

# **INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS**

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## **Imperialism Suffers Blow in Lebanese Civil War**



Druse fighters, along with Muslim and other opposition forces, have dealt devastating blows to U.S.-backed Gemayel regime.

### **Debate on the PLO's Course**

- Broad Spectrum of Palestinian Viewpoints
- Interview with Dr. Hatem Hussaini

# Lebanon civil war brings setbacks for imperialism

By Fred Murphy

The disintegration of large parts of the U.S.-trained Lebanese army in just two weeks of civil war has been a severe setback for Washington and its Israeli and European allies.

For 17 months the Reagan administration has spearheaded a joint military and diplomatic effort in Lebanon to consolidate the gains of Israel's 1982 invasion of that country. Reagan's principal aims were the following: to extend the sway of Gemayel's extreme-rightist regime throughout Lebanon; to suppress the various armed opposition forces based mainly in the oppressed Muslim and Druse communities; to secure the withdrawal of Syrian military forces; and to prevent the resurgence of the Palestine Liberation Organization's political and military activity in Lebanon.

But with Gemayel's government in a shambles and his army in disarray, most of these goals remain far from the imperialists' reach. At the same time, mounting casualties are generating disenchantment among U.S., European, and Israeli public opinion, raising the political costs of further armed intervention.

Still, the imperialists continue to bring their military power to bear in Lebanon. Right after announcing the redeployment of most of the U.S. marines in Lebanon onto warships, Reagan ordered the most massive naval shelling since the Vietnam War in an effort to intimidate the antigovernment forces and slow their offensive.

The Israeli regime has repeatedly sent armored columns north from the territory it occupies in southern Lebanon as a warning to Gemayel's opponents and to Syria. Within hours of the breakdown of an attempted negotiated solution on February 19, Israeli warplanes struck Lebanese villages in rebel-controlled territory. Similar Israeli raids were carried out on February 10.

Israeli officials have declared that their occupation of southern Lebanon will continue indefinitely, and some have floated trial balloons about preparations for a new war against Syria.

While most U.S., British, and Italian ground troops are being redeployed from Beirut to warships just off the coast, the French government is keeping its 1,270 soldiers in the Lebanese capital. Washington is keeping hundreds of military personnel ashore and is maintaining its armada of 25 naval vessels — including the battleship *New Jersey* and two aircraft carriers — in Lebanese waters. The imperialists clearly intend to go on using their military muscle to affect events in Lebanon.

## The army crumbles

The disaster that struck Gemayel and his army began February 2 when Shi'ite Muslim

militia fighters resisted an attack on their strongholds in the southern suburbs of Beirut. The army then unleashed three days of indiscriminate shelling of poor and working-class neighborhoods, whose population is largely Shi'ite and Palestinian. In response, Shi'ite leader Nabih Berri called on the cabinet to resign and urged soldiers and officers to "assert their total refusal to take part in any operation against the people."

Entire units of the army — whose ranks are predominantly Muslim — deserted to the rebel side almost immediately. Thousands more soldiers either fled or refused to leave their barracks. Many Muslim officers also defected.

This opened the way for the opposition forces headed by Berri and Druse leader Walid Jumblatt to quickly secure control of West Beirut and the adjoining suburbs.

A second offensive by Jumblatt's Popular Socialist Party (PSP) militia on February 14 routed other army units from strategic positions in the mountains southeast of Beirut and along the southern coast. This left the U.S. marines at the airport surrounded on three sides by antigovernment forces. Loyal army units remained in control only of East Beirut and Christian areas to the north, the presidential palace in the suburb of Baabda, and the key mountain village of Suk al-Gharb overlooking the palace and other strategic locations.

Underlying the present conflict and earlier civil wars in Lebanon is the second-class status of Muslims and Druse under the country's discriminatory political system. Ever since French imperialism applied divide-and-rule tactics to Lebanon in the 1920s, the Maronite Christian minority has enjoyed a range of political and social privileges. Gemayel's regime is based on the Christian Phalange Party, a fascistlike outfit that gained hegemony in the Maronite community through terror and intimidation. The Israeli regime cultivated a close relationship with the Phalange in the late 1970s and installed it in power following the 1982 invasion.

The need for a more equitable arrangement and an end to the Phalange's domination of the government and armed forces has thus been a central question in the current conflict (although opposition leaders have largely refrained from demanding that the discriminatory system itself be scrapped).

"I submit a direct request to President Gemayel," Nabih Berri said February 18, "that he admit that the practices of the government since he took power until today have brought many tragedies. I appeal to him to resign and to make way for a new Maronite president so that we can get out of this impasse."

Jumblatt has also urged Gemayel's replace-

ment by another Maronite leader, adding that Gemayel "must be tried — he and the other officers, especially [army commander Ibrahim] Tannous, for all the crimes they committed." Jumblatt has also called for building a "new nationalist army" under a "new patriotic command," based on units of the armed forces that have refused to obey the orders of Gemayel and Tannous.

Other opposition figures, such as Christian ex-President Suleiman Franjeh and Sunni Muslim ex-Prime Minister Rashid Karami, have refrained from calling publicly for Gemayel's removal.

## Pact with Israel

A second demand, pressed most strongly by the Syrian-backed National Salvation Front headed by Jumblatt, Franjeh, and Karami, has been the repudiation of the May 17, 1983, agreement between the Gemayel regime and the government of Israel. It is this accord, more than anything else, that has caused Syrian President Hafez al-Assad to provide extensive material and political support to the Lebanese opposition.

The May 17 agreement, foisted on Gemayel by U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, was modeled on the 1979 peace treaty between Israel and Egypt.

The accord authorized Israeli intervention in a wide "security zone" in southern Lebanon and legitimized the presence there of armed rightist militias headed by Israel's recently deceased Lebanese pawn, Maj. Saad Haddad. It provided for a form of diplomatic recognition of the Zionist state by Lebanon and called for Lebanon to break its ties with the Arab League. It also opened the way for Israeli economic penetration of the country at the expense of traditional Lebanese commercial ties with the rest of the Arab world.

The May 17 accord is usually described in the capitalist press as a "withdrawal agreement." But a separate pact between Washington and Tel Aviv — accepted by Gemayel — provided that Israel could keep its occupation force of thousands of troops in Lebanon as long as Syrian military units remained in the country.

The Syrian regime, which was left out of the negotiations that drew up this accord, has objected strongly to such an equating of the Israeli and Syrian roles in Lebanon.

Syrian forces first entered the country during the 1975-76 civil war, at the request of the Lebanese government and the Arab League. This intervention — which had the approval of Washington as well — succeeded in preventing the victory of an armed opposition coalition that included Muslim and Druse groups, the PLO, and various leftist and Arab nationalist currents.

Syria therefore maintains that its presence in Lebanon has been legally sanctioned, while the Israeli occupation is the result of a criminal invasion. Moreover, the Syrian view is that Israel's military role and political influence in Lebanon is a threat to Syria itself. The May 17

agreement "undermines our security," Syrian official Farouk Sharaa told the *Washington Post* in December. "It allows Israeli guns 12 to 15 miles from Damascus."

Having helped the Lebanese opposition alter the relationship of forces in the country, the Syrian regime now feels in a stronger position to negotiate a settlement with the imperialists. Its criminal attempt to split or destroy the PLO in late 1983 was also aimed at gaining a bargaining chip in future talks. The Syrian aims in Lebanon include the establishment of a friendly government in Beirut, removal of the Israeli military threat, and leverage for the recovery of the Golan Heights, occupied by Israel in 1967 and annexed to the Zionist state in 1981.

If Washington were to drop its support for the May 17 accord and change its Middle East policies, Syrian official Mohammed Haider told the *New York Times* February 11, Syria would be willing to "meet America more than halfway."

But the Reagan administration has been reluctant, at least in public, to accept the scrapping of the pact. Secretary of State Shultz warned February 15 that "those who would dispense with this agreement must bear the responsibility to find alternative formulas for Israeli withdrawal." He thus affirmed that Washington would continue to back the Israeli occupation of Lebanon.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has implicitly threatened Lebanon with the loss of much of its southern territory. Shamir's cabinet formally told the Gemayel regime February 12 that if the accord were scrapped, Israeli troops would remain in the south indefinitely.

The Zionist rulers claim their occupation of Lebanon is necessary to prevent PLO fighters from launching attacks across Israel's northern border. In fact, however, all independent military units of the PLO were driven from Lebanon in December by the Syrian armed forces, which acted under the cover of dissidents inside the PLO seeking to oust Chairman Yassir Arafat. An aide to Lebanese opposition leader Nabih Berri told the *Washington Post* February 17 that Berri's forces had taken steps to prevent PLO dissident leaders Nimr Saleh and Abu Musa from returning to West Beirut.

President Gemayel has also come under pressure to maintain the accord with Israel from the armed wing of his own Phalange party, the Lebanese Forces militia. A February 18 statement by the militia command declared that "the Lebanese Forces reaffirms its attachment to the May 17 agreement and requests the state to maintain it, ratify it, and implement it."

Increasingly squeezed by both sides, Gemayel offered an eight-point plan for a settlement on February 17 that received diplomatic support from the Saudi Arabian government. While offering formal abrogation of the May 17 accord, the plan sought to preserve its essential elements. It called for "simultaneous withdrawal" of Israeli and Syrian forces after

the signing of a new agreement with Israel.

The Saudi-sponsored plan was immediately rejected by the Lebanese opposition and the Syrian government, and by the Israeli regime as well. This left Gemayel in a still more precarious position.

As of February 20, Gemayel remained holed up in his presidential palace. Army units still loyal to his regime were bolstering their positions around the strategic town of Suk al-Gharb, where a possibly decisive battle was shaping up. When Druse fighters nearly overran Suk al-Gharb last September, intense shelling by U.S. warships blocked their advance.

Reagan decided to pull the marines out of Beirut in order to buy time and quell complaints from the U.S. Congress that his policy

in Lebanon was risky and ineffective. When the new crisis in Lebanon broke out, those critics fell silent. Reagan's probable Democratic Party opponent in the November elections, ex-Vice President Walter Mondale, declared February 8, "I stand for the continued stationing of U.S. naval forces at sea" near Lebanon.

But while U.S. ruling-class opinion is united on the need to maintain some form of intervention in Lebanon, working people have a different view. In a *Washington Post/ABC News* opinion poll conducted February 13-15, 61 percent held that U.S. military involvement there had not "served a useful purpose." Only 33 percent supported keeping the marines on warships off the coast, while 58 percent said the marines should "leave the area entirely." □

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# Elections a mask for U.S. war

*FMLN calls for talks on broad provisional government*

## By Steve Wattenmaker

The March 25 presidential elections in El Salvador offer "no solution and will tend to complicate the objective of a political solution" to the country's civil war, representatives of El Salvador's Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) told a February 9 news conference in Mexico City.

In place of elections, which they condemned as a farce having "no credibility," FMLN-FDR leaders Ana Guadalupe Martínez, Guillermo Ungo, and Rubén Zamora outlined a new rebel proposal for a "provisional government of broad participation" to include all social and political forces ready to do away with the U.S.-backed oligarchy and its military henchmen. (See text of proposal on next page.)

This new initiative is a further elaboration of the FMLN-FDR's call for a "dialogue without prior conditions" as a step toward resolving the armed conflict. The proposal for negotiations, first advanced by the guerrilla forces in October 1982, has gained widespread support in El Salvador and internationally.

While putting forward the FMLN-FDR's latest peace proposals, Ungo vowed that the guerrillas would continue their military struggle before and after the elections. The polling places themselves, however, will not be the object of direct military attacks because the FMLN realizes that many Salvadorans feel they have to go through the motions of voting in order "not to risk their lives," Ungo said.

## 'Democratic' fig leaf

Washington's strategy of promoting elections has been dictated by the steady advance of the Salvadoran revolution and the growing unity of the revolutionary leadership. The FMLN-FDR enjoys the overwhelming support of the country's workers and small farmers. The rebels today militarily dominate about a third of the national territory.

In contrast, the Salvadoran regime — kept afloat by hundreds of millions of dollars in military and economic aid from Washington — has been politically isolated at home and abroad and battered by successive guerrilla offensives. Under these conditions the Reagan administration has sought to play up staged elections as "proof" that the beleaguered Salvadoran government commands popular support in order to provide cover for Washington's deepening military intervention.

The U.S. government mounted a similar propaganda thrust in the wake of the March 1982 Salvadoran elections for a constituent assembly. Washington and San Salvador loudly proclaimed the election as a popular rejection

of the rebels in favor of the government, citing figures that showed virtually all the country's 1.5 million eligible voters went to the polls.

Two months after the election, a study prepared by the Central American University in San Salvador proved that the regime had inflated the voter turnout by more than 100 percent. And many of those who did vote cast their ballots at the point of a gun or in the desperate hope that voting would somehow hasten the end of the war.

## Right-wing contenders

El Salvador's five major right-wing parties have all nominated candidates for the March 25 election. The top two contenders are ARENA (Nationalist Republican Alliance) head Roberto D'Aubuisson and former Salvadoran president José Napoleón Duarte. The conservative Salvadoran People's Party (PPS) named Francisco Quiñonez, head of the regime's so-called Peace Commission. Col. Roberto Escobar García, a retired army officer, was named by the Authentic Salvadoran Institutional Party.

Francisco José Guerrero is the presidential candidate of the National Conciliation Party (PNC) the third strongest in the constituent assembly. The PCN traditionally was the official party under earlier Salvadoran dictatorships.

Duarte and his Christian Democratic Party (PCD) portray themselves as the "progressive" wing of the Salvadoran government. But during the time Duarte served in the ruling junta, from March 1980 to April 1982, right-wing terror reached new heights. From 1979 until he left office, death squad activity and army massacres had already murdered some 30,000 civilians.

## Death squad kingpin

ARENA candidate Roberto D'Aubuisson is a former major in the armed forces intelligence apparatus. D'Aubuisson founded ARENA with the backing of a section of El Salvador's most powerful land owners and campaigned in the 1982 elections primarily on the promise of ending the war by scoring a quick military victory over the "communist" guerrillas.

ARENA, together with several smaller parties won a majority of constituent assembly seats in the March 1982 voting. A compromise with the Christian Democrats resulted in Duarte being replaced in the office of president by conservative banker Álvaro Magaña, and D'Aubuisson was elected to head the assembly.

D'Aubuisson is best known as a key figure in organizing the country's secret, paramilitary

death squads. Testifying before the U.S. Congress February 2, former U.S. ambassador to El Salvador Robert White repeated what has long been common knowledge — that D'Aubuisson is the primary agent for the wealthy Salvadoran oligarchs in Miami and San Salvador who finance the death squad killings.

The Reagan administration's approach to the elections is to use the voting as a smoke-screen to mask huge new increases in military aid to the Salvadoran regime. "The democratic elements in Central America need our help," President Reagan said in a February 17 message to Congress accompanying his budget request. "For them to overcome the problems of accumulated historical inequities and immediate armed threats will take time, effort, and resources. We must support those efforts."

The White House then asked Congress to authorize a fourfold increase in military aid to El Salvador this year. Reagan asked the lawmakers to supplement this year's outlay of about \$65 million by \$179 million. For fiscal year 1985, starting October 1, the administration wants \$132 million in military aid for the regime.

## FMLN counters election ploy

In sharp contrast to the electoral stage show being played out in San Salvador, the FMLN is conducting a different sort of campaign throughout the country.

Several hundred townspeople gathered in the central square of the large eastern town of Chinameca February 7 to attend a lively and festive FMLN rally, according to the February 14 *Washington Post*. Onlookers laughed and clapped as young rebels in costumes played the parts of Mr. Imperialism and Lady Oligarchy in a comic skit.

Using a sound system mounted on the back of one of the guerrillas' five trucks parked in the square, an FMLN militant gave the guerrillas' answer to the March 25 elections. "The government doesn't care about your vote," shouted the speaker. "The elections are only a farce to deceive the people . . . a show for international consumption."

But, as the *Post* itself was forced to admit, the widespread support for the FMLN rebels is based on much more than entertaining skits or moving speeches. It is based on seeing the progress of El Salvador's social revolution make a difference in their own lives.

In towns like Chinameca and nearby Jucuapa, the *Post* reported, the FMLN enforced the official minimum wage for field hands during the coffee harvest — about \$3.75 per 100 pounds picked. The workers said this standard had been widely ignored in the past and had dropped as low as \$1.30 when the Salvadoran army was in control.

The guerrillas also won support for other social and economic reforms — some large, like the minimum wage, and some small. The rebels gathered praise in Jucuapa, for example, by shutting down two rowdy bars that had been disturbing the neighborhood. □

# For a provisional government

## Proposal of Salvadoran FMLN and FDR

[The following is the full text of a proposal issued in El Salvador on January 31 in the name of the General Command of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the Executive Committee of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR). It is entitled, "Proposal for the creation of the Provisional Government of Broad Participation and its program." This translation from the Spanish is based to a large extent on one provided by the FDR.]

\* \* \*

### I. Introduction

The Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) have been struggling for the final liberation of our people for several years. We have proposed various alternatives to solve the current crisis, believing that the largest number of Salvadorans must share the effort to achieve peace with justice, because only a powerful and broad effort can bring our country out of the destruction in which it has been plunged by the oligarchic regime and the intervention of the United States government.

We face a complex situation, nationally and internationally. The old oligarchic society and the state that has served it have sealed their own downfall in blood. Unable to meet the demands of thousands of Salvadorans, they have institutionalized an apparatus of repression and exploitation, and put forward political maneuvers aimed at covering up their adamantness for a military solution. In addition, the Reagan administration's interventionist escalation has prolonged the war and threatens to regionalize the conflict.

We maintain that the establishment of peace in our country requires a process involving the majority of social and political forces. These forces will create a viable solution based on the elimination of the above-mentioned factors that are the cause of the conflict.

Therefore, the FMLN-FDR proposes the formation of a Provisional Government of Broad Participation in support of a platform containing the indispensable tasks that we must take on to overcome the current critical situation. It is a platform that will allow our people to continue their process of social, political, and economic transformations toward a truly just society.

### II. Provisional Government of Broad Participation

The proposal to form the Provisional Government of Broad Participation is the result of the development of the Salvadoran people's democratic and revolutionary forces in the military and political arenas.

The Provisional Government of Broad Participation will be a government in which no single sector will have control. It will be the expression of the broad participation of those social and political forces ready to end the oligarchic regime, and to recover national sovereignty and national independence; a government in which the existence of private property and foreign investments will not be against the interests of society.

It will be a provisional government of broad participation, the duration of which will be determined by the fulfillment of its basic objectives, in accordance with the agreements among its participants, and with the understanding that it will not be a long-term government.

The basic objectives of the Provisional Government of Broad Participation are:

1. To recover national independence and sovereignty.
2. To dismantle the repressive apparatus and to lay the basis for a true democracy in which human rights and political freedom are fully respected and where broad popular participation to achieve a definite peace becomes a reality.
3. To respond to the most immediate and pressing needs of the popular majorities and to adopt basic economic and social measures to change these structures.
4. To establish the practical conditions needed to resolve the current state of war.
5. To prepare for and hold general elections.

The Provisional Government of Broad Participation will have a simplified structure at its highest level. It will have the following bodies:

- Government Junta
- Cabinet
- State Advisory Council
- Supreme Court of Justice

The Provisional Government of Broad Participation will be composed of representatives of the labor movement, peasants, teachers, workers, professional associations, universities, political parties, the private sector, representatives of the FMLN-FDR, and of an already-restructured national army.

The government institutions will reflect this broad range of representation, and will exclude the oligarchy and sectors and individuals that are against the objectives of the provisional government or that advocate maintaining the dictatorship.

### III. Government Program

This program establishes the basic lines and the indispensable measures that will guide the action of the Provisional Government of Broad Participation. With the input and discussion

from different organizations, sectors, and citizens, it will become a program of government that will go more deeply into the solutions we will have to provide for the most urgent problems posed by the development of our country.

In the first place, we propose a group of measures for immediate implementation and, in second place, measures and guidelines that will orient the course of the Provisional Government of Broad Participation during its existence.

#### Immediate measures:

1. Repeal the Constitution of 1983, and substitute for it a constitutional statute that will guide the action of the Provisional Government of Broad Participation.

2. Repeal the state of siege and all the decrees promulgated since 1980 that restrict social and individual freedoms.

3. Freedom for all political prisoners and disappeared, as well as the annulment of all sentences handed down on the basis of repressive and emergency decrees.

4. Full guarantees for the exercise of collective and individual rights and freedoms. Passage of a provisional statute allowing agricultural and state workers to organize themselves. Trade unions will be compensated for damages against their property caused by the repression since 1979. The popular power organizations that have emerged in different areas of the country during the war will be legitimized.

5. Dissolution of the security forces, death squads, and their political arm, the ARENA party. A new civilian police force will be created under the Ministry of the Interior.

6. Withdrawal of U.S. advisers, a halt to U.S. military aid, as well as such aid from other countries, and suspension of all arms shipments.

7. Restructuring of the governmental armed forces and, once that is achieved, the incorporation of its representatives into the structures of the Provisional Government of Broad Participation.

8. Investigation and trial of the military personnel and civilians responsible for the genocide, political crimes, torture, disappearances, and illegal abrogations of individual freedoms. The deaths of FMLN combatants and of army soldiers, non-commissioned officers, and officers in combat do not constitute crimes.

9. The Supreme Court of Justice will conduct the immediate investigation and trial for crimes against human rights. At the same time, it will undertake a restructuring and reorganization of the judicial system. The non-governmental human rights organizations that defended the people during the dictatorship will be asked to help in these tasks.

10. Return of the exiles and refugees, and the implementation of an emergency program to absorb and assist in the most urgent needs of the returning refugees, those displaced or disabled due to the war, the demobilized elements from the armed forces, and the families and individuals from either side who have been left

without the means to support themselves due to the war. The Provisional Government of Broad Participation will ask for the collaboration of international agencies and non-governmental organizations in these tasks.

11. Application of an emergency program for the reconstruction of the economic, educational, and health-care infrastructure destroyed or damaged by the war.

12. A moratorium on the debts of small and medium business people. Implementation of a program of quick, convenient financing for these sectors, in industry as well as agriculture, thereby stimulating the economic recovery.

13. Set and control prices on basic necessities, as a way of improving the real value of wages. Reorganization and control of the sales and distribution system for items of basic necessity.

14. Renegotiation of the foreign debt, based on recognition of the financial commitments contracted by previous governments.

15. Reestablishment of the autonomy of the National University of El Salvador, assigning the necessary resources for its reorganization and functioning. The installations of the university campus will be immediately handed over to its legitimate authorities.

16. Establishment of a massive literacy campaign and a democratic program of adult training in the areas of health, education, agricultural production, and community organization.

17. Development of a massive employment plan through the promotion of state and private investment in labor-intensive sectors of the economy. An emergency program will be implemented for the acquisition of raw materials and supplies necessary for the economic recovery. Adequate commercial channels and profit margins for the producers will be guaranteed.

18. Promotion and development of a program of popular organization through the broadening and consolidation of the municipalities, communities, and local organizations. Participation of these structures in planning, carrying out, and evaluating the projects that benefit the community.

19. Development of a massive communications program, implementing the creation of popular means of mass communication of local interest.

20. Establishment of an electoral body which, by agreement of the participants, will prepare for the holding of general and free elections. A reliable voter registration list will also be created.

#### *Economic and social reforms:*

1. Lay the basis for the full achievement of agrarian reform, insuring the free participation of the rural workers in carrying it out. Develop programs of cooperative organizations with small individual owners.

2. Lay the basis for the full achievement of the nationalization of the country's banking and financial system, with the purpose of making the financial structure and the credit system serve the interests of the national majority.

3. Lay the basis for the full achievement of the reform of foreign trade, including the control of exports of the main products: coffee, cotton, sugar cane, seafood, and meat. Include control over the import of raw materials, supplies, spare parts, and technology necessary for the national production.

4. Lay the basis for the adequate solution of the housing needs of the low-income sectors, as well as for the progressive expansion of social security services, and reorientation of foreign investment so it effectively contributes to the fulfillment of the social needs.

#### *Foreign policy:*

The Provisional Government of Broad Participation will develop its foreign policy on the basis of the following criteria:

1. The Provisional Government of Broad Participation will promote an international relations policy oriented toward preserving peace, against the arms race and nuclear proliferation. It will defend the principles of peaceful coexistence, self-determination, and non-intervention as follows:

It will join the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and in so doing will strengthen the struggle against colonialism, neocolonialism, Zionism, race discrimination, and apartheid.

Diplomatic relations with other countries will be established independently of their social regime and will be based on national interests.

It will comply with the obligations contracted in the international organizations and will seek to participate actively in international forums for the discussion and solution of the problems stemming from the economic relations among the nations.

It will reaffirm its commitment to [Simón] Bolívar's vision, and therefore will make efforts to promote and participate in the regional forums that strengthen the positions of the Latin American countries regarding the political, diplomatic, economic, financial, and social problems of the region.

2. In its relations with the United States:

It proposes the signing of agreements that will guarantee the national security of both countries as follows:

- The Provisional Government of Broad Participation commits itself not to allow the installation of foreign military bases and/or missiles in its territory; and on its part, the government of the United States should commit itself not to undertake, promote, or encourage aggressive or destabilizing activities against the Provisional Government of Broad Participation and the government that is created from said process.

- The Salvadoran government will not allow its national territory to be used to destabilize the governments of neighboring countries, nor will it allow the transit of arms and foreign troops through its territory.

It will promote the signing of agreements of nonaggression and nonintervention in the internal affairs of the countries of the area.

The relations of the government of El Salvador with the United States and Central America will be reoriented on the basis of unconditional respect for the right to self-determination, independence, and national sovereignty, as well as mutual cooperation and independence, as follows:

- It will make efforts toward achieving [Francisco] Morazán's ideal of Central American unity and making our region free of foreign military forces. It will not participate in military alliances. Consequently, it will withdraw from CONDECA.

- It will actively participate in the promotion and development of regional organizations that will guarantee political solutions to the international conflicts, and will sign agreements that promote economic, social, and political integration.

#### **IV. Procedure**

In order to put this proposal into practice, it is necessary to initiate a process of dialogue-negotiation, giving consideration to the following aspects:

1. With regard to the participants:

a) The parties in conflict:

1. FMLN-FDR delegation.

2. Delegation of the government and armed forces of El Salvador and the special U.S. ambassador for Central America or another representative of the United States government.

b) Mediators without final arbitrary power, named with the acceptance of all parties.

c) International witnesses such as representatives of the Contadora Group and other democratic governments.

2. Phases:

a) Direct dialogue, without preconditions, organized by one or several mediators, either by their own initiative or by request of the parties, which would lead to substantive negotiations, an agenda, witnesses, and procedures.

b) Direct negotiations among the parties in conflict, with mediators acting as moderators of the meetings and with the presence of the ambassadors designated by the governments chosen as witnesses.

3. Commitments:

The FMLN-FDR indicates its readiness to negotiate a cease-fire once the process of dialogue-negotiation begins, and reaches an advanced stage.

Once the agreements are concluded, documents will be signed by the parties in conflict, the witnesses as guarantors and the moderators.

The agreements will be applicable immediately in accordance with the dates, phases, and procedures agreed upon.

This process will culminate in the organization of a unified national army, made up of the FMLN forces and the restructured governmental armed forces. Until then, both armies will keep their own arms. □

# 'The PLO has not been crushed'

Interview with Dr. Hatem Hussaini

[The following is an interview with Dr. Hatem Hussaini, member of the Palestine National Council and former deputy United Nations observer for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). It was conducted for *Intercontinental Press* by Fred Murphy at the Palestine Information Office in Washington, D.C., on February 15.

[An earlier interview with Dr. Hussaini appeared in the May 30, 1983, issue of *Intercontinental Press*.]

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*Question. The last time we had the opportunity to speak with you was in April 1983, before the development of the dispute that broke out in the Fatah organization and the subsequent Syrian intervention in the Palestine Liberation Organization. Could you assess the impact of this on the Palestinian struggle and give us your views on how this conflict unfolded, from the beginning of the conflict in May and June up through the expulsion of Yasser Arafat and the other fighters from Tripoli in December 1983.*

*Answer.* I believe events have confirmed that the Syrian government wanted to control the PLO and wanted the PLO leadership and the Palestinian forces out of Lebanon. This was part of an understanding between Syria and the United States. There was an agreement between Secretary of State George Shultz and Syrian President Assad that Syria would work to remove the PLO fighters and leadership from Lebanon.

*Q. When was that agreement made?*

*A.* It was about eight months ago, following discussions between Shultz and Syrian officials. And this is exactly what happened. The Syrian government has succeeded in expelling the PLO leadership and fighters from the Bekaa Valley and northern Lebanon. Whatever Palestinian forces remain in the Bekaa Valley and the Lebanese mountains are under the total control of the Syrian government.

This of course has something to do with Syrian policy. The Syrian government is working to protect its own interests, whether in Lebanon or its interests as a ruling party in Syria.

The PLO did not want to fight with the Syrian government; it wanted to coordinate with the Syrian government and the Lebanese nationalist forces to be able to face the U.S. aggression against Lebanon and the Israeli occupation.

The disagreement between the PLO and the Syrian government was over the role of the PLO. Syria wanted the PLO to follow the Sy-



DR. HATEM HUSSAINI  
Lou Howort/Militant

rian government's political line, and the PLO wanted to coordinate with Syria while preserving its own independent political line.

In other words, the Syrian government wanted to control the PLO, to make decisions for it, and to have the PLO function within Syria's sphere of influence.

I think that out of this conflict in Lebanon the PLO has survived as a political and military force in the region. It has not been crushed — neither by the Israeli invasion in 1982 nor by the Syrian government's attempt to control it in 1983.

Most of the reports that circulated in the United States said that Chairman Arafat is finished and the PLO is finished. These have been proven incorrect. The PLO is a viable political and military force in the Middle East. Chairman Arafat today is in the Soviet Union holding talks with Soviet officials, and he has also recently been involved in extensive political discussions in Africa and in a number of Arab and European countries to safeguard the

rights of the Palestinian people.

As for the question of problems within the PLO, there is no doubt that there is a need for reforms and a review of policies since the war in Lebanon. There have been many problems within the PLO and a need for change, reform, and accountability within it. But Syria used the call for reform and change within the PLO as a pretext to attack the Palestinian forces.

Chairman Arafat and the Palestinian leadership should be held accountable by the Palestine National Council and the legitimate Palestinian institutions. The Palestine National Council will meet in the next few months to review the PLO's policy and elect a new Palestinian leadership. It is one thing to call for change within the PLO. It is something else to work with the Syrian government to try to totally crush the PLO.

I think that both the Syrian and Libyan governments have tried to use the opposition within the PLO to serve their own interests. That is why, at the level of the people, those who led the rebellion against Arafat are isolated now and have no support among Palestinians, whether in the occupied West Bank and Gaza or even among Palestinians inside Syria itself or in Lebanon.

The Palestinian people have rallied around the Arafat leadership. There is criticism of his leadership. But that criticism should remain within the PLO institutions, and reforms should be implemented through democratic dialogue and discussion. The PLO leadership is open to criticism and it is willing to make the necessary changes because this is in the interests of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian struggle.

*Q. Do you find that there has been any rethinking on the part of any of the forces within the PLO that allowed themselves to be used by the Syrian government? Is there any possibility that some of these forces could acknowledge their errors and continue to play a role in the PLO?*

*A.* There are perhaps three categories of opposition within the PLO. First there are the groups that are working under direct control of Syria — such as Saiqa, some units of the Palestine Liberation Army, and Ahmed Jabril's group, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command. Some of these groups were involved in shelling Palestinian refugee camps at Baddawi, Nahr al Bared, and Tripoli. They lost all their credibility and were harshly criticized by the Palestinian people. As a matter of fact, Palestinians in the refugee camps came out and attacked some of these

people. These groups will not, in my opinion, have any role within the PLO.

The second group are those who call for reform within Fatah and the PLO. Some of these people are genuine nationalists. They are not tied to the Syrian government, and there is dialogue with some of these people. They are welcome to come back to Fatah and the PLO and to work within the framework of Palestinian national unity, to be part of the democratic dialogue to determine the reforms needed. As a matter of fact, Fatah and the PLO did respond earlier to their demands and made some changes, in the political staff and in military appointments.

The third group are the other major Palestinian resistance organizations such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP]. They were critical of the Syrian regime when it attacked the refugee camps in northern Lebanon and stood with Chairman Arafat and the PLO leadership to maintain Palestinian national unity. As a result, in Damascus the Syrian government banned their publications for awhile. They were more critical of Chairman Arafat's visit to Egypt recently, but I think there is dialogue between these organizations and Fatah.

So, those Palestinians who were used by Syria in shelling Palestinian refugee camps and killing Palestinians have been or will be expelled from the PLO. Any other groups and individuals that have been critical of PLO policy, however, who have remained in the PLO and want to continue the democratic dialogue, are most welcome. In Algeria and Tunis and Damascus there are ongoing meetings and discussions among PLO leaders to overcome problems, maintain national unity, and ultimately agree on a platform that will enhance the PLO's political-military struggle against Zionism and imperialism.

*Q. Could you clarify the PLO's aims in the recent diplomatic efforts and talks with the Egyptian and Jordanian governments?*

A. Some critics of Chairman Arafat have said that by meeting with President Mubarak, of Egypt, Arafat is aiming to enter negotiations through the Camp David peace process and work with Egypt and Jordan to implement the Camp David agreements.

This is totally untrue. It is a distortion of reality. As a matter of fact, a statement by the Fatah Central Committee recently stressed that what Arafat actually told Mubarak was that the PLO is opposed to the Camp David agreements and the Reagan initiative and is committed to the resolutions of the Fez Arab summit conference, which stressed that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, that the Palestinians have a right to an independent Palestinian state and the right to self-determination.

So there are differences between the PLO and the Egyptian government, specifically over the Camp David agreements. But President Mubarak represents a policy that is differ-

ent from Sadat's policy. There are increasing tensions between the Mubarak government and Israel on the one hand, and between the Mubarak government and the United States.

Therefore, the PLO is trying to work within Egypt to move Egypt away from the Camp David agreements and closer to the Arab and Palestinian position. This is a necessity. Egypt is a major Arab power. Through the Camp David agreements, Egypt was isolated from the Arab front. This allowed Israel to strike at Lebanon and upset the military balance.

There are also disagreements between the PLO and Jordan over the issue of who speaks for the Palestinians. The PLO is very clear about this — it is the sole, legitimate spokesman of the Palestinian people. King Hussein does not speak for the Palestinians.

However, the PLO is willing to coordinate policies with King Hussein. But in any talks or negotiations over the rights of the Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza it is the PLO that must represent the Palestinians.

This is really the conclusion of 19 years of struggle by the Palestinian people and the PLO. Many martyrs fell to make the point that those who speak for the Palestinians are the PLO and the Palestinian freedom fighters.

The Reagan administration is trying to convince King Hussein to come into the negotiations along the lines of the Reagan initiative and the Camp David agreements and is pressuring Egypt to move away from the PLO.

But I don't think that the Reagan administration has succeeded. That is why yesterday the Reagan administration was upset with President Mubarak's statements, which are statements of fact. Mubarak said the PLO represents the Palestinians and the Palestinians have the right to self-determination. This is a fact that the whole international community has recognized. Reagan's allies in Europe have recognized this fact. And a large sector of U.S. public opinion recognizes this fact.

I think that you will see continued PLO diplomacy to protect Palestinian rights — the right to self-determination, the right to an independent state.

The U.S. government is going to try to block and sabotage these efforts. The Reagan administration is facing an election and will give more support to Israel politically and militarily.

So 1984 will be a year of stalemate. A lot will depend on future talks between the Soviet Union and the United States. The Soviet Union's position is very important for the Palestinians. The Soviet Union politically supports the PLO and the Palestinians. It stresses the right of the Palestinian people to national independence and self-determination as a cornerstone for a solution.

However, I have a feeling that the U.S. government will continue to push for military hegemony in the Middle East and more military involvement in Lebanon. It seems the U.S. government will increase its military aid to Jordan, Egypt, and Israel and push toward more direct confrontation with the Soviet

Union in the Middle East. This will be disastrous, not only for the Arab people of the Middle East, but for international peace and stability and for the American people as well.

*Q. In January King Hussein called the Jordanian parliament back into session for the first time since the 1974 Arab League conference that recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The parliament includes deputies elected from the West Bank before 1967. How does the PLO view this decision by King Hussein?*

A. A committee of the PLO put out a statement saying that the recalling of the parliament is an internal Jordanian matter. On the other hand, most of the leaders of the West Bank and Gaza have expressed full support for the PLO and stress that the PLO is their sole legitimate representative.

They don't accept that King Hussein should speak for them. They would like to see, obviously, coordination between the PLO and King Hussein, but they stress that the PLO is their sole legitimate representative.

On the other hand, in Jordan itself you will see more work by the PLO, opening offices, getting involved in economic and social work, in political work, because there are close to 1.5 million Palestinians in Jordan and many of them are refugees.

For that matter, the PLO has a right to function in all Arab countries where Palestinians live — Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt. Wherever Palestinians live, the PLO has a right to work at the social, economic, political, and military level — to speak for the Palestinians, to deal with their problems, and of course to struggle against the Israeli military occupation. Any efforts by the PLO leadership in Egypt, Syria, Jordan, or Lebanon are along these lines. In the absence of a Palestinian state you will see the PLO functioning in the Arab states, especially in those bordering occupied Palestine.

The PLO will also continue its military resistance to the Israeli military occupation in south Lebanon and the occupied West Bank and Gaza, because the Israeli government does not understand any language except force and military resistance.

The Palestinian people, under occupation, denied their freedom, persecuted and oppressed by Israeli military occupation, have a right to resist that occupation. Whether through nonviolent civil resistance or military resistance, this is a right safeguarded by the United Nations Charter and international law.

The only solution to the Palestinian problem is for the Israeli government to withdraw its military occupation forces and allow the Palestinians to freely determine their destiny and establish their independent state and raise their flag over Palestine. Then like all other peoples in the Middle East they will enjoy the right to self-determination and national independence.

*Q. What are the prospects for mending the PLO's relations with the Syrian regime?*



A. The problem between Syria and the PLO is that the PLO refuses to be dominated by the Syrian government or to function within the sphere of influence of the Syrian government. Relations between the Syrian government and the PLO have fluctuated. They have gone through periods of cooperation. And there have been periods of confrontation and direct military conflict, for example in 1976 and recently in 1983.

However, discussions between PLO leaders and Syrian leaders have continued, especially in the last few months. The PLO leadership is open to continuing talks with the Syrian government to coordinate policies and to face the U.S. attacks against the Lebanese people and the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, the West Bank, and Gaza.

This applies to all Arab governments. The PLO will talk to all Arab governments, to seek Arab support for the Palestinian cause. But it will reject attempts by any Arab government to try to dominate the PLO or to give it orders or try to get it to function as a political tool for one Arab government or another.

Q. *Could you elaborate on the resistance to the Israeli occupation on the West Bank and in Gaza and southern Lebanon?*

A. The Palestinians have always argued that Zionism is an expansionist, militarist movement. I think we have been seeing the Zionist movement do exactly that in recent years. It is expanding, occupying the West Bank and Gaza and south Lebanon.

As a matter of fact, studies have been published showing that in the 1950s David Ben-Gurion argued that southern Lebanon should be annexed to Israel.

The policies of the Israeli government in the West Bank and Gaza also point in that direction. The Israeli government wants to annex the West Bank and Gaza. And Israel, thanks in large part to U.S. military and financial support, is able to continue the occupation of these territories, the confiscation of Palestinian land, the building of new Israeli settlements.

The process of annexation of the West Bank-Gaza and the occupation of southern Lebanon is accelerating. There is increasing repression against the Palestinian people in the form of mass arrests, detentions, closing down schools and universities, confiscation of lands, and curfews imposed on Palestinian towns and villages and refugee camps and on Lebanese villages and towns.

Faced with this, the Palestinian and Lebanese people are involved in increased acts of resistance to the army of occupation. In south Lebanon there are daily attacks against Israeli military forces. In the occupied West Bank and Gaza the resistance is mostly in the form of civil disobedience. Mayors and Palestinian leaders write petitions, school and university students protest in the streets, merchants close their shops in protest in Palestinian towns and villages.

The Israeli government is also imposing grave economic restrictions on the Palestin-

ians, denying them permits to improve their businesses, their hospitals and schools, denying them permits to work, and so on. In effect these restrictions lead to the expulsion of the Palestinian people from the West Bank and Gaza. When a farmer cannot plant his crops or a merchant cannot improve his business, he has to leave. The Israeli government wants to get rid of the Palestinian Arab people in the West Bank and Gaza so that more Israeli settlers and immigrants from the Soviet Union, Europe, and the United States can be moved onto confiscated Palestinian land.

It is a policy of genocide. They are annihilating a people, uprooting them, destroying their institutions, and expelling them, wiping out their national identity and heritage.

Q. *Since the invasion of Lebanon, there has been growing opposition in Israel to the policies of the Begin and Shamir regimes. There is resistance inside the armed forces, demonstrations for withdrawal from Lebanon, and strikes against the efforts to impose an austerity policy. In what ways can the Palestinian struggle influence these developments? What are the prospects for forging alliances with progressive forces inside Israel?*

A. As a result of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the peace movement and different progressive forces in Israel were able to speak up and get involved in political action to oppose the Begin and Shamir government policies. Many Israeli officers and enlisted men refused service in the Israeli army and joined the peace movement, calling for the withdrawal of the Israeli army from south Lebanon. Some

have also refused to serve in the army of occupation in the West Bank and Gaza.

We increasingly see Israelis from the peace movement marching with Palestinians to oppose the rightist settlers who are armed and are attacking Palestinians in the Hebron area and other parts of the West Bank and Gaza. They march together to demand the lifting of curfews imposed on towns, cities, and universities.

Of course, the Israeli peace movement is still a minority. It does not have a great impact on the policies of the Israeli government. It is under pressure from the regime, which has arrested Israeli activists and jailed those who refuse service in the army. But this is an important struggle.

We are also seeing the emergence of a wealth of literature by Israelis who write articles, books, and documents that are very critical of Israeli policies. Amnon Kapeliouk's book about the Sabra and Shatila massacres, for example, is an important document that shows how the Israeli government fully cooperated with the Phalangists in planning and carrying out these horrible crimes against the Palestinians and Lebanese.

Such efforts are important and they prove a point: that this is a political struggle in which all people — Palestinians, Jews, Americans, whites, Blacks — should join together against militarism, Zionism, racism, and anti-Semitism and for freedom, human dignity, liberation, and equality among all peoples.

This gives the Palestinian struggle its universalist perspective. It is a struggle for the liberation of the human being and the dignity of the human being. □

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# Broad discussion on PLO's course

## *A spectrum of Palestinian viewpoints*

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) finds itself today in a difficult political situation, owing to a series of developments adverse to the Palestinian people's struggle for self-determination. While the Israeli rulers failed to achieve their aim of destroying the PLO outright with their invasion of Lebanon in 1982, they did succeed in dealing it some very heavy blows. In 1983, the Syrian regime took advantage of an internal dispute in Fatah, the largest of the PLO's component organizations, to try to split the PLO or bring it under Syrian control. Damascus did not shrink from using military force to drive PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat and other defenders of the organization's unity and independence out of Lebanon in December.

The dispute in Fatah, the conflict between the PLO and Syria, Yassir Arafat's meeting with Mubarak in Cairo on December 22, and King Hussein's decision to reconvene the Jordanian parliament have all given rise to commentary, discussion, and debate, among political currents within the PLO and in Palestinian communities in the Middle East and elsewhere.

To inform our readers of the range of opinions being expressed in this discussion, we are reprinting here excerpts from some of the documents, articles, and interviews that have appeared in recent months.

### **Fatah Central Committee**

[The following are excerpts from a statement issued by the Fatah Central Committee on January 4, following a five-day meeting in Tunis. The statement was broadcast in Arabic by the Voice of the PLO radio station in Baghdad. We have taken the translation from the Foreign Broadcast Information Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce.]

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The Fatah Central Committee was surprised at Brother Abu Ammar's [Yassir Arafat] visit to Cairo. The committee said in its first statement that it opposed this visit. It issued its second statement and then waited for Abu Ammar's return to issue its final statement.

In the presence of Brother Abu Ammar, the Fatah Central Committee discussed in detail the visit, its causes, and its results after it had listened to Brother Abu Ammar's explanation and evaluation of it. In the report that he read to the Fatah Central Committee, Abu Ammar stressed the following points:

1. He believes that this visit is a disruption of the Camp David accords and not an entry into them or their course. . . .

3. Egypt's return to the Arab nation de-

serves such a visit for the sake of the Egyptian people and their sacrifices for the Arab nation's battles. Consequently, the visit is not a reaction to the bitterness resulting from the stand of the Libyan and Syrian regimes.

4. The visit did not result in any political agreement. During the visit, no discussion that would disrupt the political and organizational decisions of the PNC or the Fatah movement took place. Arafat explained to the Egyptian president the PLO's stand which rejects autonomy that is included in the Camp David accords and President Reagan's plan. . . .

7. Brother Abu Ammar pointed out that he bears the responsibility for the visit in front of the legitimate institutions of the Fatah movement and the PLO and that he abides by their resolution, given that the visit was a personal initiative based on personal judgment.

The Central Committee discussed this report [and made the following decisions]. . . .

6. The Central Committee confirms its full adherence to the PNC resolutions. It will consider any violation of them rejected by Palestinian legitimacy.

7. The Central Committee confirms its rejection of all plans that do not recognize our people's right to return home, determine their destiny, and establish their own independent Palestinian state on their national soil. This means the rejection of the Reagan initiative and the autonomy for which the Camp David accords provide. . . .

12. The Central Committee believes that the solution of Arab differences and the realization of Arab solidarity constitute a pan-Arab necessity and a basic foundation to confront the U.S.-Zionist strategic alliance and restore the imbalance of power in the region. Because of the Central Committee's conviction in this principle, it has always expressed and continues to express its readiness to meet with any Arab force or regime on the basis of confrontation and of respecting the Palestinian will and independent decisionmaking. . . .

14. The Central Committee reiterates its views expressed in its statement on Brother Abu Ammar's visit to Cairo. It considers this visit to be an organizational violation, contrary to the methods of making decisions within Fatah and the PLO. This visit was made upon Abu Ammar's personal decision. The Central Committee has made a number of internal decisions to enhance the line of collective leadership in the Central Committee and the other Fatah institutions.

15. The Central Committee's position on the visit and its implications is not directed against constructive efforts which are exerted to restore Egypt to the Arab ranks in order to once again play its leading role in the Arab

world. . . .

16. The Central Committee has decided to form a committee from among its members to study and define the form and principles of the relations with Egypt in coordination with the PLO Executive Committee.

### **'Al-Fajr,' Jerusalem Palestinian Weekly**

Recent editorials in the English-language weekly edition of *Al-Fajr* (The Dawn), published in Jerusalem on the Israeli-occupied West Bank, have focused their fire on Jordan's King Hussein for his attempts to blackmail the Palestine Liberation Organization into making political concessions and to supplant the PLO in peace negotiations with Washington and Tel Aviv.

By recalling the Jordanian parliament, which included Palestinians elected from the West Bank before 1967, Hussein aims at circumventing the decision of the Rabat, Morocco, Arab summit conference in 1974 to recognize the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people," *Al-Fajr* said January 11.

Since 1974, "no chance has been spared and every opportunity was grabbed by Jordan to circumvent the Rabat decision. After every military blow to weaken the PLO, Hussein was eager to move forward. . . . As soon as U.S. President Reagan announced his September 1 [1982] plan, Jordan was the first to smile. In the second Fez Arab summit, Jordan was in the front lines defending the plan. When these attempts failed, Jordan chose the practical process of bridging the Fez resolutions with the Reagan Plan. The main axis that Jordan based itself on during the Arafat-Hussein negotiations, until April 1983, was this bridging operation."

(The Fez summit resolution of September 1982 reaffirmed that the PLO was the "sole and legitimate representative" of the Palestinian people and called for "the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Al Qods [Jerusalem] as its capital." The Reagan Plan explicitly ruled out such a state, calling instead for Palestinian "autonomy . . . in association with Jordan.")

A January 25 editorial in *Al-Fajr* again condemned the reconvening of the Jordanian parliament, terming it "one more step on Hussein's path to resume his role as suppressor of the Palestinian people's aspirations."

An accompanying column by *Al-Fajr* managing editor Sam'an Khoury pointed to three developments that King Hussein was taking advantage of: "the Israeli aggression against



Palestinian youths hold portraits of Yassir Arafat.

Lebanon and the PLO's departure from Beirut"; "the split in the Palestinian movement after the emergence of the Fatah protest movement and the resulting bloodshed"; and "Arafat's visit to Cairo."

These events indicated to the Jordanian regime "that the time was ripe to take a major political move, to pressure the PLO and blackmail its independent decision. The regime rightfully concluded that Arafat's visit gave it the cover it needed: it showed how the PNC [Palestine National Council] resolutions could be ignored by the rightist stream among Palestinians." (The February 1983 PNC meeting had resolved that the PLO's relations with Cairo would be defined "on the basis of [Egypt's] abandoning of the Camp David accords.")

A further editorial in the February 1 *Al-Fajr* took up King Hussein's declarations that the \$220 million in U.S. military aid he is due to receive would be used to help prop up other Arab regimes rather than against Israel. *Al-Fajr* pointed out that the Jordanian army had proven totally ineffective against Israel in the 1948 and 1967 wars. In 1948, "Hussein's grandfather's army entered Palestine to help crush the Palestinian resistance."

Therefore, *Al-Fajr* concluded, "Hussein in his press conference was not lying at all. The United States and Israel should not really fear this aid. It's the people of Palestine and Arab peoples who should worry. These peoples should do all they can to confront Hussein's attempt and foil it."

### Abu Khaled el-Amleh, Fatah dissident leader

[The following is an excerpt from an interview with Abu Khaled el-Amleh, a leader of the dissident current within Fatah. The interview was originally published in the January

15 issue of the Arabic-language weekly *el-Mufik el-Arabi*. Excerpts were reprinted in the February 6 issue of the Paris fortnightly *Inprecor*. This translation from *Inprecor's* French version is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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*Question.* Some say that it was the tightening of the siege and the fighting in northern Lebanon that forced Arafat to go to Egypt. That, deceived and stabbed in the back, he was obliged to go there. What do you think?

*Answer.* That is absolutely not true, since, as we explained immediately, Arafat had already gone to Egypt politically right after the evacuation from Beirut [in August 1982], through delegations that he sent there. After Beirut, Arafat went even further than the meeting with Mubarak. He took up the Reagan Plan, met with Zionists, and went to Jordan. These political moves all complement one another; it is wrong to look at things in a fragmentary way. It is well known to all Palestinians and Arabs that Arafat and his Central Committee decided in Tunis after the Fez Conference to put an end to the armed Palestinian presence in Lebanon and Syria in order to concentrate his troops in Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt. On more than one occasion he requested facilities for evacuating the Palestinian fighters. One of the conditions for concrete integration into the Reagan Plan is willingness to halt the combat and leave the field of battle in Lebanon, in face of our imperialist and Zionist enemies, in order to line up with the forces of counterrevolution. . . .

Arafat returned to Lebanon at the moment when the Palestinian revolution, alongside the National Salvation Front and other Lebanese patriots, was fighting in the mountains. He returned saying he had come to finish a task. We saw that this task amounted to dealing blows to the patriotic Lebanese and Palestinian forces in order to make northern Lebanon an area op-

posed to the Lebanese-Palestinian fighting efforts. Arafat has succeeded, thanks to his information apparatus and the Arab and international mass media, in overlooking all these realities and in accusing the rebellion [i.e., the Fatah dissidents] of being responsible for the fighting in the north. The truth is that it was Arafat who wanted this armed conflict and this Palestinian bloodshed in order to appear as an honorable fighter who resisted the dissidents, the Syrians, and the Libyans.

### Muhammad Hallaj, 'Palestine Perspectives'

[The following are excerpts from an editorial in the February issue of *Palestine Perspectives*, published by the Palestine Research and Educational Center in Washington, D.C. The editorial, headlined "To Cairo . . . With Caution," was signed by Dr. Muhammad Hallaj, director of the center and former vice-president of Bir Zeit University on the Israeli-occupied West Bank.]

\* \* \*

Some Palestinians feared that, by visiting Egypt and meeting with its president, [Yasser Arafat] was signalling his readiness to accept the unacceptable. Similarly, some ill-wishers of the Palestinian people were quick to rejoice in the mistaken belief that the Palestinian leadership, despairing and free of the constraints of "radicalism" within their ranks, are now ready to sell their souls.

Palestinian opposition to the Camp David accords was never dictated by Palestinian radicalism. Their rejection was and remains today a requirement of Palestinian national survival.

Even from the perspective of less lofty considerations, the PLO and its leadership cannot afford to play the political game on the basis of Camp David or the Reagan Plan. In addition to ruling out Palestinian statehood (Reagan Plan) or making the Palestinians' future subject to Israel's veto (Camp David), both of these schemes do not recognize a role for the PLO in the peace process. By agreeing to either one of them as a basis for political settlement, Mr. Arafat would not only be abandoning a most fundamental national right, but also he would be surrendering his and the PLO's leadership and even their very reason for being. Therefore, the assumption that, by visiting Egypt Mr. Arafat was indicating his willingness to be a Palestinian Sadat is a most doubtful assumption, to say the least.

The Egyptian people should not be abandoned by the Arabs to struggle alone with the aberration that Sadat's policies injected in their national life. As their disenchantment with the unilateral peace with Israel grows, and as their present government responds, though haltingly, to new Arab suffering brought about by mounting Israeli aggression, they are entitled to know that they have not been disowned by the Arab family, and that Egypt will always

have a place reserved for it in the affections of the Arab nation.

Yasser Arafat's visit to Cairo, and the subsequent Fateh statements on the subject make it clear that the Palestinians neither accept the defection of Egypt as a permanent Arab defeat, nor do they approve of Sadat's deviation as a lasting legacy.

## Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

[The following are excerpts from a news broadcast in Arabic on Paris Radio Monte Carlo January 11. We have taken the translation from the Foreign Broadcast Information Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce.]

\* \* \*

An important PFLP [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine] statement was issued in Damascus today. The statement says that during the past 2 days, the PFLP Central Committee held an extraordinary session in Damascus under the chairmanship of Dr George Habash. The statement strongly condemns and denounces Arafat's visit to Cairo.

The visit, the statement adds, constitutes a flagrant violation of the PNC [Palestine National Council] resolutions and a challenge to all the PLO legitimate institutions. The statement says that the visit will be followed by other moves and steps that are connected with it, with the intention of entering into the framework of the U.S. solution through a partnership between King Husayn and Yasir Arafat.

The PFLP statement says that the Cairo meeting strips Arafat of his full legitimacy and the right to lead the PLO. It states that the Palestinian people's masses and the revolution's factions, which have become fed up with Arafat's individualistic methods and decisions, can no longer tolerate these practices which have caused great harm to and created confusion in the Palestinian arena.

The PFLP affirmed that it will confront the deviationist policy, calling on Palestinians everywhere to confront this step and face the policy of capitulation. The Front called for the formation of the broadest possible Palestinian national front to include all the national factions, forces, unions, and personages in order to face the line of deviation and capitulation. The statement considers this to be an urgent national issue. The PFLP stressed the need to remove Yasir Arafat from the chairmanship of the PLO Executive Committee, adding that this has become an urgent national duty.

## Palestine Congress of North America

The main article in the January issue of the Palestine Congress of North America's *PCNA Newsletter* marked the 19th anniversary of the

opening of Palestinian armed struggle against the Zionist state of Israel. The first action of the Palestinian resistance on Jan. 1, 1965, "launched publicly the notion that henceforth the struggle against the Zionist enemy to build a democratic, free Palestine would be via the people's protracted war. . . .

"For 18 years, between 1964 and 1982, the idea of armed struggle came to be the norm for the Palestinian and Arab masses, who saw it as the only framework for action in their struggle throughout the region."

However, the article continued, "something dramatic happened sometime before the Zionist invasion of Lebanon in June of 1982. The idea of armed struggle was deflected from its ascendant place in our confrontation with the Zionist enemy. Calls for the abandonment of the concept began to be heard, sometimes faintly, sometimes indirectly . . . and at other times in a straightforward, outright fashion."

Those who raised such calls, the article said, eventually "became linked, with some elements in the leadership, to moves sponsored by the enemy camp for a 'political solution' whose aim was finally to short-change our masses of their national rights to freedom and independence."

After the war in Lebanon, the article went on, "even elements within the leadership itself

were speaking openly of phantom 'political solutions' via Washington and scrapping the armed struggle." As a result, "the Palestinian leadership polarized between those who favored armed struggle and those who would, under any circumstances, justify whatever direction was taken — even were it to be that of ruin and national humiliation.

"What can one say, for example, about Yasser Arafat's visit to Egypt in 1983? Surely those who justify it must also justify Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977. For if Arafat's visit to Egypt is not wrong, was Sadat's visit to Jerusalem right?"

"Those who do not believe in the right of people to armed struggle would wish to debate the issue with us. We however, believe the issue is not up for debate. We simply believe that Palestine is occupied and we wish to liberate it — through armed struggle. We do not seek acceptance, sympathy, or a pat on the back from the West at the cost of the lives of our massacred people, or the sacrifices of all our fallen patriots. We do not wish to make Washington the Mecca of our revolution for fear that this might debase el-Aqsa of Jerusalem in our Palestine." (The el-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem is the third most important religious shrine in Islam after Mecca and Medina.)

## SELECTIONS FROM THE LEFT

[The following selections are devoted to assessments of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).]

### Bohemia

*A weekly magazine published in Havana, Cuba.*

The lead article in the international news section of the Dec. 30, 1983, issue reported on PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat's visit to Cairo the week before. Leonel Nodal, Prensa Latina's Middle East correspondent, wrote that by meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Arafat had "surprised even some of his closest collaborators." As a result, "the end of the unfortunate fratricidal confrontations in Tripoli" had given way to "a new confrontation on the political level inside the Palestinian revolution."

Nodal reviewed the history of Anwar el-Sadat's betrayal of the Palestinian and Arab cause at Camp David and the boycott of the Egyptian regime declared by other Arab countries and the PLO as a result. "The sanctions remained in force after Sadat's death," he noted, although "Mubarak sought to reduce to the minimum, at least formally, his contacts with the Zionist state" of Israel.

"The most perspicacious Arab observers considered that the new ruler in Cairo was following a scheme outlined by Washington, aimed at breaking through Egypt's isolation . . . without renouncing the commitment made to Israel at Camp David."

The Palestine National Council (PNC), Nodal said, had decided at three consecutive meetings "not to renew contacts with the Egyptian government until Cairo disengages itself from the treaty with Israel."

Nodal cited a series of negative reactions by Palestinian forces to the Cairo meeting, including the initial statement made by the Central Committee of Fatah, Arafat's own organization. It declared that "Arafat's initiative . . . is a personal decision that involves neither Fatah nor its Central Committee nor the PLO."

The Prensa Latina correspondent quoted statements condemning the visit by PNC Chairman Khaled el-Fahum, by George Habash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and by the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP).

"The Arafat-Mubarak meeting also met with disapproval on the part of Israel, although for quite different reasons," Nodal continued. "Determined to liquidate the Palestinian cause, the Zionist rulers declared themselves opposed to the presence of the PLO in any possible future negotiations. . . .

"As occurred in the past when Sadat made

his initial offer to negotiate with Israel, the Zionist leaders immediately began upping the ante, demanding further proofs of 'good will,' which in the course of a long series of negotiations can void the final results of any positive content."

"Undoubtedly," Nodal concluded, "the PLO is passing through a critical moment as a result of the U.S.-Israeli offensive that began with the invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Only unity in the PLO's ranks can safeguard its destiny. It will take time, and the actions of the Palestinian people themselves, for the spectacular meeting in Cairo to be placed in its proper perspective."

## Rouge

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

In the Dec. 23-Jan. 5 issue, Christian Picquet assessed the outcome of the fighting between the PLO and Syrian-backed dissident forces at Tripoli, Lebanon:

"The PLO has just suffered a major defeat. And this time, Arafat will not be able to transform it into a 'political victory,' to use his phrase from the days following the August 1982 evacuation of Beirut. Of course, this is not the first time that the Palestinians have had to leave an Arab country under threat. . . . And it is also true that the majority of the population of the refugee camps and in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 continue to support Arafat. But in leaving Lebanon, the resistance loses the 'sanctuary' from which it had been able to harass the Zionist state and launch its actions to reconquer its national rights. . . .

"In supporting the dissident currents in Fatah (the main component of the PLO), which put forward a radical critique of Arafat's strategy, Syria largely restored its anti-imperialist image. And in gaining control over a significant part of the resistance, it reinforced its position in the Arab world and more particularly in Lebanon. It has become more than ever an obligatory protagonist in any regional negotiations. . . .

"The Tripoli defeat will probably open the way for the development of intense pressure aimed at forcing the PLO to accept a neocolonial solution to the Palestinian problem. In particular, one can expect to see the resurgence of the plan for federation with the kingdom of Jordan. Such was the aim of the Reagan plan in September 1982. . . .

"The blow that has just been dealt the Palestinian revolution is too serious for the leadership of the PLO and Fatah not to draw a balance sheet on the line followed in recent years. The criminal aggression of the Damascus government against the unity of the resistance cannot be used as a way out, since it was above all the leadership's acceptance of the different imperialist plans (the Fahd Plan, the Reagan Plan, and so on), along with the lack of truly

democratic structures, that by giving rise to deep discontent among the intermediate cadres laid the bases for the dissidence."

## Direct Action

*Socialist weekly published in Sydney, Australia. Presents the views of the Socialist Workers Party, Australian section of the Fourth International.*

"Palestine Liberation Organisation Chairman Yasser Arafat's visit to Egypt in late December sparked hopes among enemies of the Palestinian people everywhere that he may be on the verge of a major betrayal of his people's fight against the Zionist occupiers of their homeland," Steve Painter wrote in the February 1 issue.

After reviewing the Syrian attacks on the PLO in Lebanon and the pressures on Arafat from Jordan's King Hussein for political concessions, Painter continued:

"It is not surprising in these circumstances that Arafat is forced to look for new alliances. The Syrian assault on the PLO destroyed the previous political framework in the Middle East.

"How is Egypt which signed a peace treaty with the Palestinians' enemies any better or worse than Syria which bombs and shoots Palestinians?"

"Another factor that probably motivated Arafat to hold discussions with Mubarek is that the Camp David Accord is effectively a dead letter and has been for some time. Both Israel and Egypt have repeatedly violated the agreement. . . .

"While Arafat's enemies have eagerly claimed that the Egypt visit was a betrayal of the Palestinian cause, there is nothing to support that view. The fact is that the visit dramatised Egypt's move away from Camp David, it did not indicate Arafat's acceptance of it. . . .

"Arafat's value to the Palestinian people is that he has been able to manoeuvre skillfully in this situation, maintaining the PLO's independence while building the alliances and support necessary to advance the struggle. The Egypt visit appears to be simply a continuation of this course."

## INPRECOR INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

*A fortnightly review of news and analysis published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.*

The February 6 issue published excerpts from a Nov. 22, 1983, resolution of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Group (GCR), Lebanese section of the Fourth International, on the conflicts within the Palestine Liberation Organization.

In the GCR's view, "the acceptance of the evacuation of Beirut in August 1982 by the right-wing leadership of the PLO-Fatah

marked the latest stage of its degeneration and transformation from the petty-bourgeois national liberation movement it was in the 1960s to a bourgeois, bureaucratic leadership preparing, in collaboration with the reactionary Arab regimes, to integrate itself into the U.S. plan for settling the Arab-Israeli conflict."

The GCR held that the fighting among Palestinian currents in Lebanon had resulted from "provocative measures" taken by "Arafat and his collaborators," who "chose deliberately to transfer the struggle onto the plane of armed conflict." Therefore, "total responsibility for the recent battles in northern Lebanon rests with the rightist leadership of the PLO-Fatah."

Regarding the substance of the dispute, the GCR cited the position it had adopted at its congress in June 1983. "The duty of the Arab and international revolutionary forces," the GCR's political resolution had stated, "is to support the dissident current in Fatah in its struggle to constitute a fighting organization for the liberation of Palestine, replacing the rotten bureaucratic organizations that have abandoned this objective in order to seek to obtain a piece of territory under the sun of U.S. imperialism and alongside the state of Israel."

Nonetheless, the GCR pointed out, such support had to be given "without illusions." While the rebellion inside Fatah could be "the starting point for a new phase in the history of the Arab revolutionary movement," the condition for this was that "the dissidents carry through a radical revision of the totality of the past political line of the Palestinian resistance and of its structures, and base themselves on a conception of their struggle . . . that passes necessarily through the revolutionary overthrow of the Arab regimes."

The main shortcoming of the Fatah dissidents, in the GCR's view, lay in the character of their "relations with the Syrian regime. . . . The patriotic current should have loudly proclaimed its rejection of any interference by any Arab regime in its conflict with the Arafat group. . . . It should have categorically rejected the Syrian regime's interference in its conflict with the Arafat group in the Tripoli area and refused to take part in the fighting so long as Syrian forces were involved."

As for the GCR's position on the Tripoli fighting, "the participation of Syrian forces . . . caused us to adopt a position of neutrality in those battles and to call on the Palestinian patriots to withdraw. We support . . . the overall framework of the five proposals advanced by the joint leadership of the Democratic and Popular Fronts [for the Liberation of Palestine] on November 20 for an end to the fighting in northern Lebanon. Once again, we warn the patriotic current of Fatah against pursuing its current line of dependence on the Syrian regime, and we call on the revolutionary members of this current to struggle to change its line or to form a distinct revolutionary tendency within the quite heterogeneous patriotic current, in order to assure the continuity of the Palestinian patriotic line, if not the continuity of the Palestinian resistance itself."

# Canada: Deepening worker resistance

## Part I of political report to RWL convention

[The following is the first of three installments of the political report presented by Steve Penner at the Dec. 27-31, 1983, convention of the Revolutionary Workers League/Ligue Ouvrière Révolutionnaire (RWL), the pan-Canadian section of the Fourth International, held in Montreal, Quebec. The report, presented on behalf of the Political Committee of the RWL, was adopted unanimously. The footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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In May 1981 the Canadian federal cabinet secretly passed an order-in-council<sup>1</sup> that gives the government the power to impose a martial law-type regime in case of a "national emergency" such as war, "apprehended insurrection," or uncontrolled "labor disturbances."

The regulation provides for the imposition of wartime conscription, the establishment of internment camps (like those used in World War II to incarcerate socialists, union leaders, and Quebec nationalists), and draconian measures to control wages and unions.

### Two fronts

The Canadian ruling class's step-by-step escalation of its war against working people at home and its increasingly open involvement in imperialism's bloody wars abroad are two fronts of the same class war.

In order to shore up their crisis-ridden international profit system, the bosses and their governments must break the powerful resistance of labor and its allies to capitalism's ruthless drive to take back the gains won by the working class and its allies since the 1930s. At the same time it must brutally crush the revolutionary wars of national liberation being waged by the toiling masses of the semicolonial countries.

There is no other way that imperialism can stabilize its rule, which is being severely shaken by the worst economic recession in half a century and mortally threatened by the advance of the international socialist revolution, above all in Central America and the Caribbean.

It is no exaggeration to say that Canadian imperialism is waging a *two-front war* against the oppressed and exploited. At the very moment that the government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau began discussions to send the army and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to help the U.S. finish off the Grenadian revolution, it was considering the deploy-

1. A government regulation with the full force of law that is not voted on by parliament.

ment of these same "peacekeeping forces," if needed, to crush the threatened general strike in British Columbia (BC).

If the ruling class is to succeed in qualitatively increasing the rate of exploitation of labor (through lower wages, longer hours, speedup, and massive cuts in social services), it will first have to divide, demoralize, and ultimately crush the organized labor movement by utilizing the full force of the repressive apparatus of its state. But it cannot do that without provoking an even more massive fightback than that waged by the British Columbia and Quebec labor movements in the past year. These powerful labor struggles show that the working class is not going to give up its hard-won gains without a terrific battle.

Sweeping attacks on fundamental democratic rights will also be necessary if the Canadian government is to be able to send combat troops to Central America, or wherever else imperialist rule is endangered. That is exactly what Canadian imperialism must do to defend its huge foreign investments in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean and do its part to halt the advance of the international socialist revolution before it engulfs North America itself.

But the Trudeau government also knows full well that it cannot become directly involved in the new Vietnam in Central America without confronting the deeply rooted antiwar sentiment in the pan-Canadian working class and the powerful anti-imperialist consciousness of the oppressed nationalities — above all the Québécois.

The imposition of wartime conscription (as foreseen in the 1981 order-in-council) would inevitably provoke a huge social explosion. The ruling class is acutely conscious of the massive resistance waged by Québécois against conscription in World Wars I and II, against the occupation of Quebec by the Canadian army in 1970, and against the jailing of Quebec's three top labor leaders in 1972.<sup>2</sup> That is why the 1981 "national emergency" regulations recognized that the imposition of martial

2. Under the War Measures Act of Oct. 16, 1970, federal troops and police occupied Quebec. Hundreds of trade unionists, left political figures, and members of the Parti Québécois (PQ) were arrested in pre-dawn raids. The act suspended all civil liberties in Canada.

In 1972, following a general strike of Quebec public workers, the leaders of the three labor federations were sentenced to one-year jail terms. Protest strikes by public and private sector workers won their release after two weeks.

law conditions might be necessary in order to impose conscription in this country.

### Trudeau accelerates class war

The ruling class attacks against labor, Québécois, and women — spear-headed and coordinated by the federal government — have been qualitatively stepped up over the past three years. Just consider a few of the main features of this accelerating offensive:

- An across-the-board attack against fundamental national rights and union rights in Quebec. The imposition in 1982 of the new federal constitution stripped the Quebec government of key powers won through decades of struggle in particular, the right of the Quebec government to establish educational and language policies corresponding to the needs of the Québécois and the right to veto any constitutional changes that would reduce the Quebec government's already limited powers. Following that, a massive assault on Quebec's public sector unions, in which wages were cut by 20 percent over three months and the Parti Québécois (PQ) government attempted to impose legislation that would have rendered the unions virtually powerless.

- The imposition of Trudeau's 6 percent and 5 percent wage controls over the federal public sector in 1982; the federal government's slashing of billions of dollars in transfer payments to the provinces, resulting in big cuts in vital social services, particularly in Quebec; and the introduction of the National Energy Program, which sharply raised oil and gas prices and corporate profits.

- A stepped-up offensive by provincial governments across the country against the unions, including the attempted imposition of Bill 111 in Quebec and Bills 2 and 3 in British Columbia.<sup>3</sup> The jailing of labor leaders who led the resistance to these attacks, including Grace Hartman, then president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE); Jean-Claude Parrot, president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers; Sean O'Flynn, head of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union; and the entire executive of the

3. Bill 111, passed in February 1983 by the PQ government during a teachers' strike, abolished the right of public sector unions to negotiate or strike.

Bills 2 and 3, passed by the Social Credit government of British Columbia in July 1983, gutted collective bargaining for public workers and allowed the government to fire any government worker without regard to seniority. A two-week strike by the B.C. Government Employees Union in November won a contract exempting it from most provisions of the bills.



More than 25,000 turned out July 27, 1983, in front of British Columbia legislature for labor-led protest movement against government bills attacking unions, social services, and democratic rights.

Montreal transit workers union.

- A sharp attack on women's rights. The government has launched a huge offensive against the public sector unions, a majority of whose members are women and which have played a key role in the gains won by women over the past 20 years. The resulting cutbacks in social services also hit women hardest.

At the same time we are seeing a coordinated assault against women's right to abortion by the government, the courts, the cops, the Catholic Church, and the so-called "right-to-life" organizations. In addition, a rapidly growing number of women and youth are being forced into part-time work, generally nonunion, with substantially lower pay scales and benefits.

- A substantial increase in military spending as the government "modernizes" the Canadian army and strengthens its capacities as a counterinsurgency force for use at home and abroad; approval of U.S. flight-testing of cruise missiles in Canada.

#### Deep recession

These attacks have been combined with the worst recession in half a century. The *Toronto Globe and Mail* has reported that "the 1981-82 recession (which lasted 18 months) was the worst in living memory for most Canadians. It was all the more traumatic because its violence was not anticipated before it mushroomed into a phenomenon that many people have labeled a depression. No other [imperialist] country experienced such a vicious recession during this period."

Unemployment reached a peak of 13 percent by December 1982, almost twice the rate of the summer of 1981. This is *two-thirds* the 19 percent unemployment rate in the depths of the 1929-33 depression. Moreover, while indus-

trial production has been on the rise for the past six months, unemployment has only dropped from 13 to 11 percent. It is not expected to fall much lower, if at all, for at least the next several years.

That is no accident. The wide gap between the increase in production and the much lower reduction in unemployment is not only caused by impersonal market forces and the anarchy of capitalism. Canadian capitalism is relatively weak in the face of intense international competition. The bosses are using the crisis to drive down workers' wages, force inefficient producers out of business, and introduce new technology that allows them to produce more goods with fewer workers.

The capitalists have not done half badly. While most workers' wage increases have fallen below the government's 6 percent wage guidelines and some have had their wages and benefits either frozen or sharply cut and while a million and a half remain officially unemployed (including almost 20 percent of young workers between 16 and 24), the 375 largest companies in Canada reported a 38.7 percent increase in their profits in the first half of 1983. Those workers who still believe that what is good for General Motors is good for us too are beginning to find out otherwise!

In this report we will focus on the significant escalation of the working class resistance to this offensive over the past year through the struggles of the Quebec Common Front, Operation Solidarity in British Columbia, and the fight for women's rights. In particular we will draw out the lessons of these battles that point in the direction of the transformation of the unions into weapons of revolutionary struggle: the importance of working class unity, trade union democracy, and independent political action.

Then the report will take a closer look at the role of the trade union bureaucracy in the class struggle and the greater political differentiation in the working class under the impact of the bourgeoisie's offensive.

The final section of the report focuses on how the question of independent political action is posed in Quebec, a distinct nation with a long history of struggle against national oppression, but where there is as yet no mass working class party; in English Canada, the oppressor nation where the working class has built a mass labor party, the New Democratic Party (NDP), whose leadership supports Canadian imperialism against the Québécois; and at the federal level, where the fight to overcome the national divisions in the working class is essential to establish the basis for united struggle for power.

#### Workers fight back

The rise in production and profits as a result of the economic recovery is in flagrant contrast to continuing mass unemployment; the deepening oppression of Québécois, women, and youth; and new government attacks against working people. This contradiction will further fuel the radicalization of the oppressed and exploited and will deepen labor's combativity. Indeed, the past year saw a dramatic increase in the resistance of the pan-Canadian working class to the bosses' offensive.

The three major labor battles of 1982-83 — the Chrysler strike, the Quebec Common Front, and British Columbia labor's Operation Solidarity — marked an important turning point in the class struggle.

Taken together, these three battles led to the broadest strike movement in the Canadian state since the 1940s, directly involving several hundred thousand workers and mobilizing tens

of thousands more in a wave of giant political rallies and union meetings. They also won support from major unions across the country and to some extent in the United States.

Each of these struggles serves to reinforce the others. One of the slogans of the Common Front workers — "It's their crisis; we won't pay for it" — could have easily been the central theme of all three. In addition the major victories of the Chrysler workers and of British Columbia labor and its allies have further altered the relationship of forces in favor of the oppressed and exploited. The impact of these victories will tend to strengthen the willingness and the capacity of the working class movement to resist concessions and fight against takebacks. And they will make it more difficult for the bosses and their governments to get away with sweeping across-the-board attacks without provoking a massive battle.

The effect of labor's fightback can be seen in some limited retreats by the ruling class. Several provincial governments, which had been closely watching the outcome of Operation Solidarity's fight, decided to temporarily slow down the pace of their attacks. The Quebec government proved unable to crush the Montreal transit union and was forced to allow its leaders to return to work after having initially fired them all and having placed the union under trusteeship. And the Chrysler workers won substantial gains for the second year in a row after their one-year contract expired.

Nevertheless, these partial victories will remain the exception rather than the rule. The ruling class will do everything it can to recoup its losses. When it is necessary the full power of its state will be used to try to crush this growing resistance.

Moreover in both British Columbia and Quebec the provincial governments were able to break the momentum of the struggles and to demobilize the labor movement. They were helped enormously in this task by the class-collaborationist orientation of the trade union leadership. Thus, while the B.C. and Quebec governments' efforts to break the public sector unions were defeated, they were able to impose their austerity policies.

The limits of even the most important victories of the pan-Canadian working class show that trade union militancy, no matter how deep, is in itself insufficient to defeat the ruling class offensive. So long as the ruling class maintains governmental power, it will launch new attacks tomorrow to take back what it was forced to give up today.

That is why it is not enough to demand concessions from the bosses' governments. The working class mobilization must be directed toward throwing the capitalists out of power and installing a workers and farmers government.

It is precisely through huge struggles like those of the last year that the working class is beginning to come to grips with the questions that are fundamental to transforming the unions into effective weapons of struggle. The

battles in Quebec and British Columbia were a real test of how far the working class has come — and how far it still has to go — in coming to grips with these questions:

- In strengthening trade union solidarity and working class unity in order to defeat the bosses' efforts to divide and rule;
- In democratizing the unions and placing them under the control of the ranks;
- In winning working class political independence from the bosses and their parties and waging the struggle for a workers and farmers government.

#### Operation Solidarity

Labor's fight in British Columbia in 1983 was the most massive struggle waged by workers and their allies against government attacks in English Canada since at least the 1930s. In one important respect, Operation Solidarity's fight was unprecedented. Never before had the working class of an entire province forged such deepgoing unity, both in terms of trade union solidarity and of the broader alliance of labor with its key allies.

Operation Solidarity organized virtually every union in the province, whether or not it was affiliated to the B.C. Federation of Labour, in one unbreakable united front against the government. It succeeded in defeat-

ing the Social Credit (Socred) government's efforts to isolate the public sector unions in order to crush them. And it prevented the government from being able to fire, suspend, or discipline a single worker or impose any anti-picketing injunctions.

Still more remarkable was the even broader united front — the Solidarity Coalition — forged between the unions and almost all of the key allies of the working class. The coalition included labor, women, and oppressed national minorities, above all Sikh Punjabis. It also included farmworkers, students, tenants, the elderly, civil liberties groups, and small businessmen as well as riding [federal election district] associations of the New Democratic Party. It was, in effect, the broadest strike support committee in Canada's history.

This coalition played a key role in isolating the government and winning much broader support for the public sector unions than labor's Operation Solidarity could have done alone. It transformed the struggle from one between the B.C. Government Employees Union and the government over key union issues into a far-reaching political battle. The coalition's program included the restoration of all social services and of the human rights commission, the withdrawal of all 27 bills in the Socred budget, and the defense of the unions.



Members of British Columbia Government Employees Union upon hearing news of November 1983 settlement victory.



Through the course of this battle, broader and broader layers of the population were drawn into the fight under the leadership of labor to defend basic democratic and social rights.

As a result, the ruling class efforts to deepen the divisions in the working class received a powerful blow. Its strategy of divide and conquer has a fatal flaw. As the crisis of capitalism deepens, the bourgeoisie is less and less able to make concessions to any layers of the working class or to single out particular sectors for attack. It is compelled to take on ever broader layers of the class and ultimately its most powerful battalions, the industrial workers.

But the British Columbia experience shows that as the capitalist rulers begin to move in this direction, the sweeping scope of the attack has a tendency to unite the working class and its allies. In the course of the battle divisions between different sectors of the labor movement begin to break down, along with racism, sexism, and national chauvinism.

This unity gives the working class much greater striking power and confidence and deepens its class consciousness. A white, skilled, male tradesman, a Chinese garment worker, a teacher, and a Québécois farmworker all begin to see themselves as *part of one class* whose interests, victories, and defeats are indivisible.

In British Columbia, through the course of the Solidarity struggle, a powerful new majority was being forged. At the same time the massive actions of this broad alliance of the oppressed and exploited tended to undermine the very legitimacy of the Socred government. The question of who rules and in whose interests was more and more clearly posed.

As the political stakes in the confrontation escalated, the government and the trade union leadership decided they had a common interest in reaching a compromise and calling the battle off. They both feared an uncontrollable confrontation the outcome of which was far from certain.

#### Quebec Common Front

In Quebec, despite the deep divisions in the labor movement, the working class built a Common Front of several hundred thousand workers. For over a year, it waged a battle against the harsh wage cuts and massive cutbacks of the Parti Québécois government. Several united demonstrations were sponsored by all three labor federations: the Quebec Federation of Labor (FTQ), the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), and the Quebec Teachers Federation (CEQ).

It is remarkable that the Common Front battle took place at all. Quebec's recent defeat over the constitution has had a very demoralizing effect on the Québécois. And the public sector workers had to take on both the government of the PQ (which they have seen as *their* party for over a decade) and the attempts of the union bureaucracy to prevent any struggle against the PQ.

Despite these enormous obstacles, Quebec's

labor movement waged a powerful battle to defend not only basic union rights but also the interests of the Quebec nation as a whole. It fought to defend the public health and education systems and fundamental democratic rights — hard-won gains obtained over more than 30 years of struggle.

The overwhelming majority of Common Front members were Québécois. They played a vanguard role in relation to Anglophone [English-speaking] and immigrant workers. They took the lead in the defense of the entire working class and its organizations, cementing unity in struggle with non-Québécois teachers and hospital workers. In this way, they began to counteract the deep-rooted prejudices among Anglophone workers against Québécois, their language, and their right to defend and advance their national rights, which the bosses and their government use to divide English- and French-speaking workers in Quebec and throughout Canada.

While important progress was made in developing a fighting working class unity, the deep divisions among the three major Quebec labor federations remained a huge obstacle throughout the struggle and eventually prevented it from going as far as Operation Solidarity's fight in British Columbia.

The PQ government was much more successful than the Socreds in its efforts to isolate the public sector workers and exploit the divisions in the Quebec labor movement. While support from industrial workers for the Common Front increased through the course of the struggle, their participation in the battle was qualitatively weaker than in British Columbia.

For example, the Jan. 29, 1983, demonstration of 40,000 workers in Quebec organized by the Common Front included no more than 2,000 workers from industry, in contrast to perhaps 10–15,000 industrial workers out of a total of 60,000 at the Oct. 15, 1983, demonstration in Vancouver. In British Columbia, it was the threat of the participation of the industrial unions in a province-wide general strike that was decisive in forcing the Socred government to make major concessions to Operation Solidarity.

In Quebec, the leadership of the FTQ, which organizes a majority of Quebec's industrial workers, played as minimal a role in this battle as it could get away with. The CSN leadership did little more in organizing its major industrial unions.

The union bureaucracy was able to get away with this as a result of Quebec labor's support, for over a decade, for the reformist program and leadership of the PQ, a bourgeois nationalist party.

There was considerable confusion within the labor movement when it was confronted by an all-out attack from the very government it had so strongly supported in the past. Many workers, particularly those in industry, were worried about the possibility that a mass struggle against the government could result in its downfall and the election of the big-business Liberal Party.

The deepening unity of the working class and its allies in its defensive struggles against the bosses and their state objectively leads the workers movement toward the realization of its class political independence. This objective dynamic of the class struggle, above all in a period of a deep capitalist crisis, brings workers right up against the class collaborationist policies of the trade union bureaucracy and its undemocratic stranglehold on the workers' mass organizations: the unions and (in English Canada) the NDP.

#### Fight to democratize unions

Full union democracy is vital in order to unlock the enormous potential power of the working class movement and strengthen the working class's collective capacity to think through the biggest political questions — above all the program, strategy, and tactics needed in order to win state power.

Thus the fight for working class unity, workers' democracy, and independent class political action are not three separate battles. They are completely interrelated aspects of a class struggle program for the revolutionary transformation of the unions into powerful weapons in our class's fight for government.

One of the strengths of the Common Front struggle was the relatively high degree of rank-and-file democracy in several key unions. The Montreal Teachers Alliance, for example, held mass meetings of 3–5,000 teachers on a more-or-less daily basis. Other local unions met frequently, as did the CEQ's province-wide delegated leadership bodies.

Every move the union made was thoroughly discussed and alternative proposals were seriously considered. Many teachers stressed how important these meetings were in maintaining their morale and overcoming the fear they felt in defying the government's laws. All the membership meetings were open to the press, which helped win broader support for the teachers.

The hospital workers union, an affiliate of the CSN, held frequent meetings of a broad National Council composed of delegates from every hospital in Quebec, as well as frequent, democratically run, local membership meetings. This put enormous pressure on the union executive to lead the fight.

The union leadership eventually called off the strike in face of government threats, without any consultation with the membership. The National Council then held an emergency meeting that called for a membership vote to reverse this decision. But by then it was too late. The membership had little confidence in the ability of its weak-kneed executive to lead it back into battle.

The power of union democracy was also evident in the struggle of the Montreal transit workers union, which took place at the same time as the Common Front. For nearly a year, the democratic mass meetings of the transit workers allowed them to remain united despite the bosses' propaganda offensive and harsh re-

prisals against their members.

In British Columbia, on the other hand, none of the unions held regular membership meetings once the strike began; many held none at all. This made it relatively easy for the bureaucracy to reach a compromise with the government just as the struggle was about to escalate into a general strike.

#### Limited gains in B.C.

The leadership of Operation Solidarity reached a secret agreement with the government, announcing the conditions of the settlement only in very vague terms. It called off the picket lines before the B.C. Government Employees Union — the main union target of the Socreds' attack — was even informed of the contract settlement. The vote on the contract was only held several weeks after the strike had been ended.

These undemocratic procedures sparked considerable discussion in the ranks, especially when workers learned that the leadership's silence was part of an agreement with the government not to reveal the contents of the settlement for 10 days. Union leaders also agreed not to claim a union victory so as not to further undermine the credibility of the government!

Despite these limitations, important gains were made in the fight to democratize the unions in British Columbia as well. The Solidarity Coalition held democratic membership meetings every two weeks. In Vancouver, for example, leaders of the unions' Operation Solidarity gave regular reports on the preparation and progress of the strike to hundreds of participants. Broad discussion took place, with every political tendency in the workers movement openly putting forward its views.

The contrast with the undemocratic functioning of the unions themselves could not have gone unnoticed by the large numbers of union members who attended these meetings. The failure of Operation Solidarity's leadership even to consult with the coalition prior to the final settlement provoked a major outcry. The union leadership was forced to admit that this had been a major error.

This was the context in which the broadest and most democratic convention in the history of the B.C. Federation of Labour was held. Every union that had been part of Operation Solidarity was invited to send delegates to the convention, whether or not they were affiliated to the federation. This included the teachers, hospital employees, teamsters, and construction workers.

Fraternal delegates were also invited from the nonunion component of the Solidarity Coalition. Delegates gave a five-minute standing ovation to Renate Shearer, the head of the province-wide coalition, and held up placards reading "Labour supports the Solidarity Coalition."

For two days, intense discussions took place about how best to carry out the fight against the government. The convention was an example for the entire labor movement.

The working class is continuing to draw far-

reaching conclusions from the British Columbia experience, lessons that will lead to further shake-ups in the labor movement. There is a broad sentiment in the teachers' federation to put an end to its "professional" character and become a full-fledged trade union affiliated to the B.C. Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). In one teachers' local at Maple Ridge, B.C., an emergency membership meeting was held right after the strike to impeach the entire executive and elect a new one. The previous executive had all crossed the picket line!

#### New Democratic Party

The powerful mobilization waged by Operation Solidarity, in spite of important weaknesses, went further and was more successful than that of the Common Front for one key reason. Unlike the Quebec workers, the working class in British Columbia has its own labor party based on the unions: the New Democratic Party.

It was no accident that one of the most massive battles waged by the North American labor movement since the 1930s and 1940s took place in the province where the rate of union organization is highest — over 40 percent — and where the NDP has its strongest working class support.

The NDP consistently wins well over 40 percent of the votes in each election in British Columbia; last spring it won 47 percent. A majority of British Columbia workers and an even larger majority of trade unionists support the NDP, with the highest percentage among industrial workers.

As a result, when the Socreds launched their massive attack, the B.C. working class and its allies, unlike the Common Front workers, had a very concrete governmental alternative. It was possible not only to wage a mass political fight to force the government to back off its attacks but to consider the possibility that the battle would force the Socred government out of office and replace it with the NDP.

The dynamic of the powerful working class mobilization against the state's attacks inevitably led in the direction of a fight for political power.

It was more than symbolic when the 60,000 workers who marched on Oct. 15, 1983, surrounded Social Credit's annual party convention chanting, "Socreds out!" As the strike movement escalated, workers deepened their discussions over how this goal might be achieved.

#### 'Nonpartisan' general strike

The last thing that either the union or NDP leaderships wanted was a mass mobilization of the workers movement in a fight to establish its own government. Such a movement would inevitably lead to a head-on confrontation with the capitalist state and would spark a powerful radicalization of the working class. That is why the NDP provincial caucus remained silent once the strike began and why the union leadership kept insisting on the supposedly

politically nonpartisan character of the Solidarity movement.

Exactly how it is possible to have a nonpartisan general strike was never explained. This completely absurd idea actually meant that the bureaucracy was desperately trying to confine the movement to one of protest and demands for some concessions from the existing government rather than fighting to change it. In other words, despite the existence of the NDP in British Columbia, the union leadership's political approach to the fight for government was in no way fundamentally different from that of the union leadership in Quebec.

The fact is that *both* the English Canadian and the Quebec wings of the labor bureaucracy oppose independent working class political action.

The lack of political independence of Quebec's labor movement as a result of the bureaucracy's policy of support for the PQ gave the government a big opening during the Common Front struggle to under-cut labor mobilizations, deepen divisions in the working class, and further the integration of the unions into the state.

Robert Dean, the head of the United Auto Workers Union in Quebec until 1981, was acting minister of labor during the Common Front battle. He played a major role in helping the government play off one wing of the union bureaucracy against another.

In the midst of the struggle, the FTQ leadership negotiated a major deal with the government to establish the *Fond de Solidarité* (Solidarity Fund). This project aims to finance small- and medium-sized companies with money deducted from workers' paychecks, a policy they claim will save jobs.

At the height of the struggle, with the outcome hanging in the balance, this project of stepped-up collaboration with the bosses and the government was promoted by the FTQ leadership as an alternative to waging an uncompromising struggle against the PQ government. Louis Laberge, the president of the FTQ, boastfully counterposed this scheme to the construction of a mass labor party, arguing that the Solidarity Fund is "much more revolutionary"!

#### Reformist perspective

The union bureaucracy's political perspective of trying to reform rather than abolish the capitalist system was the fundamental political obstacle for working people both in the Common Front and Operation Solidarity battles. At the same time, its class collaborationist perspective does have a very real basis in the current level of consciousness of a majority of working people. Workers continue to have illusions in the possibility of reforming capitalism. That is why the Quebec union leadership's support for the PQ (and the B.C. Federation of Labour's support for "restraint not repression") has had broad support in the ranks.

The fact that the working class in Quebec made significant progress toward winning its

class political independence, despite these limitations, was therefore by far the most important consequence of this battle.

Quebec workers took the lead in the fight to defend fundamental national and democratic rights independently of any bourgeois party. Their utilization of proletarian methods of struggle — strikes and demonstrations — was in total contrast to the methods used by the PQ during the fight against the federal government's anti-Quebec constitution. The PQ relied on court challenges and ephemeral blocs with other provincial governments and the Conservative Party, all of whom stabbed Quebec in the back at the decisive moment.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, during the Common Front the unions, in particular the CEQ, sought support from the working class in English Canada, the United States, and internationally.

At the peak of the battle an opinion poll showed that a significant 38 percent of the people of Quebec believed a new political party was needed. While no significant layer of the working class has yet come to the conclusion that a mass labor party should be built, members of the Revolutionary Workers League talked to scores of workers who were increasingly open to this idea. The Montreal transit workers passed a motion at a mass meeting calling for a discussion of this question in the labor movement.

The search for an alternative to the PQ was reflected at the FTQ convention in December 1983 when the leadership committed itself to hold an emergency convention, to allow a democratic discussion on what position labor should take in the next provincial election.

### Struggle for women's rights

Women and the issue of women's rights have played an important role in advancing the transformation of the labor movement.

This battle has greatly strengthened labor's fightback against the bosses' attacks and cut against the attempt of the union leadership to confine labor's concerns to narrow economic issues. And it has pushed the workers movement in the direction of championing the demands of all the oppressed and exploited — of *thinking socially and acting politically*.

Two thirds of the participants in the Common Front were women. Women and the fight for women's rights also played a central role both in Operation Solidarity and in the Solidarity Coalition, as well as through the formation of Women against the Budget in British Columbia.

In both battles the fight to defend the unions was also a defense of the gains won by women over the past couple of decades: for example, their right to form unions and obtain wages and



Karen Dolan/Socialist Voice

July 1983 demonstration in Toronto to protest attacks on abortion clinics.

working conditions comparable to those in the other sectors of the labor force. Specific demands of the women's movement played a major role. Expanded daycare, an important issue in the Common Front struggle, was partially won. In British Columbia, the common fight of women and oppressed minorities against the abolition of the Human Rights Commission was at the center of the entire battle.

Thus workers in both British Columbia and Quebec saw in real life the power of a movement that mobilizes women both as workers and as a distinct constituency — women as an ally of labor — reinforcing a trend that has characterized many of labor's major battles in the past several years.

### Abortion clinics

Events over the past year have shown that the struggle for abortion rights has great potential for shaping the unions into fighting organizations more responsive to women's and all workers' needs.

During the rise of the modern women's movement in the late 1960s, it was an uphill struggle to win support for women's rights from any major union in Canada. However even when the labor movement began to address some important women's rights issues, the bureaucracy, reflecting the antiwoman views of the Canadian ruling class, opposed taking up the fight for abortion rights.

That was not surprising.

The denial of women's right to control their own bodies is absolutely fundamental to their oppression. Without this basic right, all the other gains of the women's movement remain vulnerable: the right to a job, to equal pay and equal work, to an education.

The fight to win this right challenges every aspect of women's oppression, their subordination to the family, the church, the boss, and the state — the entire system of oppression that is supported in its *essential* features by the reformist leaders of the workers movement. An unholy alliance of all the most reactionary anti-working-class forces in society has always chosen to fight this issue. It is also why revolutionary Marxists in Canada have given such importance to the struggle for abortion rights and the need to fight for it within the working class movement.

Over the past year, we have been deeply involved in the latest round of this decade-long battle for the right of women to control their own bodies: the fight of Dr. Henry Morgentaler along with several women's organizations to set up free-standing [non-hospital] abortion clinics in Toronto and in Winnipeg.

The clinics were set up in defiance of the Canadian state and its unjust laws, which continue to consider abortion a crime except when certain highly restrictive and degrading conditions are met. As a result, Morgentaler and a number of other doctors are now on trial for conspiracy to commit illegal abortions in Ontario. They face another trial in Manitoba.

The struggle in Ontario has been led by the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC). OCAC has a conscious orientation to the key organizations of the working class in English Canada: the unions and the NDP. It has also discussed the importance of making links with the women's movement in Quebec.

The championing of this struggle by the labor movement is an indication of the profound impact that the women's movement is having on the working class and the big shake-ups taking place in the unions and the NDP as a result.

At its November 1983 convention, the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) overwhelmingly reaffirmed its support for this struggle. Several hundred delegates demonstrated in front of the courthouse where Morgentaler is on trial.

Other unions in Ontario have been affected. After a heated debate on abortion rights in their union, delegates to the August 1983 convention of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) adopted a strong pro-choice, pro-abortion-clinics position.

In Manitoba, the site of the second abortion clinic in English Canada, Dr. Morgentaler is being prosecuted by the NDP government of Howard Pawley, whose position is supported by the top leadership of the Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL). However a rank-and-file committee was set up in support of the clinic. At the September convention of the MFL, the committee was able to win a small majority to support abortion clinics in Manitoba after a sharp debate. The issue has also led to important fights within the Manitoba, Ontario, and federal NDPs, with broad opposition to the Pawley government's anti-woman position.

With the trials now under way, including a

4. In November 1981 Prime Minister Trudeau signed an agreement with the premiers of the nine English-Canadian provinces on a new constitution to replace the 1867 British North America Act. The new constitution takes away Quebec's veto rights on constitutional changes and nullifies important national and language rights of the Québécois.

major challenge to the constitutional validity of the abortion law, we need to step up our involvement in and our press coverage of this historic battle. Our most important task is to put forward the proletarian strategy required to win the struggle: to carry it more deeply into the unions and the NDP; to center the fight more directly against the federal government and its laws; and to unite women and labor in a binational fight in both English Canada and Quebec.

We will also want to think through how the issue can be raised in the upcoming federal election campaign, linking our strategy for women's rights to the fight for a government of the oppressed and exploited.

### Debate in the unions

The impact that the women's struggle is having in the labor movement was shown at the 1983 conventions of both the Ontario Federation of Labour and the Quebec Federation of Labor.

At the same OFL convention that passed a motion in support of the abortion clinics, the federation decided that a fixed minimum number of its elected officers had to be women — specifically five vice-presidents. It was the first time in North America that a major union federation adopted special measures of this type to ensure the integration of women into the leadership. The outgoing OFL executive only had one woman out of 26 members.

As the *Globe and Mail* was quick to point out, this precedent could have far-reaching consequences and could spark similar fights in many other unions across the country.

A much sharper fight broke out at the FTQ convention over a simple proposal to change its name from the *Fédération des Travailleurs du Québec* (a literal English translation of which would be "Quebec Federation of Male Workers") to the *Fédération des Travailleurs et Travailleuses du Québec* ("Quebec Federation of Male and Female Workers").

This proposal provoked a lengthy and highly charged debate on the role of women in the labor movement. The bureaucracy fought it tooth and nail. One staffer explained that if this seemingly innocuous proposal was accepted, women would be back at the next FTQ convention demanding much more. "Where will it end?" he wanted to know. FTQ President Louis Laberge wound up the discussion with a characteristically demagogic harangue raising all sorts of legal and financial problems associated with the proposed change.

The motion, which as a constitutional amendment needed the support of two-thirds of the delegates, failed by only six votes. Given the overwhelming opposition of the top layer of the bureaucracy, the vote shows the vast majority of rank-and-file delegates at the convention favored the amendment, as well as a large portion of the secondary layers of the bureaucracy.

Some of the delegates who led this fight decided to challenge the official slate by running a woman in the executive elections. She lost by

a handful of votes.

Another event that took place at the FTQ convention reflected the profound impact of women's struggles on Quebec unions.

In the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) delegation, delegates rejected the traditional proposal that the president of the union — a man — be elected to the FTQ's General Council and instead selected a woman who was attending her first convention.

This was the first time that the ILGWU delegation consisted of a majority or even a significant proportion of women. The change was the result of a six-year battle by women to democratize and strengthen their union. The history of this process is a classic example of how battles of women workers and other oppressed layers of the working class rapidly lead to a confrontation with the class-collaborationist policies of the bureaucracy and to a fight to democratize the unions.

In the mid-1970s, the ILGWU in Montreal had a completely corrupt leadership with close ties to both the Mafia and the bosses.

The bosses and the union bureaucracy successfully exploited divisions within the union between a small layer of almost entirely English-speaking male cutters and the female sewing machine operators. The women were in turn divided roughly equally between Québécoises (Francophone women) and immigrants, many of whom speak little or no French (with the important exception of Haitian and Vietnamese women).

The highly-paid cutters earned two to three times as much as the women and have far superior working conditions. By playing off the cutters against the female majority of union members the bosses were able to sign one sweetheart contract after another with the union's leadership.

Eventually the women revolted and demanded that the FTQ investigate the ILGWU (in part in order to avoid the threat of a government investigation). They pointed to examples of blatant corruption, the rigging of contract votes, and the exclusion of women from any

control over the union and its decisions.

In 1977, workers had been called to a mass membership meeting to vote on a contract only to discover that the ballot boxes had already been stuffed. A near riot ensued.

The FTQ was finally forced to place the union under trusteeship, to organize new leadership elections, and to grant some of the women's proposals for democratizing the union. For the first time, a Québécois — Gilles Gauthier — was elected as union president. While his leadership performance fell far short of the workers' expectations, women and Québécois had won a larger say in the union and began to play a central role within it.

This massive shake-up gave members more confidence in their ability to take on the bosses. In the summer of 1983, the ILGWU went on strike for a better contract — its first official strike since World War II. Led by the women members, above all the Québécois women, the strikers organized flying pickets and blocked scab trucks with their bodies. Unity was formed on the picket lines between the Québécois women who led the strike and immigrant women.

This was not at all to the liking of the still mainly male union leadership. It took a series of desperate maneuvers at mass membership meetings — another gain of the democratization process — to force an end to the strike.

Still, a number of the workers' demands were won, and, as the FTQ convention showed, the fight to transform the union is far from over.

The struggle in the ILGWU shows clearly the leadership role that the most oppressed layers of the working class — women, the oppressed nationalities, immigrants, and youth — will play in the revolutionary transformation of the labor movement. They have the most to gain from building powerful class-struggle unions and sweeping all bureaucratic obstacles aside.

That is why it is above all among these most oppressed layers of the pan-Canadian working class that we aim to build our current in industry and build our party. □

## Tudeh defendants ordered executed in Iran

Iran's Supreme Judicial Council has sentenced to death three military officers convicted on trumped-up charges of treason. The three were among more than 100 supporters of the Tudeh (Communist) Party who were put on trial in Tehran in December 1983.

The Tudeh Party was banned in May 1983 and thousands of its members jailed. Those brought to trial have been charged with spying for the Soviet Union and attempting to overthrow the Iranian government, although no evidence was offered for the charges.

The persecution of the Tudeh members has been accompanied by stepped-up anticommunist and anti-Soviet propaganda by the regime, aimed not only at dismantling the party,

but at intimidating and breaking up all organizations in the Iranian workers movement.

Widening its assault on the democratic rights of the Iranian workers movement, the government has announced that it will also ban the Organization of Fedayeen (Majority), a group that shares many of the Tudeh Party's views. Hojatolislam Mohammadi Reyshahri, the head of the military tribunal trying the Tudeh defendants, said that collaboration with the Tudeh Party was sufficient reason to ban the Organization of Fedayeen (Majority). Some 30 of its members have already been charged with membership in a "secret military wing" of the Tudeh Party, and face trial. All members have been ordered to report to government offices. □

# Union ownership of industry?

*Interview with Socialist Party leader*

**By Doug Jenness**

In December, the Swedish parliament voted to establish investment funds that, according to Social Democratic government leaders, will give workers a share in the ownership of private companies. The funds are to come from new taxes on company profits and a special payroll tax. Under the plan, the funds will be handled by five regional boards that include trade union officials. It is expected that up to \$250 million a year will be spent to buy stocks in private companies.

The investment funds were pushed by the trade union officialdom, the Communist Party (VPK — Vansterpartiet Kommunisterna), and the Social Democrats, who established a government as a result of the September 1982 elections. The Social Democrats had been out of the government for six years. Up until 1976 they had been the governing party for 44 years.

They claim that the funds, by increasing union influence, will encourage private industry to make job-creating investments in Sweden. Eighty percent of Swedish business is in private hands.

Sweden's industrialists and bankers, however, strongly oppose the funds. As part of their campaign against the bill, they organized a demonstration last October in Stockholm that drew 75,000 business leaders, bankers, and shopkeepers. This was an impressive turn-out in a country of 8.3 million.

In an interview with *Intercontinental Press* in early December, shortly before the bill was ratified, Dick Forslund, a central committee member of the Socialist Party, Swedish section of the Fourth International, described the background to the investment fund scheme.

"The story begins in the early 1970s," Forslund said, "when the Social Democratic government was confronted with widespread working class discontent, including strikes and protests. It proposed this workers' investment idea as their answer to the problems the workers were raising."

He explained that the Social Democrats were unable to act on it during the six years they were out of office, but they moved on it when they returned to the helm.

"The bosses have always opposed this proposal," Forslund said. "They say that it will lead to state socialism, that the union bureaucrats will take over the economy. But this is far from the truth."

Forslund indicated that, contrary to the employers' charges and the Social Democrats' claims, the measure is actually very limited in scope. "The five regional boards are not allowed to purchase more than 7 percent of the stock in a given company. A local union in the company affected can get no more than one-

half of the votes of the stocks held by the fund."

## **Appointed, not elected**

Forslund said that in earlier proposals five nine-member regional boards controlling the funds were to be publicly elected. By the time the final version was drafted, however, the board members were to be appointed by the government. "Five are to have some trade union connections" he said. "This is vague enough to include lawyers, accountants, and so on, who have relations with unions. The other four are to be 'experts.'"

Since this measure is not going to give unions any say over industry, why are the employers so heated up about it, I asked.

Forslund replied, "They don't like the precedent. They oppose the whole concept of trade union representatives coming to stockholders meetings and 'disrupting' them. They don't like the state to intervene in their meetings either. And although this measure won't do anything, they fear the expectations it might create among the workers."

Forslund also indicated another reason for the employers' agitated opposition. "This was a good issue for them to wage an ideological campaign against governmental and union intervention in their business, because the workers weren't mobilized behind the proposal. The workers were not enthusiastic about it at all. They were, of course, solid against the employers' demonstration, but they weren't mobilized in favor of the Social Democrats' bill."

I asked what stand the Socialist Party took toward the investment fund. "We opposed it. We don't see this as a road forward at all for workers. Our party proposes nationalizing the banks and nationalizing factories under workers control. We also call for a six-hour day with no reduction in pay in order to provide more jobs."

The Social Democrats, he pointed out, do not support the six-hour day. "Only the Women's League of the party does," he said.

## **Devaluation**

Forslund also described other actions of the Social Democrats since they were returned to government. He indicated that since the Social Democrats did not win a majority of seats in the 349-member parliament they must count on the support of another party to get through their proposals. Right now they are governing with the cooperation of the VPK, which holds 20 seats.

"The first thing the Social Democrats did was to devalue the krona 16 percent," Forslund said. "In one blow this sharply increased the

prices of imported consumer goods. This has, in effect, cut the real wages of workers by 5 percent.

"This measure was supposed to give investors in industry a boost by making Swedish exports more competitive," Forslund continued. "This has worked well in the car industry and maybe a few others where profits have been rolling in, but there have been layoffs in other sectors. The mines, steel mills, and machine tool plants have been especially hit. Shipyards are being affected too."

He noted that the official unemployment level is more than 4 percent. "This is high for Sweden," he said.

## **Cutbacks in social services**

On top of the devaluation, the Social Democrats, with the help of the Communists, have continued to carry out the austerity measures launched by the bourgeois government.

"In spite of their attacks on sales tax increases when they were in the opposition," Forslund said, "the Social Democrats are increasing sales taxes — on liquor, cigarettes, and so on. The VPK has gone along with this in exchange for milk prices being lowered."

There have also been cutbacks in social security, welfare, child care, and education. "In order to finance the huge government deficit and an increased military budget, the national government is taking more of the local revenues that go for social services," Forslund pointed out. "This was put into effect by the bourgeois government, but the Social Democrats haven't reversed it."

One of the more blatant examples of how the Social Democrats have failed to fulfill their campaign promises occurred in the Norrbotten region in northern Sweden.

In this area iron and copper mining are the key industries. There have been severe layoffs as mine after mine has closed down or cut back. In the town of Svappavaara, the state mining corporation, LKAB, threatened to close down the iron ore mine. Before the election the local Social Democrats had promised that if their party was given the governmental reins again, the mines would not be closed.

The mine managers decided to defer the decision to the new government," Forslund said. To pressure the government, the miners threatened to occupy the mine and defend themselves from all attempts to remove them. But the government closed the mine anyway. The workers were very angry.

"A confrontation between the miners and the Social Democratic representative from the area was featured on national television," Forslund said. Prime Minister Olof Palme refused to come up and meet with the workers, so they gathered up all the Social Democratic campaign literature with the party's unkept promises and mailed it to him. □

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**Don't you know someone  
who should be reading  
*Intercontinental Press*?**

# WPJ position on Grenada

## Jamaican group criticizes Cuban stance

[Sharply divergent views have been expressed by revolutionary and left-wing organizations in the Caribbean over the meaning of the events in Grenada.

[Groups that are opposed to imperialism universally condemned the October 25 U.S. invasion. But there have been differences over what stance to take toward the overthrow of the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) and the October 19 murder of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and other top leaders of the New Jewel Movement (NJM).

[Among those groups that forthrightly condemned the murder of Bishop and his comrades were: the Cuban Communist Party, the Sandinista National Liberation Front of Nicaragua, the Oilfield Workers' Trade Union of Trinidad and Tobago, the Dominican Communist Party, the Movement for National Unity of St. Vincent, and the Puerto Rican Socialist Party.

[The Cuban Communist Party in particular has sought to draw the political lessons of the overthrow of the PRG. In an October 20 declaration, the Cuban party denounced the killing of Bishop and warned that U.S. imperialism would seek to take advantage of this blow to the revolution. On November 14 — after more of the facts became known — Fidel Castro laid the blame for Bishop's murder and the overthrow of the PRG on the secret faction led by Finance Minister Bernard Coard.

[A different stance has been taken by the Workers Party of Jamaica (WPJ), one of the largest left-wing organizations in the English-speaking Caribbean. The WPJ, which identifies itself as a Communist party, generally supports the positions of the Kremlin on key Soviet domestic and foreign issues.

[The Nov. 11, 1983, issue of *Struggle*, the WPJ's weekly newspaper, was devoted almost entirely to Grenada, much of it in the form of excerpts from an October 30 speech by WPJ General Secretary Trevor Munroe. One of the excerpts, which we are reprinting below, criticized the October 20 Cuban Communist Party declaration (for the text of the Cuban statement, see the Nov. 7, 1983, *Intercontinental Press*).

[In another excerpt, Munroe provided a glimpse of the WPJ's intimate knowledge of, and direct involvement in, the factional struggle waged by the Coard group.

[On Sept. 23, 1983, Munroe revealed, he received phone calls from both Coard and Bishop asking him to come to Grenada. He arrived there on September 26, just as Bishop was leaving for his last foreign trip. Over the next few days, Munroe said, he read all the minutes and notes relating to "the crisis in the Party." He then gave "advice on how the crisis

was to be solved. And my advice in fact coincided with what they had already decided. . . ." Echoing the accusations against Bishop made by Coard's supporters, Munroe said this advice included measures "to overcome the weaknesses that were identified in Comrade Maurice." At the same time, he said, Coard's "weakness was insufficient contact with the ordinary people."

[A full page of excerpts from the speech was devoted to the question of how Bishop died.

## 'The response of our Cuban comrades'

It is the socialist community — the Soviet Union and Cuba included — the strength of which today is far greater than what it was 30 years ago, that has been one of the main reasons why in little Grenada the Revolutionary Army and the militia can fight the way that they are fighting. That is the first point that needs to be made. It is the working class in power in the socialist community that has devoted so much of its labour and its time to producing weapons to defend the working class in power and to defend people struggling for their rights like in Grenada and Nicaragua and in South Africa where the common weapon being used is the AK.

The second point that I want to make relates to Cuba's response right after Maurice's killing. The Cubans made a statement on Thursday [October 20] and many of the points in that statement were the same as the points in our statement in the Workers Party. They went further than we, and I believe, looking back at it, that they would have given the imperialists a signal when they said that they would be re-examining their political relations with the rulers in Grenada who followed on the killing of Bishop.

Now, the moment that is said, the danger was that the imperialists would immediately seize the opportunity to jump in and invade Grenada while the Cuban comrades were assessing the situation and during the three days of mourning which had been declared.

Comrades, we say it — when it come to helping Ethiopia, Cuba could not be beaten, when it come to helping the Vietnamese, when it come to helping Nicaragua, all people that are fighting for their rights, the Cubans are in the front of internationalism, risking their own lives, risking their own military hardware.

But in this case a serious mistake was made. Over the three days especially the Friday and the Saturday, October 28 and 29, it was pos-

<sup>1</sup>This is an evident error. The dates should be October 21 and 22.—IP.

Munroe declared that "if the comrade was executed and if he was assassinated, then we cannot agree with such a thing, we are against it and we condemn it." But he then went on to raise numerous questions about whether Bishop was in fact executed, stressing that that version was "the story of the reactionaries" and stating that it was possible that "Comrade Maurice and the others fired first" during the events of October 19.

[Subsequent issues of *Struggle* ran regular columns and articles in defense of Coard, Gen. Hudson Austin, and other members of the Coard faction now being detained by the U.S. occupation forces. It referred to them as "Grenadian revolutionaries" and "the leaders of the working people in the New Jewel Movement."]

sible to send in reinforcements, but this was not done. Whereupon the American imperialists seized the opportunity and sent in their submarines by the Sunday [October 23]. At this point it was impossible for the Cuban comrades to send in reinforcements.

While mourning, mourn, but also understand that an attack is imminent. Do something to reinforce those who were going to be under attack. I completely agree with him [Fidel Castro] that from Sunday it would have been impossible because by Sunday the Americans had moved in their submarines. By Sunday they had also moved in place the ships that had been diverted from Lebanon and therefore a blockade was in effect in place.

So that revolutionary principles will support the comrades in saying that as of Sunday it would have been wrong to put in any direct reinforcements because that would risk a world war, and our first duty is to preserve peace at the same time as we strengthen the struggles of the people for liberation and at the same time that we defend socialism.

The point I am making, is that if the comrades in Grenada were in a position to hold out longer then the grass roots movement would have been able to develop more, as well as the position of the governments denouncing what had taken place; to develop more strength and therefore be able to get some solution before the military hostilities were actually ended. And therefore comrades I want to say this, that it was a hard decision to make. But it turned out to be wrong.

Any man who believes 'bout "hand of Moscow" or that we "take orders from Moscow." We take orders from nobody. We only take orders from the principles of Marxism-Leninism and from the Congress of our Party. And on the basis of those principles of Marxism-Leninism, we feel that our comrades in the Cuban leadership made an error which had meant the comrades have not been able to hold out longer than they have done so far. □

# Mexican PRT replies to FMLN

*Takes issue with statements on Carpio's role*

[The following is a statement by the Political Committee of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), the Mexican section of the Fourth International, issued in Mexico City on January 23.

[The PRT statement is in response to two declarations issued in December 1983 in El Salvador. The first, on December 9, was by the People's Liberation Forces (FPL), one of the five revolutionary organizations comprising the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). In it, the FPL announced the results of its investigation into the April 6, 1983, murder of the FPL second-in-command, Mélida Anaya Montes (known as Commander Ana María). It concluded that her murder was organized and carried out by a secret faction led by FPL leader Salvador Cayetano Carpio (known as Marcial), who committed suicide less than a week after the killing when one of his key followers was arrested in Managua for involvement in the crime. The FPL condemned Carpio's sectarian course, reaffirmed the need for greater unity within the FMLN, and denounced the split from the FPL of a small group of Carpio's followers, who call themselves the Revolutionary Workers Movement—Salvador Cayetano Carpio (MOR).

[The second statement, on December 16, was issued by the FMLN General Command. It endorsed the main points of the FPL statement, condemned Carpio's efforts to obstruct the unification process within the FMLN, and pointed to the perspective of a fusion of all the organizations within the FMLN into a single revolutionary party.

[The full texts of the FPL and FMLN statements appeared in the January 23 issue of *Intercontinental Press*, along with an article by Cindy Jaquith, entitled "Big strides toward revolutionary unity," assessing their significance.

[The PRT statement below is taken from the February 13 issue of *International Viewpoint*, an English-language fortnightly published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

Both the FMLN and the FPL have issued communiqués defining their positions with respect to the formation of the Revolutionary Workers Movement (Movimiento Obrero Revolucionario — MOR). These statements not only make sharp criticisms of the MOR but publicly accuse Cayetano Carpio (Marcial) of ordering the murder of Compañera Ana María. The Revolutionary Workers Party (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores — PRT) considers it necessary to make clear its disagreements with these communiqués.

1. The FMLN has publicized three different

versions to explain the terrible murder of Comandante Ana María. The first was that the CIA had committed the crime. Then it said that the perpetrator was an FPL leader called Marcelo. Now it says that the one fundamentally responsible for Ana María's death was Cayetano Carpio.

The FMLN has publicized two versions to explain the suicide of Compañero Cayetano Carpio. The first was that Carpio committed suicide out of grief at the murder of his long-time comrade Ana María. Carpio was hailed as a hero of the revolution and guide of the FMLN. Today it is said that his suicide was an act of cowardice prompted by the discovery of his role in Ana María's murder.

2. The FMLN criticizes those who disseminate the "sectarian and dogmatic thought of Cayetano Carpio." The PRT published an editorial in *Bandera Socialista* in which it accepted the first version about the suicide. It ran a sketch of Cayetano Carpio's life, using the biography published in the Nicaraguan *Barricada* [the organ of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, FSLN]. It published in *La Batalla* [the PRT's theoretical journal] excerpts from Cayetano Carpio's last speech, in which he talked about the party and the sort of unity that has to be built.

We might argue, and in fact we think is correct to do so, that the fact that the FMLN has put out so many different versions about these events — with a hero being transformed overnight into a sectarian dogmatist — has, to say the least, complicated the task of the left organizations involved in the work of solidarity with the Salvadoran revolution in properly informing the workers and peasants in our countries. But this is only part of the problem, and unfortunately the least important part.

3. The FMLN and FPL communiqués characterize Marcial's thought as "sectarian and dogmatic," but they do not explain why, they just assert it. They say that Carpio was against unity. Anybody would wonder, was he for breaking up the FMLN? What specific form of unity was he against? This is just an example. We need more information, in particular the Salvadoran masses need more information. We are convinced that a debate has been going on in the FMLN and that it is not over. It has not been conducted in the best way. This debate is over the general political orientation in El Salvador and not about the role of one or another person.

Because, if it is true, as the FMLN says, that Marcial ordered the murder of Ana María, this would mean that political arguments were replaced by violence within the mass movement, and that would obviously make it impossible to carry out a debate.

4. We think that, considering the political

positions and what we know, the debate that was going on was among revolutionists. It is normal in a situation such as the one developing in El Salvador for different ideas and proposals to come forward. In fact, what is reflected in this debate are various levels of mass consciousness. Such a dispute can be resolved in a positive way if there are adequate channels for debating the various positions. The best way to fight factionalism is through democratic discussion, both in the political and in the social organizations.

5. The MOR represents Marcial's positions. We think that its place is in the FMLN and not outside it. We do not consider them counterrevolutionaries or agents of the CIA, since they have not committed any counterrevolutionary act. What is more, the press has reported repressive actions by the government against the MOR, and so we are obliged to offer it our solidarity.

It is true that the MOR has broken with the FPL. But to be a counterrevolutionary today in El Salvador you would have to go over to the side of the government and the imperialists. The compañeros of the MOR have not done that.

So, we are convinced that the best place for revolutionists is the FMLN; since we remain convinced that the FMLN is the vanguard of the Salvadoran revolution, we think that the MOR should be in the FMLN.

6. The FMLN has accused Cayetano Carpio of murdering Ana María. Carpio, however, is one of the best known leaders of the FMLN. Therefore, the evidence for this accusation should be presented to the entire revolutionary movement. Charges of such gravity cannot be made without proof.

However, if the accusation made is true, we would have to say that it is not the first time such a thing has happened, either in the world or in El Salvador. We repudiate such methods not only because we have been the target of them but because we are convinced that they lead to the destruction of the revolutionary vanguard. Recent examples such as the split in the New Jewel Movement in Grenada and the murder of its leader, Maurice Bishop, show us how disastrous the consequences of these methods can be. Revolutionists cannot allow violence to become the basis of relations among the organizations of the mass movement.

For this reason, we are convinced that workers democracy is not some sort of luxury that should be left to workers in the imperialist countries. We do not think that workers democracy is something that you can decide arbitrarily when to apply and when not to apply. After what has happened in El Salvador and Grenada, that is more evident than ever.

7. We affirm our commitment to the Salvadoran revolution and to its vanguard, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR). We will continue to support the revolutionary democratic program and fight

for greater solidarity. Yankee imperialism, which bears the main responsibility for the travail that the Salvadoran masses are going through, is more intent on war than ever. It is

the duty of all of us to defeat this No. 1 common enemy. We understand the difficulties the FMLN has in confronting such a powerful enemy. But we are certain that sooner or later

the Salvadoran people will emerge victorious and take control of their own fate by building a new society in which there is no exploitation or oppression. □

## Britain

# Thatcher unveils 'police-state' bill

*New attacks on democratic rights, from Belfast to Brixton*

By Janet Miller  
and Michael James

LONDON — The Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, the most repressive piece of legislation ever to have been drawn up by a peacetime British government, was introduced by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in November 1983 and is currently undergoing Parliamentary debate.

If it becomes law it will give the police a massive increase in power. Democratic rights and civil liberties will be severely restricted.

Even certain elements of the national right-wing press have evoked epithets such as the "arrival of the Police State" to describe the draconian powers contained in this bill. An earlier version fell without becoming law in July 1983 when the general election was called. So alarming were its provisions, now slightly modified in some respects and tightened up in others, that even establishment bodies such as lawyers, doctors, and the church protested.

### Draconian provisions

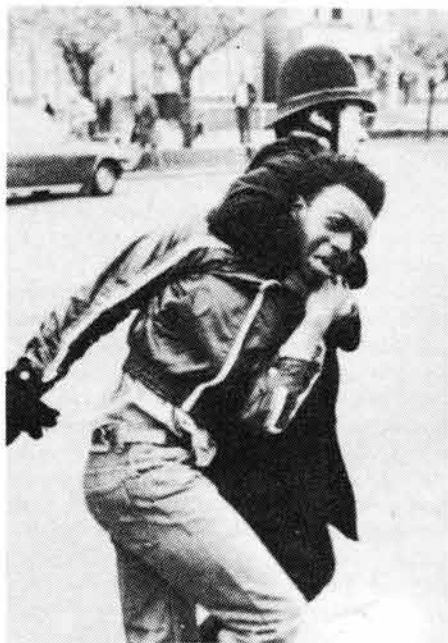
The real aim of the bill is to fundamentally weaken the democratic rights and civil liberties of the labor movement. As part of that, Black, Asian, and Irish communities and other oppressed layers will be the first to suffer.

Here are some of its main provisions:

- The Bill gives any police officer extended power to stop and search people or vehicles in public anywhere in Britain on reasonable suspicion that they are carrying stolen goods, an offensive weapon, or equipment for stealing. That is, the police will be able to stop anyone they feel like, since even combs and keys, for instance, can be labeled "offensive weapons."

- Any higher-ranking police officer may authorize setting up a road block in or around a particular area for up to seven days or longer on the pretext that it is an area of high crime and a serious offense is likely to be committed in the near future. This will enable the police to cordon off areas merely on suspicion of patterns of crime.

- A number of wider powers given to the police by the bill rest upon the police suspecting that a "serious arrestable offense" has been or will be committed. Any person suspected of a serious arrestable offense can be detained in a police station for up to 96 hours (four days)



Cop seizes Black youth during 1981 Brixton rebellion.

without being charged with any offense whatsoever, and this four-day period can be further extended if another serious arrestable offense is suspected. Access to a lawyer can be denied for 36 hours or longer in some cases.

"Serious arrestable offense" includes actions that cause "serious harm to the security of the state or public order" and "serious financial loss to any person," which, for the first time, is to be subjectively defined. The door is thus opened to the police to use major repressive powers against people involved in demonstrations, pickets, etc., and against those suspected of trifling offenses such as non-payment of a parking fine.

- Confession statements can be used to get a self-incriminating conviction in court, unless the suspect can prove the statement was obtained through "oppression" or that it is unreliable. This will be unlikely since "oppression" is defined in the bill as "torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, and the use or threat of violence." It is worth noting that the Bennett Report on the treatment of suspects in custody in Northern Ireland in the late 1970s stated that there had been maltreatment, but not enough to

amount to "oppression." This maltreatment was later condemned as torture by Amnesty International and the European Court of Human Rights.

- Strip searches are allowed, for which the police need give no reason, as are intimate searches of the body orifices (mouth, anus, and vagina). This can be conducted by a police officer of the same sex as the suspect where it would be "impracticable" to call upon a doctor. The subject's consent is not necessary and, therefore, force is implicitly permitted.

- Fingerprints and body samples, even from children aged 10 and upwards, can be taken by force.

- The bill gives the police power to search and enter a person's home and workplace, even if that person is not suspected of an offense, and there will be wide powers of entry and arrest in connection with breaches of the peace under the Public Order Act. This means that anyone participating in protest on the streets or outside a factory, or anyone planning such activity, will be liable to have their premises searched and to be arrested. This could apply to trade union offices as well as to private homes.

- Confidential information encountered in the course of a search can be investigated, including certain types of legal, medical, religious, journalistic, social welfare, and school records.

- Finally, the power of arrest has been considerably widened to cover minor offenses (for example, littering) when the police are satisfied of certain grounds — such as believing the suspect to have given a false name and address. In short, any excuse will do.

These powers are already used illegally by the police now, but the bill will legitimize such abuses and pave the way for yet more arbitrary and unchallengeable activities. Once it becomes law there will be legal harassment of minority communities in target areas, such as Brixton. Stop and search powers and military-style roadblocks will be used more frequently to intimidate and isolate communities, as they have been used in Belfast in the last 14 years and as they were used in Brixton in April 1981.

The bill will subject those pursuing legitimate aims — such as trade unionists in struggle against an employer or political activists engaged in organizing — to the likelihood of



excessive police interference, which could end up in false imprisonment. Prolonged detention will make a mockery of a suspect's right to silence, for the police will be at liberty to instigate all manner of sensory and psychological interrogation techniques short of physical violence in order to obtain confessions. Body searches, strip searches, the taking of intimate and nonintimate samples by force, all will intimidate and terrify the isolated suspect. These powers are nothing less than a license to assault.

#### 'Rising crime' — a smokescreen

Why is such a vicious piece of legislation being introduced now? Is it really to combat rising crime and to rationalize police powers, as the Home Office (ministry of the interior) says at great length in its unprecedented 67-page briefing guide to the bill? Can we really believe it would take the unusual step, again unprecedented, of announcing the bill to a press conference at the Home Office if there was nothing more to it than that? Why was the government so concerned to get its story across to the press before the bill was published and before it could be read?

The government understands full well that the "rising crime" argument is a total fallacy. Home Office studies show, for instance, that where stop and search exercises have been carried out, only 8 percent of all recorded stops in London and 2 percent outside London resulted in prosecution.

It is estimated that only half of all stops are recorded, and many of the prosecutions arise from the individual's reaction to being stopped. Moreover, stop and search operations have been used illegally in certain areas in the pursuit of so-called "anti-theft" campaigns, in which a disproportionately high number of Black youth have been singled out for attention. Just recently, they have even been subject to the humiliating and degrading treatment of having to remove their clothes in public.

"Swamp '81" was one such operation in Brixton when, in one week in April 1981, over 2,000 people were stopped and searched. The result was to help provoke the Brixton uprising one week later. Most of the prosecutions arising from the exercise were related to incidents that occurred at the time of the stop.

Since the bill will do nothing to prevent "rising crime," the real explanation for its introduction lies elsewhere.

#### Attack on unions

The present economic situation in Britain is one of deep crisis. Thatcher's austerity drive has produced accelerating unemployment, and youth are being hit hard — particularly Black and Asian youth. Living standards and essential welfare benefits and services are being eroded. Redundancies [layoffs], long-term unemployment, factory closures, and industrial decline — all characterize the severity of the recession hitting Britain's industrial regions and inner cities.

The working class is being made to pay for

this capitalist crisis; consequently, the state must equip itself to deal with any potential unrest and class conflict. This bill must therefore be seen as part of a concerted attack by the state on the working class to weaken and destroy its organizations before solid resistance can be mounted.

The government's employment legislation was the forerunner to this bill. The antiunion Employment Acts of 1980 and 1982 and now the Trades Union Bill are specifically designed to weaken the ability of trade unions to take industrial action in defense of their own members or to support the struggles of others. They throw a barrage of legal obstructions around legitimate trade union actions in defense of jobs, wages, and conditions.

The impact of these laws has hit three unions in the last few months. The Post Office and Engineering Union, the National Union of Journalists, and the National Graphical Association have all had court injunctions issued against them for taking political and secondary industrial action.

The court imposed huge fines against the National Graphical Association (NGA) in particular for illegally picketing the print works of the *Stockport Messenger*, a privately owned newspaper company in Warrington, Manchester. The dispute began with the dismissal of six print workers who, along with others, were defending the closed union shop. The dispute quickly took on gigantic proportions, involving thousands of workers who came to the print works to demonstrate in solidarity with the six. There the workers faced the sort of police brutality not seen in an industrial dispute for many years.

The government decided to test its new union-bashing laws and backed the newspaper owner as he took the NGA all the way to the High Court. With the law and the police against them, the strikers and pickets had to face much higher odds than ever before.

It is also necessary to look at the new proposed Prevention of Terrorism Act, currently in Parliament, which was originally introduced by the Labour Party government in 1974 as a temporary "antiterrorist" measure. This Act has been used to harass the Irish national community in Britain. It will now become permanent and is no longer subject to renewal every year as at present. It is also to be broadened to catch "international terrorists" as well as so-called terrorists with Irish connections. Its draconian powers of arrest, detention, deportation, and exclusion provide a partial framework for the new Police Bill.

Again, we see new Riot Laws being proposed by the government-appointed Law Commission and new higher sentences for public order offenses. Therefore, it is to the economic crisis and the need of the state to crush opposition in the face of inevitable social protest that the Police Bill owes its existence.

#### Experience of Northern Ireland

For the roots of the bill and present policing strategies in Britain, it is necessary to look to

the six counties of Northern Ireland, since it is there that the state has gained vital experience in its attempt to suppress political opposition through policing.

"Normal" law has never applied to the six counties. Right from the start, special legislation was invoked, such as the 1920 Special Powers Act, which gave the home affairs minister special power to arrest, search, detain, and intern.

In 1971 a major development in policing methods began with the emergence of the theories of Brigadier Frank Kitson, whose book, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency*, has formed the basis for police policies on both sides of the Irish Sea ever since.

Brigadier Kitson, army commander of Belfast in 1970,\* stressed the need for coordination of legal, civil, military, and police authorities and for scrupulous collection of basic intelligence on the population. He stated in his book, "The law should be used as just another weapon in the government's arsenal, and in this case it becomes little more than a propaganda cover for the disposal of unwanted members of the public. . . ."

These theories laid the way for further refinement of the combined judicial-military-police approach to suppression of the Catholic national minority. In 1973, the Emergency Provisions Act was introduced by the Labour government, suspending civil liberties wholesale. Powers of stop and search with up to 72 hours' detention, extensive power of search, and assumption of guilt in alleged arms possession cases were introduced. The number of arrests and searches for the purposes of harassment and intelligence gathering rocketed. Juryless "Diplock" courts were introduced.

The 1974 Prevention of Terrorism Act (applying to Britain) reflected these measures by extending detention for up to seven days without charge and by allowing internal exile from one part of the United Kingdom to another. It was tantamount to a declaration of war against the Irish national community in Britain. Of the 5,600 people detained under the act, only 100 have ever been charged. The effect has been to suppress political activity around Irish issues and to enable the police to perfect psychological interrogation techniques.

In 1976 Kenneth Newman was appointed chief constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. In four years, he forged it into a paramilitary force with prime responsibility for policing the six counties. State agencies (civil, legal, and welfare) were recruited to service the

\*Gen. Sir Frank Kitson is commander-in-chief of UK Land Forces. He is the leading contributor to the development of politico-military counterinsurgency techniques in Ireland and Britain. His theories have now been adopted by NATO. His experience was gained in opposing colonial uprisings in Kenya and Malaya in the 1950s, Cyprus in the 1960s and Northern Ireland in the 1970s. In 1980 he was rewarded by the British government for his efforts with a knighthood.

policing effort. There was a total shift away from policing crime to policing opposition. It was no accident, therefore, that in 1982, after receiving a knighthood, he became London metropolitan police commissioner.

Police strategies used in the six counties are becoming dominant here as well. Over the last decade we have seen massive militarization of the police, which are now equipped with water cannons, CS gas, plastic bullets, armored vehicles, and guns. The unarmed "bobby on the beat" is a thing of the past.

Riot police come and go under the names of the Special Patrol Group, Instant Response Unit, and now the District Support Unit. Their role is to back up the police — a sort of reserve police force. The cost of policing and police salaries have risen dramatically since 1979 when Thatcher first came to power.

Multi-agency and community policing are now being sold to the public as the way to beat crime — welfare agencies, schools, local government, and central government departments are being drawn in and community groups are being asked to be vigilant and spy on their neighbors. Certain locations in London have been targeted by the police as "symbolic" areas — such as Brixton and Hackney. Symbolic, no doubt, not because of patterns of crime but because of the risk they pose of social unrest. Through widespread stop and search and surveillance techniques, intelligence is being gathered, and the population is being monitored.

#### **Blacks and Asians mobilize**

Opposition to saturation policing and the new bill is mounting, and the Black and Asian communities are in the forefront. The response to oppressive policing from Black and white youth in recent years has been the uprisings of 1981 in Brixton, Bristol, and Liverpool, as well as a proliferation of self-defense groups and defense campaigns. Such campaigns have served to draw public attention to police inactivity on the issue of racist attacks and to mobilize national support for the families of Black youth who have died while in police custody or for the defense of Black and Asian youth charged with assault instead of their white racist assailants.

One such example is the Newham 8 Defense Campaign which began when eight Asian youths were attacked by three plainclothes Instant Response Unit police officers as they were protecting school children from an expected racist attack. A series of violent racist assaults had taken place against Asian school children in Newham around that time, and the police had done nothing to defend the community. The eight Asian youths were charged with conspiracy to assault, among other things, for defending themselves against men they took to be armed white racists and who later turned out to be police.

The campaign set about publicizing the truth of the incident, holding meetings and demonstrations, getting sponsors, and arranging pickets of the court during the trial. The result was

a victory. Four of the youths were let off, and four received very light sentences, and this was after they said they would do the same again if they had to. The police were forced to admit that the incident would not have occurred if they had not been there. The trial received national press coverage and the blatantly racist and brutal behavior of the police was well and truly revealed.

A National Campaign Against the Police Bill was launched in August 1983 to mobilize opposition to the bill on a united-front basis. The campaign was a spontaneous reaction against the bill by the Black, Asian, and Irish communities, which began to organize local campaigns up and down the country. Immediate parallels with the Northern Ireland situation were recognized, and meetings were addressed by Black, Asian, Irish, and labor movement speakers. The Irish speakers related the experience of the Catholic community in the six counties with the police and warned people that a similar situation was going to develop here under the Police Bill.

The campaign is being built within the community and in the labor movement. Early on in the campaign, there was a discussion among the Blacks and Asians involved as to whether they should build it solely within their own communities or whether it should be broadened out in order to make links with workers and constituency Labour parties. Since it was realized that without mobilizing as wide support as possible from the main working class organizations the bill would almost certainly become law, this is how it is being built.

#### **Labor ranks stir**

Labor movement rank and file are now beginning to mobilize. The Labour Party conference voted in autumn 1983 to oppose the Police Bill in any shape or form (the conference was composed of trade union and constituency delegates). The National Campaign is supported by some important unions, including the Fire Brigades' Union, Society of Graphical and Allied Trades, Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, and the Black Trade Unionists Solidarity Movement.

This process is having an impact on the union leadership, particularly after the Warrington experience. George Jerrom, national officer of the NGA, spoke out against the police at a recent rally on the Police Bill in Brixton. His was the union involved at Warrington, and its treatment at the hands of the police was decisive in bringing about a realization that the police were there to protect the interests of the antiunion employer. The membership of the NGA are well-paid, highly-skilled print workers who could effectively paralyze production of the national press through industrial action — so their support is important.

Recounting the Warrington dispute, Jerrom said that there had been naked aggression by the police against working people pursuing

trade union rights. The police had set up illegal roadblocks on the motorways around Warrington so that coach loads of demonstrators were diverted away from the town. When the employer's trucks left the factory they were escorted by the police. Union cars were driven off the road and stopped by the police. Pickets were attacked by riot police wearing helmets and protected by shields and batons. High-speed police vehicles were driven at the demonstrators, and the NGA communications van was ruthlessly vandalized. The only thing missing was the armed forces.

"If the intention is to control social unrest," Jerrom said, "this government is creating an alliance of social forces that so far they have sought to divide." As to the Police Bill, he remarked, "For the future, there will be no problem in mobilizing a union like the NGA against a bill like this." In a commitment to oppose racist news coverage, the NGA has now decided it will no longer print articles it considers to be racist in the national press and will defend any of its members who refuse to do so. This is an important development, for the union is seeing the fight against racism and opposition to the police as interlinked.

On Jan. 21, 1984, the first national demonstration against the Police Bill marched from Brixton to central London. The forces represented in the small but significant march (approximately 3,000) indicated a successful beginning to a truly national, labor movement orientated, anti-Police Bill campaign. Trade union and Labour Party rank and file were represented, as well as public service employees such as health workers and teachers. Black, Asian, and Irish solidarity groups, women's groups, gay groups, and youth were very prominent.

A major obstacle to drawing in wider support at the moment is the failure of the labor movement leadership to give a clear lead. Despite the fact that the campaign is sponsored by many Labour Party members of Parliament, there has been very little vocal opposition to the bill from that quarter, and a good deal of confusion surrounds the parliamentary Labour group's real position.

There is no doubting, however, that as the bill continues its passage through Parliament, discussion will go on about whether such a bill as this is really necessary to prevent crime and who the police are really serving. It is providing a useful opportunity for making alliances among those who, as George Jerrom says, the government seeks to divide.

In the coming months the campaign looks likely to deepen its connection with the organized work force and, if the bill is to be defeated, this process must continue. □

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# 'The revolution did not tremble or waver'

## *Fidel Castro's speech on 25th anniversary of Cuban revolution*

[The following is the full text of the speech given by Cuban President Fidel Castro on Jan. 1, 1984 — the 25th anniversary of the Cuban revolution — in Santiago, Cuba. It is taken from the January 8 issue of the English-language weekly edition of *Granma*, the Cuban Communist Party newspaper.]

\* \* \*

People of Santiago,  
Compatriots from all over Cuba:

Twenty-five years ago we met here, in this same park, almost at this same hour, to speak to the people for the first time from this same balcony. It would not be idle to recall — due to their permanent relevance, their moral significance, and historic nature — some of the words we spoke that night when the transcendental events of the time demanded considerable attention, but words which also express categorically and conclusively what was to be the fundamental line of our revolutionary behavior.

"We have finally reached Santiago! The road has been long and hard but here we are! (APPLAUSE)

"The Revolution starts now; the Revolution will not be an easy task; the Revolution will be a difficult and hazardous undertaking!

"The Revolution cannot be made overnight, but you can rest assured that we will make the Revolution; you can rest assured that for the first time, truly, the Republic will be totally free and the people will have what they deserve.

"We do not think that all the problems will be solved easily; we know that the road is plagued with obstacles; but we are men of faith who always face great difficulties head on. The people can rest assured of one thing, and that is that we may make mistakes once and many times; but the only thing that they will never be able to say about us is that we embezzled . . . that we made shady deals; that we betrayed.

"We will never be led astray by vanity and ambition because, as our Apostle [Jose Martí] said, 'all the glory in the world fits in a kernel of corn; and there is no greater satisfaction, no greater prize, than doing our duty, as we have been doing up to now, as we will always do. . . . I speak on behalf of thousands and thousands of fighters who have made the people's victory possible; I speak of our deep feeling and our devotion for our dead, who will never be forgotten. . . . This time no one will be able to say, as it has been said before, that we have betrayed the memory of the dead, because the dead will continue to preside. . . . And only the satisfaction of knowing that their sacrifice was not in vain can compensate for the immense emptiness they left along the way. (APPLAUSE)

"The Revolution has triumphed with no commitments to anyone, only to the people, to whom it owes its victory.

"Fortunately, the task of the guns is over. The guns will be kept where the men whose duty it will be to defend our sovereignty and our rights can reach them; but when our people are threatened, not just the thirty or forty thousand members of our armed forces will fight; three hundred thousand, four hundred thousand, five hundred thousand Cubans, men and women alike, who can wield a weapon, will fight. (APPLAUSE) There will be enough weapons for all those who want to fight when the time comes to defend our freedoms, because we have proven that in Cuba it is not only the men who fight: women also fight. (APPLAUSE)

"In a country where men fight and women can also fight, the people are invincible. There will be a women's militia or women's fighting reserve — all voluntary fighters — and we will keep them trained. And those young girls I see there, dressed in black and red, the colors of the 26th of July, I expect them also to learn to handle a weapon. (APPLAUSE)

"And this country well deserves a better future; it well deserves the

happiness it never had during its fifty years as a Republic; it well deserves to become one of the leading nations in the world for its intelligence, its courage, its staunchness!

"No one can think I am speaking demagogically; no one can think I wish to flatter the people. I have given enough proof of my faith in the people, because when I came to Cuban shores with 82 men and some said we were mad and asked us why we thought we were going to win the war, I told them: 'because the people are with us.' And when we were defeated for the first time and only a handful of us were left and kept on fighting, we knew this was going to be a reality, because we believed in the people; when we were scattered five times in only 45 days and managed to come together again and resume our struggle, this was because we had faith in the people, and here today is tangible proof that that faith was justified. (APPLAUSE) I feel the satisfaction of having fully believed in the people of Cuba, and of having instilled this faith in

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### **An unforgettable chapter was written by Cuban workers in unanimously, enthusiastically, and fully supporting the call to a general strike launched by the Rebel Army Command . . .**

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my comrades; this faith, which is today more than just faith, but rather complete confidence in all our men; and this same faith we have in you is the faith we want you always to have in us. (APPLAUSE)

"The Republic was not free in 1895, and the dream of the mambises<sup>1</sup> was frustrated at the last moment. The revolution was not carried through in 1933 and was foiled by its enemies. This time the Revolution has all the people behind it, all the revolutionaries . . . its power is so great and so boundless that this time its triumph is assured! We may joyfully say that for the first time in four centuries . . . we will be entirely free and the work of the mambises will be completed.

"A few short days ago I found it impossible to resist the temptation to go visit my mother whom I hadn't seen for a number of years. On the way back along the road that crosses through Mangos de Baraguá, some time during the night, the feeling of deep devotion among all of us in that vehicle made us stop there, at the monument which commemorates the Protest of Baraguá<sup>2</sup> and the beginning of the invasion. At that late hour, being in that setting, the recollection of those feats of our wars for independence, the idea that those men had fought for 30 years only to see their dreams unfulfilled and the Republic frustrated, and the presentiment that very soon the revolution that they had dreamed of, the homeland they had dreamed of, would come true, led us to feel one of the most moving emotions imaginable. I saw those men and their sacrifice come alive again, a sacrifice that we ourselves have closely experienced; I thought about their dreams and hopes which were our dreams and hopes, and I realized that this generation of Cubans is to pay and has already paid the most fervent tribute of gratitude and loyalty to the heroes of our independence.

"The men who fell during our three wars for independence today join their efforts with the men who fell in this war and we can tell all those who died in our struggles for liberty that the hour has finally come for their dreams to be fulfilled; that time has finally come for you, our

1. Nineteenth century independence fighters.

2. The call by Antonio Maceo in 1878 for renewed struggle for independence from Spain.

people, our fine and noble people . . . to have what you need.” (APPLAUSE)

These words were said 25 years ago.

That speech was improvised in the heat of the emotion and amid the whirlwind of events that day. The language has changed. Today we have other goals, objectives, and problems, ones that seemed so distant then. It is not necessary to express what has already been demonstrated these 25 years, but the basic ideas of that day, the very ideas that inspired us years before, on the 26th of July, 1953, have remained immutable. They are and will continue to be indefeasible. (APPLAUSE)

No mention was made then of the Marxist-Leninist Party, of socialism, and of internationalism; capitalism was not even mentioned

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**Today the whole world  
— including our enemies —  
acknowledges that our public health  
and education are impressive achievements,  
never before attained by any other  
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by name. Indeed, very few would have understood its true meaning at the time. But everything that has happened since then in our homeland, the advancement of our political process to unbelievable heights, the historic place that our people hold today in the world, our ideas and our national experience, all this is the direct result of that sacred revolutionary commitment we made to the people. (APPLAUSE)

That same night I expressed an essential idea in this way: “You know that we keep our word and that we fulfill what we promise, and we want to promise less than what we are to fulfill — not more but less — and do more than what we offer the people of Cuba.” (APPLAUSE)

Contrary to what had happened in the political history of our homeland — where the revolutionary programs many times promised to the people were either frustrated or never attempted — this time the Moncada Program was not only totally fulfilled, but we advanced even further, just as those of us who organized the attack against the Moncada Garrison and founded the 26th of July Movement dreamed of in our innermost beings. Our people have successfully created the first socialist state in the western hemisphere, the most advanced political and social system in the history of mankind. (APPLAUSE)

This time frustration was not for the people, but rather for imperialism, the big landowners, the oligarchs, the bourgeois, and other reactionaries who were always certain that any revolutionary program in Cuba or Latin America would only remain on paper and wind up in corruption or in the trash can. (APPLAUSE)

If the road that began in Yara on October 10, 1868,<sup>3</sup> to arrive at Jan. 1, 1959, was long, the road that has led us to this 25th anniversary of the victorious Revolution has been long and hard, glorious and heroic. (APPLAUSE)

On Jan. 1, 1959, an attempt was made to rob the people of their victory. When the bulk of the enemy troops had been surrounded and were on the brink of surrendering or of being annihilated, the island divided into two and the people up in arms, a military coup d'état was staged in the capital city of the Republic. Its leading protagonist was the chief of the enemy operational troops in Oriente, who, a few days before, on December 28, had met with us, recognized the army's defeat, and agreed upon the manner, date, and hour to end the struggle, by accepting the victory of the Revolution, a commitment that was not met.

The coup was conducted with the participation of the United States embassy and the complicity of Batista himself. This last-minute attempt was deemed necessary by imperialism, which, underestimating the might of the Rebel Army and the people of Cuba, believed that it had sufficient time to orchestrate a formula of pseudoreform and interference such as that of 1933, since it believed it would have until Feb. 24, 1959, when the government chosen by the November 1958 electoral farce would be sworn in. The crushing offensive of the Rebel Army in

the month of December did not give them time to await that day. It sought to save, at all cost, the old army created by the Yankee interventionist troops at the beginning of the century to replace the glorious mambí army. That army — organized, equipped, trained, indoctrinated, and corrupted by imperialism — had been the main pillar of imperialist domination for almost 60 years. But the coup was defeated by the Rebel Army and the people, who in less than 72 hours occupied all military installations in the country and consolidated the victory. (APPLAUSE)

When we met in Santiago de Cuba that night, the situation was still confusing, and, although fully convinced of the final outcome, we did not know whether bloody combats would have to be fought in the capital city of the Republic. An unforgettable chapter was written by Cuban workers in unanimously, enthusiastically, and fully supporting the call to a general strike launched by the Rebel Army Command from Palma Soriano in the morning of January 1. (APPLAUSE)

That extraordinary force, that fighting spirit of the people had not been taken into account by Yankee imperialism in making its estimates and predictions. Yet this characteristic of our people could not be underestimated. It is not by chance that they had fought alone for almost 30 years against hundreds of thousands of Spanish soldiers in the most heroic war for independence in the Americas. (APPLAUSE) A people's character is not built up overnight, but neither can it be destroyed once it has been formed, not even by centuries of subjugation, exploitation, and domination.

What we can say today is that we have not fallen short of our titans of 1868 and 1895, or the heroic fighters of the Moncada, the Sierra, and the cities. (APPLAUSE)

When in Santiago de Cuba we started on the glorious road of these past 25 years, we knew that our people would be equal to the feat they had set out to perform. Who is better aware of this, who can better bear witness to this than Yankee imperialism itself? It has never witnessed in our people a single moment of hesitation, doubt, weakness, or fear. The growing and powerless hatred of imperialism is the indication of the merits of our Revolution. (APPLAUSE) Cowards are despised, humiliated, and subjugated. On the other hand, for 25 years the hostility, the hatred, the lies, the threats, and the aggressions of all sorts by Yankee imperialism have crashed against the Cuban Revolution. We had to play the historic role of confronting here — 90 miles away, even fewer than that, 90 millimeters away, if one considers the occupied territory of the Guantánamo naval base — the most powerful imperialist country on Earth. (APPLAUSE)

The Revolution did not tremble or waver when the time came to bring exemplary punishment upon the war criminals, as we had promised the

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**In spite of the huge resources  
we are forced to invest in the defense  
of our country, the budgets  
for education, health, culture,  
sports, science, and technology  
are growing every year . . .**

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people; or to confiscate the wealth embezzled from the nation by corrupt politicians; or to defend the rights, full sovereignty, and dignity of our people; or to affect the interests of the large, exploitative Yankee monopolies and the national bourgeoisie; or to lower the rates charged for public utilities, rents, and medicines; or to order the rehiring of all those who had been laid off by the tyranny.

It did not tremble or waver at enacting the most profound and radical agrarian reform law ever implemented in Latin America, which affected not only the great landholdings of Cuban nationals, but also the immense territories of U.S. agricultural companies.

It did not tremble or waver at countering each measure of economic aggression taken by the United States, blow for blow, nationalizing all the Yankee companies that owned sugar mills, the telephone and power companies, the railroads, ports, mines, commercial chains, and banks, one after the other.

3. The first armed clash between independence fighters and Spanish troops.



Fidel Castro broadcasting call for general strike over Radio Rebelde on the morning of Jan. 1, 1959.

It did not tremble or waver when it became necessary to nationalize all the banks, all foreign trade, and all the large capitalist companies in the country.

It did not tremble or waver at uprooting racial discrimination and eradicating gambling, prostitution, drugs, and mendicancy. (APPLAUSE)

It did not tremble or waver when it became necessary to create the workers' and peasants' militia and receive socialist weapons to fight against the counterrevolutionary bands, the murder of the literacy teachers and of workers and peasants, the terrorist attacks, the assassination attempts against the revolutionary leaders, and the CIA sabotage plans. And with growing firmness and indignation we honored the dozens of victims caused by the crimes of the United States government and especially by the criminal sabotage of the steamship *La Coubre*.<sup>4</sup>

The Revolution did not tremble or waver at countering the mercenary invasion at Girón or at proclaiming the socialist nature of the Revolution (APPLAUSE) on the very day we were to bury those who had fallen under the treacherous bombing and on the eve of the decisive battle our people heroically fought and won, already defending the banners of socialism.

It did not tremble or waver in October 1962 at the threat of invasion and nuclear war resulting from a crisis that was entirely the consequence of the criminal Yankee aggressions and threats against our homeland and the measures taken to defend ourselves.

It did not tremble or waver at firmly uniting all revolutionary forces, at endorsing the doctrines of Marxism-Leninism at creating a vanguard party, a Young Communist League, and forming powerful organizations of workers, peasants, neighbors, women, students, and even of children and adolescents, who were to be raised with the principles of their parents and to love the Revolution. (APPLAUSE)

The Revolution did not tremble or waver before the colossal task of doing away with unemployment, illiteracy, ignorance, and the calamit-

4. A French ship carrying military supplies to the Cuban government exploded in Havana harbor in March 1960.

ous state of public health in our country, creating work centers; child care centers; primary, secondary, and high schools; technical schools; universities; special schools for handicapped children; rural hospitals; pediatric, maternal-infant, and clinical-surgical hospitals; polyclinics; dozens of specialized research and medical care centers; and numerous cultural and sports facilities for the mental and physical development of our youth and our people.

It did not tremble or waver in resolutely undertaking the long and difficult road of economic and social development, starting with a backward, deformed, and dependent economy, inherited from colonialism, and in the midst of a brutal economic blockade by those who had been our suppliers of equipment, technology, plans, and raw materials. A long and difficult road was begun demanding countless efforts, perseverance, and sacrifice: the drawing up of five-year and annual plans; the creation of construction, industrial assembly, and design enterprises; the building of a solid infrastructure of roads, highways, railways, and ports; the creation and development of the merchant and fishing fleets; the mechanization of the sugar harvest and all agricultural activities; the electrification of the countryside; the building of dams and irrigation and drainage canals; the introduction of fertilization and chemicals in general, cattle improvement, artificial insemination, and numerous other techniques in our backward agriculture; the beginning of the industrialization of the country; the training of hundreds of thousands of workers, middle-level technicians, and university graduates; the founding of dozens of scientific research centers and the development of solid economic relations with the socialist camp; a thoroughly new road in which at the beginning we had no experience whatsoever.

Along this road we have built thousands of industrial, agricultural, and social projects over the years. As a result of this, the profile of our countryside and cities has changed drastically. Work in all the basic spheres of production has been humanized through technology and machines. Many highly important works are under construction or near commissioning in the sphere of energy, including the first nuclear power plant, a new oil refinery, large nickel processing industries, important textile factories and spinning mills, the geological survey of the country, oil prospecting and extraction, big iron and steel works, and plants pertaining to basic industry and the light and food industries. New sugar mills are being built with 100 percent of the design and over 60 percent of the components produced in Cuba. Intensive and methodical work is being done on future plans and economic and social development lines until the year 2000.

Proof of the way work productivity has been increased is that whereas only 12 years ago 350,000 canecutters were employed in the harvest, today fewer than 100,000 are used in producing much more sugar without entailing any unemployment. (APPLAUSE) The same has happened in other branches of agriculture, industry, construction, and transportation, while increasing the quality and quantity of jobs in the various branches of production and services. Can any other country in Latin America say the same? (APPLAUSE)

Today the whole world — including our enemies — acknowledges that our public health and education are impressive achievements, never before attained by any other country of the so-called Third World, or even by several of the countries listed as industrialized. Our enemies, nevertheless, dare to question the success of our economic development. The truth is that our economy, in spite of the brutal Yankee economic blockade, has grown at an annual rate of approximately 4.7 percent — higher or lower in given years — since the triumph of the Revolution, one of the highest growth rates in Latin America for this period. (APPLAUSE)

Otherwise, how could we afford an educational system that costs more than 1,500 million pesos per year, [one peso equals \$1.19] and a health system whose cost surpasses 500 million pesos, which is dozens of times more than what was spent in these areas during capitalism. How could we have become a country without unemployment, with an advanced social security system that benefits all workers without exception? How could we be — after Argentina, with its huge expanses of agricultural land and herds of cattle — the second best-fed country in Latin America, with almost 3,000 calories and almost 80 grams of protein per capita a day, as was recently acknowledged by an institution that is an

enemy and a detractor of the Cuban Revolution? (APPLAUSE)

How could we hold an outstanding place in sports, culture, and scientific research? How could we be a country without destitute children, without beggars, without prostitution, gambling, or drugs? (APPLAUSE) Are not many of these activities the bleak livelihood for countless individuals, not only in underdeveloped countries, but in almost all the industrialized capitalist countries? How could we take on and technically train more than 20,000 young people from Asia, Africa, and Latin America and cooperate with more than 30 Third World countries? (APPLAUSE)

This is all possible, of course, not only because our economy has grown, but also because our trade with the socialist countries, which today accounts for more than 80 percent of Cuba's foreign trade, is not subjected to the growing unequal and arbitrary prices the Third World faces in its economic relations with the developed capitalist countries; it is possible because our wealth is better distributed, because the fruits of our economy do not go into the hands of the monopolies or the pockets of the rulers, because there is no capital drain, and because we have a hard-working, enthusiastic, generous people, full of solidarity, who are equal to any task, any mission, at home and abroad. (APPLAUSE)

That is, we have a priceless treasure, unknown in capitalist societies: a new man with new values and a new conception of life, for whom there is no difficult or impossible task. (APPLAUSE) Speaking of our internationalist spirit, we recently said to some foreign journalists that when teachers were requested for Nicaragua, almost 30,000 volunteered; when some months later, some Cuban teachers were murdered in Nicaragua, 100,000 volunteered. (APPLAUSE) The United States has its Peace Corps; the churches have their missionaries; Cuba alone has more citizens ready to fulfill these tasks voluntarily anywhere in the world than the United States and all the churches put together. (APPLAUSE) This spirit is reflected in our work, both at home and abroad.

Further proof of the soundness of our development may be added. In spite of the huge resources we are forced to invest in the defense of our country, the budgets for education, health, culture, sports, science, and technology are growing every year; every year we invest more resources in the maintenance and construction of housing; every year we invest a greater amount in industry, agriculture, and in the economic infrastructure. This year, 1984, the budget for science and technology will grow by 15.6 percent; public health by 14.3 percent; housing and community

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### **Cuba cannot export revolution, nor can the United States prevent it . . .**

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services by 14.1 percent; sports by 10.8 percent; culture and art by 9.1 percent; education by 5.1 percent; and social security and welfare by 4.2 percent. In spite of this, our budget income and outlays will be balanced. In the rest of the countries in this hemisphere, one only hears news of increased unemployment and decreased budgets for education, health, and other social expenditures.

In the midst of a world economic crisis, while the Latin American economy as a whole decreased by one percent in 1982 and by 3.3 percent in 1983, the Cuban economy grew by 2.5 percent in 1982 and 5 percent in 1983. A similar growth to that of the past year is forecast for 1984. (APPLAUSE)

I recently explained how the Revolution had begun its successful health program with only 3,000 doctors, that now we had almost 20,000 and that in the next 16 years, 50,000 more would graduate. (APPLAUSE) In just 15 or 20 years, the selection, previous training and work of these doctors, their adequate use, and our health system will make Cuba rank first in the world in this field. (APPLAUSE)

Our progress in education will be similar, and we are working with ambitious goals in all fields.

I said at the close of the recent National Assembly session that on Jan. 1, 1959, we were completely lacking in experience, we had nothing more than ideas, good and noble ideas, without a doubt, but only ideas. The work done in these years was carried out by very modest men who came from the ranks of the people, almost always a humble worker, who suddenly had to take over the tasks of the manager or the former

owner who would not cooperate or was leaving the country. In spite of this, starting practically from scratch, we have advanced tremendously.

Today, after 25 years, we have hundreds of thousands of technicians and tens of thousands of cadres trained by the Revolution. Today there is an experienced vanguard party with close to half a million members, the Young Communist League with more than half a million enthusiastic and staunch members, and powerful and militant mass organizations, which could scarcely be dreamed of on Jan. 1, 1959. (APPLAUSE) The proclamation of our socialist Constitution and the establishment of the

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### **We have come before you again on the 25th anniversary with a revolution that is a reality and with all promises kept . . .**

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People's Power have meant an extraordinary step in the decentralization of the state, in the more direct participation of the masses in running the country, an impressive school of government, and an enormous thrust to provincial and municipal activities.

We have, then, gigantic collective intelligence and strength and sound political, social and state institutions. Can there be anything we cannot accomplish in the coming years? (APPLAUSE)

Unquestionably, our future prospects are brilliant, but for that there must be peace. And peace is threatened in the world and in our region.

Tension has increased throughout the world as a result of the adventurist, irresponsible, and warlike policies of the present United States administration.

If we recall the crisis in [October] 1962 when 42 medium-range missiles were deployed in Cuba, the seriousness implied by the deployment of 572 strategic nuclear missiles near the borders of the USSR and the other countries of the socialist camp can be readily understood. The insane attempt to break the nuclear balance inevitably calls for necessary and just countermeasures. Consequently, negotiations between the USSR and the United States have been interrupted.

Since the advent of the present administration and in line with its warmongering and military supremacy policies, the United States war budgets have broken all records and a colossal arms race is at our doorstep. All this amid the worst economic crisis the world has suffered in the last 50 years, when unemployment spread like a plague in the developed capitalist countries and in the underdeveloped countries, when the foreign debt is becoming unbearable and unpayable for the Third World. Mr. Reagan will not be able to say that this improves the security of the United States; on the contrary, the world is becoming more insecure for all peoples, including the people of that country.

There are many who argue on a solid scientific basis that mankind cannot survive a total nuclear war, not only because of the direct destruction, but because of the contamination of the water, the soil, and the atmosphere and the colossal ecological disaster it would entail. Someone has said that the living would envy the dead.

Only irresponsible, ignorant, and demented people can drive world politics over that cliff. As part of the world, we are threatened by that danger. But the peoples of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and especially Latin America are also threatened by imperialism's policy of international gendarme, war hysteria, and aggressive behavior. The brutal and treacherous invasion of Grenada, the lies and pretexts used to justify this monstrous crime show the present U.S. government's cynicism, immorality, lack of scruples, and absolute scorn for international law and peoples' sovereignty.

Added to this are other exacerbating factors: the gross way in which U.S. public opinion was manipulated and deceived, the projection of this repulsive act as a great victory, and the belief that such practices of international banditry and terror can bring Cuba, Nicaragua, and the revolutionary movement in Central America to their knees. (APPLAUSE)

The hands that arm and advise the forces of genocide in El Salvador are the same ones that organize, equip, and direct the mercenary bands that attack Nicaragua from Honduran territory, that invade and occupy

Grenada, that instigate and support the racist South Africans against Angola, that bomb Lebanon and militarily harass Syria. The rights of the peoples, international law, the United Nations, the agreements, treaties, and world public opinion mean nothing to this new kind of barbaric Nazi-fascists, blackmailers by nature, and cowards, opportunists, and connivers at heart, who just like their Hitlerite ancestors, underestimate and despise the people's ability to struggle and sacrifice, their invincible patriotic strength, and their moral and spiritual values. (APPLAUSE)

A Vietnam was needed — with its millions of Vietnamese victims and tens of thousands of U.S. dead — for the imperialists to be given a lesson on the limits of their possibilities and their strength. Reagan wants to make the U.S. people forget that lesson, even at risks that range from new Vietnams to nuclear holocaust.

Today the United States can afford to invade Grenada, economically blockade and threaten two small countries such as Cuba and Nicaragua, and show its claws and its teeth in El Salvador and Central America; but the system of imperialist domination in Latin America is in crisis. The right-wing military dictatorships in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and other countries — imperialism's and capitalism's last resort — have failed resoundingly, leading these countries to ruin and economic collapse. There is nothing left of the "Brazilian miracle" but a \$100,000 million foreign debt and the constant news of social calamity: unemployment, hunger, inflation, decline in the standard of living, increased infant mortality, disease, and grocery store raids by the people.

The so-called bourgeois representative democracy is also in crisis, drowning in inefficiency, corruption, social impotence, unpayable debts, and economic ruin. Unemployment, insecurity, and hunger are spreading like the plague. The reformist illusions and the disreputable and onerous remedies of transnational investments have been left behind. Structural and social changes are inevitable. Sooner or later they will come about, and they will be more profound, the deeper and more unsurmountable the crisis becomes, a crisis which is not merely a passing moment.

Cuba cannot export revolution, nor can the United States prevent it. (APPLAUSE) That being the case, will it be able to blockade and interfere in all of Latin America in the future? Does Reagan imagine that Brazil is the size of Grenada? One way or another, the United States will have to resign itself to coexisting in this hemisphere with different social and economic systems and independent countries. (APPLAUSE)

The imperialists are mistaken if they think they can get concessions from Cuba or bring it to its knees through threats and aggression. This is true not only for the generation that made the war of liberation and the Revolution; it is and will be a firm and ineluctable principle of the new generation that, in the face of all the imperialists' auguries, illusions, and omens, are being raised and educated in an even more intransigent and revolutionary spirit. (APPLAUSE)

Our homeland will never refuse to work for peace, to discuss and solve differences through negotiations, and will never yield one iota of its morale, its dignity, its sovereignty, and its principles. Neither will our homeland refuse to cooperate in formulas that may contribute to overcoming tension in our area and in the world. We consider it an unavoidable duty of all peoples and their statesmen to struggle for the future and the survival of mankind, never before so mortally threatened. We ourselves need peace. Peace means a bright and secure future for our people. But peace is not won with compromises or concessions to imperialist aggressiveness. Concessions to the aggressor only encourage its morbid designs and lead the way to the yoke, oppression, and surrender.

If, after its sad exploit in Grenada, imperialism thinks we Cubans are weaker, it is blinded by stupidity. Cubans, Nicaraguans, Salvadorans have redoubled their patriotism, their fighting spirit, their revolutionary consciousness; they have redoubled their scorn and hatred of the bloody methods and policies of the empire. Every new villainy it attempts will be more costly, more difficult, more impossible.

Revolutionaries have never been afraid of the risks and sacrifices those threats imply, and now they are less afraid than ever. (APPLAUSE)

It is incumbent upon us to speak for our people. The blood shed by the heroic cooperation workers who fell in Grenada will never be forgotten.

(PROLONGED APPLAUSE) I hope the imperialists also will never forget how those men did not tremble or waver at fighting against the best troops of the United States, even when they were a thousand miles from their homeland and in conditions of absolute inferiority in number and weapons. (APPLAUSE) And as they did not tremble or waver; just as the Revolution did not tremble or waver when it had to fulfill honorable internationalist missions (APPLAUSE) which it carried out with exemplary courage and dignity, even less will it waver or tremble if the time comes for our people to defend their own soil and their own lives. (APPLAUSE AND SHOUTS OF "FOR SURE, FIDEL, GIVE THE YANKEES HELL!")

Together with the heroic fighters of our glorious Revolutionary Armed Forces, our men and women, elderly and young, will take up arms to teach the aggressors a lesson they will never forget and set an example that will move the world and shake the empire. (APPLAUSE)

We have said that production and defense are our main slogans today. They are not in the least contradictory, they complement each other. The greater the fighting spirit of a people, the more they are aware and ready to fight for their homeland, all the more will they work, all the more will they devote themselves to the work of the Revolution and the development of their country; the more production and services are developed, the more we struggle for the well-being, future, and happiness of our countrymen, the better we care for children in the schools and the sick in the polyclinics and hospitals, the better will be our attention in all other services in the country; the more brilliant our writers, artists, and

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### **The imperialists are mistaken if they think they can get concessions from Cuba or bring it to its knees through threats and aggression . . .**

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scientists, more outstanding our athletes, more efficient and vigorous our Party and our State, all the more determinedly and heroically will our people defend our homeland and our Revolution. (APPLAUSE)

If in the beginning, at Girón and during the October [1962] Crisis, when we had nothing but ideas for which to fight, our people did not hesitate for a moment to take up arms or to be ready to fight until the final consequences, think what would happen now when, along with the dignity, sovereignty, freedom, and independence of our homeland and the right to make the Revolution, we have all the achievements of the Revolution and a wonderful future to defend. (APPLAUSE)

All Party and State cadres, all members of the Central Committee, and all the leaders of the Revolution, together with the people and the armed forces, would fight with dignity and be prepared to die and to win. (APPLAUSE)

Santiago de Cuba: We have come before you again on the 25th anniversary with a Revolution that is a reality and with all promises kept. (APPLAUSE)

We bestow upon you today the title of Hero of the Republic of Cuba and the Order of Antonio Maceo, your great son who taught us that a fighter never ceases in the struggle, that there can never be dishonorable pacts with the enemy, that no one can ever attempt to take possession of Cuba without perishing in the fight. (APPLAUSE AND SHOUTS OF "FIDEL, FIDEL, FIDEL!")

You stood with us during the most difficult days; our Moncada, our 30th of November,<sup>5</sup> and our January 1st took place here. Today we honor you in a special way, and through you all our people who tonight are symbolized by you. May your heroism, your patriotism, and your revolutionary spirit forever be an example to all Cubans. May the heroic watchword of our people forever be what we learned here: *Patria o Muerte!* (SHOUTS OF "VENCEREMOS!") May what we found here that glorious January 1st always await us: Victory! (APPLAUSE)

Thank you, Santiago!  
(OVATION)

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5. The date, in 1956, of an uprising in Santiago organized to coincide with the landing of the *Granma*. The *Granma* was actually delayed several days and did not reach Cuba until December 2.

# Marcos shaken by new protests

### 500,000 rally in Manila against dictatorship

By Steve Wattenmaker

An estimated half-million people poured into the streets of Manila January 31 in one of the largest demonstrations ever against the dictatorship of President Ferdinand Marcos. The U.S.-backed Marcos regime has been battered repeatedly by massive protests since the August 1983 assassination of popular opposition leader Benigno Aquino.

The latest action, initiated by Aquino's brother Agapito, began as a 75-mile protest "jog" from the Aquino family's home province to the capital. When the 300 runners finally entered Manila — heavily armed police had blocked their way for several days — the crowds of supporters quickly swelled by hundreds of thousands demanding that Marcos resign.

The demonstration was called to denounce a January 27 national referendum on a constitutional amendment to establish an office of vice-president. Opposition groups urged a boycott of the plebiscite and, although the measure passed as expected, large numbers of voters reportedly stayed away from the polls.

U.S. banks, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Reagan administration prompted Marcos to engineer this constitutional "reform." Concerned that the political situation in the Philippines would become even more volatile should the ailing Marcos die soon, the bankers warned Marcos that he had to institutionalize some form of succession or risk losing badly needed credit.

Marcos is also directing his attention toward May elections for seats in his rubber-stamp parliament. By holding the election, Marcos is hoping to improve his regime's image and sow divisions among the bourgeois opposition by wooing some sectors to support the poll.

#### Deep discontent

Following Benigno Aquino's assassination by government security forces at the Manila airport Aug. 21, 1983, the anti-Marcos protests reached a massive crescendo in mid-September. Although led by bourgeois opposition figures, these actions reflected the deep discontent and growing militancy of Filipino workers, students, farmers, slum dwellers, and others who have had enough of Marcos' repressive and proimperialist rule.

Smaller demonstrations against the regime continued almost without interruption throughout October and November. Business people and other professionals mounted confetti-strewn marches through Manila's Makati commercial district. Filipinos rallied in smaller towns and cities throughout the country. On November 14 militant unionists demonstrated for higher wages, and several hundred students



PRESIDENT FERDINAND MARCOS

marched on the U.S. embassy to protest the invasion of Grenada.

Anti-Marcos protests reached another high point around November 27, to mark what would have been Aquino's 51st birthday. The week before November 27 saw daily demonstrations against the regime. On November 25, 5,000 squatters and students converged on downtown Manila from the poor squatter colonies that ring the city. They burned effigies of Uncle Sam amid shouts of "Down with the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship!"

On November 27 itself, more than 200,000 demonstrated in a dozen cities. Two main rallies in downtown Manila were peaceful, but police and army troops opened fire on smaller marches organized by students and slum dwellers, wounding a number of people. A general strike called by the opposition for the following day failed to materialize in Manila, but striking bus and streetcar drivers tied up public transport in the southern city of Davao.

More rallies occurred December 10, International Human Rights Day. Riot police broke up a march by seminarians against rights violations in the country, but thousands more demonstrated in downtown Manila and in Quezon City. Speakers denounced human rights abuses and demanded that Marcos release all political prisoners.

#### Bourgeois opposition seeks strategy

While the popular opposition to Marcos' dictatorial rule continues to take to the streets, liberal bourgeois parties and politicians are trying to hammer out a common strategy, in hopes of controlling the massive discontent, channeling it behind their own efforts to replace Marcos, and heading off the emergence of a more radical leadership.

In an attempt to consolidate the gains made by various opposition groups, a coalition call-

ing itself the National Alliance for Justice, Freedom, and Democracy was launched at a mass conference November 5. The new organization is chaired by two of the most respected bourgeois opposition figures, ex-Senators Lorenzo Tanada and Jose Diokno.

Thirty-five thousand workers, students, members of national minorities, and others turned out to support a platform that included calls for the removal of U.S. military bases and the dismantling of the "U.S.-Marcos dictatorship."

Speeches were interrupted by chants supporting Jose Maria Sison, the jailed former leader of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). The CPP and its New People's Army, which has thousands of fighters engaged in a guerrilla struggle against the dictatorship, is winning growing support and sympathy among those active in the mass mobilizations against Marcos.

Another conference in early January was spearheaded by Agapito and other Aquino family members. After several days of heated debate, the 2,400 participants, representing virtually the entire spectrum of the bourgeois opposition, managed to come up with a unified position on the May elections.

In an open letter to Marcos and the public, the organizations outlined the conditions for participating in the voting — conditions which Marcos cannot meet without giving up the dictatorial powers he has held since declaring martial law in 1972.

Among the conditions are: an end to Marcos' present power to rule by decree; repeal of various repressive measures like the Preventive Detention Act; a general amnesty and release of all political prisoners; keeping the military away from the polling places; and including opposition figures on the election commission.

This opposition agreement may be short-lived, however. At least one of the major opposition figures, former Senator Salvador Laurel who heads the 12-party United Nationalist Democratic Organization (UNIDO), is anxious to find a way to run in the May election to advertise his viability as a pro-Washington successor to Marcos.

To add to his other economic and political troubles, Marcos has for all intents and purposes lost his battle to convince public opinion at home and abroad that his regime was not responsible for Aquino's assassination. On top of all the previous exposures, two recent witness testimonies have poked even more holes in the regime's discredited claim that it was the CPP that had Aquino killed.

Two airline maintenance workers near Aquino's plane during the assassination claim that Rolando Galman, whom the military identifies as a killer hired by the CPP, could not have carried out the murder. One of the workers told the U.S. NBC television news December 23 that Galman, whom soldiers shot after the assassination, was actually surrounded and held by soldiers as Aquino was shot. □