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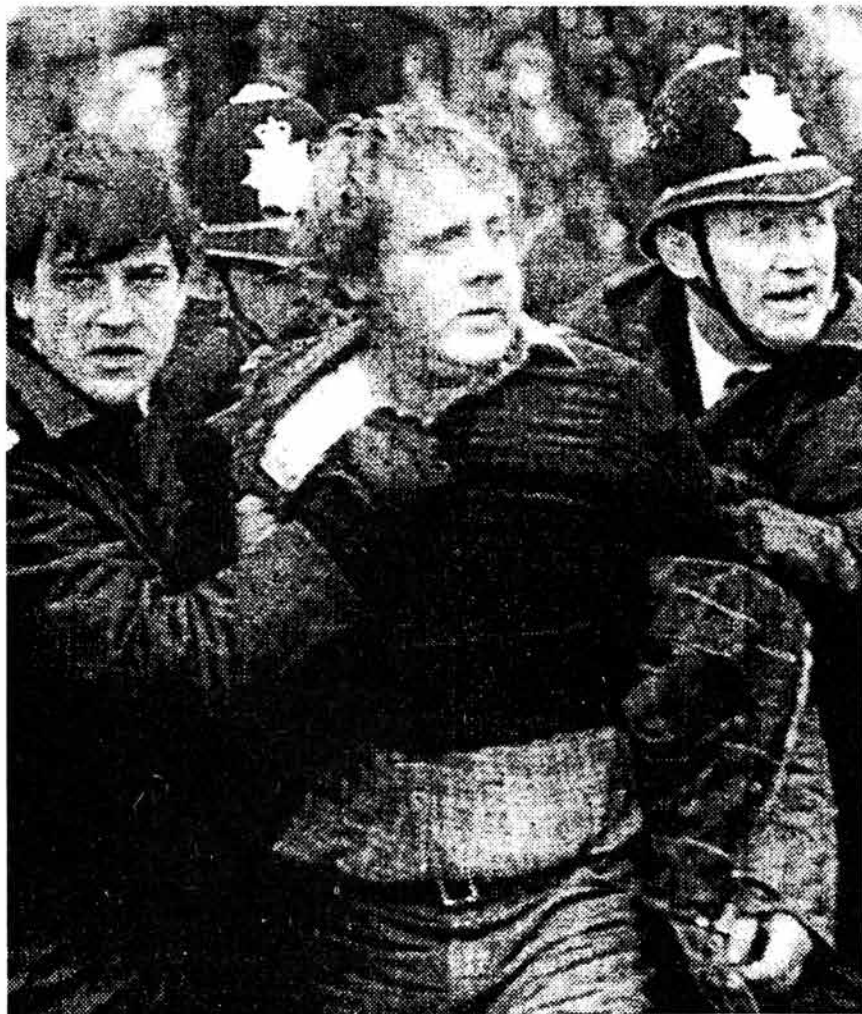
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GRENADA

**'Caretaker' Regime
Targets Gains
of Revolution**

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**Foundation Honors
Maurice Bishop,
Other Martyrs**

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**Caribbean Left
Debating
Grenada Events**

**Washington, Pretoria
Join Hands Against
Black Africa**

**2,500 U.S. Troops to Salvadoran Border
as Striking Workers Defy Regime**

Reagan boosts Israel ties in wake of Lebanon setbacks

By Fred Murphy

After suffering a major setback in Lebanon, U.S. imperialism is stepping up "strategic cooperation" with its only reliable ally in the Middle East, the colonial-settler state of Israel.

"All in all," President Reagan told a gathering of U.S. Zionists March 13, "friendship between Israel and the United States is closer and stronger today than ever before, and I intend to keep it that way." Reagan is putting his money where his mouth is: U.S. military aid to Israel will reach an annual level of \$1.4 billion in the coming year.

Agreements signed by Reagan and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in November "elevated and formalized" the "U.S.-Israel strategic relationship," Reagan said. "The new American-Israeli Joint Political-Military Group is working to decide how the U.S. and Israel can counter the threat that growing Soviet involvement in the Middle East poses to our mutual interests."

Reagan asserted that "the Soviets" have expanded their influence in the Middle East, "notably by stationing 7,000 troops and advisers in Syria." In turn, he claimed, "Syria is trying to lead a radical effort to dominate the region through terrorism and intimidation aimed, in particular, at America's friends."

King Hussein gets cold feet

"One such friend," Reagan added, "whom we continue to urge to negotiate with Israel, is King Hussein of Jordan." But the Jordanian ruler had drawn different conclusions from imperialism's debacle in Lebanon. The day after Reagan spoke, Hussein flatly rejected U.S. calls for him to open talks with Israel.

In an extensive interview published in the March 15 *New York Times*, King Hussein complained that "U.S. credibility has suffered, but so have those who believed in the United States" — meaning himself. While Washington claims to be evenhanded in the Middle East, the king said, "Israel is on our land. It is there by virtue of American military and economic aid that translates into aid for Israeli settlements. . . ."

"You obviously have made your choice and your choice is Israel and support of Israel. That being the case, there is no hope of achieving anything."

Meanwhile, the setbacks suffered by Reagan and his allies in Lebanon were also being registered in Lausanne, Switzerland, where Lebanese government and opposition figures gathered for a "national reconciliation conference." President Hafez al-Assad of Syria arranged the talks after Lebanese President Amin Gemayel agreed to cancel his May 17, 1983, treaty with Israel.

That pact, brokered by U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, had not only legitimized Israel's indefinite military occupation of the southern third of Lebanon but also called for Lebanon to break its ties with other Arab governments and extend a form of diplomatic recognition to the Israeli state. The rulers in Tel Aviv presented the treaty as a "second Camp David" and considered the installation of a regime willing to sign it to have been a key achievement of their 1982 invasion of Lebanon — second only to the blows dealt to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

But the signing of the treaty helped to galvanize opposition to Gemayel's regime, which is dominated by the extreme-rightist Christian Phalange Party and has upheld the longstanding social privileges of Lebanon's Maronite Christian minority. Militias based among the oppressed Muslim majority and the Druse community and aided by arms from Syria resisted U.S.-backed efforts to extend the sway of Gemayel's army in September 1983 and again in February of this year. The latter attempt ended with the collapse of the army, as most of its Muslim troops and officers deserted or joined the side of the rebels.

Washington and its imperialist allies had sent troops to Beirut in 1982 to help Gemayel build up a strong army and consolidate his rule. "The success of the whole Lebanese operation was dependent on the successful reconstruction of the Lebanese Army," a U.S. State Department official was quoted by the March 11 *New York Times*.

But as the army fell apart and massive U.S. naval shelling failed to reverse the rebel gains, Reagan decided not to risk further escalation and instead redeployed his marines to warships offshore. On February 29 the *New York Times* reported that Reagan had "turned down an appeal from President Amin Gemayel of Lebanon for increased use of American naval and air power in direct support of his Government."

Faced with this situation Gemayel acceded to demands that he cancel the treaty with Israel and negotiate with his opponents on a reshuffling of governmental power in Lebanon. Once the pact was formally scrapped, the Syrian regime pressured its allies in the Lebanese opposition to drop their demand that Gemayel resign.

Washington decided to take no direct part in the Lausanne talks, but kept its huge naval armada off the Lebanese coast and stepped up collaboration with Israel. A State Department official told the *New York Times* that the Lebanese negotiations "might produce a kind of compromise" if the opposition felt "that Gemayel still has some American chips to play." U.S.

officials, the *Times* said, were continuing to praise Gemayel's "determination to stay in office and his efforts to try to negotiate the best possible deal with the Syrians."

For its part, the Syrian regime seeks a more broadly based and stable government in Lebanon that will maintain friendly ties with Damascus and serve as a buffer against Israeli military aggression. By consolidating Syrian influence in Lebanon, President Assad hopes to be in a stronger position to negotiate with Israel for military disengagement and the return of the Golan Heights, seized by Tel Aviv in 1967 and annexed to the Israeli state in 1981.

Syrian aims, rebel demands

These Syrian aims fall far short of the demands put forward by some of the Lebanese opposition forces that have received Syrian aid, however. Nabih Berri, who heads the Amal militia based mainly among the Shi'ite Muslim population, told the Paris daily *Le Monde* on the opening day of the Lausanne conference that "we are determined to obtain here and now the abolition of the confessional system."

Berri was referring to the system of rule imposed by the French imperialists when they carved Lebanon out of Syria after World War I. Under the so-called National Pact of 1943, an unwritten agreement among Lebanon's top capitalists and landlords, all posts in the regime and armed forces are allocated on the basis of religious faiths (or "confessions"). The lion's share of power — including the presidency and command of the armed forces — goes to the Maronite Christian minority. The predominantly Maronite bourgeoisie (along with its junior partners among the Sunni Muslim merchants and entrepreneurs) has made use of this discriminatory system to shore up its rule over the workers and peasants, who are largely Muslim. Shi'ite Muslims, overwhelmingly working-class and peasant, now make up some 40 percent of Lebanon's population but have been most systematically excluded from political power.

Amal (Arabic for "hope") arose in 1975 as the armed wing of the Movement of the Disinherited, founded the previous year by Shi'ite religious leader Imam Musa Sadr. According to *Le Monde's* Middle East correspondent Eric Rouleau, this organization "set as its objectives, among others, the struggle against 'the feudalists and other exploiters,' 'imperialism,' 'the expansionist aims' of Israel, and for the suppression of 'confessionalism within the reigning political system.' It presented itself as the defender of 'all the disinherited' regardless of religion and stood for the 'unity, territorial integrity, independence, and sovereignty of Lebanon.'" (*Le Monde*, February 11-12.)

Following Musa Sadr's disappearance during a visit to Libya in 1978, Nabih Berri emerged as the central leader of Amal. Today the movement enjoys wide support both in the poor and working-class suburbs south of Beirut and in the Israeli-occupied south. Having scored a series of smashing victories over

the hated Phalangist regime and its army, these masses now expect their leaders to translate these into real political and social gains for the "disinherited" of Lebanon.

While Syrian ruler Assad extended material aid to Amal and the Druse-based Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) in order to weaken the U.S.- and Israeli-backed Phalange regime, he has no interest in spurring the kind of social upheaval in Lebanon that would be required to destroy the discriminatory system root and branch. It was to halt precisely such an upsurge that Assad first sent troops to Lebanon in 1976. Having forced concessions from Gemayel, the Syrian regime is now leaning on conservative figures like ex-President Suleiman Franjeh, ex-Prime Minister Rashid Karami, and Gemayel himself to counter the more far-reaching demands of the PSP and Amal.

"The Syrians have no intention whatsoever of talking about serious reforms that will only create problems which might spoil their victory," an opposition representative at the Lausanne talks told the *New York Times* March 14. "All they want is the minimum agreement that will keep Lebanon quiet for a while. . . ."

Others involved in the conference outlined to the *Times* the kind of settlement Syrian Vice-president Abdel Halim Khaddam was pressing for at Lausanne. It included a "national unity cabinet" headed by Rashid Karami, a parliament divided evenly between Christians and Muslims (the current one has a 6-to-5 Christian majority), continued Maronite control of the presidency, and a system of administrative decentralization formalizing Lebanon's division into religious enclaves.

Concessions to Phalange, Israel

The last two provisions are aimed at satisfying the demands of the Christian Phalange Party and its Israeli-armed militia, the Lebanese Forces. While Phalange political leaders such as President Gemayel and his father are participating in the Lausanne talks, Lebanese Forces commanders have warned they will not be bound by the decisions reached there. They had opposed Gemayel's cancellation of the May 17 treaty, and, according to the March 12 *Washington Post*, "frankly admit they intend to maintain a public alliance with Israel."

The Lebanese Forces, the *Post* added, "are actively cooperating with Israel in southern Lebanon. Their leaders hope to extend this military and political alliance to their own stronghold north of Beirut."

For his part, Nabih Berri has warned that Amal "will fight all projects for cantons or partition. We only accept one unified Lebanon with its two communities, Muslim and Christian."

Whatever temporary settlement is imposed by Syria, the underlying conflict will go on until the oppressed masses of Lebanon are able to carry through the unification, democratization, and secularization of their country. This struggle is bound up with the fight against continued U.S. and Israeli intervention through the arming and support of the Phalange and the

occupation of southern Lebanon.

On this question, the Syrian plan reported on by the *New York Times* would authorize the new Lebanese cabinet "to enter into negotiations with Israel over a new security agreement in southern Lebanon, to replace the withdrawal accord of last May 17 and pave the way for a pullout of Israeli troops." Syria would also be willing to have the new Lebanese regime cancel the 1969 Cairo Agreement, which codified the PLO's right to maintain military bases and

function politically within Lebanon.

These steps would contribute nothing to Syria's own defense against Israeli aggression. They would instead enable the Zionist rulers to retain the principal gains of their 1982 invasion of Lebanon and offer them a way to reduce the political and military costs of their occupation of the south. This in turn would give Israel the necessary breathing room to use its stepped-up U.S. aid to prepare for a new war against Syria. □

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2,500 U.S. troops to border

As strikers continue to defy dictatorship

By Michael Baumann

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — On the eve of the rigged Salvadoran presidential election scheduled for March 25, 2,500 U.S. troops are on the way to the Honduran border with El Salvador.

According to a March 12 dispatch by Spain's national news agency, EFE, the U.S. troops are being airlifted from bases in Panama to areas of Honduras bordering El Salvador. There are already 1,900 other U.S. troops stationed in Honduras.

Code-named "Emergency Alert," the operation includes the dispatch of the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne, one of the units that carried out the invasion of Grenada last October.

In the border zones, U.S. troops will join several battalions of the Honduran army that have already been sent to the northern border of FMLN-held territory west and east of the capital, San Salvador.

Meanwhile, the 78,000-ton U.S. aircraft carrier *America*, two guided missile destroyers, and a third U.S. ship are steaming toward Honduras' Atlantic coast from the Virgin Islands.

Washington has thus far refused to confirm that the 2,500 troops have been sent to the Salvadoran-Honduran border. The Pentagon is using the fact of permanent U.S. military maneuvers in Honduras to cover up the big increase in U.S. forces there.

The U.S. military operation comes in the midst of a rapidly deteriorating situation for the Salvadoran dictatorship.

In the latest display of their military strength and popular support, forces of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) have rapidly expanded offensive operations in the eastern half of the country. On March 8, they occupied the town of San Esteban Catarina, only 40 miles east of the capital.

They held the town long enough to hold a two-hour political meeting. According to the Salvadoran army's own estimate, at the conclusion of the meeting, some 150 young residents of the town joined the guerrilla fighters.

Even prior to the latest announcements on the dispatch of U.S. troops, the FMLN had been placed on alert for a possible U.S.-Honduran invasion.

"The FMLN will try to avoid any provocation," said Radio Farabundo Martí, one of the rebel stations, March 10. "But if the North Americans and Hondurans invade, there are arms and men to defend our national territory until victory."

Meanwhile, thousands of urban workers remain on strike in the country, protesting government refusal to raise wages.

As of March 10, as many as 10,000 Sal-

vadoran workers remained on strike, despite military takeovers of two strike-bound workplaces and threats by paramilitary death squads known as the Secret Anticommunist Army.

"The strikes have become one of the most important facts of national life," said the FMLN news bulletin *Guazapa*. "In less than a month, there have been as many strikes as all those that took place during the entire last year."

"The reason for this big change is simple: the government is implementing an economic policy — drawn up by U.S. advisers and international organizations like the International Monetary Fund — that places the entire burden of the crisis on employees and workers."

On March 7, the army colonels who run El Salvador's national waterworks (ANDA) and the Institute of Social Security (ISSS) threatened to militarize both workplaces if the strikes had not ended by 6 p.m. that evening.

'An act of direct aggression'

Statement of FMLN General Command

[The following statement by the General Command of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) was issued on March 12 and published in the next day's issue of the Nicaraguan daily *Barricada*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

In face of the recent moves of naval forces and infantry troops toward territorial waters of Central America and toward the Honduran border with El Salvador, the FMLN communicates the following to the people of El Salvador, the United States, and the world:

1. Taking into account that the FMLN maintains control over the greater part of Salvadoran territory bordering Honduras, the dispatch of U.S. troops to the Honduran border with El Salvador constitutes an act of direct aggression against our people and a provocation against our military forces.

2. The FMLN has made all possible political efforts to try to contain intervention and thus to avoid its fatal consequences both for the peoples of Central America and of the United States itself. For the people of the United States will also inevitably pay a price in blood as a consequence of the adventurous policies of President Reagan's administration.

3. The FMLN, in face of this act of aggression, warns that it will act in accordance with the interests of the people in defending national sovereignty and that it rejects absurd arguments about the nonexistence of defined

On March 8, initial steps were taken to carry out the threat. Air force troops entered ANDA's main plant, just outside San Salvador, and evicted some 200 sit-down strikers inside. Four of the 4,000 ANDA strikers had already been arrested, and their union has received several death threats from the Secret Anticommunist Army.

Also on March 8, army troops took over all offices of the strike-bound Institute for the Regulation of Distribution (IRA), a government marketing agency. Sit-in strikers were evicted and the offices were occupied by the soldiers.

Social Security workers, although expecting to be evicted next from their offices, refused to call off their strike.

Thirty thousand workers in some 20 unions held a two-hour solidarity strike March 6 to display their support for the work stoppages. And similar demands for increases in pay are beginning to be heard from other workers.

The government's initial offer to some strikers of a 10 percent increase has been denounced as too little, too late. The union representing the striking water workers dismissed the offer as "unjust," pointing out that it did not begin to meet the loss in their buying power over the last four years. □

borders, used as a justification for invasion against our people and for an attack against our forces.

4. The FMLN warns that if the presence of U.S. troops near the border is a measure of intimidation, we will respond to it by deepening the war until we attain victory. We will do so even if that means we have to fight and defeat invading troops of the United States, of its puppets in the Honduran army, and of any other nationality that joins in the aggression.

5. The FMLN calls on all its fighters to prepare for combat against invading troops. It alerts the people of El Salvador, the peoples of Central America, the people of the United States, and the entire international community about the generalized military confrontation the United States government is unleashing against El Salvador and Central America.

In this decisive hour of our war of national liberation, the FMLN calls on workers, teachers, students, soldiers, honest commissioned and noncommissioned officers of the armed forces, professionals, small and medium businessmen, the church, and the entire Salvadoran people to condemn the aggression, to pay close attention to the information we will continue to provide, and to close ranks to fight the invaders and defend national dignity and sovereignty.

United for combat until the final victory!
Revolution or death!
We will win!

Assault on surviving gains of revolution

U.S.-imposed regime targets state farms, trade unions

By Mohammed Oliver

ST. GEORGE'S, February 18 — In its four and a half years, the Grenada revolution brought many advances for working people here. These achievements are now under attack. The U.S.-installed Advisory Council, which has ruled the country since the U.S. invasion of the island last October, has taken major steps in dismantling the progressive economic and social programs of the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG), which overturned the U.S.-backed dictator Eric Gairy on March 13, 1979.

But the present situation in Grenada is also marked by the existence of a small layer of young workers who are beginning to fight to defend the revolutionary advances made under the PRG.

The majority of Grenadians still view the U.S. invasion as a "rescue mission" that freed them from the brutal rule of Bernard Coard, the PRG's deputy prime minister who organized the overthrow of the PRG and the murder of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and other central leaders of the revolution. Some Grenadians, however, are beginning to realize that the U.S. government intervened not to rescue the revolution, but to crush the last vestiges of it.

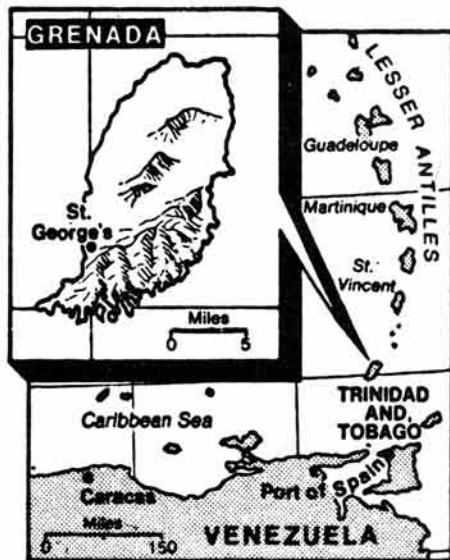
This layer is found mainly in the unions, which are the only mass organizations still remaining. Another important organization that is fighting to keep alive the ideas of the revolution is the Maurice Bishop and October 19, 1983, Martyrs Foundation (see page 168).

Many of the accomplishments of the PRG were immediately reversed in the wake of the U.S. invasion. The construction of an international airport at Point Salines — 80 percent of which had already been completed by the revolutionary government — was halted. State-run industries, such as the Agro-Industry plant that prepared and packaged agricultural products, and the Sandino Housing plant that manufactured pre-fabricated homes, were closed.

Thousands of Grenadians are now jobless. Begging and prostitution, which were virtually non-existent under the PRG, have once again become prevalent.

Following the instructions of the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), which carried out a study of Grenada at the end of last year, Advisory Council officials recently announced plans to return state enterprises to private owners. The interim government said that landlords whose property was expropriated without compensation would immediately have their lands returned.

The majority of Grenada's agricultural production is for export. Bananas, cocoa, and nut-



meg are the main cash crops. This fact meant that Grenadians, like many people dominated by imperialism, found they could not feed themselves despite the abundance of rich and fertile soil.

The workers and farmers government dedicated itself to changing that situation. The production of foodstuffs was made the priority on the state-run farms. The PRG inherited 20 such estates from the proimperialist regime of Eric Gairy. In addition, the PRG set up 12 more state farms through expropriating idle or underused lands.

The increased food production helped to decrease import costs, and the savings in foreign exchange were used to help finance other economic development projects. The state farms also became a source of jobs for the great number of unemployed agricultural workers.

The PRG also aided the creation of agricultural cooperatives, which played an important role in increasing production and alleviating unemployment.

Now, the new, proimperialist regime is handing the state farms back to private owners. The 12 estates established by the PRG are the first targets of this campaign.

The River Antoine farm, which produces sugar cane and manufactures rum, has already been returned to its previous owner. This was the only state farm that made a profit.

Other capitalist landlords are demanding the return of their lands. The Grenada Farms Corporation (GFC), the government agency that administers the state farms, is currently negotiating the return of the Belvedere farm. One reason the old bosses are pressing for the return of the farm is that Belvedere was in full

bloom in February, exporting 500 boxes of bananas a week.

The Belvedere farm was taken over by the PRG because its owners had abandoned the land. The revolutionary government invested more than U.S.\$57,000 in improving the farm. The GFC has asked that it be allowed to lease the farm for three years to recover its investment, but the old owners say that the agency should not get any compensation.

There are five other farms in which, like Belvedere, the PRG made large capital investments.

The GFC negotiating team, composed of the Minister of Agriculture Arnold Cruickshank and supporters of ex-dictator Gairy, has indicated that it wants to sell the other 20 state farms once the government has divested the 12 estates expropriated by the PRG.

Hardships for workers

Through subsidizing the state farms, the PRG was able to employ more workers than the capitalist landlords did. The new owners will fire many workers.

In addition, the PRG was concerned about the health and safety of the workers. Agricultural workers who used pesticides, for example, were provided with protective uniforms by the revolutionary government. In their greed for profits the new capitalist owners will show no such concern for the workers' well-being.

This same profit drive means that agricultural production will once again center on cash crops rather than food for domestic use. The reduction in the production of food will increase its price and deepen Grenada's economic dependence on imperialism.

Education under attack

Nor are the capitalist landlords going to continue the basic academic education for agricultural workers that was organized during the revolution.

One of the most impressive social achievements of the revolution was in the field of education. Under the PRG, education became a right. Secondary schools, in private hands under the Gairy dictatorship, became free during the revolution. The revolutionary government also set up an adult literacy program called the Centre for Popular Education (CPE).

Now free education is threatened. Nicholas Brathwaite, who heads the Advisory Council, claims the PRG left the treasury empty and, therefore, there are no funds to continue social programs. While the CPE offices are staffed, there have been no classes since October.

Another project targeted by the U.S. government and its local lackeys is the National

Agency for Cooperative Development (NACDA). This agency was created by the PRG in 1980. The government negotiated a U.S.\$380,000 loan for the agency to enable it to initiate cooperatives.

Cooperatives targeted

NACDA provided loans at 8 percent interest to Grenadians interested in beginning cooperatives. The agency helped cooperative members manage their enterprises and market their products. The cooperatives supported by NACDA were a key part of the campaign to fight unemployment, which plummeted from 50 percent to 14 percent under the PRG.

According to Melvin Mitchell, the chief officer of NACDA, the agency is in serious danger. Although the agency has kept up with the interest payments on its debt, it has not been able to pay on the principal.

The Advisory Council asked NACDA to send it a report on the achievements and current needs of the agency. The regime will then decide whether NACDA will be continued and in what form. Many people fear that the agency will be dismantled.

The U.S.-imposed regime has also begun to break up another important conquest of the Grenada revolution — the Marketing and National Imports Board (MNIB).

The PRG established the MNIB to look for new export markets for agricultural products and to guarantee, through import controls, the supply of certain foods to the Grenadian people.

An MNIB employee and activist in the Commercial and Industrial Workers Union (CIWU) told *Intercontinental Press* about the campaign to destroy the MNIB launched by the rich merchants.

"The first attempt at mashing up the MNIB," he said, "came when several businessmen published a pamphlet (immediately after the October crisis and invasion) called 'The Conscious Grenadian.' The pamphlet attacked the MNIB, and these businessmen pledged they would do all in their power to make sure the MNIB doesn't exist.

"Just a few days later," reported the CIWU activist, "we learned from the Ministry of Trade that four firms — Hubbard, Ross Foodstuffs, Star Agency, and Independence Agency — had received licenses to import goods that the MNIB had a monopoly on according to People's Law 69."

The MNIB workers responded quickly to this attack. The union demanded that the government clarify its policy regarding the board. Other Grenadian working people protested the moves against the MNIB. Even the reactionary

Grenadian Voice carried letters demanding the interim government keep its hands off the board.

The Advisory Council was forced to make a public announcement that the MNIB would remain intact. Two of the import licenses were revoked, but the other two had already been taken advantage of.

Meanwhile, the attack on the MNIB continued apace. A new board of directors was appointed, which the MNIB workers feel is determined to dismantle the agency.

"First of all," said the CIWU activist, "the new board changed the MNIB's pricing policies. From February 6 prices on some items are fixed at lower levels than before. This is to give the people the impression that the PRG was thieving the people's money.

"But," he continued, "profits made by the MNIB from the sale of things like sugar, which was purchased from Cuba below world-market prices, were funneled back into government programs. They're trying to hide this fact! The MNIB's profits helped to provide the free medical care, CPE, and so on."

The MNIB employees are also angry because the new management does not include a member elected by the union membership, which was always done under the PRG.

Attacks on unions

"However," the CIWU activist said, "the most significant struggle since October 25 involved the Seamen's and Waterfront Workers Union (SWWU), Bank and General Workers Union (BGWU), and the MNIB." The docks — and therefore, dockworkers — are central to the economy of this tiny island.

The SWWU organizes about 300 workers on Grenada's docks. They are among the highest-paid workers in Grenada. The SWWU leadership opposed the Grenada revolution and carried out attempts to destabilize the PRG when it was in power.

The BGWU membership includes unskilled dockworkers. The union is led by supporters of the revolution. During the revolution, it played an important role in countering the activities of the SWWU leadership.

"With the changed situation," he said, "the SWWU feels it can do as it pleases. In January, the SWWU blocked the off-loading of cargo imported by the MNIB, saying the Seamen's union is the *sole* union on the docks. They crushed the BGWU branch on the waterfront, and the MNIB signed a new contract with the SWWU.

"One reason the MNIB Board of Directors turned their backs on the BGWU workers," the CIWU activist suggested, "is because Eric Pierre, president of the SWWU, is also a member of the MNIB's new board."

This report on the SWWU's raiding operation against the BGWU was backed up in interviews with central activists in the BGWU. They also reported that the SWWU was raiding hotels where the workers are organized by the BGWU.

"Apparently," commented one BGWU activist, "the SWWU leadership thinks we're an

Funds needed for Grenada coverage

The big-business news media in the United States and other capitalist countries has consistently tried to portray the U.S. invasion and occupation of Grenada as a "rescue mission" designed to "restore democracy" to that Caribbean island. It has therefore carried very little news about the efforts of Washington and its puppet regime in Grenada to roll back the gains that Grenadian workers and farmers had won during the four and a half years of Maurice Bishop's People's Revolutionary Government, which was overthrown just prior to the U.S. invasion.

But we at *Intercontinental Press* have been trying to bring to our readers the real story of what is going on in Grenada today. To help do that, we sent a correspondent, Mohammed Oliver, to Grenada and several other Caribbean countries for more than a month to gather the facts about Washington's attacks on the surviving accomplishments of the Grenada revolution. His report appears in this issue of *IP*.

While in Grenada, Oliver also obtained for us an exclusive interview with George Louison, a close colleague of Bishop's and one of the few surviving revolutionary leaders in Grenada today. We will be featuring that interview in a coming issue. Like our previous Grenada interview, with Bishop's former press secretary, Don

Rojas, it will mark an important contribution to the discussion now going on among revolutionists within Grenada and abroad about the lessons of the Grenada revolution's defeat.

The response to the Rojas interview itself has been tremendous. Anticipating interest in it, we had printed more than twice our normal run of the Dec. 26, 1983, issue containing the interview. But we have already run out of copies of that issue, and orders and requests for it are still coming in. So to meet the demand, we will be putting out a special reprint edition with the Rojas interview.

Of course, it costs money to take special steps like these, just as it does to maintain the kind of high-quality reporting, analysis, and documentation of struggles elsewhere in the world that our readers have come to expect.

Like other publications, our operating costs continue to rise. And the income we receive from subscriptions and bookstore sales does not cover the expense of putting out *IP*. We function on a deficit.

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easy target because we organize so many different types of workers. They think they can pick us off workplace by workplace.

"But," he said, "we will have a meeting of our general council soon, and there's a meeting of the Trade Union Council (TUC) scheduled for the last week of March. At these meetings we will take up the SWWU's poaching [raids] and the disruption by AIFLD [American Institute for Free Labor Development]."

AIFLD

AIFLD is a CIA outfit that includes bureaucrats of the U.S. labor federation AFL-CIO on its board of directors. The agency's main purpose is to disrupt and hamper the work of unions whose leadership they deem "subversive." During the revolution, AIFLD's work was largely checked.

Now, AIFLD has been given the green light to disrupt trade unions here and try to oust their current leaderships, which Washington considers too "radical."

The chief AIFLD operative here is Osborne Baptiste. His office is in the SWWU headquarters. Baptiste, a Grenadian who returned to the country after the U.S. invasion, has been through several AIFLD training programs in the United States. So have several SWWU leaders.

Baptiste has been on the radio here slandering and lying about the leaderships of the BGWU and the CIWU. The AIFLD agent claims that the current leaderships are stealing union funds to buy homes and cars and make trips abroad.

The AIFLD campaign ran into trouble with the CIWU ranks. Baptiste had been going from workplace to workplace saying the workers had to "rid themselves of the communists." He called a general meeting of the CIWU for January 10 to discuss "union finances, long trips of union officials, and the leadership crisis in the union." Baptiste went on the radio to build this meeting. Only 15 workers attended.

Meanwhile, the CIWU leadership had called a general membership meeting for January 11. Before the meeting could begin, however, a Jamaican member of the combat force now occupying the island was told to leave. He had a tape recorder to record the meeting. The union leaders then answered all of Baptiste's charges before the 150 workers in attendance.

"The workers demanded to know who Baptiste worked for," one CIWU activist told *Intercontinental Press*. "Baptiste, who used to work at a place organized by the CIWU, said he worked for AIFLD."

"One of the workers got up and said to Baptiste, 'Are you aware that that organization you're working for is responsible for overturning progressive governments like that of Allende's in Chile?'"

"Well," continued the CIWU activist, "Baptiste got hot and started cussing the workers, who drowned him out by chanting, 'CIA! CIA! CIA!'"

In a unanimous decision, the union expelled Baptiste from membership because 1) he was not a worker at any enterprise organized by CIWU; 2) he was working for AIFLD; and 3) AIFLD is a known CIA front.

Fighters like the workers in the CIWU are looking for a program to combat the reimposition of imperialist domination of their country. They identify with the revolution led by Bishop and look to the slain revolutionary leader's ideas for guidance in the current battles.

However, as the campaign of lies and slanders against Bishop is picking up steam, forces are organizing to keep Bishop's ideas alive.

On January 21 the Maurice Bishop and October 19, 1983, Martyrs Foundation was launched. The foundation opened an office near the market in St. George's, the capital, and sponsored a march and rally to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Rupert Bishop's death.

Rupert Bishop, father of Maurice Bishop,

was murdered by Gairy's police on what Grenadians call "Bloody Monday" — Jan. 21, 1974.

Following the opening of the foundation's office on Grenville Street, New Jewel Movement (NJM) leaders George Louison and Kendrick Radix and former PRG member Lyden Ramdhanny led a march to Rupert Bishop's grave site, where they spoke about the struggle against the Gairy dictatorship and the achievements and overthrow of the Grenada revolution.

"There were around 200 people in the march," one foundation activist told *IP*. "We didn't expect that many people to turn out since we had made no major effort to publicize the march — but it shows the support the foundation has among the masses."

The foundation's office was bustling with activity when this reporter was there. Several people were folding leaflets to make brochures explaining the purpose of the group. Packets were being made up for distribution around the island and on the smaller island of Carriacou.

Many people came in to look at the picture display about the four and a half years of the PRG. They also bought T-shirts with Bishop's picture and the inscription, "Maurice Bishop — his spirit lives," or "Remember Maurice and those we lost on October 19, 1983."

Books and pamphlets on the revolution were also on sale.

Despite these sales, not many of the Bishop T-shirts are seen in the streets. "People," said the foundation activist, "are afraid to wear them."

Meanwhile, organizing for the foundation continues. "Four out of the six parishes have functioning committees," the foundation activist reported. "We hope to have parish committees in all the parishes soon in order to carry out the foundation's work throughout the nation." The group also plans to open offices in Grenville and Carriacou. □

MAURICE BISHOP SPEAKS

THE GRENADA REVOLUTION
1979-83



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In honor of Grenada's martyrs

Foundation to commemorate Bishop and other leaders

[The following is taken from a brochure announcing the formation of the Maurice Bishop and October 19, 1983, Martyrs Foundation, which was launched in St. George's on January 21. Further information can be obtained by writing to the foundation at: P.O. Box 167, Grenville Street, St. George's, Grenada, W.I.]

* * *

Why is the Foundation necessary

This foundation has been established to honour and preserve the memory of the late Prime Minister of the People's Revolutionary Government, Maurice Bishop. The foundation will also honour the memory of the Ministers of Government, trade union leaders, workers and students murdered on October 19th, 1983, at Fort Rupert. They gave their lives to preserve, protect, and defend the lives of the Grenadian people.

These martyrs and heroes of the working people fell victim to the coup d'etat led by Bernard Coard against the People's Revolutionary Government. On October 19th, the Grenadian people assembled in their largest numbers ever, over 25,000 strong, and freed Prime Minister Maurice Bishop from house arrest. The Coard clique, who had placed Prime Minister Maurice Bishop under house arrest, moved to silence the people and ordered the

army to open fire on the masses.

As if the guns of the Revolution was not enough they then executed Prime Minister Bishop in cold blood. Executed together with Prime Minister Maurice Bishop were Foreign Minister Unison Whiteman; Education Minister Jacqueline Creft; Housing Minister Norris Bain; Vice Minister for Mobilisation, 1st Vice President of the Trade Union Council, and President General of the Bank and General Workers' Union Vincent Noel; Member of the People's Revolutionary Government and President General of the Agricultural and General Workers' Union Fitzroy Bain; Mechanic Evelyn Maitland; Worker Keith Hayling; and popular Businessman Evelyn Bullen. Many students lost their lives. Among those known are Gemma Belmar, Alleyne Romain, and Sebastian Williams. The full list of those massacred is still unknown.

The horrible events of October 19th led to the collapse of the Grenada Revolution. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Bishop the Revolution had brought many benefits to the Grenadian people. The Revolution had given new hope and dignity to Grenada. The people enjoyed free health care, free education, and better housing. New programmes in agriculture, fishing, and industry were making great progress. More jobs, food, and more recrea-

tional facilities came to the people. The International Airport, through the help of Cuba, Algeria, Libya, Syria, Iraq, EEC Countries, and Venezuela, became a symbol of the success of the Revolution and the future development of the nation. The Revolution had indeed brought new respect and love for Grenada in every corner of the world.

Prime Minister Bishop and the Martyrs of October 19th represented the best and the most committed in the Revolution. This is why everything must be done to give the heroes of the people the remembrance they deserve.

The Foundation is the organisation established to ensure that the names of these heroes live on in the eyes, hearts, and minds of the Grenadian people at all times.

What is the Foundation?

The Foundation is a legal body established under the laws of Grenada. It is a non-profit, charity organisation, set up in the name of Maurice Bishop and the Martyrs of October 19th. It will collect funds and hold in trust any buildings or other properties given to it by supporters and well wishers or received through fund-raising locally or overseas.

Main objectives of the Foundation:

The main objectives of the Foundation are as follows:

1. To collect funds for building a physical monument in honour of the Martyrs.
2. To build and operate a centre which will collect and distribute literature and other propaganda materials about the life and work of each of the martyrs. These materials will include books, photos, pamphlets, films, video cassettes, tapes, slides, and a monthly newsletter. The centre will also research the life and work of other heroes and martyrs of the Grenadian people's history.
3. To set up a fund to help needy persons who lost breadwinners on October 19th as well as those who have had to pay for medical attention or were in other ways severely affected by the events of that period.
4. To establish a scholarship fund for providing scholarships, named after the martyrs, to Secondary schools, Technical, and University Institutions.
5. To urge that important places in Grenada, Carriacou, and Petit Martinique are named after the martyrs.
6. To do everything to find the remains of Prime Minister Bishop and all the Martyrs and to make sure that they are buried with dignity.

How will the Foundation function?

The main policy making body of the Foundation is the Board of Trustees, which is made up of people of integrity. The day-to-day work of the Foundation will be done by a small staff. The staff will be responsible for making sure all the objectives of the Foundation are fully met. The head of the office will be the Secretary General of the Foundation.

Toronto rally builds Foundation

By Larry Johnston

TORONTO — Some 350 people rallied here March 13 to celebrate the publication of the new book *Maurice Bishop Speaks* and to launch the Toronto chapter of the Maurice Bishop and October 19, 1983, Martyrs Foundation.

They gathered on the fifth anniversary of the Grenada revolution to hear Don Rojas, former press secretary to slain Prime Minister Maurice Bishop; former editor of *Caribbean Contact* Ricky Singh; and other speakers.

The speakers outlined the gains the revolution had brought to the people of Grenada and the beacon of hope it provided to the peoples of the rest of the Caribbean and the world.

Singh and Rojas condemned the U.S. invasion of Grenada and the betrayal of the revolution by the clique led by Bernard Coard, which opened the door to U.S. imperialism.

"Coard and the gang of mass murderers" must "receive revolutionary justice," Rojas stated. But he added that "only an independent

people's court can dispense this step, not the Yankees, not the caretaker government."

Rojas explained that Washington would use the trial of Coard and his supporters to attack the image of Maurice Bishop and the Grenada revolution. He appealed to the audience "to put our efforts into a defense campaign for the Maurice Bishop and October 19, 1983, Martyrs Foundation because that is what the U.S. government sees as the most dangerous threat inside Grenada today.

"The stronger the foundation becomes," Rojas added, "the more dangerous it is perceived to be in Washington."

The rally heard greetings from U.S. Congressman Ronald Dellums, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus. Dellums noted that "the achievements and successes of the revolution have left an undeniable imprint on the lives of generations to come."

Sixty copies of *Maurice Bishop Speaks* were sold at the rally and over \$1,200 was collected for the memorial foundation. □

Parish committees

In order to spread the work of the Foundation, committees will be established in each parish of our nation. These Parish committees will be responsible for carrying out the work of the Foundation at a parish level. The committees will be made up of everyone in the parish who wish to help to make sure that the names and works of the Martyrs are properly honoured. Parish Committees will organise seminars, panel discussions, film shows, and fund-raising activities for the Foundation, in the parishes. The Foundation will open two branch offices, one in Carriacou and the other in Grenville, to service the country better.

International work of the Foundation

The Grenada Revolution had broad support in many countries, regionally and internationally. Many of those who supported the Revolution have expressed support for the Foundation. As a result, branches of the Foundation will be established in countries of the Caribbean, North America, Europe, and other parts of the world. This would permit those who wish to carry out activities on behalf of the Foundation in their own countries to do so.



Lyden Ramdhanny, Kenrick Radix, and George Louison lead January 21 march to gravesite of Rupert Bishop to commemorate 10th anniversary of 'Bloody Monday.' The demonstration marked the launching of the Maurice Bishop and October 19, 1983, Martyrs Foundation.

Each overseas branch will have its own Trustees. These Trustees will, however, be responsible to the Board of Trustees at Headquarters, Grenada.

How will the Foundation be financed?

The foundation intends to raise its monies through fund-raising, gifts, and donations

from the public as well as well wishers. In addition, the Foundation will seek funds from international organisations, non-governmental organisations, and other Foundations which support its objectives.

The directors of the Foundation wish to appeal to all those who read this leaflet to make a direct contribution to the Foundation. □

Caribbean

Left debates Grenada events

From Jamaica to Trinidad

By Ernest Harsch

The overthrow of the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) of Grenada, the murder of its top leaders by a faction led by Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard, and the subsequent U.S. invasion have had profound political repercussions in other Caribbean countries.

Many in the Caribbean, particularly in the English-speaking countries, had looked to Grenada under the PRG as an example of what working people could accomplish. But now, proimperialist forces are seeking to use the defeat of the Grenada revolution to convince them that such revolutions can only end in violence and bloodshed.

In this situation, revolutionary and left-wing groups in the Caribbean have been trying to answer this propaganda campaign, as well as to analyze the actual reasons for the Grenada revolution's defeat. While all have opposed the U.S. invasion, sharply divergent views have been expressed over the respective roles of the revolutionary leadership around slain Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and of the Coard grouping.

In Jamaica, for instance, the overthrow of the PRG and the killing of Bishop and his comrades was sharply condemned by the People's National Party (PNP) of former Prime Minister Michael Manley. But the Workers Party of Jamaica (WPJ), headed by Trevor Munroe, re-

peated many of the Coard clique's slanders against Bishop, questioned whether Bishop had actually been executed, and went so far as to accuse the Cuban government of facilitating the U.S. invasion through its public criticisms of the Coard faction's course (see *Intercontinental Press*, March 5, 1984, p. 118).

Among those groups elsewhere that sharply condemned the murders of the Grenadian leaders and those who carried them out were the Antigua-Caribbean Liberation Movement (ACLM) of Antigua and the Progressive Labour Party (PLP) of George Odum in St. Lucia.

In Guyana, a former British colony on the northern coast of South America, all the main political parties, including the ruling People's National Congress, condemned the U.S. invasion and organized protests against it.

The People's Progressive Party (PPP) of Cheddi Jagan, in the November 1983 issue of its *Guyana Information Bulletin*, expressed "its deep sense of grief and loss at the death of Maurice Bishop and his colleagues on October 19, and its regrets that the differences in the leadership were not resolved by peaceful means." The PPP did not condemn the Coard grouping.

The Working People's Alliance (WPA) of Guyana issued a statement shortly after the U.S. invasion. One of its leaders, Rupert Roopnarine, had gone to Grenada on October

17, two days before Bishop's murder, at the invitation of the Coard-dominated Central Committee of the New Jewel Movement (NJM).

While maintaining that "terrible errors were committed by everyone involved" in the NJM leadership and repeating some of the Coard group's accusations against Bishop, it also found that "the execution of Maurice Bishop and others is not excusable." It criticized the Revolutionary Military Council for disarming many units of the People's Militia prior to the invasion and for not telling the truth about Bishop's death.

Without actually saying so, the WPA implied that Bishop's murder and the disarming of the militias facilitated the U.S. invasion. It declared that the "WPA holds firmly to the view that Maurice Bishop as revolutionary leader of free Grenada was a shield protecting Grenada and the entire Caribbean. He held higher than any, the banner of the Caribbean as a zone of peace. This banner should be taken up by all peace-loving people, in our own interest and in his memory."

In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, a country of 150,000 people just north of Grenada, the Movement for National Unity (MNU) has been conducting a campaign to tell the truth about the PRG's achievements and explain its overthrow.

On Oct. 20, 1983, the day after Bishop and his comrades were murdered, the MNU leader-

ship denounced the "wanton and senseless murder" of the Grenadian leaders by the "Revolutionary Armed Forces of Grenada and the ultra-left hard-line faction of the New Jewel Movement."

"Further," the MNU statement went on, "we consider the house arrest of the entire Grenada population, euphemistically termed a curfew, as an act of sabotage against the basic human rights of the people of Grenada and a betrayal of the original ideas and spirit of the March 13th [1979] Revolution."

"The MNU views the installment in power of the so-called Revolutionary Military Council (RMC) as a usurpation of the popular basis of the Revolution."

Another Vincentian organization, the

United People's Movement (UPM), has come out against the U.S. invasion and the dismantling of the PRG's programs, but disagrees with the Cuban leaders and the central leaders of the Grenada revolution who say Coard and his followers opened the door to the imperialist assault through their own treacherous betrayal of the revolution. UPM leaders told *Intercontinental Press* correspondent Mohammed Oliver that in the dispute between Coard and Bishop they sided with Coard, who, they said, led a principled, Marxist battle against the "right-opportunism" of Bishop.

This same charge was leveled at the Bishop leadership by Michael Als of the People's Popular Movement (PPM) in Trinidad and Tobago.

Other groups in that oil-rich nation have a different view. The leadership of the Oilfields Workers Trade Union (OWTU), for example, blasts the Coard grouping's betrayal. The OWTU had supported the PRG since the victory of the revolution on March 13, 1979, and had organized trips to Grenada for its members and solidarity activity with the Grenada revolution in Trinidad and Tobago.

Part of the discussion in the Black, English-speaking Caribbean is on the role of the Cuban leadership. One OWTU leader pointed out to *IP*'s Mohammed Oliver that the statements of the Cuban government about the October events in Grenada and Castro's November 14 speech had greatly increased the prestige of the Cuban revolutionaries in the Black Caribbean. □

DOCUMENTS

'Five comments on Rojas interview'

Antilles socialists assess lessons of Grenada events

By Philippe Pierre Charles

[The following article is reprinted from a special 20-page supplement on Grenada published by *Révolution Socialiste*, the newspaper of the Socialist Revolution Group (GRS) of Martinique and Guadeloupe. The GRS is the section of the Fourth International in those French-controlled Caribbean islands.

[The special supplement also contained a chronology of the crisis in Grenada and long excerpts from an interview with Grenadian leader Don Rojas that was taken from the Dec. 26, 1983, *Intercontinental Press*. The supplement is available from *Révolution Socialiste*, 40 rue Pierre Sémar, 97200 Fort-de-France, Martinique. The translation of this article is by *IP*.]

* * *

1. A lesson in tenacity and revolutionary optimism

It was only through an extraordinary stroke of luck that Don Rojas was not one more victim of [Hudson] Austin, [Bernard] Coard, et al. But what comes through in his moving account is his calmness, his passionate desire to understand and explain, his determination in the wake of this "tragic setback" to continue to struggle "for an end to the U.S. colonization" of Grenada and to work "for our comrades in Nicaragua."

His steadfast desire to cut through the tangle and move back into action, despite the absurdity of the moment, shows us his authentic qualities as a revolutionary.

Despite some differences, we view him as one of our own. And we commend his example to many (sometimes late-blooming) "friends" of the Grenadian revolution; "friends" who have been heard to remark that in the final

analysis the U.S. intervention was "a lesser evil," or even to suggest "to the peoples of the Caribbean and the world" that they should withdraw into themselves and leave both sides to "kill each other"; friends who wax indignant that there were no street demonstrations "before the U.S. invasion," while they themselves did not deign to demonstrate before, during, or after (except in fashionable salons whose doors are gladly thrown open to amateur dissectors of murdered revolutions).

The existence of militants like Don Rojas (and they are undoubtedly more numerous than some may think) is not simply heartwarming. It reminds us that the struggle continues, that hope is not so easily murdered.

2. A conflict between 'centralism and democracy'?

The tragedy in Grenada was seen by the Martiniquan Movement for Independence (MIM) as a conflict "between the two revolutionary principles of centralism and democracy." What elegant (and abstract) terms they use!

Don Rojas shows us a simpler and more concrete struggle between two forces: on one side a "majority" faction of the New Jewel Movement's Central Committee; on the other side very broad sectors of the masses who looked to Maurice Bishop.

All of Coard's attempts at self-justification, presenting himself as the defender of "collectivity" and "democracy" against Bishop's "personal power," cannot hide the reality that the masses were with Bishop.

Don Rojas is obviously quite correct in stressing that Coard could never have remained in power against them. From Don Rojas' description and from what we know

from other sources there is enough information to understand the reasons for Bishop's defeat.

a. Bishop's defeat in the party: first of all we must recall that the historic leaders of the NJM were much more involved in (internal and external) government tasks than in the tasks of daily leadership of the party. Don Rojas very clearly suggests that Bishop and his supporters underestimated this aspect of things and the scope of the problems, while Coard did not. (In the method of colonizing the party, one cannot help but think of a painful historical precedent, the example of Stalin.)

This defeat in the party (actually in its Central Committee) was facilitated by the NJM's weakness with regard to democracy. We should note that no congress was held after the seizure of power. We should take note of Don Rojas' description of the confusion in the party assembly where Bishop was brought up on charges.

b. In the confrontation pitting Austin, Coard, and the army against the masses, the disarming of the militias was of central importance. This disarming took place between September 15 and October 13, during Bishop's absence, and at Coard's instigation.

The fact that, as far as we know, this disarming was carried out without any serious problem undoubtedly reflects Coard's personal standing as acting prime minister. But it also indicates that there was not enough vigilance regarding the idea that the masses are the sole legitimate repository of power.

So this brings us to the question of institutions of proletarian democracy. Don Rojas indicates that "it was certainly Maurice's hope" that "this system of councils . . . would become institutionalized as organs of people's power." But Rojas also points out the delay in

taking this path and the fact that in this area the masses were more advanced than the party. It is clear that this shortcoming also played an important role in the defeat of the masses.

c. Finally, the masses were beaten because they had been kept ignorant of the debates that had existed within the party "as far back as July 1982." This was the source of their surprise and confusion. To those who would try to claim that this way of functioning is the Leninist method, we would respond firmly by citing concrete facts. In Lenin's era the debates in the party and in the soviets were made widely known, even in the most critical moments, when the fate of the masses was involved.

This was the case in March-April 1917, despite the attempts by Kamenev and Stalin to stifle the voice of Lenin, who was saying that the revolution had to grow over into socialism. But it was also the case in the disputes over the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty and the debate on unions in a workers state.

3. The whys of the crisis

Don Rojas directly and scornfully demolishes the bourgeois explanations that we have had so much trouble countering here. According to these explanations, Bishop was just a vague social democrat facing "pure and hard-line Marxists" (Coard et al.).

No, says Rojas, the goal was to establish a socialist state in Grenada. In this regard, no revolutionary should make the error of reading very much into the fact that the NJM was a member of the Second International (like the Sandinista National Liberation Front of Nicaragua).

All of Bishop's actions and writings, even from before the seizure of power, can be cited to back up Rojas' analysis.

The source of the conflict, therefore, lay elsewhere. It lay in the desire of Coard and those around him to gain sole access to power.

But simply stating this does not move us one millimeter forward unless one gives some indication of how to confront this type of problem. (We feel the answer lies in establishing institutions of workers democracy.) And we have a hard time being convinced by those here who focus only on this aspect of the problem — while they surround themselves with people who have never been noted for either their disinterest in the most petty of positions or their tolerance for pluralism in politics.

The other source of the conflict lies, according to Rojas, in the differing perceptions on the pace at which the process should unfold. And he adds, as we said, that these discussions "could have been settled peacefully."

4. Without the people there could be no revolution!

When the GRS organized its first street demonstration against the U.S. invasion, we put forward one absolute precondition for fusing our demonstration with the one called by the Martiniquan Communist Party (PCM). The precondition was that the demonstration must clearly condemn the murder of Bishop. Some



DON ROJAS

Flax Hermes/IP

people found our position very hard. Others (the MIM) preferred to go with the PCM demonstration.

Today we still have no regrets. First, because we feel an essential principle is involved: violence within the masses or between revolutionaries is unacceptable. The battle to win adherence to the idea of pluralism within the revolution must be waged now if it is to be won later. And that battle cannot be won in the salons of the commentators.

Second, we felt that there was the danger that a response to the U.S. invasion might have little credibility without a clear condemnation of those who opened the way to the invasion through their unjustifiable action.

But the debate continues today. Some PCM members try to "explain" to us that the masses can be wrong (we have, alas, no problem admitting that) and that the enlightened party has the right to impose its will, undoubtedly in the name of the "higher interests of the revolution."

We reject that idea because, as Rojas says, "without the people, there could be no revolution." Any claim to the contrary is evidence of bureaucratic, irresponsible ultraleftism!

If the NJM, or rather the Coard faction, was correct against the masses, if the masses were wrong to view Bishop as their authentic representative, then it would have been necessary to convince the masses, to win them to the "correct ideas."

Instead, the handful of "enlightened" leaders (whose leader, Rojas reminds us, did not go through the worst periods of the struggle against Gairy) chose the path of force. We know what followed. The outcome flowed from the inescapable and painful logic of the events.

But is it not ironic to see that it is the CP members who have the most difficulty taking their distance from Coard's ultraleft, sub-

stitutionist, and overly hasty methods? In any event, we should draw the lesson: using violence against the immense majority of the masses and "in the name of the masses" can only lead to the suicide of the revolution — whether pure and simple suicide as in Grenada, or suicide through a perversion of the revolution as under Stalin and his heirs.

5. A 'mature' party is needed

Marc Pulvar [leader of the MIM and general secretary of the pro-independence CSTM union federation] said on RCI radio that he was shocked that "some" (in this case he could only be referring to the GRS) have used the term "immaturity" regarding the Coard-Austin group. Don Rojas himself, while acknowledging Coard's numerous qualities, raises very serious doubts "about how ideologically developed" Coard was.

It seems obvious to us that the unhealthy effects of the previously mentioned shortcomings in the institutional system could only be limited through the existence of a mature, authentically revolutionary Marxist party.

All indications are that the Coard faction was far from providing that. Draping oneself in the prestige of the banner of Leninism is not enough to make someone a real Leninist. How could an experienced Leninist be so thoroughly mistaken about the thinking of the masses in his country? How could he be unaware of the dynamic he would unleash, given the existing relationship of forces inside and outside the country?

How could he make such cynical and naive statements like the ones Rojas quotes about how the masses will inevitably "get tired," or the statements about fighting "to the last man, woman, and child"?

Yes. In historic crises it is not enough to have a veneer of Marxism. It is not enough to have one or two "experienced" leaders. There must be one or more parties that have gained maturity through the experiences of the struggle and through a thorough study of the theoretical heritage of the international workers movement, a party capable of applying the lessons in a creative and living manner. Such a party has to be built right now for the future. □

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Lessons of Grenada invasion

UN ambassador on impact of Bishop's overthrow

By Will Reissner

UNITED NATIONS — "The U.S. administration was able to do in Grenada what it will never be able to achieve in Nicaragua," Vietnam's ambassador to the United Nations told *Intercontinental Press* in early March.

Ambassador Hoang Bich Son stressed that if U.S. troops "try to invade Nicaragua, they will become bogged down in that country, just as happened in Vietnam." The people of Nicaragua are united and will fight imperialism, Son said.

Ambassador Son took part in the anti-Japanese resistance during World War II and in the August 1945 insurrection against the return of the French colonialists to Vietnam. Son fought in the war for national independence from France and later in the struggle against U.S. intervention. A native of south Vietnam, he served as ambassador of the Provisional Revolutionary Government to Cuba in the late 1960s.

Son noted that there are similarities and differences between Nicaragua and Vietnam. The main similarity, he stressed, is that the Nicaraguans, like the Vietnamese, are engaged in a just struggle against imperialist domination.

He noted that because Nicaragua is much closer to the United States and much smaller than Vietnam, in that sense its struggle is more difficult. "But the international situation today

is much more favorable for Nicaragua than it was for Vietnam when our struggle against U.S. intervention began," he said. "It took us five to ten years of struggle before we had the support of world opinion. But Nicaragua already has such support. If the U.S. invaded," Son stated, "the whole world would be on the side of Nicaragua."

Son also stressed the change in the consciousness of the American people. "The first large antiwar demonstrations in the United States came only in 1965, when we had already been fighting for half a decade. But already today there are movements in support of the people of Nicaragua and El Salvador," even before U.S. troops are directly involved in the fighting.

On the differences between Grenada and Nicaragua, Ambassador Son said, "The U.S. invasion did not meet with strong opposition from the people and armed forces of Grenada because they were still confused, as a result of the actions of the forces of Bernard Coard."

Coard led the faction that overthrew the People's Revolutionary Government headed by Maurice Bishop and murdered Bishop and several other Grenadian leaders.

"As stated recently by Fidel Castro, socialism had already committed suicide in Grenada. If you study the situation in that country," the ambassador continued, "you will see that the



Will Reissner/IP

HOANG BICH SON

anti-Bishop forces had already destroyed the revolutionary process there, and the U.S. invasion was like trying to kill a corpse."

On the lessons revolutionaries should draw from these events, Son said, "In this connection, I highly appreciate the statements made by Fidel Castro.

"I think the most important lesson for the revolutionary movement and forces everywhere — and this we consider the most important lesson of Vietnam, too — is always to try to preserve and improve our unity. Division means suicide." □

Ireland

Sinn Féin president wounded

Right-wing murder attempt has mark of setup

By Will Reissner

Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams and three fellow activists in the Irish freedom struggle were shot March 14 while driving through Belfast. A fifth occupant of the car was not injured.

The attack was mounted from a passing vehicle by three members of the right-wing, pro-British Ulster Freedom Force. All three were arrested.

Adams was shot in the neck and head. He left the hospital March 19, following surgery. Long-time Derry activist Sean Kennan was seriously wounded, as was Joe Kennan. Both are in stable condition following operations.

The attempt to murder Adams, the top leader of the struggle against British rule in

Northern Ireland, has all the earmarks of a setup. The attack took place after Adams had left a Belfast court where he has been the object of a much-publicized trial. Because of his daily presence in court, potential assassins had no trouble monitoring his movements.

Adams is on trial for the "crime" of flying the Irish flag from his car during his successful June 1983 election campaign for a seat in the British Parliament. Although elected, Adams refused to take his seat in that body.

The June 9, 1983 issue of *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, the weekly newspaper of Sinn Féin, described the arrest of Adams and five others in that incident as "almost symbolic." But British authorities pressed ahead with the trial nine months later, pinpointing Adams' location for potential assassins.

Had the murder attempt succeeded, a heavy blow would have been dealt the Irish nationalist movement. Adams has been a key figure in developing mass action strategies that have made Sinn Féin the leading party of the nationalist community in Northern Ireland and are expanding the party's base in the formally independent south of Ireland.

Adams is the latest in a long line of freedom fighters targeted for assassination in Northern Ireland. On Jan. 16, 1981, for example, three assassins broke into Bernadette Devlin McAliskey's home, seriously wounding her and her husband Michael.

Miriam Daly, who had been a leader of the Irish Republican Socialist Party until shortly before her death, was murdered June 26, 1980. Two weeks earlier, assassins had gunned down John Turnly, a leader of the Irish Independence Party. □

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Farm co-ops: seeds of the future

Small peasants gain by voluntarily pooling resources

By Michael Baumann

SANTO DOMINGO, Nicaragua — "This is a government that treats the peasants very well," says Sabino Ordoño with a grin. "The agrarian reform is a good thing."

Ordoño, a grizzled 60-year-old rancher in the rolling hills southeast of Managua, had just received full legal title to the medium-sized spread he works.

With his 125 acres of land and 20 head of cattle, Ordoño would be counted here in Chon-

This is the second of three articles on agriculture in Nicaragua. The first dealt with the struggle to overcome the legacy of backwardness inherited from the Somoza regime. The concluding article will take up the problems and prospects facing food production.

tales province as on the borderline between a poor and middle peasant. A bit better off than many but far from rich.

At an outdoor ceremony here in early December 1983, he and his neighbors were the beneficiaries of the largest single land grant since the revolution. A total of 120,000 acres of ranch and farmland, occupied either semi-legally or under restricted titles, was mapped out and surveyed according to locally accepted property lines. It was then turned over to the 600 families working it, both in cooperatives and as individual producers. For those who needed such help, and many did, along with the deeds came certificates wiping out their debts to the national banking system.

In this and other ceremonies the weekend of December 10-11, the Nicaraguan government handed out 175,000 acres of land within 48 hours. For purposes of comparison, this is equal to nearly a fifth of *all land* owned by poor peasants under the Somoza dictatorship (see box).

But this is only part of the story. The revolution has also brought Nicaragua's peasantry concrete gains in terms of political freedom and access to medical care and education. Land, loans, and technical help followed.

As any visitor can testify, a fundamental process of change is under way in the Nicaraguan countryside. Obstacle after obstacle to development is being ripped out by the roots.

Gigantic strides have been made in wiping out total illiteracy (lack of knowledge of even the alphabet). Infant mortality has dropped substantially. Diet has improved as many peasants for the first time have gained access to eggs, cheese, milk, and chicken. Access to potable water and electricity is being expanded. Roads are being repaired or built for

the first time. New towns are emerging.

Vast agroindustrial projects offer thousands the prospect, for the first time in their lives, of year-round employment at unionized jobs. Traveling theater groups, libraries on wheels, and outdoor movie showings are reaching areas where before a copy of a newspaper was unknown.

Agricultural machinery is being imported. Scientific stockbreeding, improved seeds, and irrigation are being introduced. Tin roofs that don't leak are replacing clay tile; hard floors, dirt; brick and stone dwellings are being built where before there were only huts.

These are uncontested gains. Nearly every rural resident of Nicaragua has felt the overall impact of them.

U.S.-financed war

The major brake holding back the speed of these changes is the U.S.-financed war. Scarce resources must be dedicated to defense. Peasant militia members must leave their fields to take up arms. Crops and farm buildings are burnt by attacking *contra* (counterrevolutionary) squads.

Constant attacks prevent some crops from being harvested, others from even being planted. Thirty thousand peasant families have had to be relocated because the area they lived in was too isolated to be defended adequately against terror attacks. Teachers, doctors, technicians, all those seeking to bring progress and development to the countryside, are a special target for murder and kidnapping.

It is testimony to the strength of the Nicaraguan revolution, and to its determination to press ahead with the agrarian reform, that such advances could be made in such conditions.

Things are far from perfect. Enormous work remains to be done. But if there is one single

emotion that characterizes the Nicaraguan countryside, it is optimism.

"If we could only end this damn war," peasant after peasant will point out to visitors, "then we could really get moving."

This optimism and support for the revolution is in turn a major source of the revolution's strength. For politically, socially, and economically, these poor and middle peasants who have so greatly benefited are crucially important in Nicaragua. They make up at least a third of the total population and account for more than half of the country's total production. Without their support, the cities would starve and the factories would grind to a halt.

According to estimates by the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG),¹ small and medium peasants make up three-fifths of the 230,000 families living in the countryside.

On the whole, these working farmers and their families produce the major share of Nicaragua's food. UNAG calculates their share as follows:

Corn	94%
Vegetables	92%
Beans	87%
Dairy	80%
Sorghum	55%
Coffee	40%
Rice	31%

Their hunger for more and better land was not immediately satisfied by the revolutionary government. The big estates confiscated from the Somozaists did not lend themselves to being divided up and distributed. On the whole, they were among the most modern and

1. "National Union of Farmers and Ranchers," UNAG brochure issued in 1982.

Land ownership since revolution

size of farm	1978 acres	%	1982 acres	%	1983 acres	%
<i>Private sector</i>						
Over 860 acres	5.0 million	41	2.0 million	16.4	1.5 million	12
285-860 acres	1.7 million	14	1.5 million	12	1.3 million	10
85-285 acres	3.6 million	30	3.6 million	30	3.6 million	30
17-85 acres	1.6 million	13	1.6 million	12.8	1.7 million	14
Under 17 acres	.3 million	2	.4 million	3	.5 million	4
<i>Social sector</i>						
CAS*	—	—	.2 million	1.8	.8 million	7
State	—	—	2.9 million	24	2.8 million	23
Total	12.2 million	100	12.2 million	100	12.2 million	100

* Sandinista Agricultural Cooperatives (see text).

Source: Adapted from report to Council of State, Nov. 23, 1983, by Agrarian Reform Minister Jaime Wheelock.

efficient production facilities in the country and an important source of export income to fuel the rest of the economy.

Land seizures

Yet spontaneous land seizures had begun to occur even before the insurrection. By mid-1981, the number of such seizures had risen to 100 or more a month. On July 19, 1981, the second anniversary of the revolution, Government Coordinator Daniel Ortega announced that the revolutionary leadership "cannot continue turning a deaf ear" on the demand for land.

A new decree was issued ordering the confiscation of all big landholdings that had either been abandoned by their owners or were not being used productively. Between October 1981, when the decree was put into practice, and November 1983, it was used to confiscate more than 700,000 acres of land.

By the end of 1983 all of this land — plus other confiscated holdings and unused portions of state farms — was distributed to peasants. A total of 1.1 million acres benefiting more than 25,000 families.²

The accompanying chart shows the impact of these confiscations and the overall direction of Sandinista agrarian policy: confiscate the rich to aid the landless. Try not to needlessly antagonize the middle and rich peasants, nor big producers who farm efficiently. Instead, surround them with a cooperative and state-owned sector that will be the dominant political and social pole of development in the countryside.

As the figures show, the poorest peasants, those who previously owned 17 acres or less, have benefited the most. Their share of Nicaragua's cultivated farmland has gone from only 2 percent (300,000 acres) under the dictatorship to 11 percent (1.3 million acres) today in the private and cooperative sectors — a net increase of 1 million acres.

Hit hardest, on the other hand, were the biggest landowners, those who hold 860 acres or more. Following the confiscation of the Somozaists and the absentee landlords, this sector's share of cultivated land dropped from 41 percent in 1978 to 12 percent in 1983. This represents a net shift of 3.5 million acres — more than a quarter of Nicaragua's farmland — to the state and the landless.

"Smaller" big landowners, those holding between 285 and 860 acres, were also affected, but less so. Their share of land dropped 4 percentage points, from 14 percent in 1978 to 10 percent in 1983.

Middle to rich peasants, those holding between 85 and 285 acres, in general have not been touched at all by land confiscations. Nor for the most part have they been given any more land. Their share of land ownership has remained constant at 3 percent.

Finally the upper strata of small peasants, those owning between 17 and 85 acres, have

benefited slightly. Their share has been upped by 100,000 acres, or a little under 1 percentage point.

Cooperatives encouraged

A central aim of Nicaragua's agrarian reform is to encourage eventual concentration of about half of all farm production in the hands of cooperatives. Today cooperatives account for about a quarter of the food and fiber produced. The goal is to double that. There are no plans to increase the state-owned share. In fact, it may be trimmed back a bit from its present 24 percent. As the state farms are consolidated, land that is not being efficiently used is to be turned over to cooperatives and private producers.

Nicaragua's overall goal, the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Reform (MIDINRA) says, is "to put an end to the most exploitive forms of land rent (rent paid in labor, sharecropping, tenant farming) so as to benefit peasants robbed of their land by the landowning oligarchy; to consolidate national unity by giving production incentives to big and efficient private sector enterprises and to small producers and poor peasants, giving the latter access to land; to respect the ownership of land to all who work it efficiently."³

Encouragement of cooperatives is a key part of this process. Over the long haul, MIDINRA says, introduction of voluntary forms of collective labor will help "overcome the dispersion, isolation, and marginalization of the poor peasantry and encourage the development of productive forces." It is a step toward "both socializing the peasant economy and neutralizing the small landholding system, along with the danger of further parcelization of the land."⁴

There are no hard figures for exactly how many cooperatives there are in Nicaragua at a given moment. Estimates range between 2,500 and 3,500, totaling as many as 60,000 or 70,000 families. In part, this range of estimates stems from the fact that cooperatives go into and out of existence. A look at the three main types of cooperatives will help explain why.

The most common form of cooperative in Nicaragua is the Credit and Service Cooperative (CCS). What this amounts to is a group of neighboring farmers joining together to contract services, seeds, fertilizer, loans, and marketing facilities from the state. An average cooperative of this sort might contain a dozen families, working a total of 300 to 400 acres. Most are concentrated on coffee and cattle.

Each individual family retains title to its own land. It is free to withdraw from the cooperative, join another one, or revert to private farming once the profits and losses of a given harvest are counted.

During the period they function as a cooperative, they receive preferential treat-

ment from the state. This includes first crack at scarce inputs, subsidized bank loans, free technical help, and priority consideration for state investment in such social services as schools and medical clinics.

Cooperatives of the CCS sort probably make up well over three-quarters of all cooperatives existing in Nicaragua today. As can be seen, they represent a very rudimentary level of social organization.

Smaller in number and much more advanced in their degree of socialization are the Labor Collectives (CT) and Sandinista Agricultural Cooperatives (CAS).

Collectives of farmworkers

The Labor Collectives are made up for the most part of agricultural laborers, out of work between harvests. The state usually loans them land, free of charge. In general this land comes from unused portions of state farms or confiscated property that has not yet been parceled out.

These laborers join together, with state assistance, to work for several months producing basic food crops — generally beans, corn, and vegetables. Their planting and harvest are timed to leave them free to return to their unionized jobs when the harvest of the export crops is ready.

The Sandinista Agricultural Cooperative is the most advanced form of all. None of its members own individual title to any portion of the land. They farm it in common and simply draw a share of the seasonal proceeds, depending on the amount of labor contributed by their families.

The CAS are primarily made up of former agricultural laborers, or of sharecroppers or tenant farmers who previously owned no land at all. They receive the most preferential treatment of all — lowest-cost loans, highest priority in social and technical services.

There is a slow but encouraging stream of CCS cooperatives that, after a few years' experience of working together, decide they are ready for this step, pull down their fences, and become CASs.

To be noted in this entire process of development is the complete lack of coercion. The state encourages this form of collective labor through incentives. But no one is forced to join a cooperative.

A number of cooperatives are prospering, particularly those with first-rate land, some administrative experience, and easy access to the market. Near Masaya, a heavily settled region some 20 miles south of Managua, is located one such example.

The Carfonama vegetable cooperative produced this year, above living expenses and loan repayments, a year-end surplus of \$60,000. Thirty-six families, intensively farming a little over 150 acres, earned cash shares averaging a little over \$1,600 apiece — a sum equivalent to nearly two years' wages for an agricultural laborer.

The old owner of the land, a Somozaist, "used to treat us like servants," recalls Felix

2. Wheelock, MIDINRA report to Council of State, November 23, 1983.

3. *3 Años de Reforma Agraria*, MIDINRA report issued May 4, 1982. pp. 32-33.

4. *3 Años de Reforma Agraria*, p. 35.

López Salinas, one of the members of the Carfona cooperative. "He'd take the profit and leave us hardly enough to eat.

"When I stopped to think about it, I realized that if we still had to be servants, all we would have gotten out of this harvest would have been our tiny Saturday paychecks . . . and he would have kept the 600,000 *córdobas* [1 *córdoba* = U.S.\$0.10]."

The Ulises Rodríguez cooperative near Estelí, 90 miles north of Managua, is another success story. Under Somoza, the 29 members who today make up this cooperative were sharecroppers.

In the old days, recalls cooperative president Roberto Flores Blandon, "the landowner used to give us seeds, oxen, the use of the land — nothing more. We did all the work. But once we brought the harvest in, we had to split it with him."

Work for community benefit

"Now things have changed," he said. "We've organized ourselves into this cooperative. We don't work for the benefit of any of us as individuals but for the benefit of the whole *campesino* community that this cooperative makes up."

One of the older and better established cooperatives in the country, Ulises Rodríguez was set up a few days after the 1979 revolution. The previous owner, one of the top Somozaist officials in the area, fled the country "without even paying us our final wages," Flores Blandon says.

The co-op works in common a little under 900 acres in cattle, corn, and beans. This year, they decided to plow much of their surplus back into the land. They put \$3,000 into improving the fencing, bought three portable insecticide sprayers, spent \$800 on improved implements, and put money as well into upgrading the pasture land.

They have their eye on a tractor and have already delegated a member of the co-op to learn how to operate and maintain one. They are also thinking about setting aside some of their land for the building of new houses, nearby each other — reducing their isolation by forming a small village.

Many cooperatives, however, are not yet this successful. There are a number of reasons for this, including the varying quality of the land, its suitability for a given crop, degree of access to the city markets, and the amount of state technical help available.

Some of the most common problems cited by UNAG are the following. In the early stage of the land reform, it often happened that farmers who knew how to grow beans and corn received land better suited to cattle raising, or vice versa. In other cases, lack of technical help resulted in poor choice of seeds, poor use of pesticides, and consequently, poor yields. In still others, bumper crops were harvested, but because of poor roads and lack of trucks much of it spoiled before it could be shipped to market.

"There has been a disproportion,"

MIDINRA frankly acknowledges, "between the rate of creation of cooperatives and the organizational and operational capacity of the state to provide them with basic production services. In many cases, the poor level of services provided was the cause of their economic failure."⁵

Small farmers organize

The National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG) is the mass organization that defends the interests of small and medium farmers. It has about 50,000 members and directly influences a periphery of another 50,000 or so. This includes both private producers and members of co-ops, and UNAG has been instrumental in helping to iron out the problems both face.

It was at the request of UNAG, for example, that the revolutionary government discussed and adopted sweeping measures to deal with the biggest headache small farmers everywhere face — their condition as debt slaves to the banks.

By the middle of 1983, Nicaragua's small and medium food producers found themselves in hock to the national banking system for a total of \$35 million. There was hardly a small farmer in the country who didn't owe more money than he could pay. The counterrevolution zeroed in on this like a heat-seeking missile. They began to spread rumors that all those who couldn't pay their debts were going to have their land confiscated.

Any effort on the part of the government to collect this debt would have meant the ruin of Nicaragua's peasantry and a death blow to the revolution. Obviously such a step would never even be considered. At the urging of UNAG, the government made this explicit.

One of the major measures announced at the fourth anniversary of the revolution, July 19, 1983, was the formal "cleansing" or alleviation of the peasant debt. Again, the measure was scaled to give preferential treatment to the most advanced forms of collective production.

Food producers organized in Sandinista Agricultural Cooperatives had their debts totally eliminated. Members of Credit and Service Cooperatives had all debts up to the 1981-82 growing season wiped out. And small and medium private producers of basic food items were forgiven all debts up to the 1980-81 growing season. In addition, in recognition of their contribution to defense, all peasants serving in the reserves or militias had their total debts erased.

UNAG has also been instrumental in helping the government adjust decrees and measures to the reality in the Nicaraguan countryside. A key question facing the revolution is the pace at which to move toward long-term agrarian reform objectives. Maintaining a firm alliance between rural and urban toilers requires a close relation between concrete measures taken and the level of understanding of the food producers affected. Sometimes this

means the pace of things must be slowed.

A good example of this, and of UNAG's role in pointing to the danger signals, is the case of land titles.

History has demonstrated convincingly that simply dividing up land among peasants does not resolve the process of pauperization of the smallest producers. Their land is gradually absorbed by larger, more efficient, and more aggressive producers, and the cycle of landlessness eventually simply repeats itself.

Policy on land titles

To help counter this process, land titles given out in the first stage of Nicaragua's land reform carried several limitations. Such land cannot be bought, sold, traded, or rented. While the land titles can be inherited, the land cannot be divided among heirs. The degree of acceptance of these limitations has varied widely, according to economic situation and political consciousness.

For the landless and land-poor, even such restricted titles represented an immense step forward. For those who already held some form of claim — "irregular" or not — to fairly substantial acreage, they were a galling restriction to their aspirations to prosperity and success.

Here in Chontales province, the latter sentiment was dominant. Dissatisfaction on this point was playing into the hands of the counterrevolution. UNAG brought this to the attention of the government. In response, a new, "reformed" land title was drawn up for such cases.

The intensity of the pressure for this move could be gauged from the way it was announced.

"These reformed titles," said Chontales UNAG leader Miguel González, "are going to open up new perspectives for producers. For the producers of this area have already received agrarian reform titles on a previous occasion. But those carried limitations. . . ."

"Our organization raised this matter with the revolutionary government, pointing to the necessity for modifying the titles, making them broader, removing the obstacles. . . ."

After explaining in detail that the new "reformed" titles carried no restrictions whatsoever, González contrasted this action by the revolution to the lying claims of the counterrevolution:

"This, *compañeros*, is a concrete fact in response to the maneuvers and lies of the reaction; to the false rumors emanating from different parts of the country that the agrarian reform is going to take your land away, that you shouldn't bother to work because even the product of your work is going to be taken away from you.

"Today's ceremony, the handing out of reformed titles, the cleansing of the debts of the producers of basic foodstuffs, is a concrete response to these reactionary lies."

Sabino Ordoño and his 600 neighbors who were to receive the new land titles gave González the longest and loudest applause of the day. □

5. *3 Años de Reforma Agraria*, p. 35.

Negotiations under apartheid's shadow

Washington, Pretoria join hands against Black Africa

By Ernest Harsch

Is the apartheid regime now waging a "peace offensive" in southern Africa? Has it decided to forego the battlefield for the negotiating table? Is it finally ready to relinquish its control over Namibia?

That is the impression that the U.S. government and big-business news media are seeking to convey. Adopting the stance of a neutral mediator and peace broker, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker has been shuttling between various African capitals since late January, in what has been billed as a new U.S. diplomatic drive to end the fighting in the region and arrange a settlement for Namibia's independence.

Coming in the immediate wake of South Africa's massive and devastating invasion of Angola in December, a series of unprecedented meetings, negotiations, and agreements has taken place, involving top government officials from Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, and the United States.

A 'force for positive change'?

Washington has hailed these talks as indications of the progress that is supposedly being made in the U.S.-sponsored "peace" effort. U.S. officials have also claimed that they are a vindication of the Reagan administration's policy of closer ties with the white minority regime in Pretoria.

In a major speech before the World Affairs Council in Boston on February 15, Secretary of State George Shultz maintained that the U.S. role in southern Africa was "a force for constructive, positive change." Washington, he said, was pursuing "active and energetic" efforts toward peace in the region, and had "defined the agenda and served as catalyst" in the negotiations between Pretoria and the Angolan government, talks that marked "a clearly positive evolution."

Contrary to Shultz, Washington's goal is not to ensure peace in southern Africa. It is to safeguard imperialism's enormous economic, political, and strategic interests there, in face of the popular struggles for national liberation and social emancipation being waged by the workers and peasants of the region. In order to do that, the U.S. rulers have long followed a policy of supporting the key imperialist bastion in the area: the apartheid regime (see following article).

And Pretoria has been anything but peaceful. Within South Africa, it rules through daily violence and terror. Blacks — who are a majority of the population — suffer brutal national oppression and class exploitation. De-



nied virtually all rights, they face segregation, police bullets, restrictions on their employment and movement, and eviction from their homes.

The apartheid regime's policy has been similar in the rest of southern Africa as well. Relying on its considerable military and economic power, it has aggressively struck out at governments and peoples throughout the region.

Washington's recent diplomatic initiatives are primarily designed to provide some political cover to this aggression, and to throw U.S. imperialism's own weight behind the South African efforts to blackmail neighboring governments and to force concessions out of them.

The only kind of peace in which Washington and Pretoria are interested is peace on their terms. If that cannot be obtained, the South African capitalists have long shown themselves ready to strike out militarily — whatever momentary agreements they might sign.

Terror and destruction

Of all the governments in southern Africa, those in Angola and Mozambique have had the closest political relations with the main liberation movements, the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) of Namibia and the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa. Both the ANC and SWAPO have military training facilities in Angola, while the ANC also has offices and refugee centers in Mozambique.

Because of this backing, and because of their generally anti-imperialist foreign policy positions, the two countries have been particular targets of South African attack.

Ever since Angola won its independence in 1975, under the leadership of the anticolonial People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), it has been the victim of an un-

remitting series of provocations, incursions, bombing raids, and full-scale invasions. The massive 1975-76 South African invasion was turned back only thanks to the help of thousands of Cuban troops.

While Pretoria has sought to strike at SWAPO facilities and Namibian refugee camps, it has also targeted the Angolan people and economy, destroying roads and bridges, factories, schools, warehouses, villages, and food stocks. Following one invasion in August 1981, Pretoria established an occupation force of several thousand troops in southern Kunene Province. Most recently, in December 1983, it sent as many as 10,000 troops across the border, striking several hundred miles into Angola.

In addition to its own direct attacks, the apartheid regime has acted to destabilize the Angolan government by using remnants of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), with which it was allied during the 1975-76 invasion. Armed, financed, and trained by the South Africans, the UNITA bands have carried out widespread sabotage and terrorist actions in central and southern Angola.

For a poor and underdeveloped country like Angola, the cost of this South African-imposed war has been enormous. According to a May 1983 United Nations report, some 10,000 people had been killed in Angola up to 1982. Economic damage has been estimated at a staggering \$10 billion since 1975.

Mozambique has suffered from several direct South African raids as well. In January 1981 and May 1983, South African jets bombed Matola, an industrial suburb of Maputo, the capital, killing a number of South African refugees and Mozambican civilians.

Although Pretoria has not launched an invasion of Mozambique on the scale of its strikes into Angola, Gen. Magnus Malan, the South African defense minister, has openly warned of one. Mozambique would be extremely vulnerable to such an invasion — Maputo is just 40 miles from the South African border.

More immediately damaging have been the attacks of the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo, also known as the MNR), a South African proxy force. Composed largely of Mozambicans who had fought with the Portuguese colonialists against the freedom fighters of the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo), Renamo was originally set up by the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organisation shortly after Mozambique won its independence in 1975 and Frelimo came to power. When the Rhodesian regime was ousted with

Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, Pretoria took over the group's direction.

Like the UNITA in Angola, the Renamo bands, which number several thousand men, concentrate largely on sabotaging key installations, burning grain stocks, and terrorizing villagers, often by killing or mutilating them. White advisers have been sighted with some of the Renamo groups, and they are resupplied by Pretoria through air and naval drops.

Thanks to this backing, Renamo has recently been able to push into Zambezia, Mozambique's richest and most populous province, and into Nampula, areas where it had previously been unable to operate on any significant scale. Zambezia's economy has been severely disrupted, and much of its fledgling industry destroyed. In the south, where drought and famine affect some 4 million people, the Renamo gangs have tried to hamper drought relief efforts.

According to Mozambican government estimates, the actions of Renamo, along with Pretoria's efforts at economic destabilization, have cost Mozambique \$3.8 billion.

Severely battered by this continual South African aggression — and weakened by famine, drought, and the impact of the world capitalist economic crisis — both the Angolan and Mozambican governments have been looking for ways to win some respite from the pressures bearing down on them. They have thus been open to Pretoria's offer of negotiations. They hope to gain some let-up, however temporary, from the warfare that is wearing down their economies and peoples, as well as to test Pretoria's professed willingness to engage in serious negotiations over Namibian independence.

'Disengagement' in Angola

The first significant sign that the apartheid authorities were ready to ease up on their aggressive actions came on January 31, when Prime Minister Pieter Botha announced the beginning of a military "disengagement" from southern Angola.

The Angolan government replied that it would observe an effective cease-fire during the disengagement. SWAPO also declared that it would not attack the South African troops in southern Angola as they were pulling out.

After a series of negotiations between Angolan and South African officials, Pretoria's initially vague proposal was concretized into a plan for a four-phase withdrawal of South African troops from the 24,000-square-mile area of southern Angola where they had been based. If no new fighting broke out, each phase of the withdrawal was to take a week once the process actually began. The cease-fire between Angolan and South African troops was also formalized.

On February 16, in an unprecedented tripartite session, Angolan, South African, and U.S. officials met in Lusaka, Zambia, and agreed to set up a joint commission, composed of several hundred Angolan and South African troops, to monitor the cease-fire and with-



South African units in southern Angola following massive invasion in December 1983.

drawal. It was stipulated that a small number of U.S. personnel could participate if both the Angolan and South African governments agreed.

At first, the official Angolan press agency declared that the authorities in Luanda would not accept the presence of U.S. personnel because "the US is one of the concerned parties in the solution of the Namibian conflict and, as such, cannot play a neutral role." It noted that Washington supported "forces hostile to the MPLA" and had not even recognized the Angolan government. Later, however, this stance was modified to provide for a possible "symbolic" U.S. observer role.

Washington then quickly announced that it was opening a U.S. mission in Windhoek, the Namibian capital, to help monitor the cease-fire and withdrawal.

Pretoria, in return for pulling its troops out of Angola, has insisted that the Angolan government halt all movement by SWAPO guerrillas into the area vacated by the South African troops.

Angolan Interior Minister Alexandre Rodrigues responded to this demand at a February 21 news conference in Luanda. He said that his government would agree "to restrict the activities of SWAPO" on Angolan territory and that only Angolan troops would occupy the region in the south. But, he added, this would be done in agreement with SWAPO and only on the condition that negotiations on the Namibian conflict actually begin.

A few days later, the official Angolan press agency commented that while the government in Luanda would "scrupulously respect" the accord, it could not be held responsible for the movement of SWAPO forces in the south, especially since the area was still occupied by South African troops and not under Angolan control. This came in response to a South African claim (denied by SWAPO) that some 800 Namibian guerrillas were taking advantage of the withdrawal to move closer to the Namibian border.

While negotiating with the South Africans, the Angolan leadership has also reaffirmed its

political and material backing for the struggles led by SWAPO and the ANC.

According to Angolan officials, one demand that was *not* raised in the talks, either by Pretoria or Washington, was that the Cuban troops in Angola be withdrawn.

Cuban troops

The presence of thousands of Cuban troops, who help protect Angola from South African attack, has frequently been used by the Reagan and Botha governments to justify Pretoria's continued occupation of Namibia, and they have insisted on a Cuban withdrawal as a condition for Namibian independence.

Though the U.S. and South African negotiators decided not to raise the Cuban issue in these particular talks, that demand remains a key one in their negotiating stance.

For instance, South African Foreign Minister Roelof Botha claimed January 19 that free elections could not be held in Namibia "as long as the Cuban forces form a permanent source of menace and intimidation north of the border and as long as Swapo continues with its terror, backed by Cuban forces." If, he added, the Angolan authorities "want to see the settlement plan [for Namibia] implemented they ought to get rid of the Cubans as quickly as possible."

Despite such pressures, the Angolan government has not budged from its position that the Cuban troops are needed for defense as long as Pretoria is able to launch attacks against Angola from its bases in Namibia.

But, Angolan Foreign Minister Paulo Jorge stated in an interview in mid-February, if United Nations resolutions on Namibia are implemented, leading to the territory's independence, "the possibility of an aggression or armed invasion will be reduced. And at that moment, we will be able to take a decision with the Cuban government to work out a new program of gradual withdrawal of the Cuban troops."

Chester Crocker and other U.S. officials have indicated that the current talks between Luanda and Pretoria could open the way to-

ward broader negotiations on Namibia itself.

A South African colony since World War I, the territory is rich in minerals, including diamonds, uranium, copper, zinc, and various rare and precious metals.

Since the mid-1960s, the Namibian people have been engaged in an armed struggle for independence, under the leadership of SWAPO. Although the country has a population of only a little more than 1 million, Pretoria has sent in more than 60,000 troops in an effort to crush the independence struggle and retain its dominance.

Despite a brutal counterinsurgency campaign — which has included uprooting tens of thousands of people from their homes, massive military sweeps, massacres of villagers, and frequent detentions and killings of suspected SWAPO activists and supporters — the apartheid regime has been unable to weaken SWAPO's base of support among the population. South African security officials have acknowledged that SWAPO would easily win a majority of votes if democratic elections were held.

Although Pretoria still remains in firm military control of Namibia, the war has been a drain on its military and economic resources. During his January 31 speech announcing the disengagement from Angola, Prime Minister Botha stressed "the tremendous financial burden" of the Namibian war.

In addition, Pretoria has come under increasing international pressure to grant Namibia its independence.

But when South African officials indicate that they are prepared to discuss Namibian independence, they do not have in mind negotiating a hand-over of power to the freedom fighters. The only kind of "independence" Pretoria is yet willing to consider is one that keeps the country subservient to South African political and economic domination. Thus in recent years it has been casting about for some suitable Namibian political force that could be used as a counterweight to SWAPO.

The latest anti-SWAPO coalition that Pretoria has sought to promote is the Multi-Party Conference (MPC). It is composed predominantly of pro-South African and regionally-based parties, but also includes some that have tried to foster a more anticolonial image, such as SWAPO Democrats, a split from SWAPO.

In his January 31 speech, Botha strongly urged the MPC to get its act together. "It is up to the political leaders of South-West Africa-Namibia to decide what they are going to do and to do so urgently," he declared.

Washington appears to endorse this approach. Just before Botha's speech, he and leaders of the MPC met in Cape Town with Chester Crocker.

As part of the apartheid regime's efforts to promote the MPC, Botha has also rejected SWAPO's call for direct negotiations. Instead, he has proposed that SWAPO talk to a delegation of MPC leaders headed by the South African administrator-general of Namibia.

In a statement in early February, SWAPO replied, "It would be a mockery of the concept of negotiation for us to speak to their puppets rather than those who pull the strings. It is with the South African regime, the illegal occupiers of our country, that we are in armed conflict."

On March 11, Pretoria came up with a new variation on its negotiating stance. Foreign Minister Botha proposed a regional conference for "all those involved in the current conflict" in Namibia and Angola. He insisted that such a conference should include not only the three main forces involved — Pretoria, Luanda, and SWAPO — but also the MPC and UNITA, presenting these South African surrogates as "independent" political entities.

Botha made the proposal with the full conviction that SWAPO and the Angolan government would reject this transparent maneuver (as they did). Its main purpose was to provide further public relations material to those in Washington and elsewhere who are seeking to portray the apartheid regime as now being seriously interested in "peace."

Mozambique security pact

Parallel to the Angola talks, negotiations have been under way between the Mozambican and South African governments.

Although the apartheid authorities have been quite hostile to the Mozambican government ever since Frelimo came to power, such talks are not entirely new. In February 1979, the two governments signed a five-year agreement on trade and transport. Two further rounds of talks took place in December 1982 and May 1983 at a small border town, but they brought no concrete results.

Then a new series of talks commenced in December 1983, at first in Swaziland, then in Mozambique and South Africa themselves. Crocker played a role in helping to arrange them.

Some of the negotiations involved general economic relations, the possible resumption of South African tourism to Mozambique, and electricity sales to South Africa from Mozambique's giant Cabora Bassa hydroelectric dam.

Under Portuguese colonial rule, Mozambique's economy was closely tied to that of South Africa, especially to the industrial and mining centers of the Transvaal. The Frelimo government has found it difficult to break away from those ties. Given this reality, the Mozambican authorities have sought, during the course of the talks, to obtain the best terms they can and to find ways to bring some much-needed foreign exchange into the Mozambican economy, which is experiencing severe difficulties.

The centerpiece of the negotiations, however, has been a new security pact between the two countries.

On March 2, a joint communiqué was issued announcing that the two governments had agreed on the principles of a treaty of "nonaggression and good neighborliness." According to the communiqué, "The main thrust of the agreement is that it will provide that neither of

the two countries will serve as a base for acts of aggression or violence against one another."

As the Mozambican government emphasizes, this means an end to South African backing for the rightist Renamo guerrillas. In a New Year's message, President Samora Machel declared, "We re-affirm to the SA authorities that the establishment of good neighbourly relations between the People's Republic of Mozambique and the Republic of SA requires the ending of SA support for the armed bandits which the Pretoria regime recruits, trains, finances, equips and directs to launch criminal actions against our sovereign state."

Pretoria, which has never publicly admitted backing Renamo, in turn insists that the Frelimo government restrict the activities of the ANC in Mozambique.

In a February 8 press release, the ANC reported that Frelimo and the Mozambican government had informed the liberation movement "of certain demands communicated to them by the Pretoria regime concerning the ANC. These demands relate to the activities of the diplomatic office of the ANC in Maputo and the presence of ANC members in Mozambique." Discussion between the ANC and the Mozambican authorities were continuing in a "spirit of comradeship and mutual solidarity," it said.

Although several press reports emanating from South Africa claimed that some leading ANC members had been expelled from Mozambique, the ANC has denied any knowledge of this.

However, in a February 24 interview with the Paris daily *Le Monde*, Maj.-Gen. Jacinto Veloso, a member of Frelimo's Political Bureau and a minister in the president's office for economic affairs, made several concessions to the South African and U.S. position. If the security pact with South Africa is signed, he said, "the only difference will be that the ANC will not be able to utilize our territory to launch violent actions against South African territory."

Since the ANC does not now maintain military bases in Mozambique, what this will mean concretely is unclear.

Veloso also maintained, "Apartheid is a domestic South African problem that concerns all of humanity. There are even people in the ruling circles of that country who are interested in a solution to this question." Veloso portrayed the U.S. role as "important in the establishment of a climate of peace and stability in the region."

Alongside such conciliatory remarks, the Mozambican leaders have reiterated their backing for the liberation movements. The same week that Veloso gave his interview, President Machel declared that his government would "always support the just struggle of the peoples of the two countries and remain on the side of SWAPO and the African National Congress."

While engaging in talks with the South Africans, the Angolan and Mozambican governments have simultaneously continued efforts to

strengthen their military defenses.

On January 12, the official Soviet press agency Tass reported that the Soviet and Cuban governments, after meeting with Angolan representatives, had agreed to increase military aid to Angola for the "strengthening of its defenses, independence and territorial integrity."

Preparing for more war

Around the same time, a communiqué issued by the Political Bureau of the MPLA announced that "defense of the homeland" and "economic development" would be the two themes around which it would seek to mobilize the Angolan population during the coming year. It called on "all party and state bodies and the mass organizations to organize an economy that can support the war and to wage a war in defense of the economy."

The Mozambican government has recently obtained important military assistance (arms, equipment, and instructors) from a number of countries, including Tanzania, North Korea, Portugal, and Britain. Some 1,000 Zimbabwean troops are now in Mozambique, helping to guard the rail and oil pipeline links to Zimbabwe from attacks by the Renamo gangs.

According to a report in the January 13 London *Guardian*, "Frelimo is training tens of thousands of people for militias, a form of Home Guard. Most Beira secondary school children and teachers, for instance, now receive military training during school holidays. A key to the army's better performance and

tactics has been the return to the army of many veterans of the liberation war against Portugal."

Angola and Mozambique — as well as other countries in the region — have good reason to expect renewed war. Pretoria has not reconciled itself to the loss of Namibia, and it will fight to defend its interests there. Nor is it moving toward dismantling the apartheid system. As long as national oppression and class exploitation exist in South Africa, as long as the vast majority of the population is subjected to rule by the white capitalist class, South African society will remain extremely volatile and the regime will be a source of constant danger to all the peoples of southern Africa.

Whatever agreements Prime Minister Botha and other South African officials may put their signatures to, they will not refrain from using military force if that proves to be in their interests. The continued backing they receive from Washington and other imperialist capitals will only encourage them to do so.

Since the opening of the talks with Angola and Mozambique, the South African-surrogate forces, UNITA and Renamo, have both declared that they will continue their armed actions. They can do so on a significant scale only with direct South African backing.

A day after Prime Minister Botha announced the disengagement from southern Angola, Defense Minister Malan got up in parliament and declared that Pretoria would maintain its "full military strength" along the Namibian-Angolan border.

Despite any accords that may be concluded

between Pretoria and neighboring governments, the struggles of the Namibian and South African people will not come to a halt.

The bases of support for both SWAPO and the ANC are not in neighboring countries, but among the masses of Namibia and South Africa themselves. Their activists are present in the Black townships and rural villages, in the trade unions, youth groups, and community organizations. To an extent, their armed fighters are also increasingly being trained and operating from within the borders of their countries.

'We will continue fighting'

"Our bases are the ordinary people themselves, who are at work every day, who are cadres of our army," ANC President Oliver Tambo declared in an interview last year (*Intercontinental Press*, Oct. 17, 1983).

Nevertheless, both liberation movements have benefited from solidarity, assistance, and sanctuary in neighboring countries. If that is seriously curtailed, it will be a blow to their struggles.

During the various negotiations that have been under way in recent weeks, both the ANC and SWAPO have made their views known and have reaffirmed their determination to fight for the liberation of their peoples.

In early February, the ANC responded critically to a communiqué issued at the close of a two-day meeting of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), a group of nine Black-ruled countries in the region that are seeking to lessen their economic dependence on South Africa. The communiqué had welcomed "signs of a less aggressive stance from South Africa" and urged international pressure on Pretoria to "bring about a process of peaceful change in the region."

Thabo Mbeki, the ANC's director of information, declared in Lusaka February 4, "We don't share those views. There cannot be any détente with apartheid, there can only be struggle." He added, "I think people want to believe you can talk South Africa out of aggressive action so there can be peaceful change. We know that is not true."

Mbeki noted that representatives of the ANC and SWAPO were not invited to attend the SADCC meeting, as they had been in the past.

Following one of the meetings in February between South African and Mozambican officials over the security pact, the ANC issued a statement that declared, "Peace and apartheid colonialism are inherently mutually exclusive. No non-aggression pact will stop the ANC and the people of South Africa from fighting for their self-determination and liberation."

SWAPO has put forward a similarly combative stance. Sam Nujoma, the organization's president, has observed that "the interests of the Namibian people are not covered" by the accord between Pretoria and Luanda. While SWAPO would respect the cease-fire *within* Angola, he said, its fighters would not lay



SWAPO fighters vow to continue struggle for independence.

down their arms and the SWAPO units within Namibia itself would continue their fight against the South African occupation forces.

In fact, the South African authorities have maintained that there has been an upsurge in guerrilla activity in Namibia's more heavily populated northern regions. On March 5, the South African military forces in Namibia reported a rise in SWAPO attacks, from 21 in December to 58 in February.

The Namibian independence struggle received a significant political boost on March 1 when Pretoria finally agreed to release from prison the founding leader of SWAPO, Herman Toivo ja Toivo. Thousands of Namibians turned out in Katutura Township, just outside

Windhoek, to give Toivo a joyous welcome.

Although Toivo had spent the past 16 years in South Africa's notorious Robben Island prison, he lost no time in attacking the apartheid regime's continued oppression of his homeland, as well as its efforts to promote anti-SWAPO groupings like the MPC.

"SWAPO has no alternative but to take up arms to fight the colonial regime and root them out of Namibia," Toivo declared at a March 2 news conference in Windhoek.

"SWAPO is still fighting. We will continue fighting until we get our independence, and even then we will still not be free until our brothers and sisters in South Africa are free from the apartheid regime." □

apartheid regime on the ground. One example of this is the U.S. support for the UNITA terrorist gangs in Angola.

UNITA 'freedom fighters'?

The South African-armed and -trained UNITA combatants are frequently portrayed in Washington as "freedom fighters." UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi has visited the United States on several occasions and has held discussions with Chester Crocker, Alexander Haig (while he was still secretary of state), and other U.S. officials. Marcos Samondo, UNITA's representative in Washington, has stated that the group had "contacts with U.S. officials at all levels on a regular basis."

A February 1981 policy memorandum drawn up by Crocker stated that official U.S. recognition of the Angolan government "is out unless the Cubans leave and they cut a deal with Savimbi."

Secret meeting in Kinshasa

A report in the Jan. 22, 1984, London *Observer* provided some fresh evidence of the direct U.S. backing to UNITA. It described the contents of a confidential memorandum that had been smuggled out of Zaïre. Headed with the insignia of the Zaïrean National Security Council, the memorandum reported to President Mobutu Sese Seko (a close U.S. ally) on a meeting that had taken place in late November in the Zaïrean capital, Kinshasa, involving three UNITA representatives, South African military and intelligence officers, an adviser from the Israeli military mission in Kinshasa, and an unnamed U.S. "special envoy." At the meeting, the U.S. official promised greater "military and financial assistance" to UNITA.

According to the *Observer*:

The special US envoy, the document says, called on Unita and other opposition groups to "consolidate their authority and influence in the liberated areas." They should also "speed up social and political measures to deepen the population's discontent against the regime of [Angolan President José Eduardo] dos Santos, the Cuban and Soviet presence and other Communist countries in Angola; destabilise the situation in the capital; organise acts of sabotage against principle economic installations and seize strategic points as well as important roads."

The American official also stressed the need to disrupt joint Angolan and Soviet projects and undermine the relations between the dos Santos government and the Cubans and Russians. The rebel movements were also encouraged to sow divisions in the ranks of the MPLA leadership in Luanda and infiltrate agents into the Angolan Army. The aim is to force part of the Angolan leadership to negotiate with Unita.

He also called for more military pressure against the Luanda regime by the South Africans, who did indeed launch a military operation deep into Angola last December.

In fact, on Dec. 6, 1983, the very day that the South African invasion of Angola began, South African Foreign Minister Roelof Botha was in Rome meeting with — Chester Crocker. □

U.S. bullets in Pretoria's guns

How White House backs South African aggression

By Ernest Harsch

Publicly, the U.S. rulers "deplore" Pretoria's more blatant acts of aggression. But such formal condemnations are largely for show. The net effect of Washington's overall policy toward South Africa has been to encourage its aggression against neighboring states.

While support for the apartheid regime in one form or another has long been a standard feature of U.S. policy toward southern Africa, the coming into office of the Reagan administration inaugurated a period of even closer ties with Pretoria. Reagan has called this approach "constructive engagement."

In line with it, administration officials have actively opposed calls for investment and trade boycotts against South Africa and have encouraged greater U.S. economic involvement there. The book value of direct U.S. corporate investment in South Africa now stands at \$3 billion, although the real figure could be considerably higher. In addition, U.S. business has in recent years become South Africa's largest trading partner.

In October 1982, Washington was instrumental in arranging a \$1.1 billion loan to Pretoria from the International Monetary Fund.

The Reagan administration has promoted greater military contacts with Pretoria, allowing frequent visits to the United States by South African military, intelligence, and police officials. The U.S. Coast Guard has begun training South African naval officers.

Arms sales

According to a January 6 report issued by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a Quaker organization in the United States, U.S. arms sales to South Africa have blossomed under the Reagan administration, despite Washington's formal support for the United Nations' mandatory arms embargo against Pretoria.

Based largely on official U.S. documents released to the AFSC under the Freedom of Information Act, the report revealed that the State Department had authorized commercial

sales of more than \$28.3 million worth of military equipment to South Africa in fiscal years 1981-83. To avoid public outcry, much of this was sold in the form of components, unfinished subassemblies, and other technology that Pretoria could then employ in its own arms manufacturing industry. For instance, U.S. electronics technology has been used in South Africa's new G5 155mm howitzer.

The figure of \$28.3 million is the largest for U.S. military sales to South Africa ever recorded — one and a half times the total amount exported over the previous 30 years.

In addition, U.S. firms sold more than \$566 million in aircraft and related parts to South Africa from 1980 to 1982. Although not catalogued on the State Department's "munitions list," some of these planes and parts have been converted to military use once they have reached South Africa.

Just as significant has been the White House's *political* assistance to Pretoria. Reagan, Shultz, and other administration officials have praised the Botha regime's "reform" measures (which leave the basics of the apartheid system intact) and have stressed South Africa's strategic importance to world imperialism. In the United Nations, the U.S. representative has consistently vetoed efforts to impose economic sanctions against South Africa, and has even abstained on some motions condemning Pretoria for its invasions of Angola.

In its policy statements, the White House has also sought to shift responsibility for the violence in the region onto the liberation movements of the oppressed and the governments that support them, accusing them of engaging in "Cuban-backed terrorism." It was Washington that, in 1981, first raised the demand for a withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola as a condition for Namibia's independence, a demand that Pretoria eagerly seized upon.

Besides giving its general backing to Pretoria's aggressive policies, Washington has also sought to coordinate its efforts with the

Aggressive military role in Pacific

Government white paper reaffirms imperialist goals

By Andy Jarvis

[The following article appeared in the February 24 issue of *Socialist Action*, a revolutionary socialist fortnightly published in Auckland, New Zealand.]

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New Zealand's armed forces are being reorganised and modernised in readiness for active military combat.

This is the main projection of the 1983 Defence Review released by the government in late December.

The 50-page Review outlines a series of measures adopted by the [Robert] Muldoon government "to develop the capabilities of the armed services so that they constitute an effective deterrent against direct challenges" to New Zealand imperialism or its "vital national interests" in the South Pacific region.

The release of the White Paper on defence comes at a time when New Zealand's armed forces have arrived at a turning point.

Aging ships, aircraft, and military equipment need to be replaced. At the same time, New Zealand's major military partner, the United States, has embarked on a course of military aggression in Central America and in the Middle East.

Policy questioned

The traditional military policy of New Zealand governments has been one of intimate alliance with Australia, Britain, and the United States, and a willingness to commit troops anywhere in the world.

Recently, sections of the ruling class have begun to question this outlook.

One factor behind this is the cost of re-equipping the armed forces, requiring a major allocation of government spending. At a time of economic recession, that means further cuts in government spending on health, education, and social welfare, and deepening the offensive against the unions and the working class.

Another factor is New Zealand capitalism's changing trade relationships. In 1950, 70 percent of New Zealand's exports were traded with its imperialist allies. Today, this is less than 40 percent.

Trade with the Soviet Union and other workers states has grown in importance, as has trade with semi-colonial countries, many of whose governments often find themselves in conflict with the U.S. and other imperialist powers. For example, the Khomeini government in Iran now imports one-third of New Zealand's total lamb exports.

During the past year, a debate has been tak-



New Zealand soldier in Vietnam during imperialist war of aggression.

ing place in government and ruling class circles on what military policy will best serve the interests of New Zealand capitalism.

This has had its reflection among the political parties. The Social Credit and New Zealand Parties have called for a more "neutral" or isolationist course to be adopted, as have many leaders of the mass peace movement that has emerged over the past few years.

The National Party, which represents the dominant sections of New Zealand's ruling class, holds to the traditional outlook of New Zealand imperialism. In the main, this outlook is also shared by the [David] Lange leadership of the Labour Party, as symbolised by Lange's strong commitment to the Anzus [Australia, New Zealand, United States] alliance.

Neutrality rejected

The 1983 Defence Review begins by stating the National government's view in this debate that "New Zealand's fundamental circumstances have not altered."

The White Paper specifically rejects isolationism, neutrality, and pacifism. New Zealand capitalism "cannot prosper by standing aloof," it says. "There is no economic strength to be found in loneliness, nor security in remoteness."

In contrast to isolationism, the government puts forward a defence policy of "effective deterrence." By this it means that New Zealand's military stance must be basically aggressive.

Defence of New Zealand cannot be limited by any territorial boundaries, the White Paper states.

Major emphasis is placed throughout the Defence Review on New Zealand imperialism's "special interests" in the South

Pacific — New Zealand's "own neighbourhood," as Minister of Defence David Thomson recently labelled it.

Anzus alliance

New Zealand's armed forces must be ready to act to counter "destabilising influences" among the Pacific Island nations, the Review says, and must be able to meet "the range of challenges which could arise in the region."

The Review reaffirms New Zealand's commitment to the Anzus military alliance. "Our relationship with the United States — and with our other Anzus partner, Australia — is fundamental," it says.

Membership of Anzus enables New Zealand imperialism's "special interests" in the South Pacific to be integrated "into a larger and more comprehensive response" based on "a shared concern for security" in the "broader setting of the Pacific basin," the Review states.

The Review likewise affirms support for the government's other main military alliance, the Five Power Defence Pact. This pact links New Zealand and Australia with their other traditional imperialist ally, Britain, and with the semi-colonial regimes in Malaysia and Singapore, where both Australia and New Zealand have major overseas bases.

The Defence Review also affirms the view that the New Zealand government must be ready to commit its forces to a military role further afield.

In particular, it points to the "threat" to New Zealand and its allies posed by the national liberation movements and governments which "challenge the existing order" in Indochina, the Middle East, and Central America and the Caribbean.

Ready Reaction Force

Among the main projections for the New Zealand armed forces outlined in the Defence Review are the following:

- A Ready Reaction Force has been established consisting of a rifle battalion of 1000 to 1200 troops. It is be "equipped and trained for land operations up to as high a scale of intensity as can be foreseen in the circumstances of the South Pacific."

Along with SAS forces, the Ready Reaction Force will be kept in a high state of combat readiness for action in the Pacific Islands.

- A second rifle battalion of slightly less than 1000 troops is to be maintained in Singapore.

A commitment made in the 1970s to withdraw from Singapore is specifically overturned. The Review states that New Zealand

imperialism has both "economic and strategic" interests in South East Asia and that "despite the priority we must attach to the South Pacific, it is concluded that it is not timely to bring the force home."

Together, the Singapore battalion and the Ready Reaction Force will constitute the core of the New Zealand army.

'Second to none'

- The RNZAF's [Royal New Zealand Air Force] Orion aircraft are being upgraded to give them a capability "which will be second to none." These long-range patrol aircraft are used for "surface surveillance and anti-submarine operations" throughout the South Pacific region.

- New Zealand's Skyhawk jets are also being upgraded and eventually will be replaced by new fighter attack planes.

- The RNZAF's transport planes have been boosted to meet the "long-range transport needs of South Pacific operations."

- It is projected that the New Zealand navy's fleet of three frigates will be replaced over the next decade with modern submarines.

The Review states that New Zealand needs a navy that is "able to range throughout the expanse of the South Pacific."

It says that submarines, as offensive military vessels, better meet the requirements of New Zealand's Anzus allies.

- More modern weaponry, compatible with that of New Zealand's allies, is being acquired for the armed forces.

The New Zealand and Australian governments, under a memorandum signed last June, are to increase collaboration on the production and purchase of military equipment.

New Zealand and Australian industry and scientific institutes are to become more involved in the production of military weapons.

Spy on Pacific Islands

- The Review states that military intelligence information is being gathered on Pacific Island countries, so that military attacks "can be mounted with confidence that they are based on sound information." The military intelligence directorate of the Ministry of Defence functions in collaboration with the government's other spy agencies.

- The Review also commits the armed forces to a civil role. This includes their use as scab labour by the government during industrial disputes. And it includes their "availability to support the police" during so-called "anti-terrorist" operations — such as were carried out during the 1981 Springbok [South African rugby team] tour, and during the 1978 eviction of Maori land protesters from Bastion Point.

- The Review projects that the present level of spending on defence be maintained.

Despite the recession in the capitalist economy, government spending on defence has risen over the past half decade. It now stands at some \$2 million daily — slightly over two percent of New Zealand's Gross National Product, or more than five percent of budget expenditure. □

Socialist ACTION

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The significance of Ronald Reagan's decision to run for a second term as president of the United States "should not be underestimated," the February 3 issue of *Socialist Action* said in introducing an article by John Ross.

Since 1980, Ross began, Reagan has "consolidated a new course for United States capitalism nationally and internationally. It is not that Reagan is more reactionary than the preceding post-war US presidents such as Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, or Carter. But he is authentically *different*."

Under earlier presidents, Ross said, U.S. foreign policy had "sought to harmonise its interests to some degree with those of its imperialist rivals in Western Europe and Japan" through institutions such as NATO and the International Monetary Fund.

"At home an alliance was created between capital and the trade union leadership of the AFL-CIO. . . . A 'coalition' of capital, labour and blacks made up the Democratic Party."

What Reagan's presidency has represented, Ross continued, is "an attempt to put together a quite different coalition of forces." Such a shift was necessitated by Washington's "devastating defeat in the Vietnam war," by the inability of the U.S. economy to go on "ensuring continuously rising living standards and social peace," and by "the disintegration of the old coalition put together by the Democrats."

"Reaganism," Ross said, "is an attempt to put together a policy which may accurately be termed 'America first.' United States economic interests are put decisively ahead of its rivals — hence the huge Federal Budget deficits, the high interest rates, and the remorseless rise of the dollar. The American trade unions will be brutally assaulted to revive the US capitalist economy itself.

"Blacks, women, Latino-Americans will not be placated by the ruling class but put down. US military power abroad will be used independently of, and if necessary without consultation with, US rivals.

"Internally the old Democrat consensus is being dropped by US capital, and is under huge internal strain. It is logical that the year of Reagan's challenge for a second term is also the first year of a black campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination and the first time the AFL-CIO has endorsed a Democratic candidate even before the primary elections start."

But such efforts have "no chance" of putting the "old Democratic consensus" back together again, Ross concludes:

"The significance of 1984 will be how far those fighting against Reagan's policies outside the United States can create a crisis in US politics itself. And also will be about how far the left and socialists in the US are capable of beginning to put together black and labour parties independent of both the Republicans and Democrats."

Rouge

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

For more than a week in mid-February, thousands of French truck drivers blockaded highways throughout the country to back up a series of demands placed on the government of President François Mitterrand. These included the streamlining of customs procedures, lifting of restrictions on truck movements during weekends, abolition of fuel taxes, lower insurance costs, and a relaxation of safety rules limiting drivers to 60 hours' work a week.

About 40 percent of France's 28,200 long-haul trucking companies consist of a single driver who owns his own rig.

The Socialist Party-Communist Party government at first tried to use force to put an end to the truckers' protest. But police attacks, bulldozers, cranes, and helicopters failed to clear the roadblocks. After several days of talks between truckers' leaders and Transport Minister Charles Fiterman, the government agreed to consider all the truckers' demands, and the protests came to an end.

"At the beginning, the roadblocks were not a right-wing operation," said a front-page editorial on the truckers' protests in the Feb. 24-Mar. 1 issue of *Rouge*. "Rather, they flowed from the exasperation of certain truckers, squeezed by 'free enterprise' and by the rat-race of the road. But quite soon the whole mass of transport bosses, backed up by the braying of the SNPMI [National Association of Small and Medium-Sized Industrialists] and the far right, spurred on the roadblocks and put forward demands that quite often ran counter to the interests of the wage workers in the trucking industry. . . .

"The fact that the right wing did not push the confrontation further, and even poured water on the flames it had helped to ignite, is due to the fact that the right has nothing to gain by opening up a political crisis. The 'surgery' it wants to carry out on industrial jobs requires the anesthesia injected daily by the left [the SP and CP]. But this minicrisis should serve as a lesson. What we saw on the highways last weekend was only a sample of what the reactionaries can do."

In an article in the March 2-8 *Rouge*, Francis Sitel said the truckers' protests had pointed up "the inability of the traditional workers' leaderships to respond correctly to this kind of conflict."

The concessions offered by the government to the big trucking companies, Sitel said, failed to respond "to the basic problems faced by the small truck owners who suffer the burden of indebtedness, the competition for loads, and the pressure of the big companies."

"Concerning a mobilization of this kind, the workers confront a two-fold danger in terms of their response. The first is that, since some of the demands are in fact legitimate, the workers could get caught up in a dynamic of protests leading toward a 'front of the discontented.' Such an approach would actually lead to blurring the class lines that divide [the truckers] rather than accentuating them.

"The second and opposite danger would be to line up with the government in order to confront an offensive that is considered reactionary. . . . Of course, the methods of corporatist rage are not the methods of the workers. But we should be conscious that the government's lyrical outbursts in defense of 'freedom of movement' could quite easily lead to attacks on the workers in the future. . . .

"What is necessary, rather, is for the workers to throw the weight of their own mobilization into the scales. They should make their

own demands known and put forward their own solutions to the crisis. The most disquieting thing about this affair has been the silence . . . of the trade-union movement, which seemed to have 'forgotten' what the demands of the wage-earning truckers might have been.

"It is only under such conditions — by vigorously putting forward the class positions of the workers — that the basis can be laid for a possible alliance with a section of these layers [of small truck owners] and the anti-working-class impulses of reactionary elements can be defeated."

**klasse-
kampen**

"Class Struggle," weekly newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Danish section of the Fourth International. Published in Copenhagen.

The March 1-7 issue published an article headlined "Easter march in Copenhagen: Scrap nuclear missiles — both in East and West."

The article by Birger Sørensen reported, "In contrast with last year, Copenhagen's Easter marchers will go to the April 15 demonstration on a platform that not only contains rejection of nuclear weapons, but directly opposes the injustice and repression that independent peace

activists face in both the East and West."

Sørensen indicated that the call for the action was agreed to by the three leading peace organizations in Denmark.

The secretary of one of the groups, Pernille Jensen, stood as a candidate for the Danish Communist Party in the last general elections. Sørensen quoted her as saying, "The call could be better and more concrete and precise. But it reflects a compromise that we all must defer to a little."

The call for the Easter march was published next to Sørensen's article. It stated: "A dangerous stage of nuclear armaments was opened in 1983. The first of 572 American nuclear missiles were installed in West Germany, England, and Italy; and the Soviet Union began making preparations to install missiles in the GDR [German Democratic Republic — East Germany] and Czechoslovakia. . . .

"We unconditionally say no to Pershing 2, cruise missiles, SS-20, SS-21, SS-22, SS-23, the French and British nuclear strike forces, and all other atomic weapons. Nothing can justify nuclear weapons. They do not lead to security for anyone and menace everyone. Therefore we demand an immediate halt to installing new missiles in both the East and the West. There must now begin real disarmament that must not serve as a cover for continuous armament. We demand that the missiles already installed be scrapped."

DOCUMENTS

Canada: Labor's fight for political power

Part III of political report to RWL convention

[The following is the last 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 first part of the report, published in our March 5 issue, covered the Canadian ruling class's offensive against the working class and the developing workers' resistance, focusing in particular on two major labor struggles: that of the Quebec unions organized in the Common Front in 1982-83 and of the British Columbia unions organized in Operation Solidarity in 1983. The second part, published in our last issue, dealt with the role of the union bureaucracy.

[The footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

In the final section of this report, I want to examine what the experiences of our class over the last year have shown about the central po-

litical question facing workers in this country — the struggle for a workers and farmers government.

As the ruling-class attacks intensify, our class will go through many more profound experiences in its effort to build more effective fighting organizations. It will be increasingly confronted with the limits of what can be won by trade union action alone. Struggles by workers against their boss through a union battle, however militant, are not enough in and of themselves to save jobs, much less to fight against national oppression, sexual discrimination, or imperialist war. The fundamental root of the profound social crisis confronting working people is political: so is its solution.

The most powerful tool working people have in the fight against exploitation and oppression is a government that rules in their interests: a workers and farmers government.

The formation of such a government in English Canada and Quebec would be a decisive step in the fight to halt the imperialist war drive, to create jobs for all, to abolish national oppression and sexist degradation. It could lead the fight by the overwhelming majority of the population to abolish capital's barbarous

dictatorship.

This struggle for a workers and farmers government provided the framework for our intervention in the Quebec Common Front and Operation Solidarity in British Columbia.

These experiences showed the importance of centering our propaganda on the fight for government, presenting it as our key proposal in an overall plan of action to resolve the crisis facing working people under capitalism.

The fight for a labor party in Quebec

The dynamic of the Common Front struggle was a massive battle against the Parti Québécois (PQ) government located in Quebec City. It would have been erroneous in this particular battle to center our propaganda on the fight for government in Ottawa; we focused instead on the need for a workers government in Quebec.

At the same time, we explained that the most formidable enemy of Quebec workers is imperialism and its federal state, and that their main ally is the working class in English Canada.

We called for a radically different kind of government, one that would defend the inter-

ests of working people and the Quebec nation rather than those of big business. We pointed to the Sandinista government of Nicaragua as the kind of anti-imperialist government needed in Quebec: a government that leads the national liberation struggle all the way to the end.

These ideas provoked considerable interest. But by themselves they were still too abstract. Workers wanted to know how such a government could be won in this country and how the labor movement as it is today could begin to move in this direction.

As a result of these questions, we began to give greater emphasis to the fight for a labor party based on the Quebec unions. We talked about the need to link the labor party perspective to the fight for government. We put forward our program as the program a labor party would require to meet the most pressing needs of the working class and its allies.

On the road to independent political action, Quebec workers are confronted with two central challenges. *The working class must take charge of the national struggle.* It made gains on this front in the Common Front battle through defending health care and education — major gains of the fight against national oppression — and by defending the labor movement from the government's massive attacks. *And Quebec workers must build a mass working-class political alternative to the Parti Québécois and the Liberals.*

The PQ has had massive support from Quebec labor for more than a decade. The PQ has won this support through its leadership of the fight to defend Quebec's national rights, combined with the failure of the workers movement to put forward a proletarian leadership and strategy for this struggle.

The leadership of the unions have preferred to back the PQ's bourgeois nationalist policies rather than develop labor's own independent working-class course.

And the New Democratic Party (NDP, Canada's labor party) is now completely marginal in Quebec, mainly because of its loyal defense of federalism and its opposition to Quebec's national rights.

Openness to radical solutions

However, the PQ's massive attack on the Common Front and on the gains of the "Quiet Revolution"⁶ has now led to a precipitous decline in its support. It has sparked an enormous political crisis in the working-class and national movements.

While the most conscious militants are searching for and are open to radical solutions, few have yet come to our political conclusions. But there is a tremendous openness to proposals that point the way out of this impasse — proposals that link together the fight for government with the struggle against national oppression. Our emphasis on the need to build an

6. A series of social reforms carried out by the Liberal Party government of Jean Lesage (1960-66). It included improvements in education and health care, unionization of the public service, and nationalization of Hydro-Quebec, the power company.



Will Reissner/IP

Quebec City, Jan. 29, 1983: Common Front march.

anti-imperialist labor party capable of leading the fight for national liberation through to the end provoked considerable interest during the Common Front struggle.

While there is no broad current in the workers movement in Quebec that understands the need to build a labor party based on the trade unions, that can change very rapidly as the class struggle intensifies.

The severity of Canadian imperialism's attack against Quebec, the profoundly anti-imperialist consciousness and overwhelmingly proletarian character of the Quebec nation, and the impact on Québécois of the worldwide development of revolutionary national liberation movements — these are a tremendously explosive combination. The deepening involvement of the Canadian government in the new Vietnam in Central America, to say nothing of any attempt to impose conscription, would almost certainly spark a social explosion in Quebec. We need to give greater emphasis to the urgency of the workers movement forming a labor party with its own independent foreign policy — an internationalist, antiwar labor party.

Forged in the heat of huge class battles by a working class with a long and militant history of struggle against imperialism, a mass labor party in Quebec will be much more an instrument of the oppressed and exploited and far less susceptible to control by the reformist bureaucracy than is the NDP. The possibility of winning such a party to a revolutionary perspective — or at least building a revolutionary wing within it — will be posed from the beginning.

A wing of the bureaucracy could theoretically initiate such a party. But it would only take this route under intense pressure from the ranks and as a result of a massive political struggle within the labor movement. This fight

will be decisive to the construction of a class-struggle left wing capable of leading the revolutionary transformation of the labor movement.

Labor and the NDP

At the heart of the fight for the revolutionary transformation of the unions is the need for the working class to wage a mass struggle for political power against the bourgeois parties and the system they defend. The leadership of the labor movement is totally opposed to this perspective. This is the case not only in Quebec, where the bureaucracy consistently supports one or another bourgeois party, but also in English Canada, where a majority of the unions call for a vote for the NDP.

The formation of the NDP in 1961 as a mass labor party based on direct union affiliation was a major step forward toward the working class winning its political independence. The perspective of labor launching its own political party to fight for government had first been advanced by class-conscious militants as early as the 19th century, but had always been blocked by the trade union bureaucracy. However, the creation of powerful industrial unions in the 1930s and 1940s as the result of a massive struggle led by the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) gave new impetus to this political perspective.

These unions, which united all workers in a single industry against their common boss, were qualitatively stronger than the multitude of craft unions, which organized only the most skilled workers, trade by trade. Wasn't a political party that united the entire working class against the bosses' parties and governments the next step forward? Many workers were convinced that it was.

The NDP's predecessor, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), was a so-

cial democratic party but was not organizationally based on the unions. It was no accident that the movement to strengthen labor's links with the CCF began in the new CIO unions like the Steelworkers and United Auto Workers (UAW) in the late 1930s and 1940s.

In 1956, previously separate federations of craft and industrial unions united to form the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). This gave further impetus to the formation of the NDP in 1961. To this day, the major labor base of the NDP remains the industrial unions.

The new party was organizationally and financially independent of the bourgeoisie and its parties. It represented an important step toward the unions addressing broader political questions, above all the fight for government.

'Humanizing capitalism'

But this break has important limits. The NDP has never won the support of more than a minority of the working class. Most workers still support the bourgeois parties. The majority of the class must still be won to independent class politics.

Furthermore, the party is in no way politically independent of the capitalist class.

The NDP and union leaderships remain loyal defenders of capitalism and its state, against the interests of the oppressed and exploited. They support Canadian participation in the imperialist war alliances, NATO and NORAD [North American Air Defense]. They have consistently defended Canadian imperialism against the demands of Québécois for their national rights. All three NDP provincial governments in office in 1975 supported Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's wage controls. The current NDP government of Manitoba is spearheading the offensive against the Morgentaler abortion clinics, along with the Conservative (Tory) government of Ontario.

Because of the NDP's working-class base, its leadership is often compelled to take progressive positions. The NDP leadership initiated a successful fight for medicare in the 1960s, and NDP leaders oppose U.S. policies in Central America today. But the fundamental political perspective of the party and union leadership remains the fight for minor reforms that do not challenge the framework of the capitalist system.

In his article in the November 1983 *Facts*, the magazine of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), labor staffer Ed Finn bluntly explained the political justification for this reformist course. He argues that Marx's call on "workers to revolt against the capitalist system" proved unnecessary because of "the rise of strong unions and more humane governments." Through close collaboration of unions and government, he argued, they were able to gradually institute a series of social reforms to ensure that society's wealth was distributed "if not as equitably as it should then not as unfairly" as it had been. This "humanizing" of the profit system "helped persuade workers to live with capitalism instead of overthrowing it."

Unfortunately, Finn warned, "this civilizing process [is being more and more] fiercely opposed by the capitalists themselves. They never realized — and still don't — that their very survival depends on the 'social contract' that the unions and government together devised." As a result of the current bosses' offensive, "the effectiveness of unions is being weakened at the same time as governments have succumbed to right-wing pressures to dismantle their services. The social contract is becoming unraveled, accelerating the swing to a dangerously polarized society."

Nowhere in this article did Finn speak of the need for the labor movement to fight for government or even engage in political action. The NDP was never mentioned. Finn's entire perspective is limited to pleading for closer collaboration between existing governments and the union bureaucracy in the hope of winning enough crumbs from the bosses to dampen working people's growing anger with the profit system. Finn summed up labor's fundamental goal as being to "humanize capitalism," not to seek its replacement by a socialist society ruled by working people and their allies.

Reformists' division of labor

This article might well have been written in defense of the political perspectives followed by the leadership of Operation Solidarity in British Columbia. The Solidarity leadership warned the government that its actions were undermining social stability and the competitive position of British Columbia's capitalists. It desperately attempted to confine the fight to a narrow union framework that aimed not to bring down the Social Credit (Socred) government, but merely to pressure it to enforce its austerity policies in a less brutal way.

Thus the leadership's central slogan — "Restraint not repression" — accepted the necessity of workers "doing their bit" to shore up the profit system (though it drew the line at the massive attack on union rights). And it insisted that the Solidarity Coalition must be politically nonpartisan and not have as its objective replacing the Socreds with an NDP government.

The NDP leadership's role in the struggle was totally complementary to that of the union bureaucracy in imposing this electoralist and reformist straight-jacket on the movement.

The fact that the union leadership did not have a word of criticism of this course was hardly surprising. More direct NDP involvement in the struggle would have given it a much more explicitly political character. This would have deepened the growing movement for a general strike that could have brought down the Socred government.

The distinct roles played by the NDP and union leaderships in this and other struggles is not the result of political differences; it is fundamentally a division of labor among reformists. Its aim is to ensure that labor's struggles are confined to the fight for "bread and butter" issues rather than for fundamental social change and that political action is restricted to workers going to the ballot box every few

years. In this way they hope to prevent a mass struggle of the working class for political power, which would threaten the continued existence of the capitalist system.

Single solution

The obstacles to the fight for socialism created by the trade union bureaucracy and the NDP leadership are not two separate problems requiring two separate solutions. The fight to win the working-class movement to a class-struggle strategy requires a battle in both the NDP and the trade unions.

Our perspective for overcoming this artificial division between politics and union struggles was at the center of our propaganda in British Columbia. We proposed that the Solidarity alliance fight to force the resignation of the government. We called on Solidarity to lead a battle to replace the Socreds with an NDP government committed to implementing the key demands of the movement: the restoration of all social services and the withdrawals of Bills 2 and 3.

We tried to link our governmental perspective to the concrete tasks and demands of the mass movement as it developed in real life. Our perspective was a realistic one, since the only way Solidarity's overall program could have been won was by forcing the Socred government out of office.

At the same time, we advanced the need for the unions and activists in the Solidarity Coalition to wage a battle within the NDP. We called for transforming the NDP into a fighting labor party — a party committed to advancing the demands and building the struggles of the oppressed and exploited.

Our focus was the fight for an NDP government in Victoria (the capital of British Columbia) since, like the struggle in Quebec, Solidarity's struggle was primarily directed against the provincial government. But we also explained that an NDP government in British Columbia would be a powerful weapon in the fight for a workers and farmers government in Ottawa.

Workers governments and NDP governments

What then is the relationship between the fight for an NDP government at the provincial level (or an NDP-Quebec labor government in Ottawa) to the struggle for a workers and farmers government? Are they completely counterposed perspectives?

A workers and farmers government is a revolutionary government and cannot be realized primarily through parliamentary elections. Its establishment requires a massive uprising of the working class and its allies against the capitalist state and its institutions. It is not based on these structures, but on new organs of rule developed by the revolutionary upsurge (like, for example, the institutions of people's power in Cuba and Nicaragua). It also requires the implementation of policies that advance the interests of working people.

NDP governments, on the other hand, have

relied on and attempted to administer the bourgeois state apparatus rather than mobilizing the oppressed and exploited against it. Thus the NDP government in Manitoba, which is prosecuting Henry Morgentaler and working with big business to strengthen the profit system, is a *bourgeois* government.

The reformist leadership of the unions and the NDP are strongly opposed to a mass struggle for political power even if it were to result in a victory by their own party. This is particularly true in times of crisis. They understand full well that the objective dynamic of such a struggle — for example, a mass mobilization by Operation Solidarity for an NDP government in British Columbia — tends to rapidly go beyond the narrow limits of reformism and leads to a sharp confrontation with the ruling class.

NDP Member of Parliament Ian Waddell explained this fear in a CBC radio interview at the peak of British Columbia's strike wave last November. The Solidarity movement was "dangerous," he warned, because it threatened to discredit the parliamentary system and therefore the NDP (or at least its leadership). The real opposition is no longer the NDP caucus in Victoria, he explained, it is the "extra-parliamentary mass movement in the streets."

That is why the NDP leadership is so fearful of a mass struggle for an NDP government.

We, on the other hand, stand 100 percent behind workers' struggles for their own government, completely independent of the bourgeoisie — even behind a party led by reformists, like the NDP. Workers do not vote NDP, much less organize a general strike to put it in office, because they want a bourgeois government that will defend the profit system and oppose their needs. They do so to fight against the bosses' parties and governments and to win a government based on our class's own organizations, one that acts in our own class interests.

Thus the struggle for an NDP government, just like the fight to build a labor party in Quebec, is a big step forward in the fight for a workers and farmers government.

Our role is to push that struggle as far as we can, not to oppose it, as did the syndicalists and the Communist Party in the Solidarity Coalition. In doing so we apply the general perspective spelled out in Leon Trotsky's Transitional Program. We demand that the NDP and trade union leadership end their support for the ruling class and its policies and lead the fight for a workers and farmers government.

In British Columbia, this meant calling on Operation Solidarity to break from its phony nonpartisan character, abandon its leadership's support of "restraint," and lead a struggle for an NDP government that would implement the far-reaching demands of the Solidarity movement.

Nor can this struggle be restricted to a single province.

While the winning of political power by the

working class in English Canada could *begin* with the establishment of a provincial government that defended the interests of the oppressed and exploited, a workers and farmers government cannot be *consolidated* in a single province. That will require a massive struggle by the entire pan-Canadian working class and its allies to overthrow the capitalist system and the state that serves its interests.

The powers of the Canadian state are centralized in Ottawa, and the provincial governments are totally subordinate to it. These powers are often used as an excuse by provincial NDP governments for failing to implement radical policies. The NDP government of Dave Barrett in British Columbia used this argument in the early 1970s to justify its refusal to nationalize the provincial telephone company.

The establishment of a provincial government committed to advancing the interests of workers and their allies and challenging capitalist control of the economy would immediately lead to a head-on confrontation between the government and the federal state.

Quebec and the pan-Canadian struggle for power

The dynamic of the fight for government in Quebec is quite different than in the English Canadian provinces. The government of Quebec is not just another provincial government like the others. It, not the federal government, is viewed by Québécois as their *national* government.

One of the major expressions of the denial of Quebec's right to self-determination is the completely subordinate status of Quebec to the federal state. Thus the fight to strengthen its powers against those of Ottawa is not, as in English Canada, a narrow fight for "provincial rights" of little interest to working people. It is one of the major forms of the struggle against national oppression.

Historically there has been a series of confrontations with Ottawa concerning the powers of the Quebec government over language, education, the economy, and communications and culture. It was this issue that was at the heart of the massive battles from 1980 to 1982 over the Quebec referendum and the new federal constitution. The Québécois fought to win greater powers for their government and to decide for themselves what Quebec's exact relation to Canada should be.

Ottawa, on the other hand, was determined to gut even further the limited governmental powers Quebec had won through previous battles. For example, prior to the imposition of the federal constitution, the PQ government was able to implement Bill 101 in defense of the French language. Today the federal government and courts have disallowed most of the provisions of that bill.

As the class struggle deepens, so too will the fight of Québécois to win greater political control over their own national life. This can take the form of a fight for an independent Quebec, as it has for much of the past 15 years, or even for some form of autonomy. Thus the estab-

lishment of an independent Quebec could well coincide with — or lead to — the forging of a workers government of Quebec.

Imperialism is acutely aware of the revolutionary dynamic of the independence struggle. When the PQ was elected in 1976 one Wall Street banker explained, "It's not so much an independent Quebec I fear as the danger of it becoming a workers republic of Quebec."

The Quebec national liberation struggle is not counterposed to the fight for a workers and farmers government in Ottawa. On the contrary, with the deepening of the national struggle the necessity of a united struggle against the federal state by workers in the two nations will become more important than ever. This alliance would be even more sharply posed with the establishment of an independent Quebec, which would precipitate a life and death battle with Canadian imperialism.

Workers in both nations face the same ruling class, the same state, and in many cases the same corporations. There is, thus, an objective, material basis for greater unity between workers in Quebec and English Canada.

That is what underlay the CIO organizing drive in English Canada and Quebec as well as the United States in the 1930s and 1940s. It was also key in leading to the creation of the CLC as a single pan-Canadian labor federation in 1956 and the establishment of binational public sector unions in the 1960s.

As the federal government steps up its attacks on the pan-Canadian working class, it will provoke a broad movement among the ranks to overcome their national divisions and wage a common struggle to defend and advance workers' interests.

That is exactly what happened in 1976 as a result of the imposition of wage controls. The Trudeau government's attack led to the most powerful united struggle of workers in English Canada and Quebec since the rise of the CIO in the 1930s — the Oct. 14, 1976, one-day strike of one million against wage controls. At the same time, it *also* led to a deepening of national consciousness, helping bring about the election of the PQ one month later. These two developments sparked a major debate in the cross-country labor movement on how this fighting unity could be reinforced and labor's national divisions overcome in the face of the federal government's huge political offensive against the PQ government.

Four of the most important pan-Canadian unions — autoworkers, steelworkers, the postal workers, and CUPE — adopted formal positions endorsing Quebec's right to self-determination. The CLC's 1978 convention refused to support Trudeau's anti-Quebec campaign. In 1980 CLC President Dennis McDermott was forced to declare the Congress's support for the right of Québécois to decide their own future in the Quebec referendum.

Since then, the federal government has been very careful not to provoke further united battles of the pan-Canadian labor movement. Trudeau understands that such unity in struggle would deepen English Canadian workers'

support for Québécois national rights and further the development of a pan-Canadian class-struggle left wing in the unions.

To counter this, Trudeau opted for the oldest and most successful of ruling-class tactics: divide and rule. Sweeping attacks on the labor movement were launched, but only one province at a time. Last winter it was Quebec; this fall, British Columbia.

At the same time, Quebec was singled out for a massive attack in the 1980 referendum, the constitution fight, and the huge cutbacks in social expenditures. The government's aim was to decisively weaken the Quebec labor movement and to deepen the national divisions in the pan-Canadian working class before launching a new frontal assault.

Trudeau was aided and abetted in this goal by the reformist misleaders of the working class, particularly those in English Canada. The NDP leadership played a particularly treacherous role. They supported the Liberals and opposed the Québécois in both the referendum and in the constitution fight and failed to come to the defense of the Quebec Common Front.

The ruling class has had some success with this tactic, above all in inflicting major blows against Quebec. But the results have fallen far short of its goals. Not only did the massive struggles waged by workers in Quebec and British Columbia prevent the ruling class from smashing the labor movement, but further progress was made in building solidarity between workers in English Canada and Quebec.

The tendency toward greater pan-Canadian unity can only deepen as the federal government steps up its antilabor offensive. As this occurs, we will find increasing openness to our perspective of a united struggle for government by workers in both nations.

Federal elections

We in the Revolutionary Workers League have a major opening to advance this perspective in the federal elections, which must take place sometime in 1984 or early 1985.

This will be the most important federal election in many years. It will take place in the midst of the worst economic crisis of the capitalist system in half a century, at a time of escalating counterrevolutionary wars in Central America and the Middle East and a massive offensive by the ruling class against working people, Québécois, women, farmers, and youth.

It also comes at a time when the crisis of political perspectives in the workers movement is deeper than ever. Apart from ourselves, there is virtually no layer or even individual in the union leadership or any political current in the workers movement that is advancing a political perspective that can unite the pan-Canadian labor movement in the fight for government.

The NDP cannot credibly claim to present itself as a governmental alternative at the federal level. Since the party leadership's repudiation of any support for Quebec's national rights, the party has lost all significant support



Toronto garment workers during Oct. 14, 1976, general strike.

in Quebec.

The trade union bureaucracy, for its part, rarely mentions the fight for an NDP government in Ottawa. Recently some union leaders have begun to hint that labor's policy for the next federal election should be to stop Tory leader Brian Mulroney at any cost. That is, they implicitly propose a Liberal-NDP-labor alliance against the Tories.

The Communist Party has already advanced a similar perspective with its enthusiastic support for Trudeau's Canadian nationalist policies and for his peace initiative. The CP's central election slogan will be "Put Canada First"! Of course the CP has always counterposed its perspective of building a multiclass "anti-monopoly coalition" to support for independent labor political action — the fight in English Canada for an NDP government and for a labor party in Quebec. But its back-handed support of the Liberals against Mulroney is probably the most open backing by the CP for a ruling-class party since its support for Mackenzie King's Liberals in World War Two.

These perspectives not only undercut the fight for a workers government, they undermine the working class capacity to wage defensive struggles against the federal government's attacks.

In Quebec the crisis of political perspectives is even deeper. The leaders of the two key unions in the Quebec Federation of Labor (FTQ) — the Steelworkers and the UAW — are central leaders of the newly formed Nationalist Party (PN) in Quebec.

The formation of the Nationalist Party reflects the growing recognition among Québécois workers and nationalist militants of the need to wage a political struggle at the federal level. However, while it could help promote a broader discussion on the national question in the federal elections, it has so far had very little political impact in Quebec.

The aim of the PN is not to mobilize Québécois against Canadian imperialism, but only to elect a sufficient number of MPs to act as a pressure group in Ottawa. Initiated by the

PQ, the PN is a bourgeois nationalist party. It fully supports the capitalist system. And it even fails to advance a radical program on the national question. For example, it takes no position on Quebec independence.

Despite the involvement of top union officers in the party's leadership, the Nationalist Party has no orientation toward the labor movement in Quebec, much less toward an alliance with workers in English Canada. Instead, it hopes to be able to wheel and deal with the two main parties of Canadian imperialism in order to win a few concessions for Quebec.

A socialist alternative

The perspective of the RWL is the opposite of the class-collaborationist schemes proposed by the NDP, the trade union leaderships, and the Nationalist Party.

Our federal election campaign will put forward a socialist alternative, a strategy to unite workers in English Canada and Quebec in a common political struggle for government.

Over the next few months we will discuss in more detail our overall perspective for this campaign, including the question of running RWL candidates in English Canada and Quebec. That discussion will be based on the very rich experiences we have had in concretizing our governmental perspective in the struggles of the Common Front and Operation Solidarity.

Our election campaign will center on the need for the labor movement in Quebec to launch a labor party to lead the fight against national oppression and class exploitation. We will call on the unions in English Canada to step up their support for the NDP and wage a fight within the party to transform it into a fighting labor party — a party that unconditionally defends the national rights of Québécois and advances an independent working-class foreign policy in the fight against the imperialist war drive. And we will explain the necessity of uniting the working-class movement in the two nations in the fight for an NDP-Quebec labor government in Ottawa.

Our goal in this campaign is not to put forward the RWL as a governmental alternative today. Rather, it will contribute to the much-needed discussion in the working class on how its mass organizations can wage this struggle for power.

It provides us with an unprecedented opportunity to reach a broad audience of working people with the socialist alternative to capitalism's crisis, to imperialist war, to national oppression, and to sexual discrimination. It will be invaluable in advancing our efforts to build a Marxist current in the industrial unions, the NDP, and the Quebec national movement; to put forward our perspective for the construction of a mass antiwar movement centered in the working class; to deepen the working-class fight in defense of women's right to abortion; to win new readers for the socialist press; and to recruit to our party and youth. □

Thatcher's new assault on the unions

Increasing polarization in the trade union leadership

By Steve Roberts

[The following article appeared in the February 27 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a fortnightly review published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

* * *

A new and fundamental assault on the rights of Britain's ten million trade unionists is being launched by the Thatcher government. In 1984 laws will be enacted which aim to radically weaken the traditional ties between the trade unions and the Labour Party. Legislation already introduced by the Tories in their 1979-83 term of office will be used to decimate trade union membership by destroying the "closed shop" system.

The trade union movement, led by the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the single confederation to which the overwhelming majority of unions are affiliated, is in poor shape to resist. In the first serious test of the new trade union legislation, last December the printers union, the National Graphical Association (NGA), suffered a stunning defeat at the hands of the government. Far from drawing any les-

sons from the experience, the majority of the union leaderships have now approved a new strategy which aims to compromise with the Tories, moving along the road to American-style "business unionism."

However there is an increasing polarisation between the right and left in the trade union bureaucracy as a reaction to this policy of capitulation. At the base of the unions, "Broad Left" currents are winning increasing support for their platforms of union reform and are linking up with the left of the Labour Party.

The coming year will pose major tests for this new left. 1984 could be the year which sees the face of the British labour movement undergo its most fundamental change for fifty years.

Mass unemployment has been a potent weapon for the Conservative government in their battle with the unions. Even using the official statistics, which understate the true total by over a million, unemployment has risen from 1.2 million in May 1979 when Margaret Thatcher came to power to 3.2 million in December 1983. The level of economic militancy has declined accordingly.

in trade unions in 1979 stood at 52 percent. This has declined only marginally to its current level of 49.6 percent largely due to the continuing influx of new female membership.

Living standards of those in work have risen by 7 percent in the last four years, while hours worked, although still among the highest in Western Europe, have declined from an average 46-hour to a 44-hour working week for a male manual worker.

This latter figure is attributable in part to the effects of the recession rather than victories won in collective bargaining. And the average incomes of families taken as a whole have fallen by 2 percent in the last four years. But it is by no means the case that the British working class have suffered any defeat comparable in its effects to the defeat of the General Strike of 1926 — the traditional bench mark for assessing the health or otherwise of the labour movement in Britain.

The Tories aim to inflict precisely this type of defeat on the unions in the period leading up to the next general election, due in 1988. They have two principal objectives. The first is to radically restrict the right of the unions to organise their own political activities independently of the bourgeois parties through the Labour Party. The second is to reduce trade union membership by anything up to a half of its present figure.

The Tories and employers are using the legal system more and more intensively to achieve their goals. Two Acts of Parliament passed in Thatcher's previous term of office had the effect of:

- removing the right to picket by restricting numbers on each picket to six;
- removing legal immunity for "secondary" action by unions in cases where either workers in dispute picket other branches, suppliers, or customers of their own firm, or where workers take solidarity action in support of other strikers;
- outlawing the closed shop system whereby one has to be a member of a union in order to work in certain workplaces;
- making unions and their leaderships liable for up to £250,000 damages to anyone who can claim to have suffered loss as a result of many different types of trade union activities.

Union-busting bosses

All these facets of Tory policy on the unions were deployed during the dispute between the National Graphical Association and the Stockport Messenger group of newspapers.



Union membership is down, despite influx of female workers.

YEAR	NO. OF STRIKE DAYS LOST (IN MILLIONS)
1979	29.5
1980	12.0
1981	4.3
1982	5.3
1983	3.6

The level of trade union membership has dropped from its high point of 12.2 million in 1979 to below 10 million today. But the effect at the rank-and-file level has been even more radical. The number of shop stewards (trade union representatives elected in the workplace by section) has declined from 130,000 to 80,000 in the manufacturing sector over the same period. Among those, the number of shop stewards who work full time in their union activities has fallen from 4,000 to 2,000.

In British Leyland, where the work force has been reduced by nearly 100,000 and where the number of shop stewards has declined by over 50, the management have managed to jack up productivity from six cars a worker in 1979 to 40 cars a worker in 1983.

However, despite all this, the Tories have not so far managed to crack the fundamental organisational strength of the trade union movement. The proportion of the work force

The battle between one of the strongest and richest unions in the Trades Union Congress and a particularly belligerent newspaper employer was rightly seen as a test case in the confrontation between the unions and the government.

The dispute has to be seen against the background of attempts by all the newspaper proprietors to introduce new technology into the industry. The largely successful resistance of the unions to the effects of changes in working practices made the newspaper employers one of the most vociferous sections of the bosses in demanding an end to the closed shop. So when Eddie Shah, a newspaper-group owner in the northwest of England, decided to sack six of his employees belonging to the National Graphical Association, the most aggressive sectors of the capitalist class rallied to his side, backing him through the right-wing bosses' organisation, the Institute of Directors.

Shah hired scab labour to replace the sacked workers, and mass pickets of up to 4,000 militants battled with police outside the plant. The NGA called on the Trades Union Congress to back them with industrial action in line with previous policy. But both the TUC and Labour Party leadership refused to support the NGA beyond the limits of the law. Both the picketing and solidarity action taken by the NGA during the dispute were outside the terms of the 1980 and 1982 Employment Acts. Any effective action by the NGA in its own defence was ruled out by the terms of support dictated by the Labour and TUC leaders. The NGA caved in and the government claimed a famous victory.

The second front on which the government has attacked union organisation in recent months has been the right to strike in the so-called "essential services." The unlikely arena for the government to begin its attacks on the public sector unions in the health service, the fire brigades, the power stations, and elsewhere was the secret communications centre in Cheltenham. The 7,000 staff at the centre are to be banned from trade union membership "in the interests of national security." The workers are to be offered £1,000 as an inducement to give up their rights. Those who do not accept are to be transferred to other government offices or sacked.

The TUC leaders correctly saw this move as having more general implications for public sector trade unionists. Following the announcement, thousands of other civil service staff went on strike to protest against the government's decision. However, without taking any further action and despite government confusion on the issue, the TUC leaders offered the government a "no strike" clause in return for the right of union organisation. Given that such a clause is exactly what the government is looking for elsewhere in the public sector, the TUC's attempted compromise, like their betrayal of the NGA, is a major blow.

The public sector unions are sure to be in the

front line of the government's attacks. In the health service, for example, independent trade unionism is under attack with the growth of Joint Consultative Committees with management which militate against independent trade unionism. In addition the widespread "privatisation" of public services which contract out to private capital, either in part or whole, services previously supplied by the state has as one of its principal objectives the destruction of union organisation in the public sector.

New Tory laws

However, it is the very structure of the labour movement that the Tories mean to change with their next round of trade union legislation.

Legislation currently before Parliament would:

- demand ballots within the unions to ensure that union executives should be directly elected by their members at least once every five years;
- make industrial action called by the union without a secret ballot of the members involved subject to legal action by employers;
- require union members once every 10 years to ballot on whether they can have a "political fund" which allows them to contribute to the Labour Party.

Given the undemocratic structure of many of Britain's trade unions, the Tories feel that they command widespread support for the first of these two clauses. But their overall effect will be to allow the state to intervene at will into the internal functioning of the unions with demands of secret ballots and court actions taken by individual union members who claim irregularities in the functioning of the unions.

But it is the clause relating to the Labour Party which will have the most far-reaching effects. The Labour Party was established by the unions in order to carry out the fight to defend living standards at the political level. From the very beginning the orientation of the Party has been controlled by the union leadership, checked only by the Tendency of the Parliamentary Labour Party (consisting of the party's MPs) to be responsible to the state apparatus.

Given that 77 percent of the party's funds come from the unions, a significant reduction of that amount would force the Labour Party to turn to state funding, which would be used to establish an even greater autonomy of the Parliamentary Labour Party from any form of labour movement control.

The attitude of the TUC to these attacks has undergone a major change in the four years of Thatcher's rule. When the government's intentions were first announced, the TUC adopted policy to oppose them, up to and including industrial action to support unions who ran foul of the laws. The TUC also refused to have any discussions with the government on the question of laws restricting trade union rights argu-

ing, rightly, that any such collaboration would give the legislation legitimacy.

The first major change in this policy occurred at the TUC Congress which took place in September 1983. The Congress was the first opportunity for the labour movement to assess the results of the June general election where the Tories won a massive 144-seat parliamentary majority on a reduced share of the vote, thanks largely to the large number of votes won by the Social Democratic Party/Liberal Alliance which finished only 2 percent behind the Labour Party. (See *International Viewpoint*, No 33, June 27, 1983.)

Coalitionist strategy

At the Congress, instead of accepting the policy urged by the miners' leader Arthur Scargill of the necessity of extraparliamentary action to confront the Tories' massive majority, the delegates voted for a major step to the right. On the advice of Len Murray, the TUC general secretary, the Congress voted to meet the government to discuss the proposals for trade union reform.

Murray went on to talk of the need to discuss with "any political party which has a chance of forming a government in the future." This was a clear endorsement of proposals made by the right-wing leaders that the trade unions should break their political strategy of exclusively pursuing their political goals through the Labour Party and instead also have a relationship with the candidates of bourgeois parties, particularly those of the Alliance.

This political line of coalitionism has a long and dishonourable tradition in the British labour movement. Before the founding of the Labour Party in the shape of the Labour Representation Group in 1900, the trade unions pursued a policy of backing the Liberal Party. Even after this date many trade unions continued to back both Labour and Liberal candidates.

Even at the 1983 Congress almost one-third of the TUC was not affiliated to the Labour Party. Five major unions have a majority of their members opting out of the political levy for the Party, and recent opinion polls show that other major unions like the Transport and General Workers Union, the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, the General and Municipal Workers Union, the electricians' union, the shopworkers' union, and the National Union of Railwaymen would also disaffiliate if ballots of the membership were held. Among the major unions polled, only the National Union of Mineworkers and the National Union of Public Employees would have supported continued affiliation to the Labour Party.

When the government's proposed legislation is passed it will compel the affiliated unions to hold "mini-general elections" in the form of ballots to decide whether Labour Party affiliation is to be continued. Obviously, given the decline of commitment to Labour within the unions (the 1983 general election saw, for

the first time, a majority of trade unionists vote against Labour), a major campaign will be needed to reverse the trends evidenced above.

However, the present leadership of the TUC are not prepared to lead such a campaign. In response to calls by Frank Chapple of the electricians' union and other right-wing leaders for wholesale changes in the trade union movement to "blunt the attacks made on us . . . and strengthen our appeal in the final part of the twentieth century" general secretary Murray produced a document entitled *Strategy for the Future*.

Approved by the January General Council of the TUC, the paper calls for collaboration with governments and parties of all political colours, polemicises against the use of strike action, and implies strongly that the unions should again advocate an incomes policy.

General Council acceptance of the plan was unsurprising since the TUC leadership had moved radically to the right at the 1983 Congress. While this shift was partly due to constitutional changes which diminished the weight of smaller and traditionally more militant unions, it also reflected a growing shift to the right amongst the major unions.

Even in the mineworkers union the recent election for general secretary produced a wafer-thin majority for the candidate of the left. Another close result is predicted for the result of the up-coming election for the general secretary of the million-strong Transport and General Workers Union, the traditional bastion of the left-centre within the labour movement.

Polarisation in unions

Another vitally important union to swing to the right in the last decade was the AUEW, the metal workers union, once a motor force of the left under Hugh Scanlon at the beginning of the 1970s, now a major force of the right under Terry Duffy.

With the exception of Arthur Scargill, the reaction of the left bureaucracy to the trend to the right has been at best acquiescence and at worst active collaboration in such major betrayals as that of the train drivers and health-workers strikes in 1982.

But the NGA dispute produced a polarisation within the General Council of the TUC. The left strongly opposed the overturning of TUC policy by Len Murray and called a separate meeting to discuss how to support the printers union in the dispute. The meeting produced nothing, partly due to the defeatist attitude of the NGA leadership. However, the division revealed major tensions within the union movement and the potential for the left to organise itself in opposition to the trend towards apolitical "business unionism."

The forces that could fight for the organisation of a new Minority Movement* in British

*The Minority Movement was founded in 1924 through an initiative of the British Communist Party guided by the Comintern. At its height it represented over a million industrial workers. It declined after the defeat of the 1926 General Strike and was wound-up in the 1930s.



Miners union leader Arthur Scargill.

trade unions certainly exist among the rank-and-file leadership. Their most obvious expression has been through the growth of new "Broad Left" formations in a certain number of unions. These Broad Lefts have emerged most strikingly in the telecommunications engineers union, the civil servants union and other white-collar unions, the electricians' union, and one has been recently founded in the Transport and General Workers Union.

Such formations have existed before in the unions, most notably in the AUEW. However, previously they have served as a mechanism for the British Communist Party to cement their alliance with the left trade union bureaucracy, and most degenerated in the downturn of the latter part of the 1970s into networks of middle-layer bureaucrats.

While these features are not absent from the make-up of the new Broad Lefts, the dead hand of the Communist Party does not exercise decisive control over them. This reflects the decline of both the numerical and industrial strength of the CP. In the last 15 years the membership of the party has declined from 28,000 to 15,000. From 1967-73, through the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, the CP was able to call conferences of thousands of rank-and-file delegates from workplaces and even, on occasion, to call unofficial industrial action.

The impetus for the growth of the new Broad Lefts has not come from the CP, therefore, but from the impact of the rise of the Bennite left inside the Labour Party. The Bennite current set out in 1980 to reform the Labour Party in such a way that there could be no recurrence of the disastrous experience of the Wilson and Callaghan governments of 1974-79.

Their platform consisted of direct election of

the leader by the party instead of by Labour MPs, reselection of MPs by the local branches of the Party and the drawing up of the election manifesto by the party's national executive on the basis of conference policy rather than by the parliamentary leadership.

While the reform programme succeeded in the first two of its objectives, the struggle for leadership of the Party by its author, Tony Benn, foundered on the rock of the bloc vote exercised by the unions in the Labour Party conference. The bloc vote, which entitles the unions to 6 million votes in the Labour Party conference as opposed to the 600,000 exercised by the local parties, gives the union bureaucrats an effective veto to left advance.

A section of the Bennite left, therefore, turned its attentions to the problem of how to overcome this veto and to take on the right-wing leadership of the unions in an analogous way to that of the Labour Party leadership.

However, as is traditional with British left social democracy, the Bennite current was not organized efficiently at the base of the unions. The one figure who could have given such a movement national leadership, Scargill, was focusing his efforts exclusively on the miners union.

The major new force that benefited from this Bennite impulse was Militant, a centrist current within the Labour Party, whose number of supporters now probably stands at 4,500. However, ironically for a Labour Party tendency, the Militant has not sought to direct the new Broad Left forces towards active engagement within the Labour Party and instead has concentrated on getting its supporters elected to high-ranking positions within the trade union movement. While its gains in this respect have been impressive, the growing rightward drift of the Militant's politics in general (they refused to call for the recall of the British task-force from the Malvinas) and their economic practice inside the unions, has meant that they have been unable to offer a distinct line from that of the Communist Party — still a major force on the trade union left.

Left alternatives

The decline of the Socialist Workers Party, the 1,500-strong organisation led by Tony Cliff, in the trade unions also diminished the possibilities of the left alternative being built. The SWP diagnosis of a downturn in the class struggle, while based in a reality, led them to a sectarian and abstentionist policy towards the battle in the unions. While they closed down their frontist "rank and file" organisations, they declared their indifference to the outcome of the left/right fight inside the Labour Party and concentrated their fire on "exposing" Scargill, Benn, and [Ken] Livingstone.

The SWP analysis that nothing could be built at a national level also meant a de facto boycott of the Broad Lefts. Instead they concentrated on rebuilding basic trade unionism in the workplace. Their ultra-left attitude towards the Labour Party led their militants to oppose

affiliation to the Labour Party in such unions as the local government officers which balloted on the issue. This orientation has meant that many of the numerous shop stewards who joined the organisation in the 1970s have now left, some of them taking the SWP's advice at face value and devoting themselves exclusively to trade union work, others drifting out of activity altogether.

Supporters of *Socialist Action* have been a significant component of Broad Lefts in some of the unions. Their general strategy was spelled out by Pat Hickey, the paper's industrial correspondent, in the 6 January issue of the paper.

"What the defence of the trade union movement now depends on is the effective organisation of the left wing within it. Furthermore, that left — those forces which really fight for independence and Labour-affiliated trade unionism — has to be organised at every level.

"Attacks such as that on affiliation to the Labour Party, or on the closed shop, cannot just be fought on the local level — although the struggle starts there. It demands national organisation of those prepared to defend an independent Labour-affiliated trade union movement and basing that on local organisation at every level.

"This perspective for reversing the whole right-wing trend inside the unions is today a minority one within the trade unions — there is no doubt of that. But the right wing can only be defeated if that minority is organised to lead the fight back against the Tories at every level.

"It needs a quite different type of organisation to that which the left trade union leaders have relied on. Arthur Scargill and others have opposed the right wing mainly on the committees in the TUC or their own particular sectors. They have not challenged the right wing across the trade union movement as a whole. . . .

"There is no point in waiting for an initiative to come from the top. The left on the TUC has talked much of its opposition to Thatcher and to the present line of the general council. Action has come much less often.

"In order to win the ballots on affiliation to the Labour Party and on closed shop organisation, locally and in each union, preparation has to start now.

"Each constituency Labour Party needs to establish a campaign to win the ballot on affiliation to the Labour Party locally. Every trade union branch, every Broad Left needs to campaign to win the vote on affiliation and the closed shop. Coupled with support for every individual struggle which takes place, these are the single most important issues facing the trade union and labour movement in 1984."

The fact that the basic organisation of the British working class remains intact means that the Tory offensive will be met by major struggles in the next period. However, given the predominance of the right wing within the leadership of the trade union movement and the possible loss of jobs involved for those who do fight, many workers will be cautious before taking on the employers and government. That

caution will be reinforced by the debacle of the NGA dispute.

A dual process is needed to combat this pessimism. Firstly a national lead, however inadequate, has to be given. Secondly those militants who have drawn the lessons of the succession of defeats suffered by the labour movement at the hands of the Tories need to be organised, as a minority, to struggle for the leadership at every level. It is within such a current, in action, that workers will begin to draw revolutionary socialist conclusions and

U.S. role in Thatcher's war

Pentagon aid crucial to 1982 defeat of Argentina

Extensive U.S. military support was indispensable to British imperialism's 1982 victory over Argentina in the war over the Malvinas (Falklands) Islands, a special report in the March 3 issue of the London weekly *Economist* concluded.

"The British operation to recapture the Falklands in 1982 could not have been mounted, let alone won, without American help," the magazine said. It provided details on U.S. aid ranging from millions of gallons of aviation fuel to high-technology missiles to intelligence and communications support. According to the *Economist*, Washington was even prepared to provide a U.S. warship had Argentina been able to sink a British aircraft carrier.

The government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher dispatched the British fleet to the South Atlantic in April 1982 after Argentine military forces landed on the Malvinas Islands and restored Argentine sovereignty there. The islands had been seized from Argentina by the British empire in 1833 and ruled as a colony, the Falkland Islands, from then on.

After more than six weeks of war, in which hundreds of Argentine and British soldiers, sailors, and aviators were killed, London's colonial rule was forcibly restored.

While the Reagan administration took a phony stance of formal "neutrality" in the early stages of the conflict, it was actually in full support of London all along. The U.S. role was "splendid," Thatcher told Parliament after the British victory — Britain got "everything we asked for," she said.

Just how much Britain did get has now been revealed by the *Economist*. "An astonishing 12.5m [million] gallons of aviation fuel were diverted from American defence supplies for British use," the magazine reported. "The British even asked for an American tanker to be turned round in mid-Atlantic. American kerosine filled the tanks of Victor refuellers, Nimrod reconnaissance planes, the Vulcans which bombed Port Stanley, the C-130s which dropped supplies to ships and troops ashore. . . . Britain could have obtained this fuel on the open market, but this would have been a laborious and time-consuming business. Time was of the essence."

decide on the necessity to break with all varieties of reformism.

Neither are such hopes utopian. Plans are afoot for Benn and Scargill to launch a joint newspaper which will ally the left in the unions and the left in the Labour Party in a much more durable way than heretofore. The ability of revolutionary Marxists to project a line of march within the forces attracted by such foci will be an important factor both in influencing the struggles and the face of the left in the years to come. □

As for weapons, U.S.-supplied Sidewinder anti-aircraft missiles were "the single most decisive weapon of the campaign." These sophisticated, heat-seeking missiles "were made available from American front-line stocks immediately. . . . America sent other missiles: the Shrike radar-seekers, the Harpoon anti-shiping missile and eight shoulder-held Stinger anti-aircraft systems."

"Most important of all," the *Economist* said, "was intelligence aid." The U.S. military even shifted a spy satellite from its normal orbit to cover the South Atlantic. "The Americans claim '98%' of British intelligence of Argentine movements came from them," the report said.

According to the *Economist*, "Most military analysts today regard the strategic balance in the South Atlantic as having been extremely close." Had the Argentine forces been able to put out of action one of the two British aircraft carriers involved in the war, this could have brought on "a British defeat or a military stalemate." Hence U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger's "most remarkable offer of the war: to fill the most glaring gap which would open up in Admiral Woodward's armoury should anything happen to either of his carriers, *Hermes* and *Invincible*. It was proposed that an amphibious assault ship of about the same size, *USS Guam*, with capacity to handle helicopters and Harriers [jet fighters] would simply be turned over to the Royal Navy." This proved unnecessary, however.

The *Economist* pointed out that the Pentagon's aid to the British armed forces in the Malvinas War was all "cleared . . . with President Reagan" and personally supervised by Weinberger.

Pentagon officials interviewed by the *Washington Post* "confirmed many of the details" in the *Economist's* account, the newspaper's March 7 edition reported. These officials "spoke of extraordinary coordination between the American and British services."

Both Weinberger and the U.S. Navy high command, the *Post* reported, "feared that Britain could be sailing into a disaster and that a military defeat at the hands of Argentina would be a severe setback to the deterrent quality of the entire North Atlantic alliance." □

Strikers bring mines to standstill

Coal miners in head-on clash with Tory government

By Bruce Kimball

NOTTINGHAM — Most areas of the British coalfields are at a standstill in a strike over pit closures. More than 100,000 of the 183,000 miners are on strike, and pickets are persuading others to stop work.

This strike brings miners and those who take solidarity action into a head-on confrontation with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Tory government and its antiunion laws.

The miners' union, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), is being dragged through the courts to stop picketing. This is a repeat of the tactics used in a recent clash with the printers' union, the National Graphical Association (NGA). But this time the Tories are taking on the most powerful union in Britain, whose 1974 strike brought down the previous Tory government of Edward Heath.

Both rail unions, the seafarers union, and the 1.8-million-strong transport workers union, which organizes the dockers and lorry drivers [truckers], have declared full support for the miners by pledging not to move coal. This secondary action will lead to more bitter confrontations over the Tory laws. Other national trade unions not directly affected have also pledged solidarity.

The Trades Union Congress (TUC) turned its back on the NGA. But when civil service unions were banned at the government spy center at Cheltenham, the TUC was forced to act. A day of strike action, called on 36 hours' notice, pulled out a million engineers, transport, public sector, and other workers. This showed that hundreds of thousands of workers are waiting for a lead to take on the Tories. Now the miners' strike keeps the pressure on the TUC to take a more defiant stand.

In 1983, Welsh miners went on strike against closures. They approached other mining areas for solidarity, but this was rejected by a majority in a national strike ballot. Among the 81,000 who voted for a strike, a discussion began to prepare a future fightback. They felt that they had been "constitutionalized out of action" by the national ballot and would have to confront the problem of a union deeply divided by the actions of the National Coal Board (NCB) and misleaders like Lord Joe Gormley, the past president of the NUM.

In the 1960s, NUM leaders accepted the closures of hundreds of pits on the grounds that they were not economically viable. They fell for government promises of a supposed secure future with the replacement pits and investment. This profit-and-loss rationale for closing pits is now a major card in the Tories' hand. And the new leadership, led by Arthur Scar-

gill, is having to undo the damage done in the 1960s.

In 1977, Joe Gormley agreed to a new incentive scheme over the heads of the miners. This means 21 percent of the miners' wage is made up of productivity bonuses. Miners in high investment pits in an area like Nottingham get well over this average. This has divided miner against miner, with better off miners shunning confrontation with the NCB.

These divisions are boosted by Tory plans to concentrate production in those higher investment pits, at the expense of older pits in militant areas like Wales, Scotland, and Kent.

With right-wing union officials, the Tories, and the press playing on some miners' false sense of security, national ballots on strike action are a barrier to a fightback. So, after the 1983 defeat, militant miners prepared a different path toward national strike action. Their plan was to spread regional strikes — like the present Yorkshire strike against closure — to a national stoppage, by calling on basic trade union solidarity. Miners from the nonstriking areas are asked not to cross picket lines of "flying pickets" from Yorkshire. The "flying pickets" are volunteers from the striking mines and their active supporters. They travel around the country and set up picket lines at nonstriking mines in order to spread the strike.

This has been the pattern in recent weeks. While thousands of miners have been "picketed out," there have been some bitter clashes. In Nottinghamshire, one flying picket was killed. But this is not the result of an error of tactics on the part of strike leaders, as the defenders of a national ballot would have it. The bitterness reflects a real polarization in the miners' union as right-wing officials and the Tories try their divide-and-rule tactics.

Striking miners hope the example of their determined action to save jobs can overcome these divisions in the coalfields and strengthen the unity of the union. Their message is that no pit or job is safe and that selling jobs for inflated redundancy [unemployment] handouts means selling the future of whole communities.

When the Thatcher government won the 1979 election, the banner put forward for industry was "leaner but fitter." This meant a major shake-up of the nationalized industries — parcelling them up for private buyers, squeezing more profit out of fewer workers, and destroying union opposition to the cutbacks. The prospects for mining are devastating:

- Between 1979 and 1984, 59 pits shut with the loss of 40,000 jobs. One in three mining jobs could go if the Tories carry out their plans

to shut up to 90 pits by 1990.

- In the 1970s, pits were closed when coal ran out or geological conditions made it impossible to mine seams safely. Now the NCB insists on profits deciding the fate of pits. No matter how much good coal is there, or how needed it is in hospitals and homes, if the pit is not economically viable without subsidy, then it will be shut.

- The NCB plans for a smaller number of "super pits" stuffed with computer technology to replace production spread across the country. Whole coalfields will shut down. Instead of using new technology to shorten dangerously long working hours, it will be used to increase output from a decimated work force.

- "Leaner but fitter" has meant that whole coalfields will be starved of investment. Without these funds new seams cannot be mined or difficult geological conditions overcome. The pits join the closure list as uneconomic risks.

- The Tories cannot get away with this unless the back of the NUM is broken. They are aided by the divisive bonus scheme and arguments by right-wing officials that harder work and fewer strikes are the way to a secure future. Other tactics are used too. After decades of bitter battles, the NUM has won a certain veto over work practices. This has now been blatantly disregarded by the NCB, leading to bitter local flare-ups over manning and conditions.

In another attempt to break the miners as a force for social change, the Tories are prepared to replace coal with nuclear power — a planned increase of between 500 and 800 percent by the year 2000.

Threatened miners are particularly incensed by arguments that pits should shut because they are not economically viable. Aside from compensation still paid to the former private owners after nationalization, last year 366 million pounds interest found its way to the banks and speculators — that is a drain of 2 million pounds on every pit.

With their determined strike action, miners are saying enough is enough. In fighting for their jobs, they are pointing the way to other workers.

Demands for investment, early retirement, stepped-up youth recruitment, shorter hours, and cheap coal for environmentally sound and social use are part of their alternative to the butchery of the Tories.

By taking on the government they are forcing the hand of the gutless TUC leaders to unite the opposition to bring down the Tories. As the NUM president, Arthur Scargill, explained, "We are fighting for a government as loyal to our class as Thatcher is to hers." □