to nationalize the steel industry and convert it into a public utility.

A determined political fight for nationalization would be just that — a fight. Today's government represents the owners of U.S. Steel and the rest of big business and the banks. All the big decisions that affect society — from U.S. Steel's shutdowns, to war in Central America — are made in the interests of the tiny handful of wealthy employers, not the majority of working people. That is why the government steadfastly opposes nationalization of steel or other industries, since it violates the “rights” and prerogatives of the rich and points in the direction of production for society's needs not private profit.

In place of the current government, which stands behind the owners of U.S. Steel, the steel industry, and the entire U.S. ruling class, the working class and its allies need a government that will act to advance and safeguard our interests. The Democrats and Republicans will never form such a government. That will require a revolutionary struggle by workers and farmers to form one of our own. □

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Mass revolt ends price hikes

Bourguiba regime shaken by popular upsurge

By Ernest Harsch

"It is a historic victory," shouted one of the hundreds of thousands of demonstrators who poured into the streets of Tunis January 6. "For the first time, the authorities have given in. We have won."

The huge celebration in the Tunisian capital began just moments after President Habib Bourguiba announced in a televised speech that previously announced price hikes for bread and other foods had been canceled.

Those price increases had sparked days of massive protests and street clashes in cities and villages throughout that North African country. Bourguiba's initial answer to the protests was repression. A state of emergency was declared, and police and troops killed scores of demonstrators.

But that proved to be insufficient. The Bourguiba regime was finally forced to back down.

Economic crisis and discontent

For several years, Tunisia, like other countries in the semicolonial world, has been buffeted by the effects of the world capitalist economic crisis. This has led to a steady deterioration in the living standards of Tunisian workers and farmers.

Out of a population of 7 million, some 500,000 are unemployed, most of them youths. Many others have been forced to migrate to Europe in search of jobs, particularly to France, Tunisia's former colonial ruler.

Moves by the Bourguiba regime to privatize transportation, education, and health care in order to trim the government budget have led to sharp increases in the costs of such services.

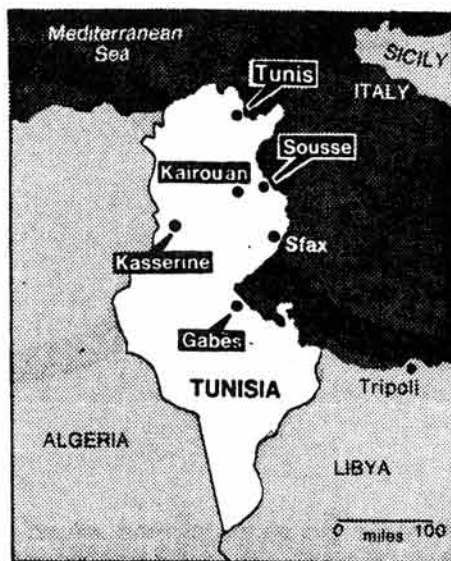
Under pressure from the International Monetary Fund to further cut the budget deficit, the government announced on December 29 that food imports would be cut back and prices sharply raised. The cost of bread was to climb by nearly 125 percent.

That same day, protests began in the impoverished southern and western parts of the country.

By January 1, the unrest had spread to the industrial towns of Kasserine, Gafsa, and Gabès, where unionized workers joined in the demonstrations, without the consent of the leadership of the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT), the country's only legal union.

The following two days, massive protests swept Tunis and Sfax, the two largest cities in the country. Large crowds surged through the streets, taking out their anger against commercial establishments and symbols of governmental authority.

Although the demonstrations began in response to the price hikes, they quickly took on



a political character as well. Slogans against the rule of Bourguiba became widespread, some of them reflecting the impact of the Iranian revolution among Tunisia's largely Muslim population. Some of the crowds that confronted police in Tunis shouted, "There is only one God, Bourguiba is the anti-God!"

'Down with America!'

The popular anger was also directed against Bourguiba's imperialist backers. On January 3, demonstrators marching past the U.S. embassy in Tunis chanted, "Down with America! Up with Islam!"

In an effort to crush the protests, troops were mobilized and fired into the crowds. Bourguiba declared a state of emergency on January 3.

Although the government officially admitted that only several people were killed, some officials put the number of dead at 70.

Charging that the protests were being instigated by "criminals and professional agitators," the authorities rounded up as many as 3,000 people in Tunis alone. In an effort to dismiss the protests as foreign-inspired, one government official claimed that they were organized by "Khomeinists," that is, supporters of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in Iran.

In fact, organized forces that look to the Iranian revolution were involved in the demonstrations. In an interview in the January 9 *New York Times*, two student representatives of a group called the Islamic Tendency Movement said that although the upsurge was spontaneous, members of their group helped organize some actions. While accepting the label "Khomeinist," they denied any connection

with the Iranian authorities.

Two of Tunisia's legal opposition parties, the Movement of Social Democrats and the Communist Party, condemned the price increases and the regime's repressive crackdown.

Although the bureaucratic leadership of the General Union of Tunisian Workers "deplored" the protest actions, it did feel compelled to criticize the price increases. On January 4, UGTT Secretary General Habib Achour even warned the government that a general strike was "not excluded," unless adequate compensation was provided to offset the price hikes.

A 'dangerous precedent'

In face of this broad opposition, the government felt obliged to back down. Besides rescinding the price hikes, Bourguiba fingered his interior minister, Driss Guiga, as a scapegoat and dismissed him from his post.

Through his televised address on January 6, Bourguiba sought to dissipate the popular anger, as well as to shift the blame for the price hikes to his subordinates. During the massive street rallies celebrating the withdrawal of the price increases, activists of Bourguiba's Destour Socialist Party organized pro-Bourguiba chants that were picked up by sections of the crowds.

But Bourguiba's regime clearly remains shakier than ever. Cracks have opened up within the government apparatus itself, as various figures maneuver to emerge as successor to Bourguiba, who is in his 80s.

Nor has the public opposition ended. When the main university reopened on January 11, students held a general assembly and decided to go on strike in solidarity with the "victims of the repression."

Bourguiba's imperialist backers are also getting worried. The January revolt against the price hikes is the third such expression of popular discontent in six years. In January 1978, a general strike led to widespread street clashes, in which scores were killed by police and troops. Two years later, an armed revolt in the southern town of Gafsa prompted the French imperialists to intervene by flying Tunisian troops to the town aboard French transports and helicopters.

In the wake of the most recent upsurge, French President François Mitterrand indicated willingness to provide Bourguiba with greater economic assistance.

The January 14 London *Economist*, a leading British business journal, called Bourguiba's canceling of the price hikes a "dangerous precedent" that could encourage further protests.

The Reagan administration in Washington dispatched Gen. Vernon Walters to Tunis on January 11 to express the U.S. imperialists' backing for the Bourguiba regime's "security." It was later announced that Walters held a "working meeting" with Tunisian Defense Minister Salaheddine Bali. □