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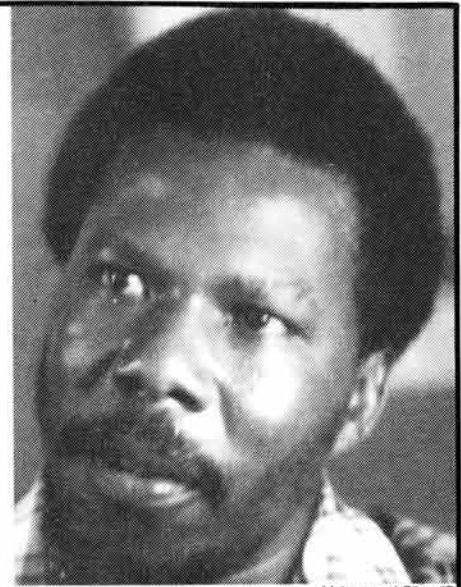
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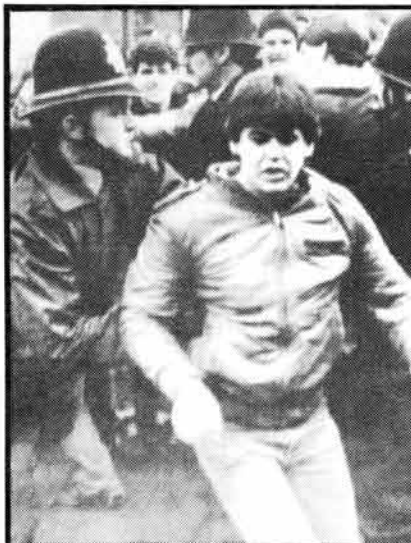
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GEORGE LOUISON

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Ending Centuries
of Degradation

U.S. war exercises threaten Central America

By Ernest Harsch

Behind a smokescreen of "democratic" elections in El Salvador, more U.S. troops, planes, and battleships are converging on Central America.

"The elections are not only a farce," declared a communiqué signed by Joaquín Villalobos, one of the five top commanders of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador. "They also constitute a cover for a plan for direct intervention by U.S. troops."

In the days before, during, and after the first round of the Salvadoran presidential elections on March 25 (see following article), the preparations for such U.S. intervention were advanced significantly, involving new provocations, threats, and acts of aggression against the insurgent workers and farmers of El Salvador, the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, and revolutionary Cuba itself.

All these moves underline the determination of the U.S. imperialists to deepen their war to halt the extension of the socialist revolution in Central America and to safeguard their domination over the region.

This is being done under the guise of seeking "peace" and "stability" in Central America.

For instance, Secretary of State George Shultz claimed on March 20 that more U.S. military assistance to Washington's allies in the region was needed to improve the "prospects for peace and negotiations." He was urging Congress to quickly approve the White House's request for an additional \$93 million in emergency aid for the Salvadoran dictatorship and \$21 million for the Nicaraguan counterrevolutionary bands that operate out of Honduras and Costa Rica.

The imperialists realize, however, that U.S. dollars and guns will not by themselves enable the local dictatorships and counterrevolutionary forces to overturn the workers and farmers government in Nicaragua or keep the workers and farmers of El Salvador from coming to power. Inevitably, U.S. combat troops will be needed.

Already in El Salvador, U.S. pilots are directly involved in the army's war, conducting spy flights over territory held by the FMLN liberation forces. This was confirmed on March 29 by Thomas Pickering, the U.S. ambassador, after a Salvadoran army commander revealed that information on guerrilla movements was radioed by U.S. pilots to government forces on the ground.

The constant U.S. military "maneuvers" that the Pentagon is organizing in Central America and the Caribbean are designed to lay

the groundwork for even deeper intervention. They help the Pentagon's planners refine their preparations for invasion and counterinsurgency, and they provide U.S. troops with valuable training under local conditions. These exercises also provide a cover for the construction of the storage depots, military bases, and new roads and airstrips necessary for a prolonged military intervention. This is particularly the case in Honduras, which borders on both Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Two new "maneuvers" have been announced. "Granadero I," a series of ground exercises in Honduras, was moved forward to April 1 from its original starting date in June. U.S. officials indicated this was done to coincide with the presidential elections in El Salvador.

"Ocean Venture '84," a massive naval and air operation in the Caribbean, is scheduled to begin on April 20.

At their peak, the two maneuvers will involve as many as 33,000 U.S. naval, ground, air, and marine personnel.

On March 26, the Nicaraguan government called these U.S. operations "unprecedented" and warned that they bring "even closer the possibility of military intervention against El Salvador and Nicaragua."

During Granadero I — a provocative reference to Washington's invasion of Grenada last October — U.S. troops will build new airfields in Honduras, train Honduran troops, and practice airborne attacks. The Pentagon revealed that two of the new airstrips, which it referred to as "assault airstrips," would be built near the borders of El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Salvadoran election a 'farce'

By Ernest Harsch

In an effort to obscure and justify U.S. imperialism's preparations for war in Central America, Washington continues to portray its policy in the region as one of support for "democracy and freedom." The Salvadoran presidential election, which was moved forward at Washington's insistence, was intended to provide more ammunition for this propaganda exercise.

On March 26, the day after the first round of voting was held, President Reagan hailed it as "another victory for freedom over tyranny, of liberty over repression and courage over intimidation."

In general, both Republican and Democratic congressmen quickly fell into line, using the

Plans for Ocean Venture '84 include, according to the *New York Times*, "a practice reinforcement and a simulated evacuation of the American base at Guantánamo" in Cuba, and "live firing exercises on Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican island of Vieques."

The sea exercises in the Caribbean will involve the aircraft carrier *America*, other warships, a Marine Amphibious Unit, 250 Strategic Air Command planes, and paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division.

This blatant show of force is aimed not only at the peoples of Cuba, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. It is also intended as a warning to the Soviet Union.

On March 26, the Soviet helicopter carrier *Leningrad*, the guided missile destroyer *Udaloy*, a diesel submarine, and a supply ship arrived in Havana. The *Leningrad* is the largest Soviet ship ever to visit Cuban waters.

This Soviet naval visit to the Caribbean came just one week after a Soviet oil tanker hit a mine in the Nicaraguan port of Puerto Sandino. The vessel was damaged and five Soviet sailors were injured.

The mining of Nicaragua's Atlantic and Pacific ports marks a new — and ominous — tightening of the imperialist-imposed blockade of that country. Besides the Soviet tanker, several other ships have hit mines, and some have been diverted to ports in other countries rather than run the risk of docking in Nicaragua.

On March 21, the Soviet government announced that it "holds the United States Government responsible for this grave crime," pointing out that it was Washington that financed and organized the "gangs of mercenaries and terrorists who intrude into Nicaraguan territory, commit banditry and violence and kill peaceful civilians."

The Nicaraguan government, on March 26, announced that it "has been obliged to call on the governments of the world to provide it with the technical and military means necessary to defend itself from the state terrorism the U.S. government has unleashed against the people of Nicaragua." □

election to cover their own approval for the White House's aggressive moves. Many indicated that Reagan's new military aid requests would now find easier passage through Congress. And on March 29 a substantial bipartisan majority in the Senate voted down two measures that would have required Reagan to obtain congressional approval before committing U.S. troops to combat in Central America.

An editorial in the March 27 issue of the liberal *Washington Post* hailed the election and declared, "The guerrillas refuse to put down their guns. The Salvadoran government should not be punished for this by having its armed forces kept on a short aid tether by the United States. Congress should vote the emergency aid."

In presenting their case, Reagan, Congress, and the big-business news media have consciously covered up the fact that the Salvadoran election was rigged from the very beginning.

It was an election organized by a dictatorship in the midst of a civil war. More than 45,000 Salvadorans have been killed by death squads and government troops over the past four years. All newspapers and radio stations independent of the dictatorship — except for those in the zones controlled by the FMLN — have been shut down by the army.

Under such conditions of repression, the FMLN and the organizations that support it chose not to participate in the election.

Thus, voters had no choice but to cast their ballots for one or another of the parties controlled by the Salvadoran capitalists and landlords, the oligarchy that has ruled the country on behalf of U.S. imperialism for decades.

Of the eight candidates for president, the top three were:

- José Napoleón Duarte, leader of the Christian Democratic Party, who was president from 1980 to 1982. Under his government, tens of thousands of Salvadorans were butchered by the army and death squads.

- Roberto D'Aubuisson, head of the ultrarightist Nationalist Republican Alliance — and of the death squads.

- Francisco José Guerrero of the National Conciliation Party, the traditional political instrument of the military during most of the 1960s and 1970s.

During the March 25 voting, Duarte received 43.4 percent of the votes, and D'Aubuisson came in second with 29.8 percent. Since neither won a majority, they will face a run-off election in late April or early May.

Although voting in El Salvador is compulsory, many Salvadorans did not vote.

Prior to the election, the FMLN and the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) made it clear that they "politically oppose the election, but we do not consider the electoral process a military target." In those areas under the control of the liberation forces, they recommended that people not vote. But in those areas under government control, people were urged to vote if they felt it was necessary in order to avoid reprisals against them by the armed forces or death squads.

A statement issued on March 26 in Mexico City by the FDR-FMLN Political-Diplomatic Commission reported that no voting took place in 89 of the country's 261 municipalities. "When compared with the 1982 elections, these results clearly show the advance and control achieved by the FMLN in El Salvador," the statement said.

Even in government-held areas, there were those who did not vote, despite the risk that entailed.

But many did. Some lined up for hours simply to get their identity documents stamped to show they had voted. Others cast their ballots — within the limited range of choices available to them — in the hopes that one of the

candidates would be able to find some way to end the years of warfare and bloodshed.

Yet voters had to contend with missing ballot boxes, closed polling stations, and all sorts of bureaucratic obstacles and mix-ups. Thousands who wanted to vote were unable to. Toward the end of the day, the computerized voter registration lists were abandoned, opening the way to even greater confusion and opportunities for fraud.

An analysis of the election in the March 28 *Wall Street Journal* acknowledged "widespread popular disillusionment with the electoral process growing out of Sunday's balloting difficulties."

Although all of the candidates are proimperialist and represent the interests of El Salvador's ruling 14 families, Washington is not indifferent to the outcome of the elections. Above all, it wants to see a stable regime installed, one that will be able to effectively pursue the war against the liberation forces.

But the elections could actually have the opposite result. The divisions within the Salvadoran ruling class over how to proceed have been reflected in the sharp frictions among the main candidates and parties, frictions that will undoubtedly continue no matter who wins the run-off.

In the context of a civil war, such political instability could provide the FMLN and its supporters with new openings to advance their struggle. The strikes by tens of thousands of Salvadoran workers in the weeks preceding the election show how explosive the social tensions are in the areas nominally under government control.

Thus, one additional consideration in Washington's decision to move up the start of its military operations in neighboring Honduras was its concern over the Salvadoran dictatorship's stability. The U.S. imperialists want to be in a position to move quickly if they have to. □

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U.S. arms to bolster Nimeiry

Libya warned of 'serious consequences'

By Ernest Harsch

In a further escalation of U.S. intervention in North Africa, Washington has rushed new military aid to the Sudanese government of President Gaafar al-Nimeiry.

It has done so to bolster Nimeiry's pro-imperialist regime against domestic opposition forces — including a resurgence of rebel actions in the south — as well as to threaten the government of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi in neighboring Libya.

The pretext for this move was the March 16 bombing of several buildings in Omdurman (part of the Khartoum metropolitan area) by an unidentified aircraft, in which five people were killed. Nimeiry quickly blamed Qaddafi for the raid, as did the Reagan administration in Washington. The Libyan government has denied the charge.

Two U.S. AWACS surveillance planes were dispatched to Egypt, supposedly to strengthen the Sudan's air defenses, but in fact as a provocation against Libya. Washington sent a note to Libya warning of "serious consequences" if anything happened to the two planes.

Throughout the week after the bombing, giant U.S. C-141 transport planes flew into a military airfield north of Khartoum with radar equipment, missiles, and Egyptian troops. The Egyptian regime, another close ally of Washington's in the region, has provided considerable military assistance to Nimeiry over the past few years.

This stepped-up imperialist involvement in the Sudan fits in with a broader pattern of U.S. threats, provocations, and direct acts of aggression against Libya in recent years. Washington hates the Qaddafi government, which has defied U.S. dictates in the region and provided backing to anti-imperialist fighters in numerous countries, including Chad, the Western Sahara, and the Sudan itself.

The March 16 bombing in Omdurman has all the earmarks of a set-up designed to justify this U.S. aggression. The official account of the bombing leaves many questions unanswered.

How was it possible for a plane to fly from the Kufra airbase in Libya to Omdurman and back — a distance of more than 1,600 miles — without being challenged by Sudanese air defenses?

Was the plane really a Soviet-made Tupolev bomber (Libya is the only country in the region known to have them), as the Sudanese and U.S. authorities claim? Some eyewitnesses insist it was not.

And why was the home of Sadiq al-Mahdi, an imprisoned opponent of Nimeiry's, a target of the bombing? This fact was omitted from

the official account.

According to a report from Khartoum in the March 24 London *Economist*, "Not a few Sudanese find the official version of the attack hard to swallow. Mr Numeiri often cries wolf and blames Colonel Qaddafi when things go wrong. So several conspiracy theories are circulating in Khartoum. Was it not a Tupolev at all but a Sudanese aircraft flown by dissident air force men? Was it the prelude to a planned coup? The leader of one of the southern Sudanese opposition movements promptly accused Mr Numeiri of ordering the bombing of Omdurman in order to whip up local, and Egyptian, support."

Whatever the case, the bombing came at a convenient time for Nimeiry. Just two weeks earlier, Gen. Omar Mohammed el-Tayeb, his first vice-president, was in Washington to request new U.S. arms. He met with Vice-president George Bush, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, Secretary of State George Shultz, and National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane.

Following Tayeb's visit, Vernon Walters, a retired general who serves as a top aide to Shultz, flew to Khartoum to discuss the details of further U.S. military assistance.

Even before Washington's latest move to shore up Nimeiry, the Sudanese regime was slated to receive \$166.5 million in U.S. military aid this year and \$190.7 million the next.



Part of a squadron of F-5 jet fighters has already been delivered.

The Sudan plays a strategic role in Washington's interventionist plans in North Africa and the Middle East. Besides taking a provocative stance toward Libya, the Nimeiry regime played a key role in backing the CIA-financed army of Hissène Habré in Chad and has made threats against neighboring Ethiopia. Several massive U.S. military exercises have been conducted in the Sudan, and the country is considered a possible staging area for Washington's Rapid Deployment Force.

Given this role, the U.S. imperialists have been especially concerned about the growing political and social unrest within the Sudan.

Since 1983, there has been a sharp rise in guerrilla actions in the impoverished south, which is populated by various Nilotic and other peoples, who are largely Christians or adherents of tribal beliefs. Southerners have long suffered discrimination and have repeatedly resisted efforts by the government in the Muslim, Arabic-speaking north to impose its domination over the south.

Several thousand fighters are now active in the south, many of them former government soldiers from garrisons in three southern towns that mutinied in May 1983. They have shot down military aircraft, attacked oil installations, and shelled towns. Thousands have been killed on both sides in the fighting.

There are two main rebel groups. The Anyanya II traces its roots back to the secessionist Anyanya movement that waged a civil war against the northern regime from 1955 to 1972. But the larger group today is the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which portrays its fight against the Nimeiry regime as a "national struggle" involving all Sudanese.

The Libyan government has made no secret of its support for the rebels. In a March 2 speech, Qaddafi explained that Libya was "allied with the popular revolution in the southern Sudan." The Ethiopian government is also reported to be backing the guerrillas.

General Tayeb has accused the outlawed Communist Party, which is based in the north, of coordinating its activities with the SPLM, claiming "the conspiracy is aimed at both southern and northern Sudan."

This reflects the regime's concern that organized opposition could also spread to the more populous Arabic-speaking north. Outbursts of popular discontent have sporadically broken out in Khartoum and elsewhere. In 1982, for example, austerity measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund led to food riots in the capital.

Nimeiry's effort to use the specter of Libyan "aggression" to rally support for his regime has not been particularly successful. Following the March 16 bombing, the government appealed for mass solidarity demonstrations in Khartoum. Only 500 people turned out. □

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Cuba, Angola reject 'linkage'

State conditions for Cuban troop pullout

[The following is a joint declaration of the governments of Cuba and Angola, issued in Havana on March 19. It was signed by Fidel Castro, the Cuban president and first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, and by José Eduardo dos Santos, the Angolan president and head of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

[The declaration came in the midst of a series of negotiations between the Angolan and South African governments concerning a withdrawal of South African troops from southern Angola. The apartheid regime has also indicated a willingness to discuss the possible independence of its colony of Namibia, but only on the condition that the Cuban troops now in Angola first withdraw. This demand, known as "linkage," is also being pushed by Washington.

[A day after this Cuban-Angolan declaration reiterating the two governments' earlier conditions for a Cuban withdrawal from Angola, South African Foreign Minister Roelof Botha issued a statement denouncing the declaration. In particular, he blasted the phrase pledging Cuba and Angola to continue their support for the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) of Namibia and the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa as the "sole and legitimate representatives" of the Namibian and South African peoples.

[This translation of the Cuban-Angolan declaration is based on an unofficial translation provided by the Cuban Interests Section of the Czechoslovak embassy in Washington, D.C. The footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

More than two years ago, the governments of the People's Republic of Angola and the Republic of Cuba, in their joint statement of Feb. 4, 1982, issued worldwide, expressed very clearly their principled position regarding the tense situation that prevails in the southern cone of Africa.¹

The time elapsed has but confirmed the fairness of all aspects included in the aforementioned statement, which has earned approval of international public opinion and has been welcomed by virtually all countries of the world, with the shameful exception of the governments of the United States of America and South Africa, who have stuck for years to the harmful formula of the so-called "linkage" that lacks any legal or moral base and has been repudiated by everyone except its authors.

The heroic resistance of the Angolan people, firmly supported by their inter-



Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos with Fidel Castro.

nationalist allies, has persuaded the imperialist aggressors that it is impossible to make the People's Republic of Angola give in and terminate its revolutionary process, forcing them to accept negotiations on new bases.

The government of the People's Republic of Angola has kept the government of Cuba fully informed of the details of the conversations that are currently taking place with South Africa and the United States, through which Angola seeks, based on principles, a negotiated solution to the conflict with the South African aggressors that over the years has confronted the Angolan people, and to create conditions that will make viable the immediate implementation of Resolution 435/78 of the United Nations Security Council and the independence of Namibia.²

In the context of this peace effort on the part of Angola, the joint statement of Feb. 4, 1982, continues to be fully valid and constitutes a principled basis for any negotiated solution that would eliminate the current tense situation and guarantee peace and full independence for the nations of the region.

Rigorously abiding by what is established in the aforementioned joint statement, the governments of Cuba and Angola reiterate that they would resume, by their own decision and exercising their sovereign will, the implementation of the gradual withdrawal of the Cuban

2. Resolution 435, which was adopted by the UN Security Council on Sept. 29, 1978, calls for the repeal of all repressive laws in Namibia, the holding of free elections under UN supervision and control, and the convoking of a constituent assembly to frame an independence constitution. SWAPO has accepted the resolution as a basis for negotiations.

internationalist military contingent, as soon as the following requirements are fulfilled:

1. Unilateral withdrawal of the racist troops of South Africa from Angolan territory.

2. Strict implementation of Resolution 435/78 of the United Nations Security Council, access of Namibia to true independence, and total withdrawal of the South African troops that are illegally occupying that country.

3. Cessation of all acts of direct aggression or threat of aggression against the People's Republic of Angola on the part of South Africa, the United States of America, and their allies.

Together with these three requirements, the termination of all assistance to the counterrevolutionary organization UNITA³ and any other puppet group on the part of South Africa, the United States of America, and their allies will also be an indispensable condition, as was expressed by the government of Angola through the Aug. 26, 1983, statement of President Eduardo dos Santos.

To satisfy these demands will mean to respect the standards of international law and the charter of the United Nations and to obey the numerous resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the Organization of African Unity.

The government of Cuba, on behalf of the Cuban people, pays due homage to the heroism of the Angolan people, who for almost a quarter of a century have waged a liberation war against colonialists, racists, their imperialist masters, and their lackeys and who have paid a high sacrifice in blood to conquer their complete independence and provide internationalist assistance to other fraternal peoples.

The government of the People's Republic of Angola expresses the unlimited gratitude of the Angolan people for the internationalist assistance that for two decades the Cuban people have provided to their liberation struggle. It fervently acknowledges the generosity, spirit of sacrifice, and heroism of more than 150,000 Cubans, men and women, who have spent time on Angolan soil providing invaluable collaboration in the military as well as in the civilian field to the independence, territorial integrity, and national reconstruction of Angola, rendering in this way a historic contribution to the cause of all peoples of the continent.

Both governments express their admiration and solidarity with the heroic struggle that the peoples of Namibia and South Africa are waging under the leaderships of their sole and legitimate representatives, SWAPO and the ANC, against the repugnant system of apartheid. They reaffirm their conviction that this horrendous institution is historically condemned to disappear. □

3. The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, led by Jonas Savimbi, was allied with Pretoria during the massive 1975-76 South African invasion of Angola and has received considerable South African training and material and logistical support since then.

1. For the text of the Feb. 4, 1982, joint declaration, see *Intercontinental Press*, March 15, 1982, p. 215.

New events inspire regroupment

Interview with Socialist Bloc leader

[The following is an interview with Octavio Rivera, member of the Political Committee of the Bloque Socialista (Socialist Bloc) of the Dominican Republic. The interview was conducted in late February in Santo Domingo by Mohammed Oliver. The translation from Spanish is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Question. Could you describe your organization and its program?

Answer. The Socialist Bloc is a revolutionary organization, a party. It is the result of a process of unification that has been unfolding within the Dominican revolutionary movement. Three organizations came together to form it — the Socialist Party, the Socialist Workers Movement [MST], and the Communist Workers Nucleus [NCT]. The MST and the Socialist Party, in turn, had evolved from radicalized Christian currents, and the NCT was the result of a 1976 split in the Dominican People's Movement, an organization that had played a big role here in the 1960s and early 1970s.

The Socialist Bloc defines itself as a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary organization. In that sense, it is a proletarian current that identifies with the socialist objectives of the revolution. In programmatic terms, it sees the transformation process as being based on the alliance of all the popular sectors — workers, peasants, and so on. Its program of revolutionary transformations has a socialist perspective, although it is not fully committed to the immediate construction of socialism.

Another important element of our program is the notion that the bourgeoisie has no significant role to play in the revolutionary process in our country — it is historically tied by many threads to international capitalism.

Our leadership proposes to establish the hegemony of the proletariat within the revolutionary process and stands for the utilization of all methods of struggle. In this particular period of political opening in our country, however, our work is essentially carried out in the framework of open and legal activities.

Not only is the Socialist Bloc itself the result of a process of unification, it also is participating in and encouraging a more general process of this kind encompassing all the leftist and progressive forces of the country. Together with other revolutionary organizations, the Socialist Bloc forms part of the Front of the Dominican Left.

Q. What would you say were the objective factors that led to this process of unification on

the left?

A. There is an important historical basis for this process. The Dominican left was able in an earlier period to accumulate cadres and gain a hearing among the masses. It was defeated by the counterrevolutionary policy implemented by the imperialists and the [Joaquin] Balaguer dictatorship they installed after the April 1965 invasion.¹

In the course of that defeat, a series of errors was committed, and currents with mistaken views came to the fore inside the revolutionary movement. So when the Balaguer regime went into crisis in 1977–78, we were not able to present a coherent alternative to the masses of the people.

Since then, the movement has undergone a process of reassessment, of criticism and self-criticism. Sectarian notions as well as notions of class collaboration have been dealt heavy blows. From the 1977–78 period on, there was a series of splits in all the major organizations, and new political currents arose that were concerned above all with developing a truly national, Dominican, approach to the question of the revolution.

At the same time, this process was tremendously affected by the victory of the Nicaraguan revolution. This reconfirmed that revolutions are possible in this region, giving the lie to all the claims made by the bourgeoisie and the imperialists after the 1965 invasion here.

Q. What role has the Socialist Bloc been playing in the labor and peasant movements?

A. The Socialist Bloc and the organizations that have come together to form it have a long tradition of helping to build some of the main working-class and popular organizations in our country. We played an especially important role in the establishment of the General Workers Federation [CGT], which is one of the main trade-union organizations here.

At present, in face of the rampant inflation that has resulted from the International Monetary Fund's policies being implemented by the regime, the CGT is involved with the other four union federations in a series of mobilizations. A big demonstration took place here on February 4, involving some 30,000 workers. In the city of Santiago, the press estimated that 10,000 took part, and a few days ago another march was held in San Francisco de Marcorís

1. On April 28, 1965, U.S. Marines invaded the Dominican Republic, under the guise of protecting U.S. citizens during the insurrection. More than 40,000 U.S. troops were eventually involved in the operation.

and involved 15,000 to 20,000 persons. This series of successful actions shows the rising combativity of the workers, which has been spurred by the unity process on the left.

In the peasant movement, the organizations that now make up the Socialist Bloc have been working for several years to encourage the organization of the peasants. Recently, the representatives of 40 local peasant councils met and set the aim of establishing a Dominican peasants federation. Each of these councils represents dozens of villages. A coordinating committee called the Independent Peasant Movement [MCI] has been organizing this work; we have taken on important responsibilities within it.

The principal struggle currently being waged by the MCI on a national level has to do with pork production. Virtually all the livestock in this sector were lost in 1977–78 as the result of an epidemic. The peasants are demanding that they be provided with the livestock and credit necessary to resume pork production. They oppose the government's plan to turn this sector over to big agricultural capitalists and give them concessions.

So in November, there was a nationally coordinated action by the peasants around these demands. It left an important mark on the popular movement. In a single day, more than 26 offices of the Agriculture Ministry were taken over — including its headquarters — by some 15,000 peasants who mobilized all over the country. This showed that the movement has a real mass base and considerable organizational strength — whereas before in this country there had scarcely existed any peasant organizations at the national level.

Q. What can you tell us about the sugar industry, the principal sector of the Dominican economy?

A. The sugar workers form the backbone of the Dominican working class. They are one of the largest sectors, around 100,000 workers, and are concentrated in just 16 enterprises. Of these, 12 are owned by the state and account for more than 50 percent of the country's sugar production. The biggest private producer is the Romana sugar mill, property of the multinational corporation Gulf and Western. The Romana mill has some 21,000 workers and accounts for around 30 percent of total production.

So considering the overall population of the Dominican Republic [5.7 million], the sugar industry is a very substantial and key sector and one in which the role of the state and the multinational corporations in oppression and

exploitation is especially clear.

What's more, the sugar workers have a long tradition of struggle. They were the ones who started what we could call the modern Dominican labor movement. In 1946, under the leadership of Mauricio Baez, a forerunner of the Marxist current in our country, big strikes took place against the U.S. corporations that controlled the sugar industry. Major demands were won. Before that, the unions that had existed were little more than craft guilds, owing to the feeble development of industry and the capitalist sector.

The workers organized in the United Union of the Romana Mill were the first to have an industrial union bringing together workers from all sectors — from the fields, the factory, and related services. Their struggles, and those of all the sugar workers, were of particular importance in preparing the conditions for the popular insurrection of 1965, after the [Gen. Rafael] Trujillo dictatorship came to an end.²

The counterrevolutionary policy applied through the U.S. invasion and the Balaguer government that it installed had the clear aim of destroying or drastically weakening the unions among the sugar workers. Many of the union organizations were destroyed, and others had their leaders murdered or bought off.

Since the Balaguer regime came to an end in 1978, we and other sectors of the left have been involved in significant efforts to rebuild the movement among the sugar workers — to reestablish ties with them and try to restore the leading role they have traditionally played in the Dominican working class.

Q. What effect have the divisions sown by the ruling class between Dominican workers and Haitian immigrants had on the unions in the sugar industry?

A. That is one of the most serious difficulties we confront in our country — a structural characteristic of the sugar industry, which has been based from the beginning on immigrant labor for fieldwork. Haitian immigrants are contracted from the ruling Duvalier family in Haiti under conditions of semislavery.

As you know, fieldwork in the sugar industry is brutal; working conditions are among the most inhuman. Moreover, the land on which sugar cane is grown was originally stolen from the small peasants. So since the beginning of this century, the Dominican peasantry has systematically refused to cut sugar cane.

The Dominican bourgeoisie and landowners and the big foreign corporations have therefore resorted to the importation of laborers for this work. This in turn has made it possible for

them to keep wages quite low and take advantage of the difference in living standards between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Intertwined with this is the strong anti-Haitian chauvinism that has been fostered by the Dominican ruling class.



For these reasons the task of organizing sugar workers is a difficult one. Many of the field workers do not hold permanent jobs — they come for one harvest and usually do not return to the same mill the following year. The Dominican workers, on the other hand, often reject the organization of the Haitian laborers into their unions.

Q. Could you tell us something about your international solidarity work and the response here to the U.S. invasion of Grenada?

A. Our patterns of activity in solidarity work and international relations have been evolving in recent times. Earlier, the left in our country was divided with respect to the positions of China, the Soviet Union, and so on. But now we have come to see the importance of the concrete experiences of the revolutionary process in our own region. In this sense, we have concluded that our principal area of solidarity work must be directed toward the peoples closest at hand — Haiti and Puerto Rico.

At the same time, we must defend those peoples of our region that are involved in unfolding revolutionary processes. We benefit from their gains, and we suffer from their setbacks. So we define Central America and the Caribbean as our frontline trench.

Perhaps this would not have such importance for a people that had not been invaded twice in this century by the United States, but for us it is a vital question.³ The defeat of im-

perialism in Central America means for us affirming the possibility of the revolution in our country in concrete terms.

When the Grenada invasion took place, it was here in our country that the biggest protest actions took place. It could not have been otherwise, since the U.S. imperialists were using the very same arguments that they used to justify the invasion of our own country in 1965. The overwhelming response of the Dominican people was repudiation. That forced the Dominican government to vote in favor of the condemnation of the invasion at the United Nations. So despite the fact that the events in Grenada constitute a grave defeat for us and for the national liberation struggle of our people, the victory of imperialism will be transformed into a defeat insofar as it leads to the consolidation of the anti-imperialist sentiments in the Dominican Republic.

We think that in the eastern Caribbean itself, such anti-imperialist sentiment will be redoubled in a way that the warmongers guiding U.S. policy do not now suspect. It will have tremendous power once the conditions are ripe for expressing it. As a result of the U.S. invasion, the peoples of Grenada, Trinidad, Barbados, and other islands have come to be true Latin Americans.

We also are aware that solidarity with Grenada could have been 100 times more powerful if the events there had not been so difficult to understand, owing to the murder of Bishop and his comrades. Had that situation not arisen, the imperialists would have encountered not only much greater resistance from the Grenadian people, but also far more serious mass protests in all the countries of the region. This shows the importance of coming to a thorough understanding of the elements that caused this battle to have to be waged in such unfavorable circumstances.

We have a great interest in learning about what actually happened in Grenada. The publication of materials like Fidel Castro's speech and the interview with Don Rojas in *Perspectiva Mundial*⁴ have helped us a great deal.

In our view, the Grenada experience and the events surrounding the deaths of Commander Ana María and Salvador Cayetano Carpio of El Salvador must be studied. They will have great value in breaking with one of the elements that has contributed to holding back the revolutionary process in our countries — the existence of ultraleft currents. We need to come to grips with this problem in the same way Lenin did in his time. From those experiences we can draw important lessons so as not to commit the same errors ourselves. □

2. Trujillo was assassinated in 1961. Juan Bosch was elected president in late 1962, but held office only eight months before being overthrown by a military coup. The popular insurrection of 1965 began when army officers ousted the U.S.-backed regime on April 24 and called for restoration of Bosch's constitutional government.

3. In addition to the 1965 invasion, U.S. Marines invaded the Dominican Republic in 1916 and maintained a military occupation until 1924.

4. "Behind the revolution's overthrow," interview with Don Rojas, a leader of the New Jewel Movement of Grenada. *Intercontinental Press*, Dec. 26, 1983, p. 756. A Spanish translation of this interview was published in the Feb. 6, 1984, issue of *Perspectiva Mundial*, a socialist fortnightly published in New York.

Struggle to break isolation

Interview with Minister Vo Dong Giang

By Steve Clark and Diane Wang

HANOI — "Don't you see that our face is brighter than before?" Minister Vo Dong Giang of the Foreign Affairs Ministry was describing his country's success in recent years in countering the military, political, and economic pressures against it by Washington in collusion with Bangkok and Peking.

Giang spoke with us for an hour on February 27 at the Foreign Ministry building here in the capital city of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Minister Giang explained why he had confidence about Vietnam's capacity to break through the isolation that enemies of the revolution have attempted to impose since the 1975 victory over the U.S.-backed Thieu regime. Ever since then, Washington has displayed its hostility toward this extension of the socialist revolution in Indochina by refusing to normalize diplomatic and economic relations with Vietnam, reneging on a 1973 pledge of \$3.5 billion in reconstruction aid, and keeping up military pressures through collusion with the rightist government in Thailand and the Peking bureaucracy.

Washington has also sought to convince its imperialist allies and neocolonial capitalist governments in Asia to follow suit.

In December 1978-January 1979, Vietnam crossed the border into Kampuchea to put an end once and for all to escalating attacks against it by the Pol Pot regime and to aid Kampuchean resistance forces in overthrowing that murderous tyranny.

U.S. imperialism cranked up its reactionary campaign another notch. It orchestrated an international effort to deny diplomatic recognition to Kampuchea's new government, led by Heng Samrin, and to demand the immediate withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea. It rushed military hardware to the Thai government, much of which was funnelled to Pol Pot's forces, who were given sanctuary inside the Thai border with Kampuchea.

Moreover, the Carter administration engineered Peking's February 1979 invasion of Vietnam. Although this renewed aggression against Vietnam was repelled within a month, serious damage was nonetheless inflicted throughout the northernmost areas of the country. Many Vietnamese lives and homes were lost, and enormous economic resources were destroyed.

'No longer a strong fence'

Today Washington, Bangkok, and Peking are still giving political, economic, and military backing to Pol Pot and other rightist Kam-

puchean forces based in Thailand. Realizing that these groups have little or no popular support because of their previous crimes, and faced with eroding international support for these reactionary gangs, the U.S., Thai, and Chinese governments have sought to offset these political setbacks by increasing military support.

"They still have the illusion that they can use these forces to create some difficulties for Kampuchean forces and for ours," Minister Giang told us. "They even hope they can make Vietnam collapse."

Efforts to do this over the past five years have failed on every front, he said. "There are very narrow options for them, since they cannot accept our views yet," he explained. "But if they persist in their views, they will remain at an impasse. Now they are sorting through options to get out of this impasse."

Giang listed several of these options. "Isolating Vietnam. They cannot do that. The embargo has been broken through. One hole has been punched out by France," he said, "and another hole by Australia. And once a fence has lost one or two slats, it is no longer a very strong fence."

The imperialist diplomatic and economic blockade of Vietnam was virtually ironclad in 1979 and 1980. Another Foreign Ministry official here told us that not one official delegation from a major imperialist power visited Vietnam during those years. Since that time, however, steps toward normalizing economic and political relations have been taken by the Socialist Party administration in France and the new Labor Party administration in Australia, accompanied by moves by some other imperialist governments.

"The second option is political confrontation," said Minister Giang. "But the ICK [International Conference on Kampuchea] resolution is ineffective," he said, referring to a July 1981 United Nations-sponsored conference that called for a unilateral withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea. Vietnam rejected participation in that conference, since the Pol Pot forces were seated as the representative of Kampuchea, while that country's legitimate government was not invited.

"And seeking to tarnish Vietnam's image is useless, too," Minister Giang continued.

Already lost two wars

"What other options do they have? To wage war? There was already a test for the Americans in Vietnam. They failed. In February 1979 they tried war, this time the Chinese, and again they failed. I don't think they are going

to try to wage war with Thai troops. They are not that stupid.

"There is only one way," Giang told us. "That is to sit down and talk with us. Whether they like this option or not, that is their only realistic option. So perhaps tomorrow or the day after tomorrow they may be forced to sit down with Vietnam."

Such negotiations are still down the road, however, Giang said, because Washington, Bangkok, and Peking "still nurture the illusion that Vietnam might collapse. That is why it is so important that we must be strong. What we are demonstrating to them is that their policy of isolating and putting pressure on Vietnam, of making Vietnam bear a heavy burden for discharging our duty in Kampuchea, is failing. We are proving that their view that they can make Vietnam collapse is unjustified."

The years 1979 and 1980 were particularly tough ones for economic and living conditions in Vietnam. A string of droughts and typhoons brought four bad crops in a row. Moreover, Vietnam volunteered a substantial portion of its own small rice stocks to head off a potentially disastrous famine in Kampuchea, caused in large part by the destruction of crops by the retreating Pol Pot troops. The economic blockade of Vietnam was still vise-like, and the country had to fight off a massive and economically destructive invasion by Peking.

The harvests in 1982 and 1983, however, have been the best in Vietnam's history. In 1983, despite floods and other poor weather conditions, food production reached 17.7 million tons, and Vietnam for the first time did not have to import food grains.

'Vietnam will not collapse'

"We are not hungry," Minister Vo Dong Giang told us, "but are self-sufficient in food, in the production of foodstuffs."

On top of that, he pointed out, "Kampuchea bounced back from the point of starvation, and in certain spheres is making quicker progress than Vietnam and Laos."

Minister Giang continued: "So we are now proving ourselves in the agricultural field — we have enough to eat — and to a certain extent are doing it in the industrial sphere." Vietnam's industrial production last year stood 25 percent above its 1978 level, and 40 major capital-investment projects are scheduled for completion this year to expand the country's long-term industrial and agricultural capacity.

"In another three years, if you have an opportunity to return to Vietnam," Giang told us, "you will see more proof that Vietnam will not collapse — in spite of the many pressures and heavy burdens of discharging our duty in Kam-

puchea.

"The leaders in America, in China, in Thailand," he said, "they are so slow to realize it. It is as if they must wait nine months for a pregnant woman to give birth before they acknowledge that she was pregnant."

The Vietnamese Foreign Ministry official also pointed to some cracks in the solid wall of hostility toward Vietnam by the capitalist governments that make up the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).*

Just before our arrival here, Gen. L.B. Murdani, commander-in-chief of Indonesia's armed forces had been in Vietnam for a three-day official visit. While here, he told the press that "it is my firm belief that there will never be a conflict between our two countries. Some countries said that Vietnam is a danger to Southeast Asia, but the Indonesian army and people do not believe it."

According to Vietnamese Minister Vo Dong Giang, "there was a lot of noise about this statement in the Thai press and public opinion there." Gen. Murdani's statement is contrary to the main rationale used by the Thai government to justify its hostile policies toward the governments of Kampuchea and Vietnam, which is also the stance taken by every ASEAN conference since 1979.

A new situation

"The situation in Southeast Asia is very new in comparison with five years ago," Minister Giang told us. "Five years ago the ASEAN nations insisted that there must be a satisfactory solution to the Kampuchean question." When he met with Gen. Murdani last week, however, the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry official told us, "the question of Kampuchea did not come up."

There are even "a number of important personalities who have said that the key for the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea is not pressure on the Vietnamese people, but elimination of the Pol Pot forces."

"This is not our own statement," he said. "Mr. Mochtar, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, and the Indonesian scholars who just finished a Vietnam-Indonesia seminar here have said this. This is very new."

Despite these new developments, Giang said, the ASEAN governments "don't yet want a peaceful solution to the Kampuchean question. They still have not shed the illusion that Vietnam could collapse. Only when they see that their policy is useless will there be no more impasse. They are still at an impasse."

"But we see a way out," Minister Giang told us. "There are two possibilities for a way out."

"The first is that the ASEAN countries will cooperate with us to stop the threat of outside interference in this region, will not provide sanctuary for the Pol Pot forces, and will not hinder our actions against these forces. Under those conditions," he said, "we will eliminate



Diane Wang/TP

Destruction in Lang Son as a result of Chinese invasion in 1979.

the Pol Pot forces one day, and the next day we will withdraw from Kampuchea.

"The second possibility if there is no such cooperation, is that we will still withdraw from Kampuchea but at a slower pace. And this will be harder," he said.

"Why? Because such withdrawal must coincide with the growth of the Kampuchean armed forces. And this is happening. The Kampuchean forces are now stronger than before, and this has allowed us to carry out two initial withdrawals already [in July 1982 and May 1983, with another scheduled for later this year]. We can gradually accomplish withdrawal this way.

"If the second way out is followed," Minister Giang said, "then there is no point to bargaining with the ASEAN countries. What we want to achieve through negotiations is a way to let Vietnamese troops withdraw quickly, but with security.

"But once we withdraw from Kampuchea securely," he told us, "there is no point to negotiations. So if ASEAN would like negotiations, they have to do it a quicker way. In four or five years we will have defeated Pol Pot. Within four or five years, whether they like it or not, there will be no point to negotiations.

"In short," he said, "there is an impasse for the other side; there is no way out for the other side if they maintain their current position.

"As far as the Vietnamese are concerned, however, there are two ways out."

A second Vietnam?

At the conclusion of the interview, we asked Minister Giang to comment on the growing escalation of direct U.S. and U.S.-backed military intervention against revolutionary struggles by the workers and farmers of Central America and the Caribbean.

Referring to the U.S. imperialist invasion of Grenada last October 25, Minister Giang said, "this is no glorious page for America. As Fidel Castro said, the American soldiers killed a corpse. If there had been no internal clashes among the people in power in Grenada, the invasion would not have happened.

"I don't know what will happen now with regard to the American troops on this very small island. The Americans have faced difficulties even on a small island that was in the midst of a critical situation and facing the gravest difficulties.

"So what can they do in Nicaragua?" he asked. "Nicaragua has said that if there is a U.S. intervention in Nicaragua, the United States will certainly meet difficulties one million times greater than in Grenada. I believe that. The Reagan administration must realize that if it invades Nicaragua, a second Vietnam is awaiting them.

"It would of course be better to avoid this," he said, "not only for the sake of Nicaragua, but for the sake of the American people and for the sake of peace in Central America.

"I don't want to see it," he said. "Vietnam doesn't want to see it. Among the people of the United States, most don't want to see it. It is not to the liking of anyone."

Minister Vo Dong Giang told us, "I am very optimistic about the Nicaraguan situation. The failure of the revolution in Grenada does not lessen my optimism for the reasons I have just explained. The Reagan invasion of Grenada was the act of killing a corpse, but Nicaragua is another cup of tea. Even in El Salvador, and in Guatemala, the situation will be different.

"So, the United States government had better avoid a second Vietnam. There are many Vietnams in Central America and the Caribbean." □

*ASEAN includes the governments of Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei.

International Women's Day

Emerging from centuries of degradation

By Diane Wang and Steve Clark

PHNOMPENH, Kampuchea — The International Women's Day celebration here March 7 began early to avoid the midday heat and sun of Kampuchea's dry season. By 7 a.m. nearly 10,000 women had lined up at the Phnompenh stadium for a rally sponsored by the Revolutionary Women's Association of Kampuchea (RWAK).

The rally was held on March 7 because International Women's Day itself, March 8, is a national holiday. This is especially appropriate here since women make up almost two-thirds of the population. During the 1975-79 regime of the butcher Pol Pot in this country, as many as 3 million people were murdered, starved to death, or died from the lack of any medical care. More men died than women, leaving Kampuchean women with unique problems and responsibilities.

At the rally most women wore the long skirts typical of the country. Women of the Cham (Muslim national minority) could be distinguished by their scarves. A contingent of women in blue overalls singled out the role of women workers. Another group, carrying sickles and hand-woven baskets, represented the peasant women. Some women wore the olive-green or blue uniforms of the country's army and security forces.

Banners in the Khmer script read, "Long live the spirit of International Women's Day," and "Long live solidarity and friendship with women of Vietnam, Laos, the USSR, and all women who love peace and justice all over the world."

Behind the ranks of women waved bright-colored streamers, along with the flag of the People's Republic of Kampuchea — the five gold towers of Angkor Wat against a red background. At the rally's climax, hundreds of balloons went up in the morning breeze as participants sang "The Internationale" in Khmer.

The presiding committee on the platform was made up of officials from Phnompenh and the RWAK. In addition some 50 guests attended from around the world, representing Vietnam, Laos, the Soviet Union, Cuba, several Eastern European countries, and the international relief agencies based here.

Women confront big obstacles

Kampuchean women confront tremendous objective obstacles. Women are only now emerging from centuries of a degrading feudal tradition, reinforced and intensified by French, and later U.S., imperialist domination.

On top of that, the country was devastated by one-half million tons of U.S. bombs from 1969 to 1973. Then, from April 1975 until Jan. 7, 1979, women, along with all other Kampu-

cheans, were forcibly evacuated from their homes and sent throughout the country to agricultural slave-labor camps run by Pol Pot's henchmen. When the Kampuchean women, with Vietnam's help, drove out Pol Pot on Jan. 7, 1979, the country was left in a state of famine and chaos. The entire population wandered the countryside on foot in search of their families and en route to their home villages.

If it had not been for the liberation in 1979, the March 8 International Women's Day would mean nothing to Kampuchean women, explained Mean Sam An, president of the RWAK. She summarized the achievements of Kampuchean women in the last five years since Pol Pot's defeat.

The new government and the People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea, she said, "have gradually realized the roles and tasks of women in a revolutionary society, enhanced considerably the social equality of women, and promoted all-round support and assistance,

creating favorable conditions for them to contribute" to rebuilding and defending the country.

Grappling with backward tradition and the country's devastating poverty, women here have attempted to take on new roles in production and political leadership. Women now make up more than 30 percent of the government workers. Significantly, women have begun to assume leading positions. In May 1981, women were elected to 21 of the 117 seats in the National Assembly. There is also a woman minister in the government, two women vice-ministers, and nine women department chiefs.

The progress reaches throughout the country. All agricultural production is organized through *khrom samaki* (solidarity groups) usually involving 12 to 15 families who cooperate in cultivation and share animals and tools. Mean Sam An reported that 19,238 chiefs of these solidarity groups are women.

Receive trade-union awards

In the country's handful of factories, too, women are playing a crucial role in the reconstruction of Kampuchea. So far about 150 women have received trade-union awards for helping meet production schedules or save hard-to-come-by raw materials.

'IP' reporters in Indochina

The struggle of the peoples of Indochina against U.S. imperialism was an inspiration to, and a central focus of, a generation of political activists.

But since U.S. imperialism's defeat in Vietnam in 1975, the big-business media around the world have erected a wall of silence around the region.

Media coverage focuses almost exclusively on information to discredit the Indochinese revolutions: reports on boat people, "yellow rain" chemical warfare, Vietnam's "occupation" of Kampuchea, rumors of U.S. soldiers still being held prisoner.

Intercontinental Press tries to break through this wall of silence to report what is really going on in Indochina. In the past year we have published articles on economic reforms being implemented in Vietnam, on the gains women have made since that country's liberation, and on how Vietnam is attempting to cope with the legacy of U.S. chemical warfare.

IP has reported on Kampuchea's ongoing recovery from the ravages of the four years when Pol Pot's forces ruled the country. In our February 6 issue, for example, we published a comprehensive article by staff writer Will Reissner on the progress

and problems still to be faced in Kampuchea five years after Pol Pot's ouster.

In order to provide *IP* readers with even more extensive coverage of developments in Indochina, editor Steve Clark and correspondent Diane Wang went to Vietnam and Kampuchea to gather first-hand information.

Their first two reports, from Hanoi and Phnompenh, appear in this issue. In addition, they will file reports from Hong Kong and Japan while in Asia.

Our readers expect and appreciate high-quality reporting, analysis, and documentation of events around the world. But providing it is very expensive and stretches the magazine's resources.

Like most publications, *Intercontinental Press* cannot cover its expenses through subscriptions and single-copy sales. Since our magazine carries no high-priced advertising, we rely on contributions to make up the deficit.

We are therefore appealing to our readers to help *IP* by making a financial contribution to its continued high-quality coverage. Please send your contribution, however large or small, to *Intercontinental Press*, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014, USA.

Women's roles in education and health are of special importance, since Pol Pot targeted literate and educated people for execution. Kampuchea now has 25 women doctors. One-third of the students at the country's medical school are women. Women comprise 60 percent of the nation's teachers.

The government is attempting social reforms to benefit women within the limits dictated by Kampuchea's current meager resources. Almost 400 kindergartens and crèches have been set up, and a government pamphlet on education lists the first reason for these programs as being "to liberate women." Government workers have a three-month paid maternity leave.

The literacy campaign has especially benefited women, since they were the majority of the more than 1 million illiterates. The Ministry of Education is currently emphasizing the need for local leaders, such as heads of solidarity groups, to complete primary schooling, as

well. This will help women assume more responsibility.

Confronting Pol Pot threat

In addition to economic development, another precondition for advancing women's emancipation in Kampuchea is defeating the Pol Pot and other reactionary forces. Backed by U.S. imperialism and the misleaders of the Chinese workers state, these counterrevolutionaries maintain a huge force of armed bandits on the Thai border and periodically carry out terrorist attacks and seek to undermine stability and progress in Kampuchea.

Confronting this threat was a major theme at the first congress of RWAK last October.

In a country where virtually every family lost a husband or son, women play an important role in encouraging people to join the armed defense forces and taking care of families whose sons do volunteer. Some women have also joined the army, and women

participate in the local militias. In Kompong Chhnang Province, for example, almost 1,100 women have joined the militia.

Mean Sam An reemphasized the need for women to help defend Kampuchea's reconstruction. She also voiced solidarity for other countries fighting U.S. imperialism. "We always stand with the brave women of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Angola, who are ready to defeat the invasion, intrigues, and aggression of imperialism."

Following the rally, participants went inside the stadium complex to watch a good-natured game of basketball. The women's team from the city's sports center challenged an all-male team. No. 10 on the men's team was the mayor of Phnompenh. Other team members included the minister of education and other government leaders.

The women won, 24 to 17. The men never narrowed the women's lead to less than three points. □

Britain

Stakes high in miners' strike

U.S. coal miner interviews strikers

By Bruce Kimball

[The following article is taken from the April 6 issue of the *Militant*, a socialist weekly published in New York. The *Militant* sent Bruce Kimball, a working coal miner from the United States, on a one-week reporting tour of the British coalfields. Kimball, a member of United Mine Workers of America Local 2295 in southern Illinois, returned to the United States on March 26.]

* * *

LONDON, March 26 — British miners scored some important victories last week as their strike against the government's plans to close more than 20 mines and lay off over 20,000 miners in the next year reached a crucial stage.

Now in its third week, the strike has spread to include more than 150,000 miners — 85 percent of the total — in England, Scotland, and Wales.

All week, it's been the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) against the National Coal Board, the police, the courts, the press, and every other force the government has been able to organize in this historic confrontation.

Squads of "flying pickets" organized from Yorkshire, South Wales, Kent, and Scotland spread throughout the country, shutting down pits, stopping the movement of coal, and building solidarity actions in Britain's major cities.

These flying squads have faced a virtual army of 20,000 police, coordinated by Scotland Yard. I visited a picket coordinating cen-

ter in Aberaman, South Wales, to learn about some of the problems faced by the pickets. Aberaman is like many of the towns in South Wales. It is built around a colliery (a coal mine and the buildings connected to it), and its entire economy is dependent on the jobs produced there. When the mine, or "pit" as it is called here, closes, the town may well die. Twenty-three of the twenty-six mines in South Wales are scheduled for closure by the government.

"First of all, we meet the police everywhere we go," one miner told me. "In spite of that, we've already got North Wales shut down." He was referring to the two coal mines in North Wales that were successfully picketed out early this week.

"Now we're concentrating on Staffordshire, and Leicestershire." Several times a week, buses rented by the union go off to these areas carrying pickets. When they encounter police, they are told that if they go any further they will be arrested. The buses turn around and use back roads to get to their destination, though not all make it.

Police are 'cracking heads'

"We've seen many, many arrests this week," another miner said. "The police are cracking heads, too," he added. Police violence has increased substantially over the past week. There have been dozens of arrests. Police have even been going through trains and public buses looking for pickets.

The right of the police to carry out this massive attack on civil liberties was challenged by

two Kent miners who were stopped at the Kent side of the Dartford Tunnel in London. But the High Court refused to issue an injunction, thus upholding the police actions.

But by the end of the week, the pickets had made some important gains. In addition to North Wales, Staffordshire and Leicestershire were out. And on March 23, Lancashire mines announced they would be closing March 26.

An equally important gain occurred when representatives of 75,000 workers in open-cast pits (strip mines) pledged to prevent coal being moved from their sites.

An impressive and solemn display of solidarity occurred on March 23 when more than 4,000 miners from all over Britain gathered in South Kirkby to pay their last respects to David Jones, the Yorkshire miner who died after picketing during the second week of the strike.

The strike is so solid in South Wales that when the government announced it would no longer rent buses to the pickets, the bus drivers went out on strike. At the Porth depot in the Rhondda area of South Wales, some 200 bus workers rallied against the strike-breaking decision. Within a day, the Welsh National Bus Co. reversed its decision. Now, "flying squadrons" of buses can fly again.

Solidarity grows

The solidarity shown by the bus drivers is evident in other areas of Wales, as well. For example, pickets at the Aberthaw power plant near Cardiff are able to keep trucks with oil and essential chemicals from getting in. And pickets at the railroad crossings put up an

"NUM picket" sign, which has prevented railroad workers from entering the power plant yard.

Important gains have also been registered in Yorkshire, the strike's center. Yorkshire is Britain's main coalfield, with nearly 55,000 miners. The strike has overwhelming support there, and it took on a national character when the National Coal Board announced that it would close Yorkshire's Cortonwood colliery, giving only a few weeks' notice.

I met a group of Cortonwood miners at a solidarity rally at Sheffield's Memorial Hall. There, several hundred unionists, students, and others heard speeches by NUM General Secretary Peter Heathfield, Yorkshire miners president Jack Taylor, and other labor leaders. Several hundred pounds (1 pound equals \$1.45) were also collected in an enthusiastic fund raiser.

Strike organizing centers

Following the rally, I got a ride with three miners from Cortonwood out to their town. We first stopped at the Miners Welfare Center. Most coal towns in Yorkshire have these centers, and they are very impressive. They have dance halls, meeting rooms, kitchens, and pubs. They are the social centers of the communities. And today they are the strike organizing centers.

The Cortonwood center was a beehive of activity. Miners were getting ready to be dispatched to picket out the evening shift down in nearby Nottinghamshire. Cars were being organized, maps were being distributed, and sheets of paper giving advice on what to do if arrested were being distributed. They were organized. They were just awaiting a call from the strike coordinating center in nearby Doncaster for their orders.

A poem written by a miner's wife hung on the wall: "Arthur gave us warnings/ You know that he was right/ So get yourselves together lads/ And come and join the fight./ Shut a pit . . . / Zip up Maggie's mouth."

The poem refers to NUM President Arthur Scargill, who wrote on the front page of a special strike issue of the *Miner*, Journal of the National Union of Mineworkers, "I cannot emphasize enough that the Coal Board's ultimate intention is to wipe out half the South Notts coalfield, cut the Midlands area by 40 percent, close down half of the Scottish pits, cut the North Western Area's pits by half, close 60 percent of the collieries in the North East, wipe out half of North Derbyshire, 70 percent of the pits in South Wales and shut down 20 Yorkshire collieries. No-one can now say that he has not been warned."

The "Maggie," of course, refers to Margaret Thatcher, Britain's prime minister.

After the pickets were dispatched, we took a ride down to the pit entrance. The miners had built a shed with seats around it to keep trucks from removing the stockpile of coal that was stored at the mine. The pit entrance was called "The Alamo" by the miners because they say it is their last stand. It was surrounded by signs

with poems and antigovernment slogans.

Mine closures 'political'

Mike, one of the strikers, drove me down to the mine itself, staying clear of the guards. "Look at all this new equipment here," he said. "Does this look like a mine that should be closing? This mine still has several years of coal left in it."

Why, then, is the government shutting it down? He and other pickets explained that the mine closures are entirely political. Yorkshire, Wales, and Scotland — where the scheduled closures are the greatest — are the strongest areas of the union. If mines there can be shut, then the union will be considerably weakened. Then the coal and equipment can be sold to private firms.

"That is Thatcher's final aim," another miner told me. "She plans to sell our mines to private corporations after the government has destroyed our union."

Against privatization

The British mines were nationalized in 1947, following a period when private corporations proved unable to get coal production back into gear after World War II. The demand itself was first raised in the 1926 general strike, which the mine workers led but ended in defeat.

The miners see nationalization as a gain of the labor movement that must be defended. That's why they fiercely resist the notion of government-owned mines being "privatized."

"It would be 'got any work today, governor,' and tipping your hat if the mines went back to private hands," a young miner explained to me. "Even though we don't have a big say in how the mines are run now, privatization would be much worse."

Since two successful strikes in 1972 and 1974, when the antiunion Edward Heath government was brought down, the aim of the government has been to weaken the union's strength. One tactic, as explained, has been to shut down the mines in the areas where the

union is strongest. Other tactics include more imports of coal, increased use of nuclear power, and major shutdowns of industries that use coal, such as steel.

This offensive against the mine workers comes in the context of a generalized assault against the wages and working conditions of labor in Britain. The employing class through its government had strong antiunion laws adopted by Parliament in 1980 and 1982. These laws, among other things, outlaw the closed shop and ban mass picketing by limiting each picket line to six. (The miners have completely ignored these laws.)

Because the mine workers union is the most powerful in the British labor movement, the government knows the NUM must be fundamentally weakened in order to qualitatively push back the entire union movement.

The stakes are high in this confrontation. That's why a central government strategy has been to divide the NUM by providing added benefits to miners who are more productive than others. In 1977, the government finally got through an "incentive plan" that provides bonuses based on productivity.

Geological conditions, combined with deliberate investment policies more favorable to certain areas, have led to some miners — notably those in Nottinghamshire — making up to twice as much money as miners in other areas such as Kent or South Wales.

Through this incentive scheme, and by constantly declaring that Notts mines are not part of the mine closure program, the government has successfully divided miner against miner.

Picket coordination is key

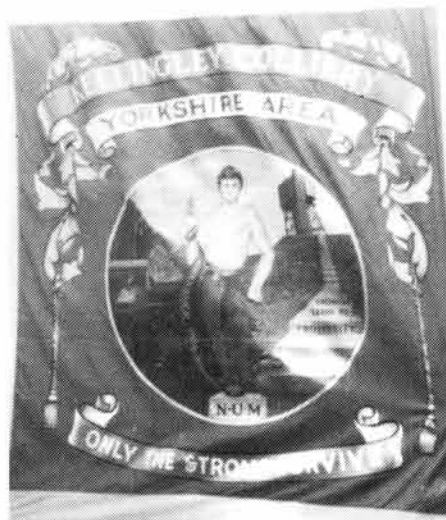
It is this division that makes this week such a crucial stage in the British coal strike. Last week, nearly every other colliery was shut down by flying pickets. Virtually the only miners working are the ones in Nottinghamshire, which has about 35,000 miners.

That is why the picketing coordination in Yorkshire — which is responsible for Nottinghamshire — is so important.

I had a chance to visit the picket coordinating center for the Doncaster "panel" — or district — of Yorkshire, as well. Strangely enough, it is in the back of a garage on a local road. Inside, though, it is the communication center for thousands of pickets. Staffed by a young miner who puts in 15 to 20 hours a day there, the center has to play a continuous game of outsmarting the police.

"We only use codes over the phone," he said. "That way the police — who have all the phones tapped — don't know what we're planning." Calls to the different Miners Welfare Centers are made hours before the different shifts in Notts so the pickets have time to avoid the police. "They have even been changing shift times," the strike coordinator said. "But we keep up with them."

"It is especially important to tell the American people about the level of police violence here," he said. "By the end of this week, we've seen a major escalation by the police. Now if



Bruce Kimball/Militant

the lads yell 'scab' they are arrested. Pickets have been attacked and tied to fences.

"Today we heard they used water cannons on some of them. Police yesterday smashed a car's windshield in and dragged everyone out and arrested them. When the [local] union president went to bail them out, the police beat him up. This is virtually a police state," he said.

Solidarity needed

The NUM strike is seriously hampered by the government's police mobilization. The government has been able to outnumber pickets by police throughout the Notts area, and this has kept the strikers from picketing out the miners who are still working. This has gotten so bad that when one South Notts mine decided to go out, the police banned their own pickets.

The stakes involved in bringing out all NUM members throughout Britain are well known to both sides. Once the Notts mines are out, the NUM can concentrate its massive forces and organization on other targets — such as power plants, steel mills, coal depositories, etc. And it can send more miners into urban centers to build solidarity with other working people.

Already, some of the police tactics have backfired. The Thatcher government is spending millions of pounds a day on this national police force. But it says there isn't money for the collieries. This has begun to reverse public opinion. In Nottinghamshire, for example, the Newstead colliery said it would go out over disgust at the police force.

In London, the Kent miners who were stopped from going any further have opened an outreach office. They are touring the city now, speaking and fundraising among labor party branches.

At the initiative of the Trades Union Liaison Council of the Labour Party, a solidarity rally is planned in East London on April 14 featuring Arthur Scargill. Events like this can help win the support of the masses of Asian, African, and Caribbean workers who live in London.

International solidarity is also of crucial importance. For coal miners, Britain is not an island. What happens during this strike will affect all working people. Coal miners in the United States face a contract battle at the end of September. A victory by the British miners will be an important blow against the coal bosses in this country as well. □

Miners defend unions

Interview with general secretary of NUM

[The following interview with Peter Heathfield, newly elected general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), was given to U.S. coal miner Bruce Kimball, reporter for the New York socialist weekly, *Militant*, on March 23 in Sheffield, England.]

* * *

Question. As I travel around, I see police all over, especially in the Midlands. As I understand it, this has been the biggest mobilization of police since the 1926 general strike. Clearly the government considers this strike to be a very major threat. What are the stakes in this strike as far as the National Union of Mineworkers is concerned?

Answer. Most British miners now recognize that the fight being conducted by the trade union is for the survival of the British mining industry. The coal mining industry has traditionally played an important role within the British labor movement and, of course, it has made an important contribution to the economic "success" of the British economy.

It is one of the few basic industries remaining since Mrs. Thatcher came to power. She intends to effectively reduce the influence of British coal within the British economy and to reduce the influence of the British mine workers within the British trade union movement.

Q. What influence do the miners have in the British union movement?

A. Traditionally the miners have played an important role in the labor movement. Historically, one factor has been the numerical size of the mine workers union. In the early post-World War II period, there were three-quarters of a million coal miners in Britain, all unionized. By now we are down to 200,000 mine workers.

We have played an important role historically. In trade union terms we have been involved in major strikes throughout this century and indeed even before the turn of the century. There were substantial miners' strikes in 1911 and 1921, and of course the important 1926 general strike was led by British miners. The general strike began when a Conservative-style government reduced wages of mine workers.

But more important for the present generation of miners were the strikes of 1972 and 1974, when we took on the Conservative government and won.

So we have played an important role in the development of working-class thinking and working-class activity here in Britain.

Q. Could you explain some of the ideals and goals that the National Union of Mineworkers is fighting for?

A. Britain is, in our view, still very much a class-ridden society. We have always maintained that the politics of British governments have done very little to reduce the divisions among classes.

I think that there is now a recognition that the present government in Britain is pursuing class policies, and it's important for all trade unionists, particularly the industrial trade unionists, to recognize that the problems facing the British people right now are of a class origin.

In the past, politicians from both sides of the House of Commons have told us that the class war is over, that the welfare state helped to remove that division. There is ample evidence at this moment in time that the welfare state as envisaged by such important figures as Nye Bevan¹ is being destroyed.

We are returning to a full class situation, and working people are the victim of those policies. The sort of laws passed in recent years by the present government are indicative of the government's intention to reduce the influence of trade unions in British affairs.

In 1981 and 1982 anti-union legislation was passed that in many ways turned the clock back 100 years. Restrictions were placed on activities of trade unionists. Secondary picketing is illegal. Trade unionists can be imprisoned. Union funds and properties can be confiscated.

The Conservative Party recognizes that trade unions have an important influence in the affairs of state. They recognize that in order to succeed in establishing a subservient work force, they have got to undermine and destroy trade unions that protect working people's interests.

Q. In light of these government attacks and efforts to reduce the importance of the unions, it is interesting that in this current strike some big differences have emerged within the miners union, which have probably been around for a long time. The Nottinghamshire miners, for example, do not want to go out at this point. Could you comment on how deep the differences are and the union's approach to the fact that there is this unevenness?

A. In many ways the present divisions within the NUM are a repeat of the problems our predecessors had in the 1920s. The Nottinghamshire coalfields are the newest in Britain and are highly successful. Perhaps the miners there see their future in a more selfish way than miners in other coalfields.

In the 1920s, for example, the Nottinghamshire miners broke away from the miners federation of Great Britain. They were earning considerably more than miners in other coalfields and did not want to be part of the whole.

That attitude, in my view, is unfortunately reemerging in the present struggles.

Many Nottinghamshire miners see a relatively secure future for themselves, and they do not share the concern of miners in other coalfields, where jobs and whole mining com-

1. Aneurin Bevan (1897-1960) was a coal miner who became a Labour Party member of Parliament and a leader of the party's left wing. As minister of health in the Labour Party government elected in 1945, Bevan was responsible for the establishment of the National Health Service and for government housing programs.

munities are being threatened by the acts of one of your countrymen, Ian MacGregor.²

Q. What do you feel are some of the best tactics or strategies for overcoming the differences within the period of the current strike?

A. If we could turn the clock back 10 years, I am quite sure that as a trade union we could have dealt with the problems in Nottinghamshire more than adequately.

But there are now the constraints imposed on us by the new anti-union laws. We as a trade union don't accept these laws, and the

2. In 1980, the British government named Ian MacGregor, then a partner in the New York investment banking firm of Lazard Freres & Co., to head the nationalized British Steel Corporation. After making sharp cuts in British Steel's output and jobs, MacGregor was named head of the National Coal Board in March 1983.

The British government paid Lazard Freres about \$4 million as compensation when MacGregor was named chairman of British Steel and another \$2.2 million when he became head of the coal board.

trade union movement in Britain as a whole does not accept them. But there are those within our ranks who have preferred to conform to those laws.

But we are desperately trying to overcome the difficulties imposed on us by those laws.

Q. One of the things that seems important in this strike is the question of solidarity. Many railroad workers, some trade union councils, ship workers, transport workers, and so on have either indicated solidarity verbally or have taken certain acts of solidarity. How important is solidarity within the union movement in Britain and internationally?

A. From a domestic point of view, it is necessary to say that the two major victories of the miners in 1972 and 1974 were not won through their exclusive efforts. The strikes in 1972 and 1974 were won because of the solidarity of other workers in Britain.

We were able to paralyze the movement of coal because of the support of seamen, railway men, and transport drivers. We had some sup-

port in both strikes from power workers — which made our task easier. Clearly, that solidarity helped British miners to achieve important victories.

In international terms, in 1972 and 1974 we had the support of many European seamen, who refused to bring in British coal or to load and unload coal from the continent of Europe. That also helped our cause.

In the present situation we have had clear declarations of support from the same groups of people. Obviously we are concerned that we cannot call on transport workers nationally and internationally to lose wages when some of our own members are still at work. That is something we are working on.

In general terms, British miners are truly internationalists. We recognize that our ability to resolve working people's problems depends to a large extent on the solidarity we are able to develop with our counterparts in the mines in other nations, but more importantly with working people throughout the world. That is fundamental to success of any trade union movement. □

Nicaragua

Expansion of food production

Working toward a balance between agro-exports and food

By Michael Baumann

MANAGUA — "If we don't make radical changes in the structure of [agricultural] production, the location of production, land tenancy, and technology, we are finished."

This is not a light-minded criticism of the Nicaraguan revolution. It is the conclusion of Commander Jaime Wheelock, minister of agrarian reform, summing up a lengthy discussion of the challenges facing Nicaraguan agricultural policy.

For a full week in February 1983, Wheelock and a number of agricultural experts from

This is the third of three articles on agriculture in Nicaragua. The previous articles dealt with the struggle against the legacy of backwardness and the formation of cooperatives.

around the world met in Managua to take a hard look at underlying structural problems in the production of food and fiber — Nicaragua's basic industry.

Participants in the seminar included representatives of seven international organizations, five Nicaraguan government agencies, and three mass organizations (Rural Workers Association, National Union of Farmers and Ranchers, and Sandinista Defense Committees).

Their findings were published in a detailed report several months later.¹ The report is tes-

1. *Informe del Primer Seminario Sobre Estrategia*

timony to the revolutionary government's determination to discuss, openly and frankly, some of its most serious long-range problems so as to confront them effectively.

Among the most important conclusions reached were the following:

- Expansion of food production at current levels of technology will not be sufficient to feed the expected increase in population.
- Government grants of subsidized credit to the peasantry have not and cannot, by themselves, substantially increase production.
- Stiff measures must be taken to ensure security in the distribution of food, most of which today lies in private hands.

Looking ahead to year 2000

If Nicaragua were to continue with its present level of agricultural technology, by the year 2000 it would have to more than double the 1.1 million acres of land currently devoted to food production.²

Alimentaria. Report published in Managua in June 1983 by the Center for the Investigation and Study of Agrarian Reform (CIERA), research arm of the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Reform.

2. Except in direct quotes, all units of measure have been converted to U.S. equivalents.

- 1 manzana = 1.73 acres
- 1 quintal = 100 pounds
- 1 córdoba = US\$0.10

The problem is that no such expanse of cultivable land exists. Hence, the answer must be found in increasing the yield per acre.

In Nicaragua, Wheelock points out, this means shifting food production from the worst to the best soil and, if necessary, adding irrigation:

"The traditional export crops, located on the Pacific coast, where we have the only land susceptible to mechanization, must be combined with the production of basic food crops. That is, it is absolutely essential to shift the production of basic food crops back to the Pacific coast, where they were originally uprooted by capitalism and Somozaism."

For example, corn can be planted, under irrigation, after cotton has been harvested. This would immediately increase yields by as much as sixfold over traditional planting of corn on poorer soil. Such steps, if widely introduced, can cut by three-quarters the amount of land that will have to be added to cultivation.

Socially and economically, this means making production of food an equal priority with cash crops — a complete reversal of inherited agricultural patterns. Under Somoza, almost all credit, the best land, trained personnel, and technology were channeled solely to the export sector.

That's how, Wheelock notes, Nicaragua ended up with the problem it faces today — producing an insufficient quantity of food:

"For the most part, basic food crops are produced by peasants using technology at the same level as that of the Indians at the arrival of Columbus: the digging stick. Moreover, such crops are produced on the worst land, on slopes that are too steep, where there is inadequate rainfall, where the ground cover is very thin and the soil very poor."

By shifting to irrigation, increased mechanization, and part-time use of better land, it is calculated that Nicaragua's basic food needs by the year 2000 can be met by introducing only 320,000 acres of additional farmland.

Cheap credit only part of answer

"Somoza provided 20 million to 30 million córdobas a year to cover production on 300,000 manzanas," Wheelock states in summing up the discussion on credit policy.

"We have spent as much as 700 million córdobas but have not increased production by even 50 percent. . . . Here's the problem: all the resources, all the technical assistance, better seeds, credit, etc., cannot give a positive result so long as they go to the same producer, on the same soil, in the same geographical location. To believe otherwise would be to deceive ourselves."

One result of the government's initial easy-credit policy was a huge debt, run up by peasant producers whose land could not produce enough to repay their loans. Much of this debt was eventually wiped off the books by government decree. But until the basic structure of production gradually changes, such debts will simply reoccur.

In the meantime, the government has set more stringent standards of economic viability in order to qualify for government loans. It has also selected some 500 of the best-managed cooperatives (out of a total of some 2,500) for extensive technical and financial aid.

Participants in the seminar discussed two additional problems with agricultural investment in the early years of the revolution — both of which have since been corrected.

The first was to devote most credit to the export sector — mainly sugar, beef, and coffee. This not only reflected the inherited model of development, but in fact was based on simply carrying through projects designed under Somoza.

The second was a lack of balance. Investment was mostly channeled to primary production, with little thought given to necessary increases in storage, processing, and distribution facilities.

Correct pricing policy is also something that had to be learned through experience. For example, the report states, many peasant producers consider the government's purchase price for corn — \$360 a ton — to be below their costs of production. So in 1982 they grew enough for their own use but sent little or none to market.

In some instances peasants who had contracted loans to plant corn figured it was more advantageous to plant beans or cotton. They repaid the "corn loan" with proceeds from the

sales of other crops. The result: in the cities, plenty of beans; but almost all the corn being eaten today is imported.

State farms: tempted by quick profits

In Nicaragua's transition from capitalism to socialism, market mechanisms are widely used where detailed planning is impossible.

The state farms, for example, function largely as though they were capitalist enterprises owned by the state. In addition to producing good yields, providing year-round employment, expanding social services, and adhering to union contracts, they are also expected to "make a profit."

Administrators are judged by how well they combine all these (at times conflicting) responsibilities. In this situation, shortcuts can sometimes be tempting.

The report bluntly pointed to this as an area requiring greater government supervision.

"It has been noted," the report states, "that the organization of the APP [People's Property Sector, in this case state farms] within a profit-making logic at times has a negative effect in ensuring access to food.

"For example, in terms of cattle, various APP dairy plants are decreasing production of milk to make more money through production of meat. And in the APP dairy plants, as well as in those that are privately owned, an increasing amount of raw milk is being diverted into secondary products, to which greater value has been added — such as butter, ice cream, or cheese — in place of pasteurized milk.

"When it comes to marketing the products, some APP farms sell to the private sector instead of to state purchasing agencies, when private buyers offer a higher price."

Weakest link in chain

An even sharper problem comes in wholesale and retail trade, where the state has little direct control. Apart from rice, beans, corn, and sugar, the report notes, "retail sale of basic food items remains concentrated in corner grocery stores and open-air markets, where control is difficult to organize. A certain degree of organization of store owners has been attained, in associations, but they tend to take part in speculation unless the neighborhood Sandinista Defense Committee exercises strong control.

"The extent of speculation is greater in [Managua's] Eastern Market, where it is almost impossible to control prices among the 8,000 vendors who operate there."

Particularly insistent on this point was Ronald Paredes, a national leader of the Sandinista Defense Committees and one of their delegates to the Council of State.

"We have to cut once and for all this chain (of intermediaries) between the wholesaler and consumer that makes products so expensive. We have found as many as seven middlemen in one product, greatly increasing the cost of living for our people — for it is not the producer who benefits from these high prices. We have

found that of 1 córdoba spent on basic food items, as much as 65 centavos goes to middlemen."

Recommendations by the seminar on this point were among the strongest they made:

- Immediate increase in production of beans and corn on state farms. In addition, the state should move toward a majority share in the production of meat, milk, cereal, fruit, and vegetables.

- More state-run retail food stores, in addition to the 2,500 that already exist. And a larger variety of products at each store.

- Either introduce effective "commercial regulation" of private wholesalers "or transfer these operations into the hands of the state."

Priority of the revolution

Nicaragua has taken, and made public, a hard look at its problems in delivering food because it fully intends to take whatever steps are necessary to solve them. Improving the diet and nutritional standards of the population as a whole, Wheelock points out, "is the priority we have given the revolution."

Major strides have already been made, even under existing conditions, as can be seen from the accompanying chart. Taking 1977, the last "normal" year under Somoza, as a base (100), clear at a glance are the difficulties encountered in the year of recovery, 1980, and the gains registered by 1982, the most recent year for which full figures are available.

The major declines, in cotton and cattle, stem from factors beyond the control of the revolution. Extensive cattle smuggling during the revolutionary war reduced the country's herd to its 1960 size. And Somoza's record cotton harvest included cultivation of marginal land it is no longer profitable to farm.

Big gains have been registered in the production of nearly every other item of food. The revolution that has made this possible intends to do even better. □

Food production since revolution

Production as percent of 1977 production

	1980	1982
Corn	80	91.4
Beans	71	115.1
Rice	132	198.4
Sorghum	148	198.4
Cottonseed	17	53
Sugarcane	81	117
Processed sugar	92	117
Beef	100	70
Pork	76	158
Chicken	68	268
Raw milk	57	67
Pasteurized milk	106	170
Eggs	89	348
Cooking oil	79	120
Flour	103	137
Ground coffee	72	156
Fish	104	186

Source: Informe del Primer Seminario Sobre Estrategia Alimentaria, pp. 16-18.

Interview with George Louison

New Jewel leader describes revolution's overthrow

[George Louison, a former teacher and farmer, was a founding leader of Grenada's New Jewel Movement, serving on both its Central Committee and Political Bureau. After the March 13, 1979, insurrection that brought the NJM to power, Louison became the minister of agriculture, rural development, and cooperatives in the new People's Revolutionary Government.

[One of the few supporters of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop within the NJM leadership to have survived Bernard Coard's October 1983 coup, Louison is currently on the Board of Trustees of the Maurice Bishop and Martyrs of October 19, 1983, Foundation.

[The following interview with Louison was conducted by *Intercontinental Press* correspondent Mohammed Oliver in mid-February at Louison's home in Concord, on the west coast of Grenada.]

* * *

Question. How did the crisis within the New Jewel Movement (NJM) develop last year, and how was the People's Revolutionary Government overthrown?

Answer. At the end of August [1983], Liam James made a proposal for an emergency Central Committee meeting in September, saying there was an impending crisis within the country and a crisis within the party.

At that time there were maybe four or five of us who were out of the country. I, for example, was in the GDR [German Democratic Republic]. Ewart Layne was studying in the Soviet Union. So we were recalled for this urgent Central Committee meeting.

When I returned from the GDR and tried to find out what this particular crisis was, people gave two reasons: First, that the party was in crisis and that sections of the party were on the verge of protesting against the way things were going within the party. And second, that the revolution had lost confidence and support among the masses, and that as a result of that there was a very deep crisis within the country and within the party.

But it became clear to me that there was no loss of confidence in the country. I disputed that there was any crisis. Far from the people losing confidence in the revolution, they were beginning to settle down with the revolution and see it as a way of life. Even people who had reservations about the revolution in the early period were beginning to settle down with it. They saw that there were plans to deal with all the key problems in the society.

So the arguments started around whether there was a crisis in the country and whether

there was need for change in the Central Committee, because that was the line being pushed at the beginning of September. People said there were complaints about the work of particular individuals on the Central Committee, in particular five people: Hudson Austin, Unison Whiteman, Fitzroy Bain, Ian St. Bernard, and Kamau McBarnette, whose work it was claimed was weak. There was absolutely no complaint whatsoever raised by any member of the Central Committee about Maurice Bishop's leadership.

On the Tuesday before the start of that meeting, September 13, Selwyn Strachan and myself sat down for a long discussion in which we went into the so-called complaints about these five people. At the end of it, we arrived at the conclusion that there could be no removal nor additions to the Central Committee. Once complaints were raised about Unison Whiteman, there was absolutely no one in the party at that time who could have done a better job at the foreign affairs work. The only other people who could in fact have taken up the foreign affairs work at all were a small handful, who were already overburdened, people like Prime Minister Bishop, Bernard Coard, Selwyn Strachan, and myself. The same for Fitzroy Bain among the agricultural workers. And while McBarnette and St. Bernard were in fact very weak, we came to the conclusion that their replacements would not be better.

I also had discussed this with a number of other members of the Central Committee. When I returned on the Saturday, September 10, I had happened to have met Chris De Riggs at the airport, and we went through a long discussion. By the end of it, I think he too was of the position that there could be no removals or additions to the Central Committee.

So by the time the meeting began on Wednesday, September 14, at about 1:00 p.m., I think most people were coming into that meeting having already been beaten back on the complaints about individual members on the Central Committee. That's the reason why the first two days of the meeting took a different character from what I think people originally wanted, which was to come and sling mud.

So when the meeting began, people came up with the discussion on the crisis within the country. I took the position that there were problems, but there was no crisis.

There were two major problems for the masses as I perceived them. First of all the electricity question, and secondly the roads. There were complaints about them but these complaints were perfectly reasonable and legitimate, because the roads had in fact deteriorated and the electricity problem was quite

a nuisance.

People were vexed with these problems, but they had lost no confidence in the revolution.

They were convinced that the revolution would have solved these problems. Thus the crisis which was being perceived was an artificial crisis.

I also took the position that people were not placing enough emphasis on the objective conditions. There was just too much subjective thinking. People were not thinking about the economic situation, the world situation, the

Far from people losing confidence in the revolution, they were beginning to settle down with it . . .

way the country was, what the things are we have to concentrate on, or how fast we can expect the revolution to move forward in the context of the backwardness we had inherited and the collapse of the infrastructure that had happened under Gairy and under the plunder of the multinational companies that over the years were responsible for our electricity and our telephones and our different social amenities. We had inherited these things when they were on their dying legs, and it normally takes time to restore them.

I also recall that we had a long and bitter argument about recalling Leon Cornwall from Cuba. At the time, Cornwall had just come down from Cuba for the meeting. We said that it was almost tantamount to breaking diplomatic relations to just withdraw our ambassador without any explanation, and keep him at home, since there was talk of Cornwall coming back to head the political section of the army, to become political commissar for the army.

Q. Who raised that? Liam James?

A. I think that was raised by Ewart Layne during the course of the conversation. There was also talk of Layne not going back to finish his course [in the Soviet Union]. Again, I opposed that on the ground that the course only had four more weeks to go. But the theory evolved that it was possible for the party to lose power within a few weeks.

It was a half-baked, childish theory, we argued. What was the force that was going to take power from us?

There was only one force pointed out at that time that could have taken power from the party — American imperialism. And if imperialism had attacked, when the party was at

the stage it was, the entire people would have fought. Imperialism would have had to pay too heavy a price to take power in this country. As it turned out, when imperialism did attack, the people were divided, and so the imperialists did not have to pay that heavy price.

Layne, James, John Ventour, and Phyllis Coard in particular led the argument that there was a crisis. Most of the other people were in the middle, I think watching to see how things evolved to make up their minds as to which side to go.

Q. Who else was there?

A. Well, the entire Central Committee. Except Austin, who had been in Korea and returned on the very last day of the meeting.

Maurice was also quite firm that there was no crisis; there were problems, but no crisis. But because a lot of the arguments on the last day of the meeting became very personal attacks on him, he listened to the attacks and did not take part as much in the discussion.

On that last day of the meeting, September 16, this crazy proposal for joint leadership came up. Liam James suddenly came up with this idea. He said that really the main problem was not the weakness of individual members of the Central Committee, but Maurice's style of leadership. He said that there were a number of qualities for leading the revolution at this time. Maurice had two of them, Bernard had four of them.

Q. Which were the qualities?

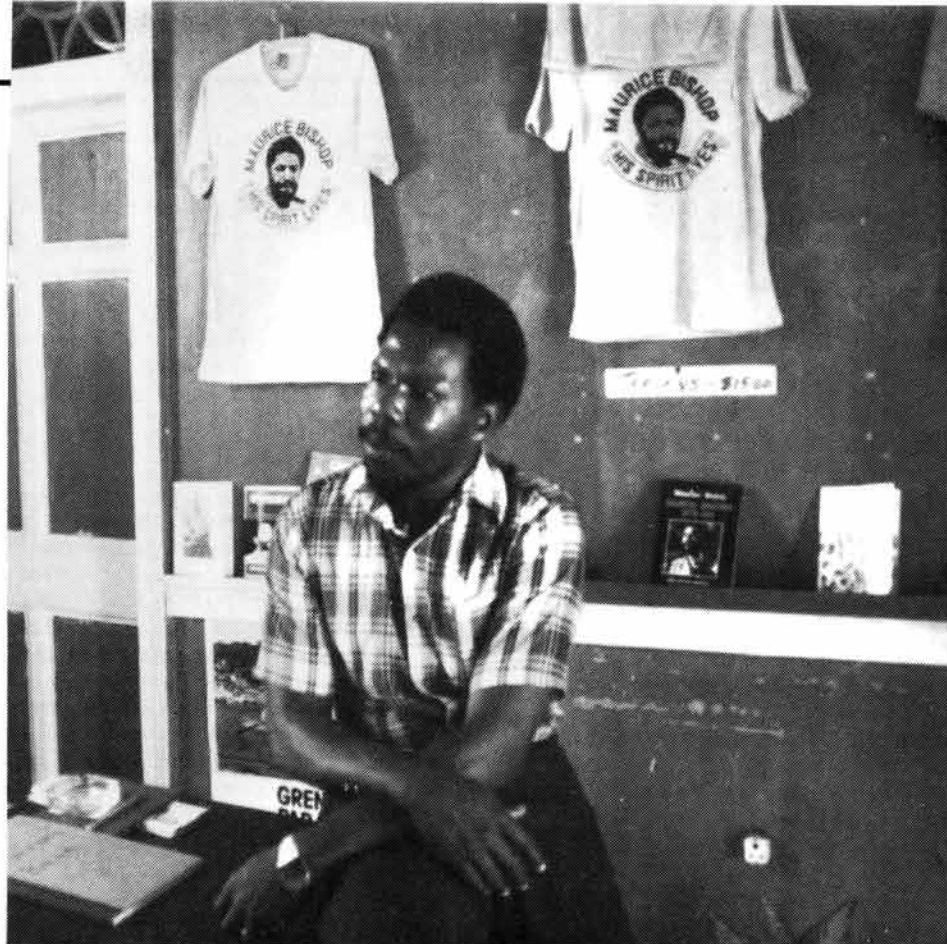
A. Well, he said there were four qualities that Bernard had: brilliance in strategy and tactics, a Leninist style of organizing, depth of ideological clarity, and overall supervision and control. He said these four qualities were stronger in Bernard Coard than in Maurice Bishop.

And there were two qualities Maurice Bishop was particularly strong on. One was work among the masses and brilliance in putting forward the positions of the revolution. The other was regional and international work.

And therefore we should marry those two sets of qualities in order to find the perfect leader.

Of course I immediately opposed that. At the time I admitted that Maurice needed to improve in certain areas, but that there was absolutely no way that joint leadership would solve any problems, that it was a formula for disaster. If there were any problems at all — and I stressed *if* there were any problems in Maurice's leadership — then I proposed that two things should be done: a joint, collective assistance to help him to overcome these problems and also improvement in the work of individual members of the Central Committee.

My argument was that one of the major problems with the Central Committee was the fact that there were many individuals who had not functioned up to the proper level. In fact, there were five or six members of the Central Committee who virtually lived in hospital over



Mohammed Oliver/IP

George Louison in the office of the Maurice Bishop and October 19, 1983, Martyrs Foundation in St. George's.

the past year. I think not many people were aware of that fact.

Ventour, who said his illness was psychological — one of the most dishonest statements I have heard — almost died on two occasions in 1983 of hepatitis of the liver. He was in hospital for an entire year. Then he was put on a restricted work program in August, of four hours a day, when he was able to come out of hospital. And even those four hours he couldn't carry.

St. Bernard spent five months in hospital in Moscow because he was blind in one eye, and was going blind in the other eye, and could not function.

Tan Bartholomew spent four months in the Soviet Union in hospitals because he had seri-

There was no way joint leadership would solve any problems. It was a formula for disaster . . .

ous eye problems and, worse, had a knee problem and could not walk for many months. In late November and December 1982, McBarnette got six weeks of holiday in Cuba in order to attempt to recover and then spent three months in hospital in the first three months of the year because he was ill again. Phyllis Coard spent six weeks in hospital in January

1983 during an operation for gallstones. When she returned, she did not function at full pace for many months.

But nobody wanted to admit that half of the problem within the party itself was the continued illnesses of a section of the Central Committee. The areas where there were substantial problems were the areas in which these people were either ill or not functioning.

The women's organization in particular had a fall-off in activity for part of 1983. A significant portion of the leadership of the National Women's Organisation (NWO) was either overseas on scholarships or ill, such as Phyllis, who was president. Also, we had relieved some of the leading sisters to go into other areas of work. But to be quite frank, there were also a number of problems with Phyllis' leadership. She was not a popular person. So a number of people, particularly in the leadership, were becoming more and more distanced from her.

In the case of the National Youth Organisation (NYO), the same problem happened, because the leader, Bartholomew, was ill for almost an entire year. And the rest of the leadership was not able to fully carry out the programs of the NYO.

So I held the position that there was not enough weight put on the objective conditions, including the illnesses of so many people. As a result, to take a position that Maurice's leadership was the main problem was unbelievably

ultraleft, childish. There was no basis for it.

On September 16 we also pointed out — though it is not reflected in the minutes — that proposals of that character must be given weeks in advance, so that they really could be studied. We returned for this emergency Central Committee meeting and there was not even an agenda circulated in advance.

What is more, the proposal that turned out to be the most fundamental one was only sprung

We argued that resolutions of the Central Committee should go before the members, but the minutes cannot. That sets the basis for disruptions in the party . . .

half way into the last day of the discussion. That was the second stage of the crisis, when the proposal for joint leadership emerged. Those elements of the Central Committee were beginning to unfold their plan to remove Maurice Bishop from the leadership.

They rushed a vote on this that very same day. Unison and I tried to prevent the vote. It was wrong to come to a vote at that time because of the fact that the issue had not been properly debated. But later on, the vote was taken.

There entered the third stage. These people then very dishonestly went to the membership, not on the issue of joint leadership so much, but on the issue of democratic centralism. They said, "Look, the Central Committee had taken a decision by a vote, and Maurice Bishop is the only man holding it up." That was because Maurice had said he needed time to reflect, a week to reflect. So they went to the membership on those grounds, very dishonestly and manipulatively, not putting the issue first.

Q. Was this a situation where you would say the importance of the issue overrode any formal concern about democratic centralism?

A. Democratic centralism is the principle by which the party operates. But in this situation we were dealing with an issue of the most fundamental character for the revolution — the question of leadership of the process. And on such a question, a party needed time for a very proper, clear, thorough, ideologically well-based discussion.

There were people who were saying the joint leadership question was a creative application of Marxism-Leninism in order to strengthen the revolution. That was the position of the ultraleft elements in the Central Committee, the elements who wanted to remove Maurice Bishop from the leadership, using salami-tactics. They were led by Liam James, Ewart Layne, Phyllis Coard, and John Ventour. Selwyn Strachan joined them and did so for the worst left opportunist reasons as well

as for other reasons still unknown.

We pointed out that such a proposal was, first of all, completely unscientific. It denied life itself. It denied the very concept of a living organism; it was creating a two-headed monster. It was creating a situation in which you had two final poles of authority within the party. The proposal was also not grounded in Marxism-Leninism. There was no way in which it could have been seen as a socialist proposal. It was therefore not ideologically based. It was completely and totally ultraleft.

Q. Why do you say ultraleft?

A. We are dealing with two things here, that fed on each other. First of all, the personal ambition of Bernard Coard to become leader, which goes back years. And second, the wild ultraleftism of a section of the Central Committee, which eventually became fanatical. And today, there is still some of this fanaticism around.

I say ultraleft because it was a fact that these people were claiming that they were left. They had said that the Central Committee had split into a Leninist wing and a right-opportunist, petty-bourgeois wing.

I say ultraleft also, because of the fact that the proposal was bound to mash up the party and bound to destroy the revolution. I pointed that out as early as September. I said it was like a little ball going down one of those hills we have in Grenada and letting loose a 30-pound stone. The odds are great that the 30-pound stone was bound to hit a 100-pound stone, which would hit a 500-pound stone. And the 500-pound stone would hit a 10 ton stone, bringing down the whole thing.

That is what happened. As events developed, issue after issue evolved, leading to the collapse and destruction of the revolution.

Also, the proposal was impractical. It could not be put into practice. The way it was supposed to evolve was with Maurice Bishop handling all of the mass work and the mass organizations and Bernard Coard handling the party work and the party organizations. Here were these people, at a time when it was

We ran the danger of creating a real elite. The party was going to get more benefits than the average person . . .

claimed that the relations between Maurice Bishop and Bernard Coard were at the lowest, coming up with a solution that had to rely on the very closest of working relations between these two men. Their hearts had to beat at the same speed for something like that to work. One does not create a proposal that is guaranteed to lead to the greatest of problems. And this is what joint leadership was doing. It was literally laying a highway for collision between Maurice Bishop and Bernard Coard. That was the way I argued in September.

Unfortunately, I left the country on the morning of September 17, for three weeks. So I was out of the country when the meeting of full members of the party took place on September 25 and did not have a chance to put my position to them.

Instead, what happened at that meeting was a deliberate slander campaign against me, for what was called "bad behavior" at the September Central Committee meeting. Rather than concentrating on my ideological argument, they concentrated on the fact that I had been really vexed in the meeting, had threatened to walk out, and at one stage did engage in some rough language with a couple of members of the Central Committee. I did so when the level of the demagoguery had reached the point of being so absurd, so out of touch with reality, and when they descended to personal attacks, accusing people of being opportunist for the slightest things. It was necessary to answer these attacks.

But that was not the fundamental essence of the thing. The fundamental essence was the ideological and theoretical arguments that I had given.

So that stage was the attempt by the Coard clique to remove the argument from being one of the merits and demerits, the correctness and incorrectness, of the absolutely childish and ultraleft proposal of joint leadership, and to keep the argument in the realm of democratic centralism.

Unfortunately, they succeeded in doing that. The party membership never consented to the arguments around the question of joint leadership and what it can do, but instead concentrated on democratic centralism.

From this, they eventually designed the charge of one-manism. They claimed that on the basis of having got the full members of the party — who alone are the ones who discussed and reviewed this question — they had a mandate. But that mandate was a manipulated mandate. It was a mandate without everybody knowing the full facts. And it was done with people almost taking a herd-like approach.

Q. There was no one there to challenge that?

A. I was out of the country. Maurice was not, but he came to the meeting late. Secondly, I think that because of the sheer weight of the emotional aspect, he did not enter into the debate, but just listened to it. There was no one there who was sufficiently clear about what was taking place. Unison was there, but he did not challenge it because I think he was pretty much in a state of mind like Maurice.

Also, these people were putting over their arguments as ones to improve the party. There was no hint whatever that Bernard Coard wanted leadership. And when some members raised the question that if this thing gets out and people get to know about it, it will create crisis in the country, they said, no, that was not the intention of Bernard Coard.

I think Maurice wanted unity. He was a man who virtually stood for unity at all costs.

And on that basis he said, well, he had reservations about many aspects of this proposal, but in the interest of unity he was willing to consider it.

Q. You mentioned earlier that the Central Committee minutes had been doctored. In what way?

A. The minutes of September left out a significant portion of the contribution of myself and Unison, nor did subsequent minutes do justice to Maurice's contribution.

What was beginning to happen in the party for the first time was that there were people

We never discussed the crisis within the party with Fidel Castro. That was a fabrication that Coard used . . .

speaking to the minutes. This phenomenon arose almost out of the blue, that the Central Committee minutes would be handed to members of the party. We argued vehemently that resolutions of the Central Committee should go to the members, but the minutes cannot. What that does is set the basis for all kinds of disruptions in the party, where everyone sees what each person says in the meeting. This could only create the basis for undermining the

Central Committee. The Coard clique wanted to do precisely that. They wanted the records to go to the members so that they could use them in a very demagogic way to discredit people.

Q. What happened after the full-membership meeting?

A. After September 25, Bernard Coard moved to further consolidate his position. Maurice was overseas, and Bernard Coard and his clique moved to virtually install themselves in power.

They attempted to make changes in the army by giving a small salary increase, of \$30, to the soldiers. They tried to implement many benefits. The army was manipulated through hints that the benefits that they were now getting were a result of Bernard's instrumentality, which was a complete and total lie. We had discussed for several months trying to find a small increase for the soldiers. I remember that Unison was probably the strongest person on that. He made those points virtually at every meeting. But Bernard Coard and Company said, "You see, we are getting that for you. The reason why you didn't get it before is because Maurice was not pushing hard enough on it." It was totally dishonest.

Bernard also visited all the army camps. He moved from project to project, trying to give himself a high degree of visibility.

Also we used to hold Central Committee

and Political Bureau meetings at Maurice's house, for security reasons. That was the safest place in the country. But they moved it from that venue to Fort Rupert. In other words, they took many small and big actions.

Bernard Coard made sure that he got a major write-up in the newspaper. If you look at the party paper of September 26, you will see that Bernard Coard starred on the front page, at a time when there was no reason at all, no event happening that meant that he should be on the front page of the paper.

Q. What about the militia?

A. They did not make direct moves on the militia in terms of changing leadership there. Their assessment was that they could get the militia in line through the army, and did not recognize that the militia was really of the masses. During those two weeks Maurice was overseas, they called in all party members, did full assessments of their personal situations, financial positions, and other things. They made big promises to help them solve personal situations.

When I looked at what was done in those two weeks with party members, I saw that we ran the danger of creating a real elite in the society. A number of party members already had relatively good incomes, in the Grenadian context. And these people were discussing with them their personal situations, to give them even more benefits, so that the party was going



Prime Minister Bishop with school children during the days of the revolution.

to get more benefits than the average person among the masses.

During that time also, meetings were held with the candidate members and the applicants to the party. Bernard Coard gave a very one-sided picture of how things had happened, running a slander campaign against Maurice in particular, and secondly against me, because I had opposed the joint leadership question.

While we were overseas, the Central Committee, meeting under Bernard Coard's chairmanship, took a decision that for the following six months the Central Committee of the party would meet as the Political Bureau, with those members of the Central Committee who were not Political Bureau members becoming alternate Political Bureau members, attending all Political Bureau meetings, with the right to speak and engage in debate, but without the right to vote, of course.

It also decided that Bernard Coard would chair all Political Bureau meetings in the future, while Maurice Bishop would chair Central Committee meetings. The Political Bureau meets weekly and the Central Committee meets monthly, so in any one month you would be having five meetings of the same group of people, with Bernard Coard chairing four of them.

Equally so, a proposal was put forward for the establishment of a Central Committee Secretariat, and in that the name of Maurice Bishop was not mentioned at all. Bernard Coard and Selwyn Strachan would have become the heads of that Central Committee Secretariat. It would have been the only party in the world to establish a Central Committee Secretariat where the leader of the party was not even contemplated as a member of the Secretariat.

So by the time we returned on October 8, they had virtually placed themselves in control of the party and in control of the military, preparing to remove Maurice from leadership. I think all the facts about what happened in those

Often, things that appear very clear to the working people are things that ultralefts cannot see . . .

two weeks that we were away clearly bear out that this was a transfer of power.

When we returned on October 8, the "welcome" we got was extremely cold. In fact, only Selwyn Strachan came to the airport to meet us. Between Saturday, October 8, and Wednesday, October 12, Bernard Coard lined up the conditions for the house arrest of Maurice Bishop and for the events to come.

First of all, Bernard Coard did not come to the airport on October 8 to receive Maurice Bishop back to the country. One week later he explained in the Central Committee meeting of October 12 that he did not come to the airport because he had got a message that said that Cletus St. Paul was going to jump off the plane

from Cuba to shoot him at the airport. That is the stuff that Grimms' Fairy Tales and the Arabian Nights are made of.

Q. Cletus was the head of Maurice's security?

A. Right, and he was returning with the delegation from overseas.

On top of not coming to the airport, Bernard Coard went underground. He moved out of his house, which is right next door to Maurice Bishop's house, without saying a word to Maurice Bishop. He went around spreading the position in certain circles that he did that because he was afraid that Cletus St. Paul would assassinate him.

All that time he said nothing to the Central Committee. He did not inform Maurice Bishop that that was why he was doing it, so Maurice Bishop did not know one thing of all of this behind-the-scenes manipulation.

Thirdly, Bernard Coard went around spreading a rumor that Maurice Bishop and myself had met with Fidel Castro on Friday, October 7, that Fidel Castro had agreed to give us the support of Cuba and to use the Cubans who were in Grenada to get rid of Coard.

As you know, we had never discussed the crisis within the party with Fidel Castro. Far from asking for his help, we did not even mention the crisis in the party to him.

So that was a complete fabrication that Bernard Coard used to whip up hysteria within the party.

Coard also went around and told people that I had been going among the masses and discussing the joint leadership crisis within the party, which again was a total fabrication, aimed at whipping up hysteria.

In the days between October 8 and Wednesday, October 12, the key military figures in the party did not report to Maurice Bishop. Normally, when he has gone out of the country and returned, every one of them would automatically give him a report. Neither James nor Layne gave him a report. The only persons who spoke to him were Hudson Austin and the chief of staff, Einstein Louison.

Nor did Bernard Coard say a word to him. Here was the "joint leader" of the party, for four days after the other "joint leader" returned, not even making contact.

Then on Wednesday, October 12, in the very early morning, at 1:00 a.m., a meeting was held of a section of the security unit that guards Maurice Bishop's house. Some men were called, others were not called.

These people were told that Maurice Bishop was giving trouble, and therefore what it meant was that from now on they must no longer take orders from him. Their orders should come instead from the Central Committee, and their responsibility was to protect the working class, not the life of any one leader. Can you imagine that these are the people guarding the life of Maurice Bishop?

Later that morning, the party branch in the armed forces called a meeting, at 7:00 a.m. Here was this perceived crisis in the party, and

no other branch was meeting, no regional branch. The Central Committee was not even scheduled to meet. There was only one meeting scheduled for that Wednesday the 12th, the regular meeting of the Political Bureau, which met every Wednesday. The only branch that was meeting was the party branch in the armed forces.

They passed the most vicious resolution. It called on the party to take the most resolute action against what they called a minority that

They were playing into the hands of imperialism . . .

was trying to disrupt the party. If necessary, it said, any form of punishment that was needed must be taken against that minority. The tone was really vicious.

On that day, when the Political Bureau met, Bernard Coard was in the chair. The agenda had three points on it. The first was the resolution of the army. The second was an item they called George Louison. The third was an item called the present crisis in the party.

We were able to get the resolution of the army thrown out because it had not gone through the proper procedure to reach the Political Bureau, it had to go through other committees first. So on procedural grounds we were able to get it removed.

Then they charged that I was engaged in antiparty activity in Hungary. They claimed I held a meeting of the party members who were on the trip and attempted to get them to come back and oppose the joint leadership proposal. It is true that we held this meeting, but we told them that the meeting was not called for any decision, but only to let them know what was happening, because that was being done in Grenada also. Every single section of the party was being told, and these people who had been away with me did not know what was happening. So we called a meeting to brief them.

They also claimed that I had gone among the people and discussed this joint leadership issue. None of these charges were substantiated. During the course of the meeting I openly attacked a number of individuals on the Central Committee, pointing out that they did not do any work for the year and that it was their style of work that was responsible for the crisis. So the meeting became a major confrontation.

At 12 o'clock that day when the Political Bureau had finished its meeting, a motion was moved that the meeting be transformed into a Central Committee meeting. So what was going to happen was that people would just change their caps.

We took an adjournment and resumed at 3 o'clock as the Central Committee, because it was claimed that the Central Committee had more power than the Political Bureau. Bernard Coard did not return to the meeting that afternoon. Instead, he stayed home.

By that time they had made up their minds that they would move to expel me. The debate

went on for several more hours and eventually ended up with my being expelled from the Central Committee and from the Political Bureau, at about 10:00 p.m.

Also, by the time we came back, this so-called rumor that Bernard Coard was plotting to kill Maurice Bishop had surfaced in the country. Maurice was being accused by them of being involved in the rumor. There was a material base for a rumor of that kind. And it could very well be that Bernard Coard was the one who spread it, since he had already put all the pieces in place between Saturday and Wednesday.

When Maurice Bishop was challenged, he pointed out that he was not involved. Cletus St. Paul was immediately called into the room, and accused. When St. Paul answered the charges on the rumor, James then sprung a second charge at him, of wanting to kill Bernard Coard. Of course, St. Paul pointed out that he was not involved in that. But the Central Committee nonetheless voted because by that time the Coard clique had a majority — to arrest Cletus St. Paul, not for the evidence on the rumor, but for the so-called plan to kill Bernard Coard.

Maurice Bishop was asked to do several things after the discussion on the rumor. First of all, he was asked to give a radio broadcast which denied the thing and pointed out to the people of the country that it was a deliberate attempt by people to sow confusion. Secondly, he was asked to send a note to a lady who had repeated the rumor asking that she assist the investigation.

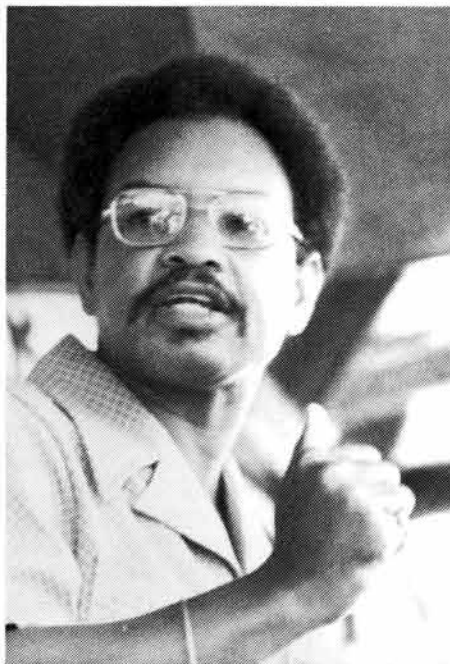
And then also the army was put on alert.

The broadcast was made and repeated only three times that night, between midnight and 1:00 a.m. on the 13th. It was supposed to have been run all night and all the following day on the radio. But I think Bernard Coard advised its withdrawal because he recognized that a broadcast of that kind would only clear Maurice Bishop.

They called another meeting on the morning of the 13th. By that time I was expelled. They did not invite Fitzroy Bain, because he had dissociated himself from the manipulations of Coard on the 12th. At that meeting they took the decision to place Maurice Bishop and army chief of staff Einstein Louison under house arrest and to call a meeting of the whole party for that afternoon to report on what was done.

That meeting was extremely mob-like. They told the party that they had put Maurice Bishop under house arrest and what they had done in my case.

Maurice spoke and pointed out that initially — because of the fact that he wanted unity and did not feel that any single person should have an absolute grip on the leadership — sharing the leadership was never a problem for him. Based on this attempt to get unity, he had said that in principle he could examine it, but there were things in it he did not accept. Subsequently, after coming back to the country, these things became even clearer. He pointed



UNISON WHITEMAN

Jerry Hunnicutt/IP

out very, very clearly that the joint leadership proposal could only have the effect of destroying things. So, as a result, he had reached the point where now there was no way he could go along with the joint leadership proposal.

I spoke also and pointed out that the accusations against me were false and why I opposed the question of joint leadership.

But those statements did not have much effect on the people in the room. A lot of people who supported us were frightened, because a section of the party was behaving exactly like a mob.

Bernard Coard did not say a word at the meeting. So I went up to him during the recess and said, look, the party is facing the greatest crisis, why are you not saying a word. Coard then said to me that he had cried when he heard statements the other night. I said it was not a question of crying, the party needs guidance at this time. And he said that what the party needs is not guidance but a psychiatrist.

Nonetheless, we continued. The meeting did not take any decisions, although it lasted many hours.

The day after, on Friday, I tried to get Coard and Strachan. But Coard himself called me on Saturday morning, about 2:00 a.m., and there began a series of negotiations that lasted for three days, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, involving Unison and myself with Coard and Strachan.

In these negotiations, we pointed out: First of all, that there was no way they could have held power because the people would not have allowed them to do it. Secondly, that the regional and international situation did not allow them to do so, and even if they held it, imperialism would take advantage. Thirdly, that

our best ally, Cuba and the socialist world, could never accept the ideological position that they were taking, since it was false.

Coard attempted to convince us on ideology during that period. And we were able to defeat him, because every single argument he brought up, we were able to answer.

We pointed out that what they were doing was against the people, was antipeople, that it was going to destroy the revolution. I pointed out to him that he had already destroyed the party, because the party was forced to attempt to go out and explain why Maurice Bishop was under house arrest, and could not explain it. They could not sell the people this line of democratic centralism.

That is why they developed the "principle is principle" position, to try to explain it. They went out and said, "Principle is principle, if you were in our organization and the majority decided on something, could you as one person go against that decision?" People were not impressed with this childish way of presenting it. The people asked, "Well, what was it everybody wanted to decide on?" Which is what party members should have asked on their own — what was the issue.

So they said the issue was joint leadership. People asked, "Joint leadership, what is that?" They replied, "Well, the party will now have two leaders, Bernard Coard and Maurice Bishop." So people immediately said that is madness. "Have you ever seen a ship with two captains?" In other words, the masses were immediately zeroing in on the fundamental issue.

Quite often, as you know, things that appear very, very clear to the working people and the working class, facts that are indisputable, are things that ultralefts cannot see.

What these people were into was a revolutionary phrase. I think it gave life to something which Lenin said once, that we cannot be in a

Within the country as a whole, there is tremendous support for the programs of the revolution . . .

position to tell the world that a revolutionary phrase destroyed the revolution. Unfortunately, in the case of the Grenada revolution, a revolutionary phrase about joint leadership destroyed our revolution.

So during those negotiations, therefore, the ideological arguments were very intense. But they were behaving like people who had reached a point of fanaticism and were not prepared to listen to any form of reason. Coard by that time had tasted the power he always wanted, and was relishing it. Both he and Strachan were in good moods, puffing cigars while the negotiations were going on.

Coard thought that with the party and the army on his side, there was no way that he could lose the power. He miscalculated all of the fundamental elements of the situation. First of all, the party was very small, and had lost

touch with the people.

Secondly, they miscalculated the party's ability to influence the masses on every issue. They thought that because over the years people trusted, admired, respected the party; that because over the years whenever the party called on the people to make sacrifices to build the revolution, people were prepared to make those sacrifices — that it was possible for them to come out with their so-called majority decision and remove Maurice Bishop from power. We told them that that was impossible. But their miscalculation on that made them believe that it was possible for them to sell the party line.

They miscalculated that, with the military, they could frighten people into docility. They did not recognize that the Grenadian people had reached a stage where they accepted for a fact, based on our practice, that the power was indeed in the hands of the people, that they had a fundamental say in what must happen in the country, and that they were prepared to exercise that say, at any cost.

People could not conceive of the party wanting to take such a decision without even consulting them, because they did not hear that Maurice Bishop was in any trouble until the morning that it was announced that he was under house arrest. Of course they also miscalculated the speed at which people were responding and the numbers of people that were coming out.

The Coard clique simply thought that it was possible for them to grab the power and to hold onto it.

I pointed out to them that a few weeks before, in September, they were saying that counterrevolution was on the rise, that it was possible for the revolution to lose power in six to eight months. But when Maurice Bishop was put under house arrest, there was not even one single act of counterrevolution in the country, not even a stone was thrown, which reflected the fact that in essence there was no organized counterrevolution in the country at that time. We had already defeated counterrevolution, and the main threat was imperialism.

We pointed out that they were playing into the hands of imperialism because they were about to isolate themselves and isolate the revolution from all of its natural allies and in that way place it at the mercy of our enemies. Our allies, the socialist and progressive world, as well as the working people of the Caribbean, could not come to our defense in a situation where they had split the party and split the revolution.

It was only those elements who were hostile to the revolution who would now find a basis for action, like the puppets of the regimes around the Caribbean, who always wanted a means to destroy the Grenada revolution, [Barbadian Prime Minister] Tom Adams and [Dominican Prime Minister] Eugenia Charles, and those elements who were looking for the first opportunity to destroy the revolution. They now felt that they had it because a space was opened for them. Ultraleftism succeeded in providing our enemies with a possibility for

destroying the revolution.

Q. What did they say in response?

A. They said, even if it takes 10 years, the masses have to understand. Their analysis was that imperialism was too weak to attack them. There was Lebanon, which had reached a flash point. There were a number of other things, and imperialism could not attack them at that time. They felt that after a while the socialist countries would understand and come to their defense.

During the discussions on Sunday, we introduced the Cuban position, because by that time Fidel Castro's reply to the Central Committee had come. [See box.]

In addition, Bernard felt that if the masses demonstrate for weeks upon weeks, they are bound to get tired after a while and get hungry and go back to work. He said Williams did it in 1970 [in Trinidad], Gairy did it in 1974, and it could be done again.

We said that was an extremely Machiavellian view of dealing with the people on the protests, especially in the context of what the people were protesting for.

On Monday, the 17th, they promised to

have a response for us early on the morning of the 18th. On Tuesday, the 18th, they did not respond early. They said that by mid-day they would have a response. At mid-day they said they had not finished, they would have it at 2. At 2 o'clock they said they had not finished, they would have it at 4. At 4 o'clock they said they still had not finished, they would have it the following day, by 2:00 p.m. We said there was absolutely no way we could tolerate their stalling. Bernard Coard said that he thought the situation needed a cooling-off period. We said to him that there is no time, because people are incensed, and there can be no cooling off with Maurice under house arrest. If they want a cooling off, then release Maurice from house arrest.

So we got in a heated argument on the phone. We said that we could not hold back the people from coming out onto the streets any longer. Bernard slammed down the phone eventually.

Those were the events that led up to October 19. There is no need to go into the events of October 19 itself.

Q. Do you know anything about the organization of it? Was it organized, or was it com-

Castro: 'A miserable piece of slander'

[The following is the text of an Oct. 15, 1983, letter sent by Cuban President Fidel Castro to the Central Committee of the New Jewel Movement. It was among the documents seized by the U.S. forces during their invasion of Grenada and subsequently released to the press. The Cuban government first referred to the letter in its October 20 statement condemning the murders of Bishop and his comrades the day before. This English translation was by the Cuban government.]

* * *

Esteemed Comrades:

I send you this message motivated by certain references which, in their conversations with our Ambassador, have been made by several Grenadian leaders in relation to Cuba.

The supposed notion that on passing through our country Bishop had informed me of the problems inside the Party is a miserable piece of slander. Bishop did not mention a single word to me, nor did he make the slightest allusion to the matter. Completely the opposite. He expressed to me in general terms and with great modesty that there were deficiencies in his work which he thought he would overcome in the next few months.

In reality, I am grateful to Bishop for that discretion, and for the respect he showed to his Party and to Cuba by not touching on such matters.

We are indignant at the very thought that some of you would have considered us capable of meddling in any way in the internal questions of your Party. We are people of principle, not vulgar schemers or adventurers.

Everything which happened was for us a surprise, and disagreeable. In our country, the Grenadian Revolution and Comrade Bishop as its central figure were the object of great sympathies and respect. Even explaining the events to our people will not be easy.

In my opinion, the divisions and problems which have emerged will result in considerable damage to the image of the Grenadian Revolution, as much within as outside the country.

Cuba, faithful to its moral values and its international policy, will pay strictest attention to the principle of not interfering in the slightest in the internal affairs of Grenada, fulfilling the promises made in the field of cooperation. Our promises are not to men. They are to the peoples and to principle.

History and developments yet to come will judge what has happened in these last few days.

I wish for you the greatest wisdom, serenity, loyalty to principles, and generosity in this difficult moment through which the Grenadian Revolution is passing.

Cordially,
Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro Ruz
15 October 1983

pletely spontaneous?

A. What is clear is that for several weeks before, the Coard clique was putting all pieces in place, with the clear indication that if necessary, they would take a military solution.

We raised that with Strachan and Coard during our discussion. I said that I got the distinct

On the international level, the independence of Grenada is the key question that people should raise in every forum . . .

impression that John Ventour and Selwyn Strachan were behaving as though they wanted a military solution.

At that time they were also moving to use the military against various people. As a matter of fact, on the Saturday, they had attempted to surround Fitzy Bain's place, and Fitzy Bain had to go underground. When Unison returned from the U.S. on the Friday afternoon, they prevented him and me from speaking, on the grounds of security — they said we couldn't ride in the same car.

By that time also, they had already put Einstein Louison under house arrest. And they had shifted around people who they felt would have been more sympathetic. For example, they put Iman Abdullah, who eventually did the shooting, as the chief guard of the unit around Maurice's house.

On that day, they could have done anything. I think the Coard clique had come to the conclusion that it was a kind of "us or them" situation. They finally recognized that they were completely isolated from the masses, and maybe that the only way they could hold onto power was by shedding the blood of the people.

They had committed the ultimate crime that the revolution had always promised the people never to commit: never to turn the guns of the revolution on the people. Once they had committed that crime, there was no way they could have been forgiven.

Q. But also, the pouring out of the masses to free Bishop, was that organized by anyone?

A. It was somewhat spontaneous and somewhat organized. On the night of the 18th, we made several phone calls, just before they arrested me. And when they announced that they had arrested me and that I was not to move from the house, I was able to make some phone calls to key people to tell them I had been arrested, and that they should come out on the following day. Unison did the same thing, as did Norris Bain and Lyden Ramdhanny.

We did not go out and organize prior to the 18th. At that time we were still hoping that there would be a peaceful solution, and that solution did not involve any mass reaction. So we were holding back the people. People ap-

proached us about demonstrations. We said give it more time and see if we can solve this without coming out onto the streets.

But when it was clear that there was need for more pressure, we decided to use the 19th as a day to pressure them to force them to recognize that they had zero support in the country. The people were just waiting for the call.

Apart from slaughtering Maurice Bishop and many of our best leaders, the Coard clique terrorized the population in the worst way imaginable. The four-day shoot-to-kill curfew was in a sense itself an act of the greatest treachery and terror, which struck fear into a large section of the Grenadian population.

You have to recognize that only 37 percent of the homes in the country have pipe-borne water, only 26 percent of the homes have internal toilets. The revolution never instituted any programs of cutback on food items, and therefore there were no shortages in the country, so that people did not have to hoard any food and had no stocks of foodstuffs. Also, because the country is agricultural, many people have small animals and crops in the fields to take care of.

So the curfew imposed the greatest hardship and provided a material base for the fear and the terror that developed with an around-the-clock curfew, with no food, no water for most; they had to hide to go to the toilet.

In addition, the Coard clique had deployed teams of party members around the country, fully armed, who shot all over the place, to run people back into their homes whenever people under this great hardship attempted to break the curfew.

They also compiled what they called assessment sheets of each village, in which they listed who were for RMC [Revolutionary Military Council] and who were against it. And those lists struck fear in the people because they saw them as virtual death lists.

Through their ultraleftism, they whipped up the worst anticommunist sentiments in the country. Whatever sentiments of anticommunism that have emerged, I think the Coard clique has to take full responsibility for them. American propaganda has further reinforced that. People were going around describing themselves as the hardest communists, Ventour and others were going around saying that Maurice Bishop was a petty-bourgeois who cannot bear Marxism. This sloganeering and phraseology was being used in the workplaces, on the streets, in an attempt to explain their position. That created grave problems among the people, and affected their consciousness. How could you murder the leader of the country, how could you murder a number of people without the least warning, how could you close down the whole society and put the entire nation under arrest, without giving them a chance to attend to their farms, to get water, to even go to the toilet, and then turn around and say you are doing it in the name of an ideology to benefit the people.

All of this has created grave problems now in the country. The Yankees have been able to

use this and attempt to reinforce it.

However, we must say that within the country as a whole, there is tremendous support for the programs of the revolution. People want the programs of the revolution. People are seeing already the hardships that have come as a result of the collapse of the revolution. So many people are out of work, over 4,000 people have lost their jobs. Many of the programs that they had turned to are no longer there. The farmers are recognizing that the Marketing Board has cut its buying from the farmers by some 35 percent already. The international airport, which was the pride and joy of the nation, is now stagnant. The persistent problems that we had been attacking, and the problems that the revolution had begun making progress on — the problems of poverty, unemployment, poor health, poor education, the problems of developing a national spirit and a national consciousness, of being able to rally the people to participate in the day-to-day decision-making process — all of these questions that were tackled and answered by the revolution are now receiving no attention.

Q. What was the extent of the Yankee repression after the invasion? In particular, what was your experience?

A. Overall, there was a major effort by the Yankees to document all members and supporters of the party, members of the mass organizations, militia members, and many people they thought were active in the revolution. All told, they documented over 4,000 people, taking all personal data: date of birth, address, job, employment history, finger-

If we made any mistake, it was not to resolutely fight ultraleftism . . .

prints, photographs. So now the CIA has files on some 4,000 Grenadians.

They also did a mass detention of a wide cross-section of the population. Many people were kept in very shabby conditions. I have been told of a number of people who were beaten up.

I was personally detained by the Yankees on three occasions. On the first occasion they took me to a police station. They said I was organizing a sniper force. They said that if any of their soldiers got killed, they would turn the place upside down.

They then arrested me a day or two later. At that time they took me to the Point Salines detention camp. There you get a four-hour "sun bath." They put you in one barbed-wire area for two hours, then move you, document you, and put you in a second barbed-wire area for two more hours out in the open. After that, they throw you in the tent.

On the third occasion, they threw me into the prison.

On each occasion, the kinds of questions they asked were mainly political. They were



Thousands of Grenadians were taken to the U.S.-run detention camp at Point Salines.

not deeply concerned about evidence against Coard and his clique, as to the events of October 19 and the murder of Comrade Bishop. I told them I would have given them any evidence I knew about that particular period surrounding the killings that would lead to a conviction of the Coard clique. In my personal opinion, they must be convicted for the crimes they have committed.

But I said that I could not talk to them about my political future nor the workings of the party. Their main objective was to get me to make a written statement on the party and to give information on various people. I refused to do that.

In my case, I would say that the main thrust was psychological warfare, an attempt to discredit me, to drive fear into me with the hope that I would withdraw from all activity, or that I would break and run.

That psychological warfare is continuing. In the early period there were always troops passing up and down outside this house, and helicopters hovered over it for long periods. Now that has been reduced. They still pass, and daily there is a jeep that drives by.

Q. Earlier you mentioned that the Coard grouping still has some supporters in Grenada.

A. The ultraleft position of the Central Committee is even today being reflected in the antipeople nature of those who still, for one reason or another, go along with the Coard clique's positions.

First of all, many of them have become anti-Cuban. They attack the Cuban revolution, on all kinds of grounds. They attack it for "cultism," personal attacks on Comrade Fidel Castro. They attack it for not having done enough to save the Coard clique, as if anything would

have saved that bunch of madmen. They are demonstrating the worst kind of Pol Potian qualities in doing this. As happens with ultralefts, they eventually took the same lines that imperialism takes with respect to socialist and progressive countries.

Secondly, within Grenada, they are attacking the people. They are saying they never knew that the Grenadian people were so backward. They are saying that it is the way people behaved that created the vacuum, that people behaved on the basis of emotions, not reason. But the facts show exactly the opposite, that it was Bernard Coard and Company that acted on the basis of idealism, not reality.

Thirdly, they are engaged in antipeople activities. For example, now there is a clique within the National Women's Organisation that has started to distribute the money of the

Problems within the party need to be properly debated within the party . . .

NWO to individual people of their ilk, rather than utilizing that money for some struggle or project that can benefit all women, such as a day nursery.

Some of them have already begun to show signs of warming up to the invaders, and in that way set the stage for infiltration of the progressive movement.

Before the invasion came, they were the ones who were making the most noise about being the hardest of the hard. But none of the leaders went out and fought for what they claimed they believed in. Instead, they were found without the slightest scratch, with large sums of money in their pockets, prepared to skip the country and allow the working people

and their children to take the brunt of the pressure. The attempt by the clique was just to abandon ship. Of course, they did not succeed in escaping the country, and are now behind bars.

Q. I've talked to several people in different unions about their struggles around different aspects of the U.S. drive to roll back the gains of the revolution. What do you think are the prospects for any kind of struggle on the part of the Grenadian working people to defend themselves from these attacks?

A. The overall situation in Grenada at the moment is quite confused. There is a major contradiction that has to be answered at some point. People want the programs of the revolution, want progress, want to see that those issues that I mentioned are tackled. But at the moment, they do not see any particular course to tackle it. And they do not see the occupiers as moving to tackle it.

This is a contradiction, because the more people begin to fret for the progressive programs that they had become accustomed to, the more they recognize they have to have a force, a government that can respond to these things. And that must be answered.

I think that it is still early, but the mood has changed quite substantially from what it was in October and November, when people had almost completely lost direction. People were then so badly shaken up by the events that they could not even focus properly. Gradually, they are beginning to focus more, to think more.

As one who has worked closely with the people, I have deep and abundant faith in the masses. There's absolutely no doubt about the consciousness of the Grenadian people. The four and a half years of the revolution have been a very deep and very important experience for the history of our country ahead.

And those four and a half years came out of a history of struggle. The New Jewel Movement was able to take the struggles that started with the Black Power movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s and transform it, develop it, into a people's program and into a people's revolution. That struggle is not a struggle that is easily lost. That's why I have great faith in Grenada, that it is possible for the masses to reassert their consciousness and be able to utilize it for the future development of the country.

Q. What do you think supporters of the Grenada revolution, here and abroad, should be doing now?

A. The Grenadian people have already begun to call for their programs. That is the main task, to attempt to see to it that the programs of the revolution continue, that people continue to receive the benefits they received under the revolution: the worker programs, profit sharing, training for workers, greater involvement and say in the management process, the recognition of the trade unions, the free education, free health care, housing programs.

All should be restored and expanded.

On the international level, the independence of Grenada is the key question that people should raise in every forum, that our country must be able to reassert its independence, without decisions on the security of the state being taken in Washington or by a group of neocolonial troops.

There is, of course, another factor: to make sure that the attempt to discredit and destroy the names of Maurice Bishop and the martyrs

We have to recognize that we cannot just take unity for granted. We have to be very vigilant to maintain it . . .

of October 19 is not effective, to see to it that they remain symbols of the struggle.

In the four and a half years, they connected up the Grenada revolution so brilliantly with the struggles of working people worldwide. I think the greatest symbol of that was Maurice Bishop. We have to see to it that every effort and assistance is given to make sure that that symbol continues to live in the minds of the people, and that it can be a spirit of continued inspiration for revolutionaries in the Caribbean, Latin America, and throughout the world.

Q. What do you see as the most important lessons of the overthrow of the Grenada revolution?

A. I think fundamentally the question of the party, the building of the party to ensure that ultraleftism does not at any time get the upper hand. Or when it does emerge — because in most parties it will emerge — that it is resolutely dealt with.

The situation here in Grenada reminded me

of the struggle in early 1918 that Lenin put up against the ultraleft elements around the Brest-Litovsk treaty, especially in his piece, "The Revolutionary Phrase." And there was also, "'Left-Wing' Communism — An Infantile Disorder."

If we made any mistake at all, it was not to resolutely fight that ultraleftism. I think we started to fight it too late.

There was a certain element of believing that the closeness and unity that the party had developed over the years would override any such crisis. In fact, the party had reached the stage where over the years we didn't even vote. We decided everything by consensus. There were some issues that took months to decide because we did not get the consensus immediately. But that was our style of work. The very first time we voted was in September, when the joint leadership question came up, and then the issue had not been properly debated.

I think a second lesson is that problems within the party must at all times be openly debated. I think we did not do enough on that, especially around the 1982 resignation of Bernard Coard [from the Central Committee]. We should have brought the party together at the time. That was a mistake in retrospect. Problems within the party need to be properly debated within the party. In that way, people who take wrong positions can be fully brought out.

A third very key lesson is the fundamental mistake that the ultraleft elements made. They almost believed that they were building socialism for the party. The Coard clique behaved completely arrogantly, against the interests of the working people of the country, and had the idea that the party could do anything, declare anything, and that the rest of the society had to fall in line on 24-hours' notice. In other words, they lacked an appreciation of the genuine need for the masses of the people to be in tandem with the activities of the party.

They must understand those actions so they can carry them out also.

It is something all of us have to be clear on: the work to build socialism cannot be seen in the context of socialism for the party's sake only. It has to be done with the society and for the society.

Another lesson is to fully understand and appreciate imperialism and the extent to which it will go to destroy revolutions in this area of the world, and, in fact, throughout the world. One must never have a naive or distorted view of the extent to which imperialism is prepared to go.

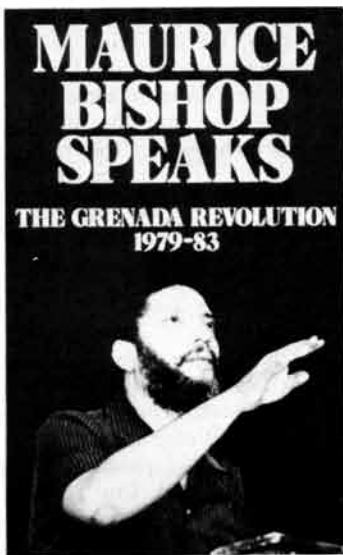
Or the extent to which neocolonial puppets can become full actors and participants for imperialism. We see that in some of the states that border Nicaragua, and it was even more glaring in the way the neocolonial puppets behaved in the Grenada situation. They were prepared at the drop of a hat to come and "restore democracy" with American M-16s, tanks, and helicopter gunships.

The Coard clique missed that completely. They missed the fact that politics in the modern world has a fundamental international dimension to it that must never be underestimated. Therefore, domestic actions must always be weighed within the context of the international situation and its effects. And that is true for small countries as much as for big countries.

We also have to recognize that we cannot just take unity for granted within our movements. That's an important lesson. We have to work very, very hard and be very vigilant to maintain it.

I think we were guilty of some slackness in maintaining the unity within the party because of our approach of consensus. It is a fact that we had a united leadership. It broke down. And the results were fatal.

So it is vital for parties to have a very vigilant approach to unity. There can be no slackening up on that. □



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Australia

'Maurice Bishop Speaks'

Labor MPs, solidarity activists hail new book

By David Deutschmann

MELBOURNE — At the Australian launching of the recently-published *Maurice Bishop Speaks* (Pathfinder Press, New York), an Australian Labor Party (ALP) parliamentarian urged that the book be distributed as widely as possible in the labor movement.

Olive Zakharov, an ALP senator in Australia's national parliament, had begun her speech at the March 13 book launching by quoting from a March 1980 speech of Bishop which gave "a prophetic warning of the coming U.S. invasion of Grenada."

Maurice Bishop Speaks was a book, Zakharov said, which she "had difficulty in putting down." Continuing her description of the book she said: "Apart from Maurice Bishop's own words, this book has an excellent analysis of the events that led up to and followed his death. Both the book's introduction and the Cuban statements are necessary reading for those who want to draw the lessons of October 1983."

Another speaker who highlighted the Cuban statements on Grenada, which are included in the book, was the secretary of the Victoria Australia-Cuba Friendship Society, Jo Connolly. Connolly was one of the leaders of the first Australian work brigade, which spent one month in Cuba earlier this year.

In describing the impact on the Cuban people of the death of Bishop and the subsequent U.S. invasion of Grenada, Connolly referred to discussions that brigade members had with Cuban internationalists. Working with the Australian brigade were a number of Cubans who had served as volunteer workers

in Africa and Central America, as well as Grenada.

The third speaker at the book launching was Ros Eason, representing the Latin American Information Centre and also a member of the foreign affairs policy committee of the ALP. Eason recalled the visit to Australia of several leaders of the Grenada revolution — including Prime Minister Bishop and Foreign Affairs Minister Unison Whiteman — for a Commonwealth meeting in Melbourne in October 1981.

In particular, she described a public meeting of more than 400 people addressed by Whiteman, where he had attacked a U.S. naval and military "maneuver" taking place at the time, a mock invasion known as "Ocean Venture '81." Whiteman and Bishop were warning, related Eason, that this was a dress rehearsal of an invasion of Grenada.

Eason had been one of the speakers at the 1981 public meeting where she had welcomed the Grenadians on behalf of solidarity activists.

Messages were also sent by three prominent left-wing Labor parliamentarians, Joan Cox-sedge, Gerry Hand, and Peter Milton. In his greeting, Milton made reference to his recent visit to Cuba and Nicaragua.

The Australian book launching was organized by New International Publications, which is organizing as wide as possible distribution of the book. A step in that direction was made at the book launching — held on the fifth anniversary of the Grenada revolution — where 10 copies of *Maurice Bishop Speaks* were sold. □

Grenada

'The People's Heroes'

New newsletter of Bishop's supporters

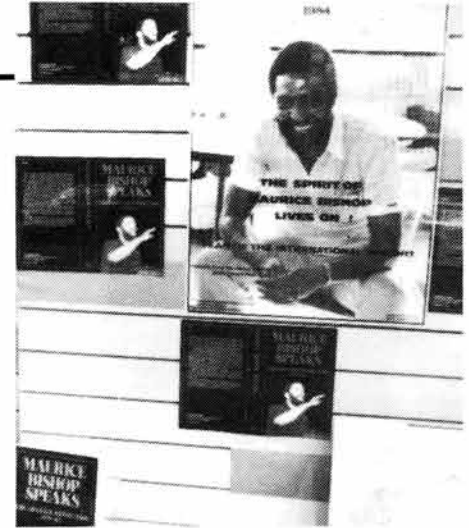
Dedicated to keeping alive the memory and political legacy of the Grenada revolution, the first issue of the *People's Heroes* appeared on the streets of Grenada on March 10.

The eight-page printed monthly newspaper is the public voice of the Maurice Bishop and October 19, 1983, Martyrs Foundation, which was established on January 21 by supporters of the murdered prime minister.

An editorial on the front page explained, "This newsletter will fulfill a very important historical task. Too often in the past, Grena-

dians have not kept records of the life and work of our most talented sons and heroes even though we love and admire them deeply. . . . *People's Heroes* seeks to make sure that the life, work, thought and aspirations of the October 19th Martyrs are carefully researched, documented and left to pass from generation to generation of our heroic Grenadian people.

"Certainly, Maurice Bishop and Unison Whiteman, for thirteen (13) years, were totally integrated and grounded with the people of Grenada. They made sacrifices on behalf of



Lou Howort/Militant

Maurice Bishop Speaks prominently displayed in B. Dalton window in New York. Dalton's is largest bookstore chain in U.S.

the Grenadian people. Their rich experiences need to be catalogued and preserved for our people present and yet unborn."

An accompanying article noted that the current interim government of Grenada — which was imposed by the U.S. occupation forces — has maintained an "official silence" about Bishop and his comrades.

It also observed that "most Grenadians are still shell-shocked" by the events of October — the overthrow of Bishop's People's Revolutionary Government by a clique led by Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard, the executions and shoot-to-kill curfew, and the subsequent U.S. invasion.

"Those who have launched the Foundation, however, see it as a fundamental duty to rise and do something positive in the name of Maurice Bishop and the October Martyrs," the article went on.

Articles in the issue included a full-page biography of Maurice Bishop; a description of some of the gains of the Grenada revolution and the importance of commemorating the March 13, 1979, insurrection; a report on a memorial service for Norris Bain; a column on Alimenta Bishop, the late prime minister's mother, whose house was destroyed during the U.S. invasion; and a survey of some of the international protests against the murders of Bishop and his comrades. The last piece quoted most extensively from the October 20 Cuban statement condemning the killings.

Pointing to the importance of international solidarity, the *People's Heroes* also provided reports on activities around Grenada organized in Trinidad, Nicaragua, and the French-ruled Antilles.

Readers of the newsletter were urged to obtain other materials on Bishop and the Grenada revolution. One advertisement featured the new book, *Maurice Bishop Speaks: The Grenada Revolution, 1979-83*, published by Pathfinder Press in New York City. "Keep the spirit of Maurice Bishop and other martyred patriots alive," the ad said. "Get some of these materials for you, your family, and friends today." □

Liberation forces wage fight

Former Dutch colony seeks independence from Indonesia

BY Andy Jarvis

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

* * *

National liberation fighters of the Free Papua Movement (Organisasi Papua Merdeka — OPM) are reported to have launched a major offensive against the Indonesian armed forces occupying West Papua (Irian Jaya — the western half of the island of New Guinea). According to civilians who have sought refuge in neighbouring Papua New Guinea, the first weeks of February saw major fighting in the West Papuan capital of Jayapura.

Among the rebel forces taking part in the assault on the capital is an Indonesian paratroop unit which defected to the OPM side at the start of February, bringing guns and ammunition. In addition, up to 1,000 OPM guerrillas are reported to have crossed into West Papua from jungle bases on the Papua New Guinea side of the border, where they had been in hiding.

The Melanesian nation of West Papua, with a population of more than one million people, was occupied by Indonesia in 1963. Previously, like Indonesia itself, it was part of Holland's colonial empire in the region — known as the Dutch East Indies. Following World War Two, Indonesia won its independence from Holland following a deep-going national liberation struggle. The nationalist Sukarno regime that came to power continued to campaign for an end to Dutch rule in West Papua. At the same time, political movements began to develop in West Papua seeking self-determination.

In 1963, under pressure from the United States government, Holland transferred rule in West Papua to Indonesia. According to Rex Rumakiek (a leader of the OPM and co-ordinator of the Vanuatu Pacific Community Centre), the handover was part of a deal to gain Indonesia's neutrality in the Vietnam war. Two years later, in 1965, the pro-imperialist Suharto dictatorship came to power in Indonesia in a bloody military coup backed by the U.S., Australia, and New Zealand. The 1965 coup ushered in a period of extreme repression against the labour movement and national minorities within the state of Indonesia.

Under Indonesian rule, the Melanesian people of West Papua have been subjected to cultural and physical genocide. The Indonesian regime does not recognise the existence of a Papuan nationality or culture. Instead, Indonesian place-names, language, and culture have been imposed, and the country renamed Irian Jaya.

Papuans are often forced to work against

their will in conditions approaching slave labour. Detention without trial, torture, and execution are common. Where the Indonesian military has been unable to establish control, whole villages have often been bombed to destruction. According to the London-based Anti-Slavery Society and other sources, over 200,000 West Papuans have been slaughtered by the Indonesian military during the past 20 years.

A major part of the Indonesian regime's genocidal policy is the replacement of Papuans with Indonesian nationals. Communally-owned tribal lands, considered inalienable, have been confiscated and the villagers driven off to make way for resettlement as private plots by Indonesian peasants — many of them forced to move to West Papua against their will. Under the latest resettlement plan just an-

nounced, it is intended to settle over one million Indonesians in West Papua within the next five years.

The Free Papua Movement developed in the late 1960s in opposition to Indonesian rule. In 1970 it reorganised its forces into a united movement around a programme of national liberation, socialism, and democracy, and the following year a provisional government was established. Possessing few and mostly out-of-date guns, the OPM guerrillas have often had to challenge the Indonesian army with bows and arrows and other traditional weapons. Despite this, the OPM has been able to score significant victories against the occupying forces and establish its control over large areas of the rural countryside and the jungle highlands.

The OPM has overwhelming support among the West Papuan population. In neighbouring Papua New Guinea there is also widespread support for the West Papuan liberation struggle. However the government of Papua New Guinea opposes the OPM, as do the governments of Australia and New Zealand. Within the South Pacific region, only the government of Vanuatu has stated its support for the struggle in West Papua. □

Peru

Workers shut down country

As police assaults on protesters mount

By Fred Murphy

A nationwide state of emergency decreed by President Fernando Belaúnde Terry failed to deter hundreds of thousands of Peruvian workers from taking part in a 24-hour general strike on March 22.

The massive work stoppage was called by all four of Peru's trade-union federations and gained the support of a broad range of peasant and shantytown dwellers' organizations, student groups, and local elected officials and members of parliament from the United Left (IU) and other working-class parties.

Some 300 delegates representing this array of popular forces gathered in Lima, the capital, on March 7 for a "national people's assembly," where the strike call was ratified. Among the demands put forward were an end to the regime's austerity policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), general and periodic wage increases to offset inflation, emergency aid to peasants affected by drought and floods, and an end to military repression in the Andean region of Ayacucho, where the regime is trying to suppress the guerrilla movement known as Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path).

Belaúnde's response was to decree a three-day suspension of civil liberties throughout the country and send 10,000 Civil Guard troops onto the streets of Lima. Widespread clashes between these repressive units and students

and youth were reported the day of the strike.

The most brutal government action came outside the central Lima headquarters of the General Confederation of Peruvian Workers (CGTP), the country's largest labor organization. Workers who gathered for a rally there were dispersed with clubs, water cannon, and tear-gas grenades.

The government's show of force during the general strike was part of a broader attempt to drive the popular movement off the streets.

On March 15, tens of thousands of residents of the impoverished shantytowns in the southern part of the capital attempted to march on Belaúnde's Government Palace to present demands for potable water, electricity, and other municipal services. The march was organized by elected local officials from the United Left and was joined by several members of parliament, including Javier Diez Canseco and Edmundo Murrugarra of the IU and Hugo Blanco of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT).

When the marchers — including many housewives with small children — tried to advance beyond a Civil Guard blockade, they were violently attacked with tear gas, clubs, and water cannon. Hugo Blanco was singled out by a unit of guardsmen and severely beaten on the head, back, and stomach. Diez Canseco, hundreds of other demonstrators, and even journalists covering the action, were also injured in the attack. □

New economic reforms

Seek to boost output and alter balance in growth

By Will Reissner

China's economic planners have a problem quite different from those facing industrialists and bankers in capitalist countries. The Chinese economy has been growing fast, but the planners are trying to alter the balance between various sectors of the economy.

Last year overall industrial production grew by 10.2 percent. Output of heavy industry increased by 12.1 percent, nearly three times the targeted growth rate. Light industrial production climbed by 8.4 percent.

Agricultural production in 1983 was 4.7 percent above the bumper crop of 1982. The 1983 grain harvest was nearly 380 million tons, 26 million tons higher than the previous year.

China's foreign trade increased by 4.9 percent in 1983. With exports of US\$22.3 billion and imports of US\$21.3 billion, the country had an overall trade surplus of \$1 billion.

Average per capita income also rose sharply: 12 percent in the countryside; and 7.7 percent in urban areas.

This rapid economic growth comes on the heels of several years of similar increases. In fact, most of the 1985 production goals outlined in the current 1981-85 economic plan were already reached by the end of 1983.

Trying to slow industrial growth

Since 1980 the Chinese government has been trying to slow the growth rate of industrial production in order to transfer scarce resources to eliminating bottlenecks in energy production and transportation. By concentrating the country's capital investments in those areas, the planners feel, the stage could be set for more orderly economic growth in the future.

But since the slowdown was proposed in 1980, growth rates in industry have far exceeded the planned targets in every year but one. In 1981 stringent measures did succeed in holding the growth of heavy industry to 4.7 percent. But the following year, heavy industrial production surged forward by 9.3 percent rather than the 1 percent target. And in 1983, heavy industry — targeted to grow by 3.9 percent — actually grew by 12.1 percent.

Construction, which was supposed to decline in 1983 under the plan, actually rose sharply. This led to shortages of steel, cement, lumber, coal, and other supplies and drove up prices.

Stringent measures have been put into effect to try to hold down the pace of economic growth in 1984. More than 5,300 construction projects were ordered cancelled.

Local authorities and enterprises will now need state approval before beginning any new projects, and enterprises can no longer seek bank loans without higher approval.

A special 10 percent energy and transport tax was levied on all local industrial expansion beginning Oct. 1, 1983. The tax was quickly raised to 15 percent when the lower levy did little to discourage investment.

China's state planning commission is trying to hold economic growth in 1984 to 4 percent for agriculture, 5 percent for industry, and 8 percent for retail sales.

Revolution made growth possible

When the Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949, overturning the capitalist regime of Chiang Kai-shek, that victory set the stage for the elimination of imperialist domination, landlordism, and capitalism.

The victory of the revolution opened the way for the creation of a planned economy that could begin to eradicate the horrible conditions under which the vast majority of China's peasants and workers lived.

Terrible famines had periodically swept the country, leaving millions dead in their wake.

Epidemics of typhoid, cholera, and dysentery took countless lives every year. In rural areas most of the population was afflicted with worms. Infant mortality took a terrible toll.

In 1949, 80 percent of the population was illiterate. In rural areas, millions of peasants never even saw, much less entered, a school.

Peasants labored under the twin yoke of the landlord and the moneylender. Year after year, the peasants had to borrow money to make it through to their next crop. Not only was their crop constantly mortgaged, but their land was also mortgaged, and at usurious interest rates. Millions of peasants regularly took to the roads and to the cities, to try to survive through beggary.

By kicking out the imperialists, destroying landlordism and usury in the countryside, and establishing a planned economy, the Chinese revolution opened the way for gigantic strides in the development of agriculture, industry, health care, education, and living standards.

China remains a poor country by the standards of the advanced capitalist countries or the Eastern European workers states. But since the Chinese revolution, it has made tremendous advances in the living conditions of the population.

The accompanying chart compares China's performance in a number of health and economic fields with that of other countries in Asia. The comparison between China and

India is particularly revealing.

China, with 1 billion people, and India, with more than 700 million, are the two most populous countries in the world. Until the Chinese revolution, China and India were both synonymous with abject poverty and human degradation.

The fact that China eliminated capitalism and landlordism, while both remain in place in India, has resulted in dramatic improvements in the lives of China's workers and peasants while their Indian counterparts remain mired in desperate poverty.

In fact, the gap in living standards between Chinese and Indian workers and peasants is even greater than the figures indicate, since China's income distribution is much fairer than India's, where the most abject poverty exists side-by-side with enormous wealth.

Even greater growth was possible

While China has made enormous strides in many fields since the revolution, even greater progress could have been achieved.

From its beginnings, the new workers state established in China was dominated by a bureaucratic caste. Under the rule of Mao Tse-tung's faction of the Chinese Communist Party, the country's development was periodically disrupted by this bureaucracy's administratively-conducted campaigns. The bureaucracy's dominant hold over the country excluded the workers and peasants from participation in making most economic, social, and political decisions.

On a number of occasions, the bureaucracy arbitrarily set goals for the country and announced big shifts in policy, without regard to the relatively low level of technology inherited from decades of imperialist oppression. The bureaucracy then tried to achieve those goals through exhortation and political motivation of the population. When that failed, repression was used.

The regime's shifting policies toward agriculture were a case in point. Under the Agrarian Reform Law of June 28, 1950, the property of rural landlords was confiscated and redistributed among the peasants. This measure, made shortly after U.S. aggression in Korea began, consolidated support for the regime among the mass of peasants.

Between 1951 and 1953 a start was made toward rural collectivization with the establishment of mutual-aid teams that brought together small numbers of villagers in cooperative endeavors. The mutual-aid teams shared farm implements, draft animals, and labor on important projects on a seasonal or ad hoc basis, in keeping with the traditions of many rural villages.

Within a few years nearly 10 million mutual-aid teams, encompassing 70 million households, had been established. In 1953, a move was made to begin to convert many of these teams into small collectives, grouping 20 to 30 peasant households. In the process, the land that had been distributed among the peasants under the 1950 land reform began to be

concentrated into larger units.

Many peasants welcomed the introduction of the collectives. While keeping title to their small plots and having the right to withdraw from the cooperative, peasants saw a benefit in pooling resources to allow more rational cultivation of the land and more coherent utilization of the available labor power.

But what began in 1953 as a small-scale, voluntary, and experimental program was transformed into a national campaign in 1955. The goal was announced to consolidate the existing cooperatives into what were called advanced agricultural producers' cooperatives. In these, the individual peasants lost title to their land and were paid only on the basis of their labor, with no regard for the amount of land they had brought into the collective.

Although there was strong resistance to this compulsory collectivization among many peasants and from within the Communist Party, the regime pushed forward. By the end of 1956 almost 90 percent of China's peasant households were organized into the new cooperatives.

In 1957, faced with mounting opposition to these cooperatives, the CP launched an "anti-rightist" campaign in the countryside. This was followed by the decision to establish gigantic people's communes in 1958. Within three months of the August 29, 1958, resolution of the Communist Party Central Committee announcing the communes, it was claimed that 99 percent of the 500 million rural Chinese were already enrolled. Under the slogan of carrying out a "Great Leap Forward," the peasants on the communes were exhorted to work more than 12 hours a day to boost production.

Grandiose plans were also announced to industrialize the countryside. Backyard steel furnaces were set up throughout rural China.

Under the guise of liberating women, meals



Deng Xiaoping, architect of reforms.

were to be taken in communal dining halls and children were to be cared for in communal nurseries. These moves were actually designed to rapidly increase the number of women working in the fields.

Similar plans were announced to sharply increase urban industrial production by coercing workers to work longer and harder.

In fact, the "Great Leap Forward" caused sharp declines in agricultural and industrial production. Peasants, workers, draft animals, and machinery began to break down under the burden of 12-hour days. Many peasants simply went through the motions of working, bitter at what they viewed as the usurpation of their land, animals, and implements by the commune.

The communal dining halls were not dining halls at all. Rather peasants gathered by the communal kitchens and ate their meals outdoors. Nor did commune nurseries provide adequate care.

Eventually the "Great Leap Forward" had to be halted. The economic crisis in 1960 led to readjustments eliminating some of the harshest elements of the communes.

Similar dislocations also took place during the so-called "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" of the late 1960s, during which Mao's supporters claimed that any goals could be achieved if political motivation existed, regardless of the objective economic possibilities.

Economic reforms

After Mao's death in 1976, his faction in the Chinese Communist Party — known as the "Gang of Four" — lost control over the party and state apparatus when they were pushed aside by supporters of Deng Xiaoping. Deng had been reviled and humiliated for his opposition to the Cultural Revolution.

When Deng's faction consolidated its control in 1978, it began to try to reverse some aspects of the Maoist method of economic administration. Deng blamed China's flagging economic growth on the arbitrary, overly centralized, and rigid planning system that paid little attention to market needs or local input.

The new officials announced a "Four Modernizations" program to overhaul Chinese industry, agriculture, science and technology, and the armed forces. The goal is to quadruple China's gross domestic product by the year 2000. (The "Four Modernizations" slogan was first raised by Premier Zhou Enlai in 1975. After Zhou's death, the program was branded revisionist by Mao.)

Deng hoped that China would receive considerable aid from the United States in implementing its modernization program. In order to demonstrate China's usefulness as an ally, Deng furthered Peking's counterrevolutionary foreign policy line. The Chinese regime, for example, launched a major invasion of Vietnam in 1979, with the knowledge and support of the Carter administration, to punish Vietnam for helping Kampuchean liberation fighters overthrow the Pol Pot regime.

Despite Deng's eagerness for a special relationship with Washington, China has received little concrete help from the United States in its modernization program.

On the domestic level, however, the modernization program has been more successful. A series of economic reforms was put into place. In a November 1979 speech, Prime Minister Zhao Ziyang — who had been paraded through the streets of Canton wearing a dunce cap during the Cultural Revolution — argued for use of "any structure, system, policy, and measure that can promote the development of productive forces" as long as two prerequisites were met: state ownership of the means of production must be maintained, and people must be

Comparison of selected Asian countries

(Per capita, with China as index)

Category	China	Bangladesh	India	Indonesia	N. Korea	Thailand	Japan
Gross national product (1979)	100	23	39	80	159	119	2,056
Crude steel production (1980)	100	3	37	NA	524	NA	2,659
Crude steel consumption (1979)	100	6	40	19	662	NA	1,355
Energy consumption (1980)	100	7	31	36	438	60	596
Wheat production (1981)	100	22	93	NA	39	NA	10
Rice production (1981)	100	155	82	151	186	274	78
Corn production (1981)	100	NA	17	43	NA	127	--
Meat production (1980)	100	NA	5	11	NA	49	86
Cars & trucks in use (1983)	100	47	208	515	NA	752	19,686
Telephones in use (1983)	100	NA	81	69	NA	167	9,479
Televisions in use (1983)	100	5	19	108	85	192	1,625
Radios in use (1980)	100	14	79	72	142	219	1,189
Infant mortality rate (1983)	100	307	277	209	77	123	16
Life expectancy (1983)	100	68	72	71	93	88	110
Doctors per capita (1983)	100	18	80	20	460	29	280
Secondary school students (1983)	100	35	32	40	219	54	81

Sources: *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1982-83*; *Far Eastern Economic Review Asia 1984 Yearbook*

paid according to their work.

The aim of the reforms introduced by Deng's supporters was to increase local initiative, make production more responsive to the market, foster the technological renewal of Chinese industry, and provide material incentives for increased production.

The balance between heavy and light industry was to shift toward greater emphasis on light industry in order to increase the supply and quality of consumer goods. With more consumer goods available, and changes in the wage system to encourage greater production, it was argued, peasants and workers would have an incentive to boost production and increase their income.

The headlong expansion of the Chinese economy since 1980 owes much to the introduction of these reforms.

Capitalist road?

Jude Wanniski, a guru of Reagan's "supply-side economics," visited China in September 1983 and reported that "two things astonished me. I found an economic boom unfolding whose implications are exciting for the world, and never once during nine days in Peking and Shanghai did I feel I was in a Communist country. China is running, not walking, down the capitalist road." (*New York Times*, Oct. 25, 1983.)

Others who are more familiar with China also report that the economy is booming, but have a better understanding than Wanniski of the social system in place.

The *Wall Street Journal's* Peking correspondent Amanda Bennett wrote in the Dec. 27, 1983, issue: "However it may have appeared a few years ago, one thing is now clear: China isn't marching straight down the capitalist road."

Bennett is right and Wanniski is wrong. The reforms implemented by Deng and his supporters have not changed the social system in place: private ownership of the means of production remains prohibited, and the land remains nationalized.

Agricultural changes

Perhaps the most sweeping changes have been made in agriculture. Changes in this sphere have the most direct impact on China's people, 80 percent of whom still live in the countryside.

The huge agricultural communes established under Mao still remain in place. But on the communes agricultural production is now being organized through the "household production responsibility system."

This new form of organization was first introduced in 1979, although many parts of the country were slow to adopt it. But by 1983 the household production responsibility system was firmly established virtually everywhere.

Prior to the introduction of the new work system, peasants on China's communes (which sometimes include tens of thousands of peasants in dozens of villages) were organized into production brigades (generally made up of

all the inhabitants of a village). Those brigades were further subdivided into production teams.

The brigades and teams organized the work of the peasants and were responsible for agricultural production. Peasants received work points for the amount of labor they expended, and at the end of the harvest, the proceeds of the crop would be divided among brigade members on the basis of the number of work points each had accumulated.

This system was often described as "everybody eating out of the same big pot," since the income of each brigade member was largely dependent on the work the whole brigade carried out.

Through the brigade system, Chinese authorities were able to carry out huge public works projects in the countryside, mobilizing the labor of the commune members to build irrigation canals and dikes, drain marshes, reclaim scrub land, and so forth.

A national survey conducted in 1980 by a group of Chinese economists concluded that in China as a whole about 30 percent of the production brigades worked quite well, 40 percent did fairly well (neither chalking up great successes nor floundering), and 30 percent functioned poorly.

'Household responsibility system'

Under the new system, direct responsibility for production has shifted from the production brigade to the individual peasant household. The peasant household now contracts with the commune to cultivate a certain crop on an assigned parcel of the commune's land. The family agrees to sell a set amount of the crop to the commune at a fixed price. It is then free to do what it likes with anything over that quota — keeping it for personal use or selling it at a higher price through the commune or in farmers' markets.

(In addition, each commune allocates a certain amount of land to each individual on a per capita basis for personal use. A family of five, for example, might be allocated one-half acre.)

In neither case does the land become the property of those assigned to cultivate it. Control remains in the hands of the commune, and plots can be shifted from year to year. Recently, however, there have been suggestions that land assignments be made for as many as 15 years at a time in order to encourage peasants to make improvements that require a prolonged period to show results.

Other commune functions have also been contracted out. Some peasants are given responsibility for fish ponds in return for a commitment to sell a given quantity of fish to the state. Others contract to cultivate the commune's orchards or to operate the commune's tractors or transport equipment.

In each case, after meeting production quotas, tax levies, payments to the commune and brigade, and any other mandatory charges, the remaining income is retained by the contracting household.

Jia Hekung, the general manager of the

Xindu Xiang settlement in Sichuan province, described the impact of the change to the responsibility system on that commune of 20,000 peasants farming 3,350 acres of farmland.

'Slowly as caterpillars'

Jia told *Miami Herald* correspondent Michael Browning that under the old system, the "production brigade leaders had to bang on doors and blow whistles to roust the peasants out of bed in the morning.

"When the peasants got up," Jia continued, "they went into the fields as slowly as caterpillars and came home as quickly as dragons. While they were in the fields they usually just stood and did nothing, or pretended to work.

"At that time, we all ate out of the same big pot. By that I mean that everyone was given the same reward, regardless of his labor."

On that farm the switch to the responsibility system has had significant results. Since 1978 the harvest increased by 28 percent, per capita income has risen more than 250 percent, and the peasants have markedly improved their standard of living.

The number of televisions in Xindu Xiang, for example, rose from one in 1978 to 860 by late 1983.

Canadian sociologist Graham Johnson described the results of the introduction of the new system at the Fucheng commune in the Pearl River delta of Guangdong (Canton) province.

This commune, which Johnson has visited over a period of 10 years, has 40,000 members, typical for the delta region where communes are the largest in China.

On his latest trip, Johnson wrote in the Nov. 3, 1983, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, he saw many signs of "a material standard of life that has improved enormously over the decade."

Much of this progress, however, is due to the large-scale commune projects undertaken in the late 1950s and early 1960s, such as the draining of marshland and the construction of a 9-kilometer-long embankment.

Johnson reports that there has been a significant increase in the output of agricultural commodities over the past five years and notes that "the responsibility system, now devolved to the household throughout the brigade, is credited with much of the success in agricultural production."

One of the most striking results has been the freeing up of a large segment of the commune labor force to engage in nonagricultural activities in commune factories and workshops.

Johnson notes that in one brigade, before 1980 some 3,000 people out of the brigade's labor force of 3,500 had been engaged in field agriculture. Today only about 1,000 are so engaged. The rest are now involved in specialized tasks connected to agriculture such as transport or trade, or work in brigade-run enterprises. The brigade employs 200 people in a fireworks factory, and operates weaving and knitting factories as well.

Under the production responsibility system, peasant families now have more flexibility in deciding how to deploy their labor during the agricultural cycle. But collective forms of economic organization still play a big role in production.

Commune's involvement

As Johnson points out in another article, in the Oct. 6, 1983, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, the three-tier organizations of the commune (commune, production brigade, and production team) remain "leading bodies in a real sense." The commune and brigade levels remain central to formulating overall production plans although they now have little to do with day-to-day operations.

On the other hand, the team leadership continues to be "intimately involved in decisions of a day-to-day character." For example, the team leadership draws up the production schedule that peasants follow in sowing their fields, applying fertilizer and pesticides, and gathering the harvest.

For highly perishable goods like fish and vegetables, specific delivery dates are set in the production contract.

The communes also market the surplus crop of the peasant households. As Johnson notes, "there has been very little change in the system of collective marketing following the introduction of household-responsibility systems."

Variations on reforms

In some areas, the responsibility system is being applied on the team level rather than the household level. For example, in many areas of the enormously productive rice-growing region around Canton, the land remains undivided.

In the Renhe commune near Canton, Johnson reports, "there is a responsibility system in operation." But contracts are not made with individual households. Rather, "the brigades and teams allocate labour, productive resources (tractors, fertiliser, etc.) and water as part of a unified plan. Distribution, often through a system of work points, is a team responsibility."

Johnson reports that on that commune the land has not been divided because "there is a fear, on the part of cadres and peasants alike, that a distribution will result in small and less-productive fields: the risk of division seems too great."

But at that commune too, under the team responsibility system, individual productivity has risen sharply. The number of people directly involved in field agriculture has declined while the number employed in commune industries has risen.

Other factors in higher production

Greater individual initiative has contributed to the increased production since the introduction of the responsibility system. But initiative has not been the only factor in the higher yields.

Peasant households today can take advan-

tage of the vast projects carried out collectively by the communes in the past three decades, which have made the land far more productive.

In addition, the increased productivity of the household responsibility system is at least partially due to expanded production of agricultural implements, machinery, and fertilizer in the past decade.

William Hinton, a radical U.S. farmer who has followed Chinese agriculture for decades, described a trip he made to northern Anhwei province in the November 1983 *Monthly Review*. Hinton reports that peasants in Fengyang county regularly attributed their increased yields to "the incentive to work provided by the contract," but further questioning showed that that was only part of the reason for the bigger harvests.

Hinton writes: "When I countered with the suggestion that hard work alone could hardly quadruple yields on any piece of land they all said, 'Of course, we bought more fertilizer.'

"It turned out that they are now not only buying and applying four to five times as much fertilizer per acre as before but they are also applying phosphorous along with nitrogen for the first time (potash they still neglect). More fertilizers coupled with more complete fertilizers have had a startling effect on yields." Such quantities of fertilizer simply were not available in earlier years.

Peasants also attributed their increased yields to hybrid seeds that were introduced at about the same time the responsibility system began to be applied, and to timely pest control. Today virtually every family has its own sprayer for insecticides and fungicides. When an infestation develops, the population can go out and eradicate the pest within hours. In the past, only one or two sprayers were available for whole teams.

The gains in agricultural production have been impressive. But there are limits to how much yields can be increased by individual households intensively cultivating small plots of land. In some areas the responsibility system has already raised yields close to that ceiling.

Further increases in agricultural production will eventually require greater mechanization and much larger plots, as is already the case in the previously mentioned communes in the Canton area.

Such mechanization, however, requires the continued growth of Chinese industry, both to provide the needed machinery and to absorb surplus commune labor that can be released from intensive agricultural production.

Problems with progress

The introduction of the production responsibility system has also led to some new problems. With the household again the center of the production system, there is a growing problem of peasant families keeping children out of school to work on the land. There have also been reports that the birth control program in some areas has been disrupted, as peasants again see an advantage to larger families that

can provide more labor in the fields.

In addition, according to William Hinton, peasants are cutting down trees that had been planted by the commune for soil conservation and farming sloping wasteland that should never be tilled, leading to greater soil erosion.

While the Chinese regime may be justified at this time in introducing measures that permit greater initiative by individual households, such policies inevitably will lead to greater class differentiations in the countryside. The steps that the government takes to deal with this process as it unfolds will be very important to determine if the living standards and interests of the great mass of the peasantry are protected.

Reforms in industry

Expanding and modernizing China's industrial capacity is crucial to attaining the goal of quadrupling the gross domestic product by the end of the century.

When Deng Xiaoping's supporters took control in China in 1978, reforming the industrial structure was high on their list of priorities.

An attempt has been made to introduce a form of the responsibility system in the industrial sphere. By giving local managers and officials greater control and more room for initiative, China's planners hope that the quality and efficiency of industrial production will rise and goods will be produced with a greater eye to the marketplace.

In essence, under the industrial reform plan individual factories and enterprises must take greater responsibility for their results.

One key change made in the industrial arena was to give enterprises financial autonomy. Previously the state took all of an enterprise's profits and made up any of its losses. Under the new system, money-losing factories are supposed to survive or fail on their own. Money-making factories retain their profits after paying taxes to the state. They can use these retained profits as they see fit: to modernize plant and equipment, increase wages, build workers' housing, or whatever.

On June 1, 1983, following several years of experimentation, all state-owned enterprises were placed under the new system, and by August, 90 percent of all state-run enterprises had made initial tax payments.

The responsibility system as applied to individual factories has given greater power and responsibility to managers. New workers in state enterprises, for example, are no longer guaranteed a job. They must sign renewable contracts linking their pay with job performance. "In theory," according to Robert Delfs of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, "slackers can be dismissed."

At the same time, an October 1983 law has, also in theory, given workers more leverage to resist unjust demands by the newly powerful managers.

According to the New China News Agency, union officials "foresaw the possibility of small-scale, partial strikes — strikes usually

lasting for very short periods — breaking out spontaneously, mostly when the reasonable demands of the workers were blocked after exhausting all normal means due to bureaucracy and unlawful practices.”

From the vantage point of China's central planners, the industrial reforms have been less of an unqualified success than the changes in agriculture.

Local managers have followed their own agenda rather than the national priorities stressed by the central planners. After fulfilling their contractual commitments to the state, many factories have diverted production into high profit lines that often have little connection with the state's priorities for use of scarce resources.

In addition, rather than *modernizing* their plant and equipment, a key goal of the reforms, local factories boosted production by *expanding* their facilities. Local projects often duplicated facilities being built by other enterprises or turned out to be unnecessary additions.

Many factories used newly retained profits to increase their spending on housing for their work force. Although this solved an obvious and pressing need, it further increased competition for scarce construction materials.

Building boom causes strains

The boom in production and the expanded pace of construction have put serious strains on China's electrical generating and transport industries, which cannot cope with the higher demand.

Spending on housing and other nonproductive construction projects has risen from 34 percent of all capital construction in 1980 to 46 percent in 1983. Whereas China's planners calculate that total capital construction should not exceed 8 percent of national income, it is now running at 13 percent.

Many of the government's problems in controlling the volume and direction of investments are a direct result of the earlier reforms, which shifted funds to the control of local governments and enterprises. State revenues have dropped from 37.2 percent of national income in 1978 to 24.5 percent in 1982.

And whereas historically the state handled upwards of 80 percent of all capital-construction investment, by 1982 the state's share had dropped to 49.8 percent.

Without the fiscal resources to direct the investment plans, the state has now had to resort to administrative edicts to cut investment spending. According to a July 26, 1983, dispatch from the New China News Agency, the State Planning Commission imposed strict ceilings on capital-construction spending for the rest of 1983 and 1984 to “cut runaway spending and prevent further strains on the economy.”

An emergency state council circular instructed all localities and enterprises to suspend all projects not covered by the national plan. Even projects covered by the plan will be suspended if they have not been guaranteed delivery of raw materials.

Priority on funds and raw materials will go to 120 key projects concentrated in the fields of energy, transportation, communications, and production of essential raw materials.

The planners hope that if a slowdown in new construction can actually be achieved, the economy will have breathing space to solve the energy and transportation problems that plague it. Rotating blackouts of industry are already a common occurrence in many areas due to chronic power shortages.

Foreign investment

As part of the “Four Modernizations” program, China's governing bureaucracy has encouraged limited foreign investment in China.

According to Yuan Baohua, deputy chairman of the State Economic Commission, Peking hopes to sign contracts to import \$1 billion worth of foreign technology and equipment in the coming period and hopes to finance these purchases through loans from the World Bank and private bankers.

“The imports of foreign capital and foreign technology are now major policies for China's economic construction,” Yuan stated.

In order to attract that foreign investment, the government is cutting taxes and streamlining procedures for foreign-owned companies that want to invest in China.

For the first time, foreign companies are being encouraged to set up fully-owned plants. A new packaging plant opened in November 1983 by the Minnesota Mining and Manufac-

turing Company is the first such 100 percent foreign-owned plant to begin functioning.

But foreign investment in China will be limited to selected areas of the economy. The biggest arena for foreign companies is in the exploitation of off-shore oil sites. Already 18 foreign oil companies have been assigned blocks in the South China Sea to begin exploratory oil drilling.

The welcome extended to foreign companies in the oil industry reflects the urgency with which Chinese planners view the development of energy resources. The Chinese government itself has targeted US\$7.7 billion for its own petroleum sector in the 1981-85 five-year plan. But that sum pales in comparison to the US\$75 billion that foreign oil companies could spend in the next decade on exploration and production in China's off-shore waters.

Once commercial oil flow begins, the foreign operators will be compensated for exploration expenses by receiving a previously agreed upon share of the crude oil output, which they can then sell abroad to recoup their foreign currency costs.

Most of the remaining foreign investment will be concentrated in four “Special Economic Zones” that were established four years ago to attract foreign capital.

With promises of tax holidays, cheap land and labor, and some access to the Chinese domestic market, the Special Economic Zones are supposed to attract high technology industries that can aid the modernization process. □

India

Women suffer oppression

Despite advances conditions remain miserable

By Vibhuti Patel

[The following article appeared in the March 16 issue of *Socialist Action*, a labor weekly supported by the Socialist League, British section of the Fourth International. It is published in London. Patel is a leader of the Communist League, Indian section of the Fourth International.]

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At the 1981 census there were only 935 women per thousand men in India. In only four countries in the world, namely Iran, Pakistan, India, and Australia is the sex ratio adverse to women.

In Australia, the majority of the population has been migratory, mainly men, so it is understandable that there are less women than men. But in the other three countries the adverse sex ratio for women is an indicator of the degraded status of women. High mortality, neglect of the female child, and overall discrimination

against women are the main reasons for this dismal reality. Nowadays, techniques like amniocentesis — which makes possible ante-natal sex determination testing — are used, or rather abused for decisions to abort female foetuses because boys are preferred.

In post-independence India, there has been a continuous advance of the female literacy rate. But still today three-quarters of Indian women are illiterate, and higher education has remained the privilege of only 2.1 per cent of women.

A positive feature however is the growing importance of women's education in urban areas. (The demand for educated and working women is increasing in the marriage market too!)

As a United Nations report reveals, women do most of the work throughout the world. Right from the birth of the human species women have been working. But their contribution is not socially recognised. Women's

work in the home — cooking, cleaning, mending, child-care, care of the old and the sick — is not treated as “work.” It is unpaid work. Everyday there is the slog, without rest, without leave, without “overtime,” without “bonus.”

The discrimination that a woman faces within the family is extended to all areas of life including fields and factories. Women form a source of cheap, unskilled, and auxiliary labour — last to be hired and first to be fired.

Advancement of Literacy in India (1901-1981)

Year	Percent	Male	Female
1901	5.35	9.81	0.60
1911	5.92	10.56	1.05
1921	7.16	12.21	1.85
1931	9.50	15.59	2.90
1941	16.10	24.90	7.30
1951	16.67	24.95	7.93
1961	24.02	34.44	12.95
1971	29.45	39.45	18.69
1981	36.17	46.74	24.88

Source: Census Report, 1981

Since 1951, there has been a great increase in the work participation of women in India. Nevertheless the 1981 Indian census shows only 14 per cent of women to have “gainful” employment. An increasing number of women are being thrown out of the “workforce,” but at the same time more and more women are entering the “labour force” looking for jobs. Among the total unemployed, women constitute more than 60 per cent.

Half of all women workers in India are employed as agricultural labourers. Only 6 per cent of the entire female workforce is in the organised sector, thereby having relatively secure jobs, better facilities, wages, and work conditions. The rest of their working sisters are in the “informal sector” in low paid, low productivity, and unskilled jobs.

Technological changes have badly affected women’s jobs opportunities in manufacturing, petty trade, household and cottage industries, and agricultural sectors. Non-agricultural working women are concentrated mainly in industries such as garment, electrical, electronics, food-processing, and construction, doing monotonous and tiring jobs.

The number of women employed in the cotton and jute textile industry and the manufacture of dairy products, originally known for its job opportunities for women, has declined drastically. Low-caste women are forced to work as domestic servants, sweepers, and scavengers.

Women in the service sector, popularly known as “white collar employees” are found mainly in professions like teaching and nursing. In post-independence India, the number of highly educated women — lawyers, doctors, engineers, scientists — has increased, but it is negligible in comparison with the millions of poor, illiterate, semi-literate, and poorly-paid working women.

In agriculture, plantations, mines, and small scale industries, women are usually paid lower wages than male colleagues for doing similar chores. Only a microscopic minority of working women get facilities like maternity leave, creches, housing, trade union rights etc.

Brutal conditions

The fight for legal provisions to improve the status of women in India started around the mid-nineteenth century. As a result the Female Infanticide (Dudha Piti) Prohibition Act, the Sati Prohibition Act, the Widow Remarriage Act, and the Age of Consent (Sadra) Act were all passed. The constitution of free India announced equality between the sexes and denounced discrimination against any citizen because of sex.

Yet the provision of personal laws regarding marriage, inheritance, property, and divorce is a glaring example of the hollow claim to equality. All these personal laws consider women as inferior to men, devoid of any individuality. Now progressive and women’s organisations have started pressing for the enactment of a uniform civil code for all citizens.

Recently a number of progressive Bills have been put forward, and there have been heated debates regarding the judgement of the Andhra Pradesh High Court on Restitution of Conjugal Rights, the Rape Bill, the Dowry Bill, and the Marriage Laws Amendment Bill. But these proposed legal reforms will have limited impact on improving the status of most women because of economic dependence, poverty, illiteracy, and the hold of traditional values. For effective enforcement of these laws, strong pressure groups are needed.

Throughout “history” women have been violated — raped, battered, tortured, insulted, degraded. Society turned a blind eye and a deaf ear to this reality, but now one finds increasing awareness of such problems.

More and more cases of wife-murder are declared as “suicide,” there have been mass rapes during caste and communal riots, gang rapes, sexual harassment of women in the streets and workplaces are reported. In most cases the police and other state forces have come out as notorious perpetrators of atrocities against women. They use brutal and perverse techniques to torture women under trial and women prisoners.

The evil of dowry — that has spread among many castes, communities, and religious groups — has resulted in the cold-blooded murder of brides. During the period of 1975–78, the total number of deaths of women due to burns in our country was 6,248. They were recorded in the police registers as “accidents” or “suicides.”

Reforms

The primary role of women is considered to be that of child-bearer and home-maker. It is not unusual to hear that women who fail to produce a child — particularly a male child — are tortured or taunted by relatives and in many cases deserted by their husbands. Traditional

norms and taboos, perpetuated and strengthened by the caste system, the joint family, and religious institutions, make the oppression of women blatant. The mass media — radio, TV, press, advertisements, cinema, and the education system — idealise the masochistic tendencies among women, portray a sexist image, and attribute stereotypes to women.

Amidst this stark grey reality, there are a few bright spots. After 1975, more and more women fought against injustice and oppression which has resulted in a blossoming of women’s groups and organisations. These organisations and groups of younger women have a certain freshness of ideas, readiness to come out on the streets, tremendous militancy, and courage.

Initially the women’s organisations attracted mainly educated middle and upper middle-class women, but slowly and gradually they are influencing other strata too. As a result, there was an organised nationwide anti-rape campaign during 1980.

The women’s organisations also organised huge protest demonstrations against dowry deaths, the portrayal of women in the media, against beauty contests, and for legal reforms concerning women.

A number of feminist magazines, not only in English and Hindi but also in the regional languages, are being published. Many specialist interest groups working on different areas concerning women have been created. As a result, one finds a gradual change in the attitude towards women among political parties, planners, academicians, law makers, and the media.

The calls of Indian women’s groups and organisations have begun to stir women, and they respond from an inner consciousness evolved out of their own experiences unexpressed over the centuries. □

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Mexican Trotskyists on U.S. elections

'Left must explain why it's not supporting Jackson'

By Enrique Hernández

[The following article appeared in the February 27 issue of *Bandera Socialista*, fortnightly newspaper of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), Mexican section of the Fourth International. The translation from Spanish is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Rev. Jesse Jackson's candidacy for the Democratic Party's nomination is moving forward, causing the American good old boys' hair to stand on end.

An earlier article (*Bandera Socialista* 281) mentioned that Jackson's campaign to secure a Black candidate — through the alliance of the Black population, the Spanish-speakers, and the workers movement — is having a big political impact. And that is indeed the case, since we have before us the most radical candidate who has run for the nomination of the U.S. Democratic Party. Not even the most radical speeches of the man who lost to Nixon, the liberal McGovern¹ — again a candidate in the Democratic primaries — can be compared to what Jackson is saying (alliance of the exploited and oppressed, no to intervention in Central America, Marines out of Beirut and Grenada, an end to the policy of interventions). And this calls for a serious assessment of the situation facing the U.S. left.

Jackson is a candidate whom the Democratic political machine cannot accept. He will never be nominated by the Democrats. Of course, his positions are reformist and never as inflammatory as those of a Malcolm X. But, in contrast to Martin Luther King, we see before us a figure who goes beyond demanding that the rights of Blacks be respected. The moderate Black leaders therefore do not agree with him. This is the case with the widow of the murdered Martin Luther King and with Carter's former United Nations ambassador Andrew Young, now mayor of Atlanta.

A recent poll published by *Life* magazine shows that for the average American — that alienated, God-fearing fellow — Jackson's election would be a tremendous shock. They were asked which Democratic candidate they would prefer against Reagan.

The majority opted for [Walter] Mondale, others for [John] Glenn. But when it came to Jackson, in their majority they said that they would vote for Reagan. Ronnie save us from the Black devil! U.S. society and its parties cannot accept a Black candidate, when that candidate breaks with traditional U.S. politics. Still less since Jackson went to Syria and suc-



JESSE JACKSON

ceeded in gaining the release of a Black pilot who had been shot down by Syrian anti-aircraft fire in combat near Beirut. This left Reagan looking ridiculous.

The U.S. left — itself sharply divided and practically isolated from the great masses — has traditionally chosen one of two paths: either support the more "liberal" Democratic candidate as the "lesser evil," or else run their own candidates, winning extremely small numbers of votes.

The same thing is happening again. What is different is Jackson, whose proposals are very close to those of the left.

The opinion of the radical left that is running its own candidates or abstaining is that you cannot support anyone in the Democratic Party, which is a bourgeois party. This sounds good regarding Mondale, who together with Hubert Humphrey was a "Reds hunter" in the Democratic Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota during the 1950s. But not regarding Jackson. This does not mean fostering illusions in the Democratic Party or supporting it as such, but rather taking a stand toward a candidate who draws the line: on this side, the exploited and oppressed; on that side, Reagan and his offensive against us all; on that side, too, the big-business candidates in the Democratic Party.

Of course, Jackson will not win. But his campaign is raising consciousness about what is currently going on in the United States.

Unemployment among Black youth is reaching 50 percent. There is a big campaign against Spanish-speakers and other minorities. The eastern industrial cities are practically in economic ruins. In those cities, unemployment approaches 15 percent, higher than the na-

tional average of 8 to 9 percent. The anti-union offensive is at its high point.

And, obviously, the radical left does not offer an alternative today.

Jackson makes possible a certain heightening of consciousness: "Are we going to let them keep screwing us, or will we do something to stop it?"

So there is an opportunity for the left to actively intervene through Jackson's campaign, as happened in Chicago where a Black candidate named [Harold] Washington — spurned by the local political machine — won the election [for mayor in 1983]. Thanks to the Democratic political machine, which opposed Washington until the last moment, and thanks to the Republicans as well, the campaign was carried out in these terms: on that side are the most reactionary and racist forces in Chicago; on this side the people. And the Chicanos united with the Blacks, despite being given the "chance" to feel "white" in contrast to them. And the trade unionists supported Washington also.

The United States is not Chicago, but the overall situation is the same. And another thing: in Chicago the left that ran its own candidates, though it lost to the Black Democrat, increased its vote in certain districts. There the population voted for Washington, but also for the other Black radical who ran for local office.² The difficult thing for the left was to explain why they did not support the Black that everyone else was supporting. The same thing is happening with Jackson.

In discussions at Coyoacán with his U.S. cothinkers in the late 1930s, Leon Trotsky stated that the struggle was for a workers party, but they would have to go through various stages to achieve that.

Jackson is not going to form the workers party, but his program of "us on this side" extends a bridge toward the possibility of breaking with the two-party system, despite the fact that he is in the Democratic Party, which would never be so demagogic as to nominate him. Mondale is the man.

Obviously, not everything can be reduced to participation in the Jackson campaign as a means of agitation. The big problem continues to be the division and political backwardness of the U.S. left, which reflects the sectarian essence of U.S. society. This in turn is based on that society's imperialist nature and its economic power to keep the masses subjugated and divided. □

2. In the final round of the 1983 mayoral election in Chicago, Washington was opposed by Republican Bernard Epton and Socialist Workers Party candidate Ed Warren.

1. Democrat George McGovern lost to Richard Nixon in the 1972 election.

U.S. SWP opposes Democrats

Calls for independent working class political action

By Mac Warren

[The following article appeared in the May 13, 1983, *Militant*, a socialist weekly published in New York. It was reprinted as part of a pamphlet, *A Socialist View of the Chicago Election*, by Pathfinder Press. Mac Warren is a national leader of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States.]

* * *

The potential political power of Blacks, Latinos, and the labor movement, expressed in the recent Chicago elections, has sparked a major discussion on which way forward for political action that can advance the interests of working people and the oppressed.

Two views inside Democratic Party circles are being expressed in the wake of the election victory of Democrat Harold Washington, the first Black to become Chicago mayor. Jesse Jackson, leader of Operation PUSH, calls for running a Black in the Democratic presidential primaries, and links this to a massive voter registration drive among Blacks.

Jackson says now is the time to "renegotiate our relationship with the Democratic Party. We're not arguing a Black agenda; we're arguing a national agenda from the perspective of Blacks."

Jackson has held several meetings with Tony Bonilla, president of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), to discuss this perspective with him. LULAC is assessing the massive (over 75 percent) vote for Harold Washington by Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, and other Latinos and what that means for a Black-Latino alliance in the Democratic Party for the 1984 elections. The recent gathering of the national Conference for Puerto Rican Rights, held in Newark, N.J., took up the same question.

A second point of view in this discussion is articulated by Andrew Young, the mayor of Atlanta and a prominent Black Democrat. He argues it's wrong to run a Black in the Democratic primaries. This would divide Black leaders, he says, and possibly create a racial polarization that could jeopardize a Democratic victory in 1984. In other words, it would shake things up.

Lane Kirkland, president of the AFL-CIO [national labor federation], has talked of a labor-Black coalition, but he shares Young's approach and opposes Jackson's.

This discussion has received prominent coverage in the major dailies, the Black press, and on television. The question is being discussed at political meetings across the country.

"Building a political alliance of the labor movement and the oppressed is a major question for workers today," comments Ed Warren, who was the Socialist Workers Party candidate in the recent Chicago mayoral election. "This discussion is a very important one for

Blacks, Latinos, trade unionists, and socialists."

A laid-off garment worker, Warren is a member of the SWP and the National Black Independent Political Party. He actively participated in meetings in the Chicago Black community about how to mobilize Black political power prior to the decision of Harold Washington to run for mayor.

In those meetings Warren explained that the events in Chicago reflected the real pressure that has built over the last decade among workers for solutions to the crisis of the capitalist system. He pointed to the crumbling of the Chicago Democratic machine as a sign of the growing incapacity of the two-party system to contain the push by Blacks and other working people for a political solution to the problems they face.

Warren said the logic of this push is toward breaking with the Democrats and Republicans, and running independent Black, Latino, and labor candidates. He pointed to the potential for building a mass independent Black party, and the impact this would have on unionists seeing the need for a labor party.

The perspective of the SWP was a significant factor in the Chicago discussion. While all socialist groups in the country are small today, what they do and the stands they adopt are important, especially at a time like this when workers are thinking about the idea of an alliance between Blacks, Latinos, and labor. Historically socialists — even when a small minority — have been an important factor in big turning points in the class struggle, from the rise of the CIO, to the civil rights movement, to the formation of labor parties in countries like Britain and Canada.

This is why it's important to call attention to the fact that every other major group that identifies itself as socialist endorsed the Democratic party candidate, Washington, in the Chicago elections. These include the Democratic Socialists of America, Communist Party, Workers World Party, Communist Workers Party, and the newspapers *In These Times* and the *Guardian*.

These groups capitulated to the pressure to support a capitalist candidate instead of recognizing the big opportunities for gaining a hearing from working people for a different course, a break with the Democrats and Republicans. Instead of advancing the fight for independent political action on the part of Blacks, Latinos, and the labor movement as an underlying strategy, these groups bolstered the idea that workers should give the capitalist parties another chance.

They put forward similar arguments to cover up their wholesale collapse in the face of the Democratic Party campaign of Washington. Perhaps the best example of this is the Workers World Party (WWP), which called the election

a "referendum on racism."

In a departure from previous practice, the WWP campaigned openly for the Democratic Party candidate. To overcome resistance in their ranks to this crossing of class lines, the WWP defended its endorsement of Washington and attacked the socialist campaign of Ed Warren in an article in the April 15 *Workers World*.

"The Chicago race was not analogous to an election between a liberal Democrat and a conservative Republican as such," *Workers World* said. "That is an election campaign where political program is key, where the responsibility of a working-class party is to expose the false policies of the capitalist parties.

"The Chicago election," it explained, "was an election *in form*. It was, in reality, a *referendum on racism*."

Warren's campaign against the capitalist parties was a "surrender to racism," the article proclaims. He should have withdrawn in favor of Washington.

The idea that capitalist elections are in reality just referenda on one or two issues is not new. In 1964, workers were told the race between Lyndon Johnson and Barry Goldwater was a referendum on the Vietnam War. Most voted "against the war" and elected Johnson, who proceeded to escalate U.S. involvement.

Similarly, the 1984 elections are already being portrayed as a referendum on Reaganomics. To defeat Reagan's social and war policies you have to vote for the Democrat.

And a race between a Democratic candidate who is female and a Republican who is male can easily be described as a referendum on sexism.

This is the logic of the course the Workers World Party has embarked on. The class character of the Democratic Party — the fact that it represents the interests of the employers — is dissolved into an abstract struggle "against racism." Exposing the nature of the Democratic or Republican parties becomes irrelevant, political program is no longer "key," and the candidate of a genuine working-class party, Ed Warren, becomes an agent of reaction.

The Workers World Party relies heavily on moralism to push its retreat from Marxism and presents an utterly patronizing view of both Black and white workers.

Workers World claimed that Warren's campaign would be viewed as racist by workers in Chicago. "Blacks and whites will perceive a call to vote against Washington as giving aid to the racist forces," the paper said.

But the SWP did not call for a vote against Washington, but rather a vote for a socialist perspective and against the two capitalist parties that monopolize political power today. And this is what won Warren a good hearing among workers, contrary to the *Workers World* predictions. Blacks, whites, and Latinos responded in a friendly way to the socialist campaign. Over 800 copies of the campaign newspaper, the *Militant*, were sold in the last week before the election, a signifi-

cant number of them at plant gates.

The many thousands of workers who met SWP campaigners were politically much more sophisticated than the WWP and other socialists gave them credit for.

Close to 4,000 people voted for Ed Warren. Fourteen thousand voted for Nicolee Brorsen, SWP candidate for city clerk, and 20,000 for Craig Landberg, SWP candidate for city treasurer, indicating that thousands who voted Washington for mayor also registered their support for the socialist perspective. These Blacks, Latinos, and whites who voted SWP were the vanguard of the many thousands more who listened, discussed and learned from the SWP campaign.

What the Workers World Party really expresses is its own lack of confidence in the political capacities of Blacks and all working people.

They have decided that it's not possible to talk about socialism with the American working class, especially with Blacks, who are apparently incapable of thinking in class terms.

By the same token, white workers, in the WWP view, are incapable of grasping that racism is against their class interests.

The WWP fell totally for the frame-up of white workers orchestrated by the capitalist media. Accepting the lie that the core of reactionary opposition to a Black for mayor was in the white working class, they talked to white workers on a moral level. "White workers need to be educated on racism, need to see that racism is a deadly poison that divides them," *Workers World* preached.

They went on to say that "under the existing circumstances, it was the first duty for a working class party truly interested in building unity to come out strongly and unequivocally for Washington."

In other words, white workers are racist and to help them overcome this racism, working-class parties should tell them to vote for the racist, antilabor Democratic Party.

The entire framework of the WWP and other socialist groups who caved in to the Democrats is false. Their inability to look at politics in class terms leads them to miss what is actually happening in U.S. politics.

The real lesson from the Chicago elections is that it is easier today than ever before to get a hearing for a strategy of independent Black, Latino, and working-class political action. Socialist, class-struggle fighters in the labor movement, members of the National Black Independent Political Party, and other political activists should join in the discussions going on today about how to build an alliance of Blacks, Latinos, and the unions. They should participate and help advance the perspective of breaking with the racist, antilabor capitalist parties and charting a course of independent working-class political action. □

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SELECTIONS FROM THE LEFT

[The following selections are devoted to assessments of Jesse Jackson's campaign to be the Democratic Party's candidate for president of the United States.]

THE MILITANT

A revolutionary socialist newsweekly, published in New York.

"One of the striking features of the 1984 presidential race" in the United States, Doug Jenness wrote in the February 17 issue, "is that most organizations and publications that consider themselves socialist or communist are backing Jesse Jackson, one of the eight candidates contesting for the Democratic Party nomination." Thus, Jenness said, "the Socialist Workers Party . . . stands virtually alone in putting independent working-class political action and socialism at the center of its perspectives in the elections."

The starting point of the SWP's campaign "is the need to build a mass revolutionary workers party that can overturn the capitalist rulers and establish a workers and farmers government," Jenness said.

The SWP's candidates, Mel Mason for president and Andrea González for vice-president, "point out that a political party capable of leading tens of millions of workers and their allies to power can only be forged through irreconcilable conflict with the capitalist employers, their political parties, and their government."

Central to advancing this perspective, Jenness went on, is the necessity of "telling the truth about the Democratic and Republican parties," both of which "are financially and politically controlled by a tiny number of ruling families." He emphasized that "the Democratic Party is as much the ruling class's own alternative as the Republican Party."

In this framework, Jenness took up the campaign of Black leader Jesse Jackson for the Democratic presidential nomination:

"There's no question that the Jackson candidacy has helped stimulate a big discussion in the Black community and among politically-minded people throughout the country. And it would be foolish to stand aside from this discussion. It provides an excellent opportunity for socialist workers to get a hearing for their views."

But if Jackson himself were charting the political course necessary to further the interests of Blacks and of all U.S. working people, "he wouldn't be running in the Democratic Party primaries and talking about 'renegotiating' the relationship of Blacks in the Democratic Party."

It is not strange, however, that Jackson "is running in the Democratic primaries," Jenness continued. "It's totally consistent with his capitalist reform perspective. . . ."

"He supports the basic framework of im-

perialist foreign policy, including its military apparatus. He says that the U.S. needs an 'adequate defense' and 'if the American conventional forces were to pull out of Europe that wall would begin to walk. The Iron Curtain would begin to shift.'"

Regarding the economy, Jackson's "main theme . . . is to emphasize the need to make U.S. business competitive — that is, more profitable — on the world market. . . ."

"Rather than calling on U.S. workers to join with Japanese workers in a struggle against their common enemy, the employing class in both countries, he echoes the employers' reactionary anti-Japanese propaganda."

Most currents on the U.S. left have chosen to ignore Jackson's real positions, Jenness noted: "There is a tendency to selectively choose the most minimally progressive stands of Jackson and blow them up, while ignoring the more backward, even reactionary, positions."

"Jackson's striving to gain more influence for Blacks in the Democratic Party," Jenness concluded, "does not help lead Blacks toward breaking from capitalist politics. It's a diversion from, and therefore an obstacle to, this goal. Socialists who support Jackson's campaign do a disservice to Black activists and worker militants who are seeking political clarity. . . ."

"By getting behind the Jackson campaign, for whatever reason, most of the left is creating confusion precisely where the greatest clarity is needed — on the class character of the Democratic and Republican parties and the need to project an independent working-class course."

Guardian

An independent radical newsweekly, published in New York.

"The effort to assemble a 'Rainbow Coalition' around [Jesse] Jackson can be a powerful vehicle for putting progressive issues forward and mobilizing the oppressed," an editorial in the Nov. 23, 1983, issue declared.

Earlier local campaigns by Black candidates Harold Washington and Mel King in Chicago and Boston "showed the potential of a campaign that unabashedly raises the issues — racism, sexism, class oppression, militarism — that liberal candidates prefer to keep silent about," the editorial said.

"Jackson's candidacy offers a chance to apply these lessons on a national level."

"Won't Jackson's candidacy just help the Democrats?" the *Guardian* editors asked. "It's a possibility, but it could also hasten the day when a majority of Blacks and other oppressed groups see their interests outside the 2-party monopoly. . . ."

"What could well happen is that the Jackson campaign will raise his supporters' expectations to a level the Democrats can't hope to

meet. Ultimately, if the platform of the Rainbow Coalition is stuck to, such people will increasingly see their objectives can best be pursued outside the Democratic party."

"Jesse Jackson is no revolutionary," the editorial concluded, "but that's not what matters. The point is that he has seized the time and is saying the right things."

DAILY WORLD

Published in New York City by the Communist Party U.S.A.

An article in the January 26 issue reported on a mid-January meeting of the CPUSA's Central Committee, which "gathered . . . to discuss the mobilization of its membership and the U.S. people for the 1984 elections."

Simon Gerson, political action director of the CPUSA, gave the main report to the meeting. He stated that "the central theme" of the CPUSA's electoral policy is "to defeat Reaganism, Reagan, and the Reaganites in Congress and help unite an All Peoples Front to reverse the present course of nuclear holocaust and disaster for our people and the world."

CPUSA General Secretary Gus Hall described the 1984 elections as "especially complex," requiring "a great number of variations

of tactical applications." Still, the "basic issue . . . is the question of peace and war," Hall said. "We have confidence that Reagan can be defeated. . . . If we do not halt Reaganism we will soon reach a point where nuclear war will be inevitable."

"The only Democratic candidate offering a bold, rounded out program is Jesse Jackson," Gerson said. "He has already affected the political landscape and is forcing the other candidates to discuss basic issues. Whether all this will translate into delegate strength at the Democratic convention in July cannot be said at this point, but the fact remains that Jackson's entrance has already shifted the political agenda and the character of the political debate. His campaign has become the focal point of independent forces."

DEMOCRATIC LEFT

Published in New York City nine times a year by the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA).

Writing in the Jan.-Feb. issue, Manning Marable, a Black leader of the DSA, pointed out that "Jesse Jackson was never known as a 'progressive' or 'leftist' within the context of black politics." Rather, "Jackson has represen-

ted the personification of opportunism and ambivalence." Among several examples of this Marable cited was the fact that when Black youth in Miami, Florida, rebelled against police brutality in 1980, "Jackson flew into the city to 'cool off' black militancy — only to be denounced by local community leaders and activists."

Nonetheless, Marable said, "it would be extremely short-sighted for any socialist to stand outside this historic movement of civil rights and poor people's activists within national electoral politics." In Marable's opinion, "socialists should be involved in campaigns that build coalitions with liberal and left constituencies within national minority communities, and that raise political issues from a democratic left perspective."

Jackson, Marable said, is "the candidate who comes closest to accomplishing these strategic goals. . . . Only Jackson backs a left social democratic economic program that calls for the total restoration of the 1981-84 budget cuts, tax increases on corporations, and massive public works programs. On foreign policy, Jackson is again the leftwing candidate."

While Jackson is unlikely to win the Democratic nomination, Marable added, his campaign "will increase the number of registered voters (especially within the black community), and increase their turnout rates in both the primary and general elections."

DOCUMENTS

Australian SWP discusses 'unity'

No longer calls itself Trotskyist

By Jim Percy

[The following article appeared in the February 29 issue of *Direct Action*, a socialist weekly published in Sydney that presents the views of the Socialist Workers Party, Australian section of the Fourth International.

[It is the fourth installment of a talk by Jim Percy, national secretary of the SWP, to the Resistance and Socialist Education Conference held near Sydney in early January.

[In this section of his talk Percy discusses the Australian SWP's relationship to the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA). The SPA was established in 1971 following a split in the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). The minority who established the SPA adhere to a loyal pro-Moscow line. The CPA is critical of some of Moscow's policies and generally aligns itself internationally with those parties that characterize themselves as "Eurocommunist."

[Collaboration between the Australian SWP and the SPA was also taken up in an article that appeared in the Dec. 13, 1983, issue of *Direct Action*. In that article, headlined, "SWP-SPA collaboration causes flurry on left," Dave

Holmes polemicizes with an article by David McKnight in the CPA newspaper, *Tribune*. He indicates that the *Tribune* article "correctly notes that for some time the SWP has ceased to refer to itself as 'Trotskyist.'"

["The SWP took this decision," Holmes writes, "not because it was preparing to make a 'political somersault,' but because this term — the product of a whole period of history of the international workers movement — did not adequately describe or convey what the SWP stands for.

["In fact, the label of 'Trotskyism' only made it more difficult for the party to penetrate new sectors and broaden its influence. Also, the use of this term constantly linked us in the mind of the radical public with sects like the SLL [Socialist Labor League — Australian followers of Gerry Healey's Workers' Revolutionary Party in Britain], groups with whom the SWP has nothing in common (and which, it should be noted, have nothing in common with the Marxist-Leninist perspective for which Trotsky stood.)

["The SWP," Holmes continues, "has dropped this label, the better to advance the es-

sential ideas it has always represented. The SWP is a revolutionary socialist party, a Marxist-Leninist party. Its ideas are constantly being developed but it still adheres to the basic program it has always had."]

* * *

There are no gimmicks or tricks that can overcome the crisis in the labor movement. But out of the process of confronting the crisis there will come genuine revolutionists, and people who can be won to revolutionary politics. This crisis of capitalism is a long-term one, and we are going to continue a dialogue with anyone who is willing to talk with us.

As we grow, as we develop, we will prove our own validity and to some extent escape our past, which I wouldn't describe as sectarian but perhaps as semi-sectarian.

Part of this process goes forward with the encouraging example we've been able to develop in the alliance with the Socialist Party on the questions of the accord and the war drive.

This has been quite important. It came as a great surprise to many on the left when the

Socialist Workers Party and the Socialist Party of Australia were able to unite on anything, were able to sit in the same room without calling each other names. It set quite an example.

Left unity

The response that we have seen is that many on the left do not want this.

It has taught us a lot about the question of the united front — how you build a united front. If you genuinely want to build a united front, you make sure it happens. You don't think the main thing is to stick the knife in on the existing areas of differences, which of course remain.

What do we bring to this process of re-composition of the revolutionary forces? We have a past record of striving for unity.

We have developed an approach to building a revolutionary party in which we attempt to unite in a single party with all currents that are revolutionary. That is an important gain.

One thing we understand is that we don't have to insist on agreement on all political questions before we can unite with a current that is coming towards revolutionary politics or is revolutionary now.

That would be a false idea. What we have to do is to decide: What can we defend today, what are the decisive questions in the class struggle today, how do we move forward now?

In regard to the past, we have one guideline that is very important. That is that we tell the truth about the past, no matter how bitter it may be. We are completely honest — we don't cover up for it, we don't hide from it. That is an approach that is unique, and it allows us to understand the past a whole lot better than anyone else.

But we are not looking at the past to develop a pure line of continuity. We have a problem in the world today: There is no other party, even in the Fourth International, which agrees with all the political positions that we put forward. So we don't insist on that sort of agreement when we attempt to unite revolutionaries in this country.

Learning from others

There is another lesson we have been learning over the past few years, and that is to have a certain modesty, a certain humility about the achievements of revolutions in other countries.

That is not to say we are agnostic about the processes that take place in other countries, but we try to have a sense of proportion.

I think the discussion that went on in the Socialist Workers Party around the question of Cuba had this as its guideline. We wanted to get off the sideline, stop being carping critics on Cuba, and get involved in the revolutionary process itself.

This process of understanding the Cuban Revolution has led to a certain rethinking of our political ideas, and some of those will be outlined tomorrow in the debate about revolution in the colonial countries. Of course, this is only the beginning of thinking out how to build a revolutionary organisation in this country.

Thinking out about our past, where else did we go wrong? The lessons are there. We are assuming we are going to find more.

The reason we think we are going to find more is that we don't think you can build a revolutionary party by setting up a program and saying that's it, finished, and then away you go.

No, a revolutionary party is really built only when it becomes a mass formation. Its tactics are only fully applied when it becomes a mass force. Until then you have too few political and organisational resources to regard the process as finished, to think that you have an adequate party to meet the needs of today.

So that's not the way we will proceed. There is no one party or one individual who has a monopoly on truth.

Now when we accept that idea and understand it fully, when we say it and it's not just a diplomatic formula, when we understand that truth, we will have got somewhere.

Otherwise, if you don't recognise that, if you don't recognise that you can learn from others, you simply persist in the errors you have been making. Of course, we are going to proceed in this process as Marxists — we don't have to throw out our basic tools.

There are going to be delays, unevenness, false starts. The important thing is that we have started this process and that's our course, our direction.

Trotskyism

Well, where does this leave Trotskyism? This is one part of the debate on the left. Dave McKnight of the Communist Party wrote an article about the united front work between ourselves and the Socialist Party, saying: This is strange — collaboration between the SPA and the Trotskyists!

We haven't been calling ourselves Trotskyists for quite some while. The term itself was invented not by Trotsky but by his opponents, by Stalin. Trotsky himself didn't like it, and today it is too narrow a term to describe us, although it is part of where we have come from.

There are many on the left who insist that they are the "real" Trotskyists, and you will find that they are usually the ones who have gone most off the rails, the furthest from Lenin's views. So they can have the "real" Trotsky, if that is what they want.

However, we won't be able to avoid this as a reference point; it's part of where we have come from and therefore part of us today.

It's not a useful term in the processes which we want to become involved in, and that we see opening up on the left. It's an obstacle to that process.

Even in the 1950s, George Breitman of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States proposed that they drop the term because it was no longer useful. I think that he was referring to the currents that were emerging from the break-up of the world Communist movement, and the way that was reflected in the United States.

Now we have largely dropped the term from our own press but it is going to remain a part of us for one reason that is very important. That is because of Trotsky's contribution to Marxism. We are not going to deny or forget what a great revolutionist he was.

We will continue to study his achievements, from his role in the Petrograd Soviet in 1905 to the founding of the Fourth International in 1938. That was some career; it spanned a long time. After Lenin, he was the foremost leader of the Russian Revolution, the founder and leader of the Red Army in the revolution's most difficult years.

We should remember something else that is very important about Trotsky: His most fruitful years as a revolutionist — that is, when he was a Leninist, when he was Lenin's follower — largely occurred in a period of ebb in the world revolution. The years after Lenin's death, from 1924 to 1940, when Trotsky was murdered, were years of ebb.

Trotsky made most of his contributions in a most difficult period for the international workers' movement. If we look back to those contributions, they are an arsenal for our movement today.

We don't have to seek in that immense volume of work, however, for what was the most important contribution, what was the "key thing" that Trotsky did. There is too much to Trotsky's work of that period that no other Marxist came close to.

The new generation of revolutionaries will turn to his writings to seek guidelines on many questions. It is quite interesting that in his last campaign Che Guevara in Bolivia had a copy of Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* in his pack. The new generations of revolutionaries will know how to get rid of the Kremlin's demonology of Trotskyism, as well as getting rid of the cultism of the Trotskyites.

What about Trotsky's mistakes — his vacillations before 1917, or the other errors he made afterwards? What of them? We say: So what?

If you treat Trotsky as a cult figure, if you consider the Trotsky movement as a cult, then you are going to take Trotsky's mistakes as your own and you are going to hang on to them. So that is a problem for many people who call themselves Trotskyists today.

Party-building

But the Fourth International was not formed by Trotsky to be Trotskyist. It was formed to be a mass current to help lead revolutions, to be tested by new revolutions, and that is the view that we have of it today. That's why we regard Central America as so important, that's why we regard the development of those new revolutionary currents as the key thing that we have to relate to. And in this country, how can we relate to the new currents that are emerging in the working-class movement?

We have to stress that this rethinking process that goes on in our party has an end in mind. The purpose is to help us build a party

here in Australia. That can't be done by changing our line to suit anyone else. We are either convinced of new ideas or we are not.

What we are interested in is motion and possibilities, and we are convinced that there is political motion in the Australian left today. We remain ready to work with anyone wherever it is possible. No other stance can build a revolutionary party in this country.

All the rest of the left is in a crisis. To a certain extent, as a result of the new situation that is opening up, we are in a crisis. We have the clearest political line on the left — I think that is true today. And we have grown as a result of that. In the last three years our tendency has grown systematically. But with our growth comes a certain opportunity and responsibility and knowledge of the possibilities that open up.

We start to play for higher stakes than we have in the past, we start to be able to influence

the class struggle in a different way. Whatever problems this may cause, we prefer them to the problems we have had in the past, in the '70s.

We think that the new situation will lead to a crisis only if the party and Resistance fail to intervene in it, don't attempt to lead the process forward, don't find the ways to move things forward when an opportunity opens up.

We are going to intervene; we have the cadres and the possibilities of doing that. Our responsibility is not to pat ourselves on the back for our achievements to date but to lead and take advantage of the situation.

If we do that, our tradition will have prepared us for the '80s. Trotskyism will have a success in that sense.

That process is only beginning, but our whole past has prepared us for it. In particular the last few years have prepared us for the building of a stronger revolutionary party in this country. □

ing class policies of the Socialist government in Spain; and the development of the 1983 strike movement in Belgium. Turning to his own country he described the effect of the return of the Social Democrat government of Olof Palme.

Camejo presented two feature talks, on US politics and on the possibility of socialist revolution in advanced capitalist countries. Both were enthusiastically received. He ended his second talk by urging all young people to join Resistance: "I would if I could, but I can't, but you should."

The conference also heard presentations by representatives of the revolutionary movements of El Salvador and the Philippines.

Raul Torchez is the Australian representative of the Mexico-based World Front in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador. His speech was punctuated with chants of "FMLN," and at the end he was given a standing ovation as members of the audience returned his clenched fist salute.

Equally inspiring was the presentation of a representative of the New Democratic Front of the Philippines. His talk demonstrated the similarities between the struggle in his country and that in El Salvador, in particular the military tactics used by the repressive regimes and the progressive role of sections of the Catholic church. He gave a vivid account of the innovative tactics of the Filipino revolutionaries, and described the situation in the wake of the assassination of Benigno Aquino.

Always a highlight of conferences of the SWP and Resistance is the rally to launch the fund drive for the following year. On this occasion the panel of speakers included the general secretary of the Socialist Party of Australia, Peter Symon. The SPA is a party that looks to the Soviet Union as a model.

Symon's talk focused on the economic crisis and the policies of the [Robert] Hawke Labor government elected in March 1983.

He pointed out that the Prices and Incomes Accord, a social contract similar to that of the British Labour government of Harold Wilson, had done nothing to stem rising unemployment and falling wages. During the elections, he reminded the audience, Hawke and his colleagues had promised tax reforms to favor the poor, yet their first budget had increased indirect personal taxes and reduced company taxes.

Symon stressed the need to continue the work begun by the SWP and the SPA in forging a united front against the Prices and Incomes Accord, and the importance of continued co-operation in the peace movement.

In response to the fund appeal made at the rally 52,000 Australian dollars was pledged toward the year's target of 80,000.

Jim Percy, the national secretary of the SWP, gave a major address on the theme of revolutionary unity. He pointed out that the election of a Labor government with pro-capitalist policies in the midst of a capitalist crisis made the construction of a viable

Australian SWP conference

Hears representatives of North Star Network

[The following article is taken from the March 12 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a fortnightly magazine published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

* * *

SYDNEY — The Resistance and Socialist Education Conference held near here in early January culminated a year of steady growth for the revolutionary socialist movement in this country.

Attendance at the six-day conference peaked at 420, a 35 percent increase on the previous record established in January 1983. Over half of those in attendance were born outside of Australia, with the largest contingents coming from Turkey, Chile, El Salvador, and Sri Lanka. Forty-two nationalities were represented.

The average age of participants was 25, and 51 percent of those who registered as members of the Socialist Workers Party and/or Resistance [a youth organization that supports the SWP] had joined the movement since 1980. Fifteen people decided to join during the course of the conference.

The participants included members of 42 different trade unions, with the largest numbers coming from the Amalgamated Metal Foundry and Shipwrights Union, and the Australian Railways Union. Forty-six different political and solidarity organisations were represented and 40 percent of all participants were women.

The presence of such a wide cross section of the Australian working class showed that the SWP and Resistance made the most of their opportunities in 1983.

During the year a group of Turks in Melbourne, members of the organisation Revolu-

tionary Path, fused with the SWP. Discussions held during the conference resulted in a similar group from Sydney also deciding to unite with the SWP.

A highlight of the conference was a panel featuring militant zinc miners' leaders from Rosebery in Tasmania. They told of their long struggle to prevent the closure of their mine and their town by the mining bosses. Also on the panel were SWP members who provided valuable support during a bitterly fought strike.

Another significant feature of the conference was the attendance of a number of supporters of a socialist journal distributed inside the Labor Party. This group had carried out its own fusion at the end of the year, and the presence of these people indicated the growing interest in Marxism in the ranks of the Australian Labor Party.

International guests included Frej Anderson, a member of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and a leader of its Swedish section; Peter Camejo, a well-known United States socialist who is also a member of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International; and Byron Ackerman representing the North Star Network, a revolutionary socialist organisation in the United States.*

Anderson presented a well-received feature talk on recent workers' struggles in Europe. He described the growing isolation of the Mitterrand government in France; the anti-work-

*The full text of the first issue of the North Star Network's publication *North Star Newsletter*, dated October 1983, was reprinted as a document in the Nov. 28, 1983, issue of *IP*. A second issue of the *Newsletter* appeared in February 1984. It's a special issue on the Australian SWP. — *IP*

socialist alternative both more urgent and more feasible. The need to build broad movements in opposition to the Labor government's social contract policies presented the socialist movement with big challenges.

Observing that the penalty for failing to rise to these challenges would be costly, Percy examined the plight of the Communist Party of Australia. Leaders of this party were important in convincing the trade union movement to accept the social contract with the Labor government. Eight months after the election of the Hawke government, this party was clearly in a rapid membership decline and convulsed by an internal debate about whether or not to liquidate into the Labor Party.

The conference had two major components. On the first four days Resistance held its 13th national decision-making conference. This involved discussion and adoption of resolutions on the international situation and the fight against war, how revolutionaries relate to the Labor government, the role of youth in the class struggle and building Resistance. At the end of this process a new National Committee was elected by the delegates.

Forum on Jesse Jackson

North Star Network involved in regroupment

[The following slightly abridged letter, dated Feb. 12, 1984, was circulated by Jim Bradley, corresponding secretary of the Bay Area Socialist Organizing Committee, based in San Francisco.]

* * *

It's been a long time since we communicated with many of you, especially those outside the Bay Area. . . .

Over the last two years we have faced a crisis. Like many other local groups, we had looked to the development of a national trend to help us orient our work and build the socialist movement. With the demise of the Organizing Committee for an Ideological Center (OCIC) and the rapid death of nearly all its many local groups, we were badly disoriented and discouraged. This is not the place for a major analysis of that debacle, but suffice it to say that our limited exposure to the internal struggles within the OCIC made us feel lucky that we had never formally affiliated with it.

Nevertheless, we were faced with a serious dilemma. We could disband and acknowledge that a purely local organization was insufficient and wait for better times, or we could attempt to reorient ourselves on another level. . . .

As you might expect, this organizational crisis was also a political one. We found most of us now actively questioning some of the precepts that we had put forward in *Confronting Reality* (our only publication), as well as deepening our critique on some of the points we had raised there. For example, we found ourselves now questioning the usefulness of the term

During the conference it was announced that the weekly socialist newspaper *Direct Action* would become a joint publication of the SWP and Resistance and that its size would be increased from 16 to 24 pages. These steps will coincide with a vigorous campaign to increase the circulation of the socialist press.

The other part of the conference spanned the full six days and involved the feature talks, the rally, a cabaret of political skits and music, and a series of educational talks on various aspects of Marxist theory.

Several Latin American participants commented that the conference had been the most internationalist event they had been involved in during up to 10 years in Australia.

Peter Camejo pointed out in one of his talks that if we were able to have it out in a worldwide poll between capitalism and socialism, we socialists would be sure to have a big majority. What emerged from the conference was a better-educated movement, confident that it will continue growing and deepening its political abilities so that it will prove equal to the task of organizing the socialist victory. □

"party building" in this period; many felt that the struggle should now concentrate on creating the conditions in which a generally shared perspective could emerge in the future. We have also become more critical of the idea that a single vanguard party can or should emerge to provide the sole leadership for a U.S. revolutionary movement.

Questions, however, are not enough to sustain an organization, especially in these tough times for the revolutionary left. Speaking positively, we did finish a short written perspective on the struggle against racial oppression, but even that task has taken many months. We also did a trade union study with some close friends, but while useful and continuing as a discussion group, it failed to produce the written perspective for the movement that we had hoped for.

As a result of these difficulties, some members temporarily felt we would be better off trying to form a caucus within DSA [Democratic Socialists of America], but eventually we rejected that course for a variety of reasons. We debated just holding on in a "survival" mode, but rejected that possibility as well. Ultimately, with some loss of members in the course of these deliberations, we decided to try to make some deeper links with those groups and individuals in the area who seemed closest to us politically, based on our previous work with them, and perhaps begin to contribute to the development of a new socialist perspective. These groups included Workers Power, a small national group that left International Socialists some years ago and that has worked

in Teamsters for a Democratic Union as well as in local struggles with us; Solidarity, a network of ex-NAM [New American Movement] members who left after a merger between NAM and DSOC [Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee] (they are now federated locally with Workers Power); a new group called North Star Network, made up of people who have left the Socialist Workers Party, including Peter Camejo; and the local *Guardian* [radical weekly published in New York City] bureau.

With Workers Power and Solidarity we have had a series of three private forums on issues of common work (El Salvador, trade unions, and reproductive rights). With the larger aggregation, including unaffiliated individuals, we have formed the Bay Area United Forum, which is dedicated to putting on public forums on issues of concern to the broad left. We hope through this vehicle to develop better working relations with many other segments of the Left who have not talked to each other in the past and who come out of different political traditions (Trotskyism, Maoism, etc.). The first forum, on El Salvador, was held on October 27, and featured Robert Armstrong of the *Guardian* and NACLA [North American Congress on Latin America]. It drew over 250 people and, despite some problems too complex to discuss here, has encouraged us all to plan others.

BASOC is not the center of a new trend, but we hope to be part of the work that creates a new movement if we are to avoid permanent Reaganism, with or without Reagan. We feel certain that there are many veterans of recent party-building attempts (such as the OCIC) still active, many of whom we have great respect for, as well as newer activists who will be looking for a general revolutionary perspective in the years to come. We hope to be part of that search, while remaining active in the mass movements.

We encourage those of you who live in the Bay Area to continue that participation with us, and we particularly want to invite you to attend the next Bay Area United Forum. It will be a debate on the nature and significance of the Jesse Jackson campaign. The speakers will include Wilson Riles, Jr., as Northern California Jackson Campaign Coordinator arguing for a pro-Jackson approach; Ann Weils of OPPIA [Oakland Progressive Political Alliance] in Oakland presenting the case for building a base through the Jackson campaign; Anthony Thigpen, Los Angeles community organizer, explaining problems with working within the Democratic Party context; and a trade union leader arguing for support for [Walter] Mondale. The forum will take place at 7:30 on March 9 at Laney College in Oakland. . . . * □

* The leaflet publicizing the forum included the following statement of sponsorship: "The Bay Area United Forum initiated by Bay Area Socialist Organizing Committee; North Star Network and Workers Power/Solidarity Federation is composed of individuals from various political currents working together."