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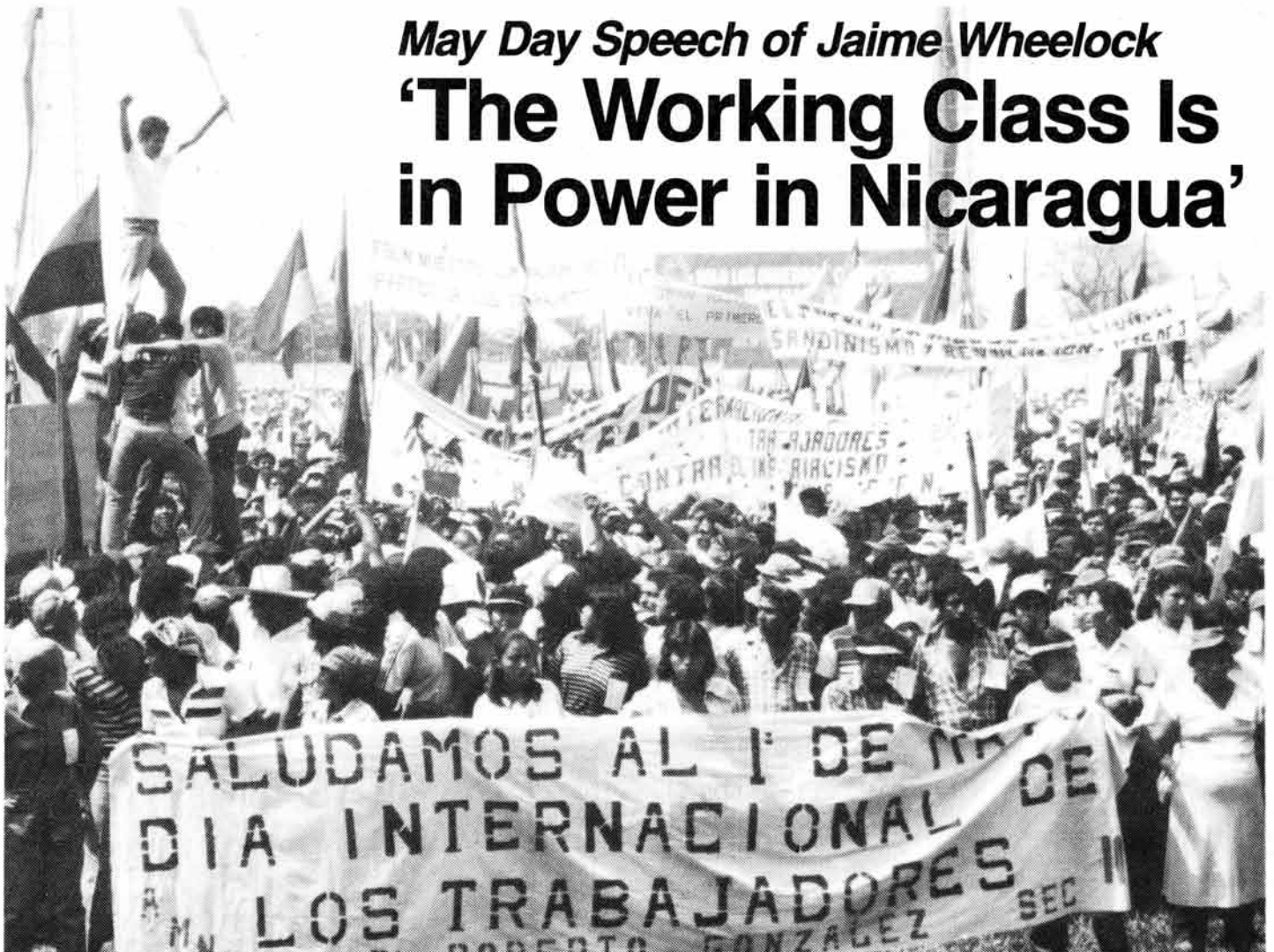
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## *May Day Speech of Jaime Wheelock* **'The Working Class Is in Power in Nicaragua'**



Michael Baumann/IP

**Women and the  
Salvadoran Revolution**

**Education in Vietnam  
and Kampuchea**

*Interview With Trinidadian Unionists*  
**The Struggle for Workers Power in Trinidad and Grenada**

# Electoral fig leaf in El Salvador

By Ernest Harsch

Following the credo that a lie repeated often enough may eventually gain some credibility, President Reagan, in a nationally televised speech May 9, maintained that the Salvadoran regime "has made great progress toward democracy." As evidence of this, he cited the second round of presidential elections held in El Salvador just three days earlier, in which Christian Democratic Party leader José Napoleón Duarte was declared the winner by a narrow margin.

Thus, for the third time in just two years, the U.S. imperialists are seeking to use the smokescreen of fraudulent, orchestrated elections as a cover for their deepening military intervention against the insurgent workers and farmers of El Salvador.

In one variation or another, this same theme — of U.S.-supported "democracy" versus "totalitarian communism" — is being used to justify Washington's aggression throughout the region: against revolutionary Cuba, against the workers and farmers government in Nicaragua, and against anyone, anywhere who dares to defy U.S. dictates. Its real motivation, however, is less lofty: to defend imperialism's profits and domination of the region in face of the advancing socialist revolution.

## 'A bipartisan consensus'

Halting and turning back that revolution is a common goal of the entire U.S. ruling class, and of its two chief political instruments, the Republican and Democratic parties.

That point was stressed repeatedly in Reagan's speech. He noted that the recommendations of the Kissinger Commission, which outlined a series of steps to deepen U.S. intervention in Central America, reflected a "bipartisan consensus." He evoked the actions taken by Democratic President Harry Truman, supported by "both parties," against the Communist-led forces in the Greek civil war in the 1940s. He cited the policies of President John Kennedy, a liberal Democrat, against Cuba in the early years of its revolution.

Reagan concluded by calling on Congress to "take prompt action" to support the White House's current moves in Central America.

And Congress proved exceptionally prompt, its feigned outrage over the CIA's mining of the Nicaraguan ports just a month earlier quickly forgotten.

The day after Reagan's speech, the Democratic-dominated House of Representatives approved a bill that would enable the House appropriations committees to shell out an additional \$129.4 million in U.S. military aid in Central America for the remaining six months of the current fiscal year, and \$132.5 million for fiscal 1985 — most of it destined for El Salvador.

The vote on the bill was close (212 to 208). But as news analyst Leslie Gelb commented in the May 12 *New York Times*, the dispute in the House "was not over whether Washington should provide military aid or whether Communism should be stopped. Virtually all the House debaters agreed on that." The main difference of those who opposed the bill was that they thought Congress's approval for greater U.S. military involvement in El Salvador needed more political cover — through revival of the old charade in which the president would periodically certify that "human rights progress" was being made in El Salvador.

For instance, Stephen Solarz, a liberal Democrat who voted against the bill, echoed one of the main themes in Reagan's speech during the course of the debate. Solarz maintained that the "American people don't want any more Cubas in Central America."

## Litany of lies

The bulk of Reagan's speech comprised a litany of the wildest slanders, accusations, and lies against Nicaragua, Cuba, and the Salvadoran liberation forces. Reagan consistently sought to portray these victims of U.S. aggression as the aggressors, and Washington as the victim.

The unrest in Central America, Reagan maintained, was fomented by "the Soviet Union and its surrogates."

Cuba follows a "path of revolutionary violence," he charged, and "even provides safe passage for drug traffickers who poison our children."

"The Sandinista rule is a Communist reign of terror," Reagan declared, and the U.S.-backed counterrevolutionaries who are seeking to topple the Sandinistas "are freedom-fighters."

He charged that "El Salvador's yearning for democracy has been thwarted by Cuban-trained and armed guerrillas," who want to "establish totalitarian rule."

Many of these accusations have been present, in one form or another, in other Reagan speeches in recent years. But the tone of this speech was markedly sharper, particularly in its characterizations of the Nicaraguan government.

"With this speech," Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega stated the following day, "Reagan is seeking approval for his interventionist policy in El Salvador and to continue murdering Nicaraguan people, sabotaging its economy and provoking a shortage of food and medicines."

## A facelift for Duarte

Reagan's claims about "progress toward democracy" in El Salvador have been reinforced by a concerted propaganda campaign in the big-business news media in the United States

and Western Europe to portray Duarte — Washington's chosen candidate in the Salvadoran elections — as a virtual savior for working people.

"He is committed to social reform, the eradication of human rights violations and the reconciliation of all Salvadorans interested in a peaceful and productive society . . ." an editorial in the May 8 *Washington Post* declared of Duarte.

The May 9 Paris daily *Le Monde* harped on Duarte's past conflicts with the Salvadoran oligarchy: "Mr. Duarte presents an enormous advantage: he is no one's puppet. He is a Salvadoran nationalist, a clear thinker who learned, through torture, that politics is not a child's game. . . ."

Although Washington formally remained "neutral" in the presidential election, it clearly backed Duarte. Reagan administration officials later revealed to reporters and to congressional committees that the CIA provided nearly \$1 million to Duarte's Christian Democratic Party, and half that amount to the National Conciliation Party of Francisco José Guerrero, who was eliminated in the first round of voting on March 25.

For the moment, the U.S. imperialists prefer Duarte to his chief rival, the ultrarightist Roberto D'Aubuisson. D'Aubuisson's role as head of the death squads is widely known. Had he won, Washington would have had to pay a higher political price for its stepped-up aid to the Salvadoran regime. Duarte provides more of a fig leaf for the U.S. intervention.

But Duarte's role is not fundamentally different from that of D'Aubuisson. When Duarte was president in 1980-82, more than 25,000 Salvadorans were killed by government troops and the death squads. Wages were frozen, strikes outlawed, and newspapers shut down.

The government will remain dictatorial, although it is now an "elected" dictatorship (through elections in which representatives of the liberation forces were unable to participate). However much Duarte talks about peace, his regime will continue to prosecute the war against the Salvadoran people, a war in which U.S. personnel are playing an ever greater role.

In doing so, Duarte will have to confront not only the fighters of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, but also an increasingly assertive labor movement.

This has been evident in a series of strikes and other labor actions in recent months, as well as on May Day, less than a week before the election. On that day, despite threats of repression by the army and death squads, more than 3,000 workers marched through San Salvador to celebrate the international workers' holiday. It was called by the Movement for Trade Union Unity of El Salvador (MUSYGES), which comprises five federations and three of the most important unions.

Besides commemorating the thousands who have been murdered in El Salvador for their political beliefs, the marchers condemned the elections, which they termed "a farce and a mockery of the people." □

# The pope's message in South Korea

By Will Reissner

South Korea's U.S.-backed military dictatorship was well pleased by Pope John Paul II's four-day visit that ended May 7. Human rights activists, however, were bitterly disappointed that the pope had echoed the military dictatorship's basic themes on political, economic, and social questions.

"Government officials barely disguised their pleasure over the four-day visit in which the papal entourage traversed the length of the country," Clyde Haberman reported in the May 8 *New York Times*. "Formally, the Pope was on a pastoral mission, but the close Government involvement in the arrangements showed how much President Chun [Doo Hwan] hoped the trip would help him improve his often strained relations with South Korea's Christians."

Shortly after landing in South Korea, the pope was hustled off to a private talk with military dictator Gen. Chun Doo Hwan. The two emerged from the meeting with a joint statement, which gave no indication of any disagreements between them. During his trip, the pope levelled attacks against the workers state in North Korea.

One Protestant cleric bitterly noted that during his entire visit, the pope "didn't say anything about the [South Korean] Government's abuse of human rights."

The pope could not have been unaware of the repression in South Korea. He got a whiff of it firsthand while saying a mass on May 3. During the mass, tear gas fired by police at nearby student demonstrators drifted into the church.

In Kwangju, a city that is a center of opposition to the military regime and where Gen. Chun's troops killed more than 200 demonstrators in May 1980, Pope John Paul II gave the assembled crowd the same advice the church hierarchy has given to the oppressed for centuries: "Free yourself from bitterness, pardon those who have sinned against you."

One Roman Catholic layman, who has been imprisoned for political activity in Kwangju, complained that the pope "urged reconciliation to the families of the Kwangju victims but not to the Government that did the killing."

Many Kwangju residents were surprised that the pope did not visit the cemetery where victims of the 1980 massacre are buried. A 22-year-old Catholic, whose brother was imprisoned for 18 months after the 1980 Kwangju protests, told Philippe Pons of the Paris daily *Le Monde*, "we are a bit disappointed. . . . Especially that the pope did not go to the cemetery. Doesn't he know that there is pressure on the families of those who died in May 1980 to remove the remains of their family-members? Their presence is clearly an irritating reminder for the authorities."

The youth added: "Today many of us fear that after the pope's visit the authorities will

again tighten the screws."

The pope's implicit sanction of the bloody imperialist-backed Chun dictatorship stands in marked contrast with his actions in Nicaragua in 1983, when he openly sided with the counter-revolutionary church hierarchy against the masses of workers and peasants who support the Nicaraguan revolution and used his trip to

encourage opposition to the Sandinista government.

His trip to South Korea has simply reconfirmed the reactionary political aims of the Catholic church hierarchy: opposition to the struggles of the oppressed against exploitation and imperialist domination, wherever they may be. □

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# Capitalist offensive, at home and abroad

*Resistance to attacks on working people, imperialist policies*

By Dave Armstrong

AUCKLAND — The beginning of 1984 in New Zealand has seen the ruling class and its government intensify their attacks on working people at home and deepen preparations for war abroad. At the same time, strikes and other protests have been escalating in response. With elections scheduled for November, the year promises to be one of intense political debate and increased opportunities for revolutionary socialists to win a wider hearing.

On February 1, a new law came into force outlawing the closed shop and any other form of union preference in hiring. Then on March 23, a wage freeze imposed in June 1982 was extended indefinitely. Widespread strikes and stop-work meetings are beginning to develop in response, despite the weak lead from the union officialdom.

On March 27, a terrorist bombing destroyed the ground floor of the Wellington Trades Council building, killing the caretaker, Ernie Abbott, an active unionist and former vice-president of the Wellington Caretakers and Cleaners Union.

Trade union statements emphasized that "the victim was Ernie Abbott, but the target was the trade union movement," and that this murder was inspired by the government and employers' anti-union campaign.

As only the second known case of a worker killed for union activity in New Zealand's history, Abbott's death was met with widespread protests. Tens of thousands of workers across the country stopped work on March 3, the day of the funeral, with 5,000 participating in the funeral procession through Wellington.

## Pacific islanders begin to move

Pacific island migrant workers are the target of a racist immigration bill currently before a select committee of parliament. The bill gives greatly increased powers to immigration officials to arrest and deport so-called "overstayers" — people who have stayed beyond the time period of visitor or work permits. It makes actions by these officials beyond review by the courts. The new bill has been accompanied by racist propaganda campaign led by government members of parliament to blame Pacific island migrants for rape and other violent crimes.

Pacific islanders are organizing against this bill. On March 22, some 2,000 Tongans met in Auckland to express their opposition — a massive proportion of the Tongan population in the city.

This meeting followed a smaller one initiated by the Samoan branch of the Labour Party in Otara, a working-class suburb of

Auckland with a large Pacific islander population.

These meetings are a significant development in the Pacific island community and reflect their continuing radicalization in the face of years of racist harassment from police and immigration officials. Because of this intimidation and the fact that they are recent arrivals in the country (most Pacific island immigration occurred in the 1960s and 1970s) Pacific islanders had been loath to get involved in public protest activity.

The fact they are doing so more readily now is an important development for the working class as a whole. Although the Pacific islanders (including those born in New Zealand) only make up around 3 percent of the total population, they form a significant proportion of the industrial working class in the main cities.

## Vanguard role of Maoris

On February 6, about 3,500 Maoris, the indigenous people of New Zealand, joined the final leg of a 10-day *hikoi* (peace walk) to the small town of Waitangi in the far north of the North Island to highlight Maori grievances at the annual Treaty of Waitangi celebrations. The treaty, signed in 1840 between the British Crown and some Maori chiefs, marked the formal assertion of British sovereignty over New Zealand.

The *hikoi* raised traditional issues of land and fishing rights (supposedly guaranteed in the treaty), as well as the defense of the Maori language and opposition to racist discrimination in jobs, housing, and social services. Maori youth have been particularly hard hit by the growing unemployment of recent years, with 30 percent of Maoris aged 15–19 unemployed compared with 9 percent for non-Maori.

The march marked the emergence of *Te Kotahitanga* (Unity Movement), which aims to unify and organize Maoris in the fight for their rights. *Te Kotahitanga* is now organizing for a national meeting later this year to consolidate a continuing political movement. It may emerge as a powerful new force among the Maori people, who make up 13 percent of the population, and are overwhelmingly working class.

The *hikoi* and formation of *Te Kotahitanga* also confirm the vanguard role Maori workers are playing for the labor movement as a whole. It represents the search by a section of the working class for a way to resist the ruling-class offensive and to develop a leadership willing to lead a militant struggle.

Women's rights have also come under at-

tack. An abortion bill sponsored by a government MP in October 1983 aimed to further toughen an already restrictive law. Though defeated, it marked the beginning of a concerted anti-abortion campaign.

This year has seen a number of pickets of abortion clinics and moves to cut funding for publicly funded hospital board-run clinics. The reactionary Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child has announced plans to raise a NZ\$384,000 [NZ\$1 = US\$0.65] "extraordinary fighting fund" for 1984, with \$50,000 earmarked for this year's elections.

It is also clear that job discrimination in the workplace has intensified during the recession. An Employers Federation conference in April found that not a single employer present had done anything to promote the official policy of the federation to encourage the employment of women in nontraditional jobs.

The government has also taken more aggressive moves to deepen its participation in the imperialist war drive against the workers and peasants of the semicolonial world.

During his recent trip to the United States, Prime Minister Robert Muldoon expressed support for the dictatorship in El Salvador when he met its president, Alvaro Magaña, in Texas, and endorsed the U.S. invasion of Grenada.

## Practice invasion

The March 4 *New Zealand Times* reported that Muldoon "compared New Zealand's strategy in the Pacific with President Reagan's approach to the Caribbean, and now Central America." New Zealand's aim in the South Pacific, declared Muldoon, is to prevent the duplication in its "backyard" of "the sort of conditions which eventually brought chaos to Grenada."

Military exercises under the Five Power Defence Arrangement (grouping New Zealand, Australia, Britain, Singapore, and Malaysia) were held during March with British, Australian, and Gurkha troops, involving a practice invasion of a Pacific island.

An official army statement admitted the exercise was designed to practice suppression of an internal insurrection from people "seeking a larger share of political representation and economic power." The exercises marked the first use of the recently established Ready Reaction Force, a 1,000-strong battalion designed for use in the South Pacific.

On March 12, Muldoon announced that the New Zealand government had agreed to maintain its helicopter unit as part of the 26,000-strong U.S.-sponsored Sinai force for at least another two years.

Also in March were maneuvers involving U.S., Australian, and New Zealand naval and air forces under the ANZUS military alliance linking these countries.

Taking part in these exercises was the U.S. nuclear submarine *Queenfish*, one of the vessels scheduled to be equipped with some of the 400 nuclear-armed Tomahawk cruise missiles with which Washington is arming its Pacific fleet. This nuclear build-up is comparable to, and complements, the introduction of a similar number of cruise missiles into Western Europe, although it has received far less attention. The ANZUS exercises themselves were designed to perfect antisubmarine warfare techniques, which form an important part of U.S. nuclear war strategy.

The visit of the *Queenfish* to Auckland, and U.S. frigates to other ports, became the focus for a number of protests, including a march of 5,000 in Auckland on March 24. Although primarily antinuclear in character, the protests were also directed against the ANZUS alliance and raised the issue of the independence movements in the Pacific. Latin America solidarity committees highlighted the danger of the U.S. war in Central America.

#### 'Realistic' policies?

In the face of these intensified ruling-class attacks, many workers are looking to the election of a Labour Party government in the 1984 elections as a key part of defending their interests.

Unfortunately, the parliamentary Labour Party has proved unable to answer the challenge and stand firm by the unions and the working class. Instead, it argues that "realistic" policies are needed to appeal to a "basically conservative" electorate.

Labour leader David Lange has consistently argued against industrial action against the wage freeze or in defense of union coverage, maintaining that workers must "wait until November" when the elections are scheduled and that action now "only plays into the hands of Muldoon."

The Labour Party leaders remain committed to making capitalism work. Labour's finance spokesman — and company secretary — Roger Douglas wrote last year, "The Labour Party cannot promise any handouts — indeed it will face a situation almost certainly requiring further reductions in total government expenditure and continued restraint in wages and other income areas."

While telling the workers that it cannot make "extravagant" promises to improve their standard of living, the Lange team aims to convince the bosses that it would be a better manager of the capitalist economy than Muldoon's National Party.

This approach has meant the failure of Labour's leaders to pose as a real alternative to the Muldoon government; they continue to lag behind National in the opinion polls. It was precisely this approach that led to Labour's defeat in the last three elections. By undermining opposition to government attacks on working



Rebel

#### Maoris on 10-day peace walk to Waitangi

people they simply demobilize and demoralize their supporters.

It has also allowed the recently established right-wing New Zealand Party, which emphasizes more "freedom" from government economic controls of business, to pose as a "radical" alternative to the National Party. Led by millionaire property speculator Bob Jones, it has gained 18 percent of voter support in recent opinion polls, with support being drawn as much from former Labour supporters as from National.

Labour's conservative course has not gone without challenge from Labour's ranks. Several incumbent right-wing Labour MPs were challenged for selection as candidates in this year's election — one successfully. A leading Maori MP and cabinet minister in the 1972-75 Labour government split from the party in 1980, taking many Maoris with him to form a nationalist Maori party called Mana Motuhake.

The Otago meeting on the Immigration Bill initiated by a Pacific island Labour Party branch was directed against the failure of the Labour Party branch leadership to oppose the racist bill.

A debate is opening up in the party on its direction and program with the right-wing economic policies of Roger Douglas coming in for particular criticism from union affiliates and Labour youth.

There is also greater recognition by workers that union action, far from being an electoral liability, can help deal blows to the National government and generate the sort of enthusiasm in Labour's ranks needed for victory.

Revolutionary socialists in New Zealand, organized in the Socialist Action League (the New Zealand section of the Fourth International) will be using the heightened political interest shown in the elections period to advance a class-struggle political alternative to the class-collaborationist approach of the Labour Party leadership and union officialdom. The current debates and differentiation in the Labour Party, and growing struggles against the ruling-class offensive, convince us that our message will get a favorable hearing from thousands of workers.

Signs that this is the case have already been

demonstrated by the success of the recently completed subscription drive for *Socialist Action* — more than 1,200 were sold in just eight weeks.

The message the league will be taking into this election year is that there is no escape from the catastrophe facing working people so long as this system is allowed to continue — so long as our needs are subordinated to the profit drive of big business.

This harsh reality needs to be explained if workers are to be able to conduct an effective fightback. Working people need to be organized and led in action to resist each and every one of the attacks on our rights and living standards, and the war plans of the government.

We need to unite the power of our class and win allies in the struggle by standing up for the rights of those especially victimized and oppressed by capitalism — women, Maoris, Pacific islanders, and youth — as well as other layers exploited by big business, like the family farmers.

This power could then be mobilized to put in a Labour government that is based on and takes the side of workers and working farmers, as they struggle to take the economy out of the hands of the private profiteers and put it in the service of human needs.

For workers who want to move the labor movement in this class-struggle direction, the starting point is solidarity with those fighting back:

Solidarity with workers taking action against the antiunion laws and for defense of their living standards.

Solidarity with the Maori people defending their rights, such as the hikoi to Waitangi.

Solidarity with women battling discrimination in employment and for abortion rights.

Solidarity with Pacific islanders against the racist immigration controls.

Solidarity with the people of Central America and the Middle East against imperialist intervention. For a nuclear-free and independent Pacific.

It is out of these battles that new leaders of our class will emerge who seek to transform the unions and Labour Party into instruments of struggle adequate for the mighty task ahead.

# No end to debt crisis

## Argentina bailout only postpones problem

By William Gottlieb

U.S. Treasury Secretary Donald Regan announced at the end of March that a \$500 million deal had been worked out to rescue Argentina from imminent default on interest payments already past due on its \$43.6 billion foreign debt.

Had agreement not been reached by the March 31 deadline, the big U.S., European, and Japanese banks that hold Argentina's debt would have been forced to write off the interest payments as "non-accruing assets." This would have reduced the banks' nominal profits and undermined their already shaky balance sheets. The "rescue" agreement was thus above all a move to rescue the imperialist banking system.

This bailout deal was no more than a stop-gap measure, however. It dealt only with the overdue interest payments of one near-bankrupt semicolonial country. The problem of Argentina's overall debt was not touched.

The bankers themselves are well aware of this. That is one reason why a closed-door conference of leading imperialist financiers was held in New York in early May. The meeting involved Paul A. Volcker, chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board; Jacques de Larosière, head of the International Monetary Fund; Alexandre Lamfalussy, incoming head of the Bank for International Settlements; and representatives of 15 to 20 central banks, plus officials of the top private commercial banks. Together these men represent the high command of imperialist finance capital. They are faced with a steadily deteriorating international financial situation.

### Latin American role in bailout

While it solved few of the bankers' problems, the Argentine bailout in March did have some revealing features. Argentina had to cough up \$100 million from its own foreign currency reserves. The imperialist banks themselves advanced \$100 million. And the governments of Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela joined together to lend Argentina some \$300 million, which was also promptly remitted to the banks.

All these Latin American countries are facing severe financial trouble and economic crises of their own. Brazil's difficulties in meeting payments on its massive foreign debt led to an earlier U.S.-orchestrated bank bailout.

In return for the Latin American role in the Argentine interest arrangement, Washington promised to lend Argentina enough to repay Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela — provided the Argentine government accepts

demands by the International Monetary Fund for austerity measures. Should Argentina refuse the IMF's terms, the four Latin governments will find themselves holding the bag. Needless to say, it is a bag these countries cannot afford to hold.

Why did these governments put themselves in such a position?

To understand this, it is necessary to look at the political situation in South America's "southern cone." From 1976 to 1983, Argentina was ruled by one of the most brutal military dictatorships in Latin America. Death squads roamed the country. Some 30,000 persons suspected of opposing the regime fell victim to kidnapping and "disappearance." Communists, socialists, trade unionists, and even liberal bourgeois figures were presumably murdered and buried in unmarked mass graves or dumped at sea.

The military claimed such terrorist practices were the necessary price for restoring social stability and economic health. It did not work that way. The country was hit by triple-digit inflation, a sharp decline in industrial output, massive unemployment, and plunging real wages. Eventually these conditions became intolerable, and, despite the terror, mass protests and strikes broke out. Not only the Argentine working class but broad sections of the middle class could no longer tolerate military rule.

The dictatorship's inability to defend the country against British aggression in the Malvinas Islands further undermined its crumbling authority.

### Alfonsín and 'democracy'

A point was finally reached last year where the military's continuation in office was simply impossible.

The country's wealthy capitalists and landowners were alarmed at the discrediting of the entire repressive apparatus of their state. They pressed for early elections and managed to install a liberal politician named Raúl Alfonsín as president.

Alfonsín, leader of the Radical Civic Union, defeated the candidate of the Peronists — Argentina's other big bourgeois party — by a wide margin. The imperialist news media hailed this as a major victory for "democracy" and expressed relief that the Peronists had been blocked from returning to government.

While the Peronists are a capitalist party, the key to their electoral victories in earlier decades was always the mass support of the Argentine working class and their control over the country's powerful trade unions, organized in the General Confederation of Labor (CGT). The Peronists have historically taken a more

nationalist stance, as compared with the Radicals' open identification with imperialism.

In the 1983 election, however, large numbers of workers voted for Alfonsín because of his strong statements against military rule and repression. This contrasted with the collaboration many top Peronists — including union officials — had offered the military dictatorship.

While Alfonsín is not about to challenge imperialist domination of Argentina, his ability to act openly against the workers and farmers is limited by the utter discrediting of the military and police forces. While these repressive bodies remain largely intact, Alfonsín has had to make good on his election promise to prosecute the top officers who made up the successive military juntas between 1976 and 1982. An array of other high officials has been hauled into court by victims of the repression or their relatives.

Moreover, Argentine working people are well aware that it was their own mobilizations in gigantic street protests and three general strikes that were key to defeating the dictatorship. These struggles have brought about a situation in which the Argentine people today enjoy more democratic rights in practice than in almost any other South American country. Trade unions and political parties have extensive freedom to organize. The right to strike exists and is widely exercised.

So, for the time being, extensive repression is not a viable option for the Argentine rulers. This in turn limits their ability to impose the harsh austerity measures now being demanded by Washington and the International Monetary Fund. Alfonsín himself has felt obliged to state, "It should remain clear to all that we are not disposed to aim this negotiation [with the IMF] at squeezing the workers' living standards or at keeping our productive capacity idle." Or, as one unnamed Argentine politician told the *New York Times*, "The president does not have much room to maneuver."

It was to offset the evident weakness of Alfonsín's government in face of the working class that the Mexican, Brazilian, Colombian, and Venezuelan governments joined Washington in putting together the interest payments bailout plan. Since these regimes will not be repaid unless Alfonsín gives in to the IMF's demands, they are expected to put pressure on Buenos Aires to make concessions to the banks.

The imperialists and the Latin American bourgeoisies hope this will in turn enable Alfonsín to tell the Argentine workers he has no choice, since other Latin American "democracies" are urging him to reach agreement with the IMF. Such caving in to Yankee imperialism's demands will thus be disguised to some extent. Whether Argentine workers will buy this argument remains to be seen.

### Not only Argentina

The situation in Argentina is made still more tricky for the imperialists because of the crisis that is brewing next door in Chile. Gen. Augusto Pinochet's regime has not only alienated

Chilean workers and the bulk of the middle class, but even many industrial capitalists. The latter face bankruptcy due to the regime's tight controls on credit and its opening of the country to cheap manufactured imports in the name of "free trade."

Like the former regime in Argentina, the Pinochet tyranny is responsible for the murder of thousands of Chileans. Today, Pinochet faces massive mobilizations demanding that his dictatorship be replaced by a democratic government. It may prove quite difficult for the Chilean capitalists to bring a smooth end to Pinochet's rule with an Alfonsín-type government before a real social explosion occurs.

A similar dilemma faces the Uruguayan ruling class, while in Bolivia and Peru elected civilian governments confront radicalized mass movements of workers and peasants spurred into action by austerity measures of the kind the IMF is demanding for Argentina.

Added to this picture is imperialism's widening war in Central America against Nicaragua's workers and farmers government and the masses of Cuba's socialist revolution, and the ongoing ferment in the Caribbean — most recently exemplified by the anti-IMF rebellion in the Dominican Republic in April.

Imperialist domination and capitalist rule are thus increasingly being called into question throughout Latin America. This is a big reason why the rulers of Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, and Brazil saw fit to circle the wagons around their Argentine counterparts. Moreover, these capitalist regimes are all so entangled in the global debt trap that they are in no position to defy the imperialists of Wall Street. They have little choice but to dance to Washington's tune.

#### The broader crisis

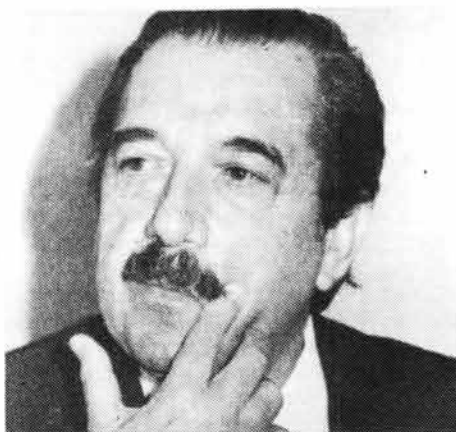
The March crisis involving the banks and Argentina is part of a broader phenomenon that the capitalist press terms the "world debt crisis."

Where did this crisis come from, and how will it be resolved?

The immediate trigger was the 1979–82 world capitalist recession. In 1979–80, interest rates rose explosively in the United States and on all world money markets. At the same time, the U.S. dollar was sharply devalued against gold, causing dollar-denominated prices to take a great leap upward. In order to maintain even their existing levels of imports, semicolonial countries like Argentina had to step up their foreign borrowing of dollars. On top of this, they had to pay much higher rates of interest on the newly acquired debt, as well as on a portion of their old debt.

In the meantime, economic recession was spreading throughout the United States, Western Europe, and, to a lesser extent, Japan. This reduced the demand for the raw materials and other commodities these imperialist countries import from the semicolonial world.

To make matters worse for the nations oppressed by imperialism, the gap widened be-



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tween the prices they pay for their imports and the prices they receive for their exported commodities. This is because the semicolonial countries export mostly agricultural and mineral raw materials, which sharply drop in price whenever imperialist demand declines. On the other hand, imperialist industrial monopolies slash their output when recession reduces demand, in order to defend their monopoly prices and profits. Under these conditions, one semicolonial country after another found itself at the tender mercies of the IMF.

The IMF is an international banking institution in which governments are the depositors. It is dominated by its biggest depositors, the imperialist governments — Washington above all. The IMF acts as a lender of last resort to regimes that are facing bankruptcy; its loans are conditional on the adoption of austerity measures.

#### Rising protectionism

The 1979–82 recession had another effect. It increased protectionist trends in the imperialist countries and especially in the United States. Measures began to be taken to restrict the importation of the relatively few industrial products these countries purchase from the semicolonial world.

This trend has continued despite the current cyclical recovery from the recession in the imperialist countries. On April 19, for example, the U.S. Commerce Department ruled that Argentina and Brazil were "subsidizing" steel exports to the United States. Business correspondent Clyde Farnsworth explained in the April 26 *New York Times*:

"The United States and other industrial countries are creating a basic conflict: They are erecting trade barriers against steel, textiles, and other prime sources of income for third-world debtor countries while trying to assure that those countries keep up with their payments to the banks."

Farnsworth cited the case of Brazil: "The economic conflict is seen most starkly in Brazil, which owes more than \$90 billion and needs \$12 billion a year just to pay the interest. Brazil's projections before the latest Commerce Department actions were that exports

this year would reach \$25 billion, compared with \$22 billion in 1983.

"If steel, textile and shoe shipments are curbed, exports could be much less. Meanwhile, imports of oil, food, technology, spare parts and other goods are being held at what are considered minimal levels of \$16 billion, the same as last year."

Can the current upswing in the capitalist business cycle internationally gradually resolve, or at least ease, the world debt situation?

In the April 19 *New York Times*, Paul Lewis tried to create the impression that this is exactly what is happening. "Private Western banks," Lewis wrote, "have resumed voluntary lending to many nations in the developing world, with the notable exception of those in Latin America, the Bank for International Settlements reported today." Lewis then declared that "the debt crisis is being transformed into more of a regional problem that mainly concerns Latin America and banks in the United States, which hold some 40 percent of Latin America's outstanding foreign debt."

#### Overproduction

Even if this were true, there would still be quite a problem. But Lewis' argument has a considerable flaw. The world debt crisis is but a symptom of a more fundamental disorder, the problem of capitalist "overproduction." If the capitalist world has been skidding ever closer to the brink of financial disaster, it is not because it has been producing too little, but rather because it has been producing too much.

Periodically, more commodities accumulate in warehouses than can be sold at prices that are profitable to the capitalists. Production must be slashed and workers thrown out onto the streets in order to get rid of the "surplus" commodities.

During a recession or depression, production is brought back into line with the needs of the profit system — at the expense of the workers, farmers, and even the weaker capitalists, who are bankrupted in droves.

Since World War II the capitalist states and central banks have taken some of the sharp edge off the periodic business cycle downturns by expanding credit rapidly in recessions and, if need be, by sharply devaluing the currency. But this has meant that recessions have been rendered relatively "ineffective" in liquidating capitalist overproduction.

It is this that is behind the unheard-of levels of interest rates and the international financial tensions. The game of blunting recessions is coming to its inevitable end. Not for nothing is each announcement by the U.S. government of continued domestic economic expansion promptly followed by a new decline in stock and bond prices on Wall Street. Nor is it an accident that every IMF-imposed austerity program has resulted in *reduced* overall production. The weak capitalists of the semicolonial countries are the first to walk the plank.

The current economic recovery, marked by a rise in production in the imperialist countries, will therefore actually worsen the global

debt crisis, if not right away, then within a few years.

There are indications that this is already beginning to happen. The upswing in the business cycle has already reversed the trend toward lower interest rates that prevailed in 1981-82. As interest rates rise, financial pressures on the debt-strapped semicolonial countries increase.

#### No end to debt crisis

"Latin American nations and their bank lenders," the April 15 *Washington Post* said, "are worried that the rising interest rates in the United States will wipe out much or all

of the progress they've made toward putting their shattered economies back in order." The *Post* noted that Wall Street expects interest rates "will rise even further in the coming months. . . . Each percentage-point increase in their rates costs Brazil and Argentina \$700 million each in additional interest payments."

In his "crisis-is-over" article in the April 19 *New York Times*, Paul Lewis quoted an unnamed European financial expert as saying, "So long as another interest-rate explosion is avoided, the debt crisis looks manageable." But the whole history of the capitalist business cycle, going back for more than 150 years, indicates the current upswing will end in just

such an "interest-rate explosion."

So the crisis is not behind us. As economics columnist Leonard Silk put it in the April 4 *New York Times*, "The full measure of the looming crisis has not yet been taken, because of its vast scope, economic complexity and political difficulty. But it seems impossible to go on avoiding it for many more months."

The current debt and economic crisis in Latin America is, therefore, the harbinger of a new outbreak of the global capitalist economic crisis. Before it runs its course this crisis could shake to their very foundations not only Latin American capitalism but also the imperialist colossus to the north. □

## Vietnam

# Education a national priority

*A key to reconstruction from ravages of war*

By Diane Wang

HANOI — "This school was bombed three times in December 1966. It was completely destroyed. But we carried on classes by hiding them at 10 sites throughout the countryside." Tran Viet Thi was showing *Intercontinental Press* editor Steve Clark and me a high school just outside Hanoi. He was the school's administrator during the war; today he directs education for the district.

"In 1971 we rebuilt here because the bombing seemed to have relented," Thi continued. "But on Dec. 26, 1972, an air raid destroyed the school again. This present building was completed in 1979. We tried to build around the bomb craters; students covered over most of the other holes."

The school now has several three-story buildings set in the midst of rice fields. A science laboratory had anatomy charts drawn on bamboo mats, as well as microscopes and specimens donated from Poland and other East European workers states.

This one high school was a good illustration of all Vietnam's efforts to establish education while fighting an all-out war against French and U.S. imperialism.

We kept the experience of that high school in mind as Ho Truc, Vietnam's vice-minister of education, reviewed the country's achievements with us.

There are nine years of compulsory education for children between six and 15 years old, Truc told us. Vietnam has about 12 million students in such general education primary and secondary classes.

Before Vietnam's revolution in 1945, there were only five secondary schools in the entire country — for children of the wealthy. Now every district has at least one, and some have two such schools.

Studies include natural sciences, history, geography, ethics, both Vietnamese and world



Diane Wang/IP

Viet Ba secondary school near Hanoi.

literature, and a foreign language.

In addition, there are about 1.5 million children from three to six years old in kindergarten. Vietnam first began to set up kindergartens in 1956, soon after it had defeated the French and established its independence in the northern part of the country. In some northern provinces, around the Red River delta, about 60 percent of the children attend kindergarten. For the country as a whole, about 35 percent are enrolled.

Vietnam has extended this effort by setting up infant centers for children two months old to three years old. About 1.2 million infants are cared for in such centers for part of the day, Truc reported.

These efforts are considered important not only to give children an early start in education, but to give women more free time for

their own work, political involvement, or education.

#### Women benefit

Women have benefitted from Vietnam's education system in other ways. While traditionally excluded from education before the revolution, women now are more than 31 percent of the university students.

Vietnam has 84 universities and other institutions of higher education. In 1947, the second year of its war against the French, the country set up its first universities and secondary vocational schools in liberated zones. Vietnam wanted to lay a basis for the reconstruction that would follow the war.

During the U.S. bombing from 1965 to 1973, the country graduated 100,000 students from university and 200,000 from secondary



vocational school. This is especially remarkable considering that in northern Vietnam 70 percent of the villages, 60 percent of the towns, and almost 30 provincial capitals were destroyed by bombing.

About 1.5 million people are now involved in adult education classes. "We try to base the classes on what people need," Truc told us. "For example, people need skills and techniques to develop agriculture and animal breeding. We don't teach math and literacy to train academics but to give peasants what they need."

Truc said classes deal with such basic science as explaining what lightning is, to debunk superstition. "Teachers learn from their classes. They cooperate with scientists to popularize their information." Classes might use a battery to explain electricity and lightning, for example.

We had a glimpse of how extensive the adult education classes are when we visited a new economic zone outside Ho Chi Minh City. One worker in the sugarcane farm, a former soldier in the U.S. puppet army, invited us into his house. It was a small two-room bungalow for a large family. In the kitchen were stacks of mathematics books and a blackboard covered with trigonometric functions. The man told us in a matter-of-fact way that he was studying at night.

### Three reforms

Vietnam is now carrying out its third national education reform. The first national reform in 1950, Truc explained, had established a single general education system and made Vietnamese the language of instruction at all levels of schooling.

Before the revolution, education had all been done in French. The use of the Vietnamese language in Vietnam's schools has been one of the country's major achievements, Truc said.

In 1956 Vietnam carried out another national education reform to eliminate illiteracy in the newly liberated areas and to carry out a large-scale development of education.

In 1980 the country began its third national reform. This aims at reunifying the education system throughout the country and integrating education into daily life.

Immediately after liberation, Vietnam began the initial reunification of the education system with a massive literacy drive in the south. This was completed in 1978.

"When we reunified the country the biggest problems were the shortages of paper and teachers. We trained enough teachers, but still lack paper," Truc said. "We have plenty of material to be printed and publishing houses, but not enough paper. It is a big obstacle to further developing our teachers and education."

"At present, because of our poor conditions, education is not at as high a level as we want," Truc said. "We have shortages of books, classrooms, and equipment. All too often, only the teachers have books."

The new reform aims to increase collabora-

tion between the formal education system and the mass organizations, between the schools and factories and cooperatives, Truc said.

A basic collaboration already exists to provide education. Local areas or cooperatives assume responsibility for building secondary schools or teachers' homes. A local branch of the Vietnam Women's Union, for example, might assume responsibility for raising funds to build an infant center. The state then provides salaries, books, and equipment.

Now, however, the educational reform seeks to extend that collaboration so that the mass organizations, factories, and cooperatives contribute to the content of education itself.

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## Kampuchea

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# Schooling for the masses

## Interview with Education Minister Pen Navuth

### By Diane Wang

PHNOM PENH — "In the field of education, Kampuchea today is surpassing the accomplishments of all the previous regimes," Pen Navuth said in a March interview with *Intercontinental Press*. Pen Navuth is minister of education for the People's Republic of Kampuchea.

"Within the last five years, from 1979 to 1984, we have had 1.7 million students in the general education schools. Under the former Sihanouk regime, there were never more than 900,000 students," Navuth said.

"But I am talking not only about the quantity of education available, but the quality," the education minister continued. "Before, anyone who went to school was simply trying to prepare for a government post. The former regime spent a lot of money educating a minority of people to get a high rank."

"We are training our students to understand their own productive activities, to understand agriculture, planting, and the like. We consider education important for production; it is a necessity for everyone. I want to stress this as the primary way in which we have surpassed previous regimes," Navuth said.

Today one out of four people in Kampuchea is attending school. This does not include another 300,000 who are attending adult education classes.

### Difficult past to overcome

Kampuchea must overcome a harsh legacy to establish education for the general population.

In the 1960s, Prince Norodom Sihanouk tried to pose as a modernizer and somewhat progressive ruler. "If we believe Sihanouk's statistics, 20 percent of the school-age youth were going to school. But that left behind the

This will help make education an increasing part of people's daily lives. "Many students study and aspire to become professionals or officers," Truc explained. "This is not wrong, but under our conditions it can be a difficulty. We want to emphasize the education of all the people, so that they study to become good farmers and workers."

Vietnam hopes to extend general education to 12 years, as well as develop schools for the specially gifted and handicapped.

The reform will involve more extensive teacher training, research, and construction. □

other 80 percent not attending," Navuth pointed out.

Sihanouk was ousted by Lon Nol, a U.S. puppet, in 1970. As civil war broke out against Lon Nol's brutal dictatorship, Washington dropped one-half million tons of bombs on the small country. "During the Lon Nol regime," Navuth said, "this was a war-torn country, victimized by invasion. What education that had existed was weakened."

On April 17, 1975, the Khmer Rouge forces led by Pol Pot defeated Lon Nol. But within hours of their victory the Khmer Rouge began evacuating the cities and villages, herding virtually the entire population of Kampuchea into forced labor agricultural camps. "When we come to Pol Pot, education was finished," Navuth said. "Not only did he close all the schools, but the intellectuals and educated were massacred."

Under Pol Pot, 75 percent of the country's former teachers were killed. Throughout Kampuchea many told me how they had to hide their ability to read and write during the four years of Khmer Rouge terror. "If you could read the label on a bottle of aspirin, you were automatically branded an agent of the former regime and executed," one person recalled.

On Jan. 7, 1979, when Pol Pot was finally driven out, the People's Republic of Kampuchea had hardly anything to build on. The country's entire population wandered in search of their home villages. The new government had to cope with a severe famine during the first two years.

It was a major achievement to open schools on Sept. 24, 1979.

Twenty-eight teacher-training schools have been set up. In five years the schools have trained more than 40,000 general education teachers, nursery school mistresses, literacy and adult education instructors, and education

administrators. The emphasis has been to train personnel as rapidly as possible. Now the ministry of education wants to turn attention to improving the quality of training.

A major problem today is providing more advanced teachers for upper-level classes as students progress. "The number of students in the second- and third-degree levels increases two or three times each year," Navuth said. "For example, in the 1982-83 school year we had about 80,000 in the second-degree level. By the next year this had increased to 147,000 students. The challenge is to train teachers with the capacity to teach these levels."

#### Language training

"All general education is taught in Khmer," the Kampuchean language, Navuth said. "This is the realization of our country's aspiration, since education had been in French." Teaching in Kampuchea's own language makes education much more accessible for the peasants and workers. In the last five years 91 school books have been published in Khmer.

At the same time, the ministry of education recognizes the need to train people in foreign languages. "We have a target, that all students learn at least one foreign language at the high school level," Navuth explained. "Students will need foreign languages, not only for studies abroad, but to do research."

Currently, despite a severe shortage of foreign language instructors, Kampuchea has begun classes in Vietnamese, Russian, Spanish, and German. "We hope in the future to add English and French," Navuth said.

#### 'Flower ceremony'

"I would like to tell you about Kampuchean people's spirit in the field of education," Navuth said. "Our government could never have provided such education without the wholehearted support of the people. Our state can only provide the salary for school teachers. All the materials — the buildings, desks — are contributed by the people themselves."

*Intercontinental Press* editor Steve Clark and I had an opportunity to see how the country mobilizes to build the schools. Travelling along a country road we came across what is called a "flower ceremony." A Buddhist religious leader sat at a roadside stand calling out to people, explaining the local community's project to build a school. Young women flagged down passing bicycles, ox-carts, and cars with a Kampuchean flag to collect donations. Behind them we saw the future school, being built bit by bit as the community raised the funds.

In addition to restoring a basic school system, the ministry of education has attempted innovations.

"In Sihanouk's time there were no kindergartens," Navuth explained. "Our government and our party stress organizing kindergartens to liberate women. We are still experimenting and training, but all our state authorities try to extend this field."

Because a disproportionate number of men

died under Pol Pot, women now outnumber men 2-to-1 in Kampuchea. Freeing them to participate in production, education, and political activity is crucial to the country's reconstruction.

"Our state authorities are not able to provide and administer a complete system of kindergartens yet," Navuth said. "So we have two kinds of kindergartens. Some are administered and paid for by the state; others are organized and supported by the people," through their factories or agricultural solidarity groups. There were more than 30,000 children from the age of three to six years going to kindergarten last year.

#### Literacy and adult education

The other major innovation of the new government has been adult education. "Our government and party paid great attention to this field because there was such a large number of uneducated people left behind by the regimes of Sihanouk, Lon Nol, and Pol Pot," Navuth said. Of the country's 7 million people, one million adults were illiterate. The overwhelming majority of the remainder had received only three or four years of schooling.

Kampuchea's first priority was a literacy drive to teach the one million to read and write. "During the first three years of the campaign, from 1980 to 1983, we liberated more than one-half, about 55 percent, from illiteracy," Navuth explained. "You can understand the difficulties we faced. We were struggling against famine. People had no homes or stability in those years. We had shortages of lamps, fuel, electricity, vehicles to transport teachers."

In the last year the campaign has stepped up its efforts, so that now some 64 percent of the former illiterates have learned to read and write.

Each province and municipality has set up a committee to deal with adult education. In Kompong Chhnang, Steve Clark and I spoke with the head of that province's education committee, Nuth Sem. In an emulation cam-

paign, compared with four other provinces, Kompong Chhnang had been first in educational achievements.

Sem told us that a 1979-80 survey had shown that 40,000 adults in Kompong Chhnang province were illiterate. Since then about 80 percent have been taught to read and write.

The literacy drive organized and utilized the talents of many forces, especially since only 55 teachers out of 1,300 in Kompong Chhnang had survived Pol Pot. "The Buddhist monks were very involved with the literacy effort," Sem told us. "And we sent artists around the province with performances that encouraged participation."

Classes were set up at production sites, before 7:00 a.m., when work started, or at night. Other classes were held at the schools during lunch when the regular students went home.

Committees at every level, from the solidarity groups to the village to the province, discussed the progress of the drive and tried to help solve individuals' problems that made study difficult.

Once people achieve basic literacy, they are encouraged to go to continuing education classes, called complementary education classes. "The complementary school students have increased to 300,000," Navuth said. "We are paying special attention to promoting the education of cadre and personnel. For example, we are urging all the leaders of *khrom samaki* [the agricultural solidarity groups] to complete the first level of primary education." District leaders are encouraged to complete the second level, equivalent to the seventh grade.

Kampuchea's constitution declares that the school program is aimed at "linking general knowledge to practice, learning to production, and school to society."

Kampuchea needs this kind of ambitious educational program to give people the basic skills they need to govern their country, to defend it from Pol Pot and other right-wing forces, and to reconstruct its agriculture, production, and society. □



Diane Wang/IP

A "flower ceremony": Kampuchean youths collecting funds for school construction on road outside Phnom Penh.

# Life in a rebel zone

## Interview with nurse who visited Guazapa

[The following interview with Lorraine Guay is reprinted from the March 26 issue of the Quebec fortnightly newspaper *Lutte Ouvrière*, French-language publication of the Revolutionary Workers League, the pan-Canadian section of the Fourth International.

[Guay, a nurse and activist in the Central America solidarity movement in Quebec, spent six months in the Guazapa region of El Salvador in mid-1983, a zone that is largely under the control of forces of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN).

[The interview was conducted by Carole Caron, a member of the Revolutionary Youth Committee (CJR) in Montreal. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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*Question. Could you give us a brief history of Guazapa?*

*Answer.* Guazapa is located about 35 kilometers from the capital city, San Salvador, in Cuscatlán province. It has a population of 10,000, exclusively farmers.

Before the zone was liberated, a majority of the people were small peasants who had a little plot of land or rented one from the big landlords. There were also agricultural laborers.

The illiteracy rate was about 60 percent. The place was full of fascist gangs that terrorized and harassed the population.

The population in Guazapa is very Christian, and several priests played an important role in raising the consciousness of the population. There was the case, for example, of Rutilo Grande, who was murdered by the death squads in 1977, as Archbishop Romero would be later. Despite this, the movement of consciousness raising grew and made the farmers conscious that to liberate themselves from the dictatorship they would have to take up arms. It was the Christian movement for socialism, somewhat like what existed in Chile in the 1970s.

*Q. When did the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) appear in the area, and how did it organize the population?*

A. In January 1981 the FMLN launched a general offensive in the country and began to organize zones under its control. The FMLN's first activity in Guazapa was to organize the armed wing of this movement of conscious peasants. The peasants then began to organize themselves into defense structures and cleared out the fascist gangs.

The various organizations of the FMLN began the work of political and military education by going from house to house.

*Q. What is the basic structure of people's power in Guazapa?*

A. There are people's committees that bring together people who have no political affiliation as well as those who are active members of one of the parties in the FMLN.

Guazapa is a very unstable liberated zone, subjected to frequent invasions by the Salvadoran army. It is the zone closest to the capital, San Salvador, and the army feels a loss of face when it sees people organizing themselves and developing a new form of democracy right under the army's nose.

But people's power is not as developed in Guazapa as in other liberated zones like the ones in the provinces of Chalatenango or Morazán for example.

*Q. How do the people's committees function and what are their main tasks?*

A. Each committee is made up of 10 to 15 families. They are small units, which it is felt encourages people's participation. The committees meet about every two weeks. At the meetings people discuss problems of security against the army's invasions. For example, if people leave their laundry out or keep their fires burning when planes fly over the zone, that makes it possible to locate people easily and places the lives of the population in danger. There is instruction on that sort of thing. People also discuss withdrawals, that is, where to go and how best to pull back when the army invades the zone.

In short, this is where people discuss the community's life, including economic aspects, health, and education. The discussions are made by vote or by consensus.

*Q. What progress has been made in the field of health?*

A. The zone is very well organized on that level. The inhabitants are treated by a medical corps, an important part of whose work involves treatment of wounds suffered by the guerrillas, although the losses are minimal on the guerrilla side. The majority of the personnel of the corps is women, most of whom are daughters of peasants who had no basic education and who have been taught the rudiments of first aid. The first aid that is dispensed is of high quality.

They also do preventive work; they take care of childbirth, the newborn, and so on.

*Q. What has been achieved on the economic level?*

A. Since Guazapa became a liberated zone, the landowners have left the area. The peasants took the land and are cultivating it. This is done in a somewhat anarchic manner. After the victory of the revolution there is going to be an agrarian reform to organize production. This is one element in the FMLN's platform.

What you have is a subsistence economy. The farmers cannot sell their products in the market because when you are part of a liberated zone you are considered a criminal. There are efforts to control prices inside the zone. In general, the peasants produce for themselves and give some to the guerrillas.

The most advanced form in the consciousness of the farmers is the production collectives. These are not yet cooperatives, but they bring together a certain number of farmers who cultivate the land together, and the produce goes to the families and the guerrillas.

*Q. What is the role of women in the Guazapa liberated zone?*

A. Women are present everywhere. They face a wrenching dilemma between their role as mothers and their role as revolutionaries, but they participate on all levels.

There are few women in the guerrilla forces themselves, partly due to the attitude of men regarding women's participation in the guerrilla struggle. Machismo has not disappeared, and often reservations are openly expressed regarding women in the guerrilla forces.

Rape and violence have practically disappeared in the zone. There are many discussions about the struggle for women's liberation, and several points of view are expressed on the question. The FMLN's political organizations all have women's committees that carry out consistent educational work.

*Q. How is the participation of young people reflected?*

A. Half the population is under 17 years of age, and the life expectancy is 45 years. Clearly the guerrillas are young. There are youth militias to prepare young people to participate in the guerrilla struggle, but those who are 9 or 10 years old do not take part in the guerrilla struggle. In general they serve as couriers. The youngest guerrilla I met was 14 years old.

There was a party given for young people to urge them to attend school and to encourage their parents to send their children, because it is not necessarily understood why it is important to learn to read and write. They also combine work in the fields with hours of schooling.

*Q. What kind of information do the people in Guazapa receive?*

A. The people's committees and the FMLN produce a weekly information bulletin that has a regular format: international, regional, and national news. The people discussed, for example, the visit of U.S. special envoy Richard Stone to El Salvador last autumn.

They also have shortwave radios and listen

to Radio Havana quite regularly. Last July 26 [the anniversary of the 1953 attack on the Moncada barracks in Cuba], they listened to Fidel Castro's long speech. They also closely follow what happens in Nicaragua, because for them Nicaragua opened a door in their liberation struggle.

*Q. You spent several days in San Salvador.*

*Do you think the FMLN has major support there?*

A. San Salvador is an occupied city in which there are enormous tensions, and civil liberties do not exist. You cannot do anything or say anything. The propaganda in the newspapers and the media, solely government propaganda, is enough to make one sick.

It is clear that mobilizations and strikes have

resumed here and there, and that is the fruit of the FMLN's labors. It is also clear that if there were not a large network of collaborators, all the FMLN's underground work would be impossible.

Despite the state of war and terror, despite the frequent invasions, the people in the Guazapa zone are much happier than those in San Salvador, much more relaxed. And that says a lot. □

# Women and the Salvadoran revolution

## Interview with FMLN activist in Guazapa

By Norma Herrera

[The following article appeared in the April 9-16 issue of *Guazapa*, a Salvadoran rebel newsweekly. The translation from Spanish is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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From Guazapa, the heroic peak that symbolizes "a dagger in the heart of the enemy," we interviewed compañera Clara Cienfuegos of the Propaganda Collective of the Guazapa Front in the country's Central Zone.

Clara Cienfuegos, one of the hundreds of women who are part of the struggle in the combat fronts, explained to us why Salvadoran women are involved in the liberation struggle. She spoke of the exploitation that women have suffered for more than half a century and of their determination to actively participate in the social transformation taking place in our country.

She explained the activities that women carry out within the liberated regions as well as on the war fronts, and she made an appeal to women to continue to become involved in the struggle to break the chains of oppression and social exploitation that exist in El Salvador.

### Exploitation of women

"The liberation struggle of the Salvadoran people has deep historical roots," Clara told us. "At this time we are waging the decisive battles that bring us ever closer to the revolutionary triumph and the consolidation of our greatest ideals: liberation and social justice."

Traditionally, women have been considered mothers and housewives; they have been subjected to the worst alienation from their traditions.

Working-class and peasant women, Clara added, have a more disadvantaged situation in society than the men. By the very fact of being women they receive less pay than men, even for equal work.

In the factories, for example, working-class women are subjected to the worst treatment by the employers. The mere fact of being married means they do not have a right to work, because marriage means "children, pregnancy, sick leaves." In recent years, in order to get jobs in a factory women have had to pass a



Women soldiers of FMLN in La Palma, Chalatenango.

physical examination, to determine whether they are pregnant.

Furthermore, women have also been exploited inside the home because they work until all hours of the night, without any "remuneration or days off." That is, women have been doubly exploited. This is due to the system of alienation in which they live, because from a very young age women are taught to serve and obey men, beginning with their fathers and brothers.

Under these conditions women have been deprived of a real education, since they do not have the opportunity to cultivate and develop themselves. In particular, working-class and peasant women have found it impossible to develop within the country's political, economic, and cultural arena due to the heavy exploitation and oppression under which they have lived. They must always confront the economic and ideological problems in particular.

### A compañera in struggle

But we see something very important, Clara continued. With the development of the revolutionary mass organizations, the Salvadoran woman has had opportunities to develop and excel. Little by little she became conscious of the real role that she has to play within society, and in this period the participation of the

woman is the result of the work done by all the democratic and revolutionary organizations.

Through her work, the Salvadoran woman has succeeded in becoming incorporated in the liberation struggle and is no longer considered an object of personal use. She becomes a compañera of the man in the struggle.

Within our present revolutionary process women are found working in posts of great responsibility, as leaders, as intermediary cadres, or in the ranks. But they always give their all, doing everything that any revolutionary can for their country, including "giving their lives for the revolution and the construction of socialism."

We have many examples of heroic women in the revolutionary movement, Clara stated. One example is Compañera Mercedes Recinos. Mercedes Recinos was a worker who, because of her qualities as a great organizer and her political clarity, held leadership positions in one of the most powerful union federations in El Salvador, FENASTRAS, until she was murdered by the dictatorship.

We also recall Compañera Lil Milagro Ramírez, a university leader who, together with Roque Dalton, made great contributions to the theory of the Salvadoran revolution.

Within the teachers union, Comandante Ana María played an important role. She was a founder of the Association of Salvadoran

Educators (ANDES June 21) and a martyr for revolutionary unity.

These examples show us the scope of the abilities of women that have been suppressed for so long, Clara added.

We asked, could you tell us in what other fronts of struggle we can see women's participation?

Salvadoran women are participating in the liberation of our country, demanding respect for human rights and exposing violations of those rights. This exposure has been pressed with determination and bravery by Salvadoran women who have raised their angry voices.

Among the martyrs of the struggles for the defense of human rights in El Salvador are Compañeras Marianella García Villas, Elizabeth Henríquez, and América Perdomo, who are among those who gave their lives for freedom.

Another front in the struggle is the Committee of Mothers and Family Members of Political Prisoners, the Disappeared, and Victims of Political Murders in El Salvador. In this committee our mothers, sisters, and daughters have shown their great capacity to fight. Already many mothers and family members who raised their voices to demand the freedom or knowledge of the whereabouts of their loved ones have also been struck down by the enemy. Yet during the four years of declared war, under a constant state of siege and sometimes martial law, under constant attack by the death squads, the paramilitary gangs, etc., the mothers, these brave women, have maintained an entire line of struggle. They have challenged the regime and its oppressive laws. They have carried out hunger strikes, sit-ins, and demonstrations. They have presented appeals to the U.S. ambassador, the minister of defense, and the assembly deputies. They have issued all kinds of denunciations through the means of communication, condemning the fascist methods of repression.

Within the guerrilla camps, women also do production work and cooking. Sometimes the compañeras who are cooks and have to travel with the army of the zone have been ambushed. On many occasions, the compañeras who are medics have to treat and remove the wounded right in the midst of the battles or bombardments.

The women working in communications transmit reports on the development of the battle right from the site of the action.

Finally, within the revolutionary struggle it is not only the combatants, but all those who have decided to fight for a new homeland, who demonstrate their courage.

What work do women carry out within the Revolutionary Army?

Women are found working alongside men, fighting fiercely against the class enemy. We women work as radio operators, in communications, health, political education, and as fighters.

Our participation as fighters is on a much lesser scale than that of men. But it has great significance, since the very fact of living with-

in a guerrilla camp, carrying out any kind of task, shows the valor and conviction in struggle that we have already acquired.

#### Zones under control

From the Guazapa Front, barely 35 kilometers from the country's capital you can see the twinkling lights of the streets of San Salvador. There — in the liberated zones — Salvadoran women are massively involved in literacy, in production, in health, and in the Association of Women, which works and produces clothing and food for the revolutionary army and its structures.

The woman in the liberated zones plays a very important role. Compañera Clara mentions Palo Grande in the Guazapa Front, where compañera Maribel works as a teacher. She handles one of the 45 schools that the FMLN has opened in the midst of the war throughout the Guazapa Front. The schools teach subjects such as social sciences, mathematics, natural

sciences, Spanish, and civics, which are the curriculum of the program. There are many women like Maribel involved in education or literacy, as well as the other work of the zone.

In closing our interview, Clara Cienfuegos sent a message to Salvadoran women:

"I want to say to my compatriots that now is the time to break with the structures of repression, oppression, and injustice, which the ruling class in El Salvador has used to subjugate us. We must all get together to fight along with men to do away with the poverty, prostitution, alcoholism, banditry, etc. that exist in our country.

"In addition, we must know that we are very strong and capable of great sacrifices. We have never been afraid of work, and now more than ever we must dedicate all our efforts to the work that the revolution demands of us, so that we will soon see a free homeland where everyone has bread, education, health, and work." □

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## United States

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# Marroquín fights deportation

## *International support more urgent than ever*

The Political Rights Defense Fund has launched an emergency campaign to force the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to grant a permanent residence visa to Mexican-born socialist Héctor Marroquín, based on his marriage to a U.S. citizen. Such a visa, usually granted as a matter of routine to spouses of citizens, would allow Marroquín to remain and work in the United States.

Marroquín, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance, has been fighting for the right to political asylum in the United States for more than six years. His case is now before the U.S. Supreme Court, which is expected to issue its ruling very soon. If asylum is denied, Marroquín would have 48 hours to leave the country voluntarily or face deportation to Mexico.

The INS has delayed final approval of his visa application, apparently hoping the Supreme Court will rule against him and he will be forced to leave the country. Once outside the United States, Marroquín's reapplication for a residence visa would be more difficult.

Marroquín has lived in the United States ever since 1974, when he fled from Mexico after being framed up for his political activities. He and three other student activists were falsely accused of murdering a school librarian. Two of the accused were killed in cold blood by the cops. The third was kidnapped and "disappeared." The probability that Marroquín would receive similar treatment is the basis for his plea for political asylum.

Soon after arriving in the United States, Marroquín became politically active again, helping to organize a local of the Teamsters

Union at the plant where he worked in Texas. Later he joined the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance.

In the past six years, he has spoken extensively around the country about his case, defending the rights of all undocumented workers and explaining the connection between the attacks on workers' rights at home and the escalating U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean.

In recent speaking tours in Texas and California, he was able to meet with farmworkers, garment workers, electronics workers, and others, including many immigrants who know firsthand how the INS and the employers conspire to attack workers' rights.

Marroquín's case has gained attention internationally. In March and April, articles on his fight appeared in socialist newspapers in New Zealand, Canada, and Denmark. *Socialist Action*, published by the Socialist Action League of New Zealand, compared Marroquín's case with provisions of a pending Immigration Bill in New Zealand that would increase the government's ability to hound political opponents who do not have New Zealand citizenship.

The Political Rights Defense Fund, which is coordinating Marroquín's defense, is asking supporters of his right to live in the United States to send letters and telegrams demanding that the INS give Marroquín his visa without further delay. They should be sent to: Alan Nelson, Commissioner, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Washington, D.C. 20536, with copies to PRDF, Box 649, New York, N.Y. 10003. □

# 'The working class is in power in Nicaragua'

## May Day speech of Commander Jaime Wheelock

[May Day 1984 in Nicaragua, the fifth since the victory of the revolution, was celebrated in the most difficult circumstances workers and farmers there have yet had to face. The largest-ever counterrevolutionary invasion of Nicaragua has been under way for several months. The main ports have been mined. Food shortages are threatened.]

[May Day was celebrated in a central rally in the northwestern agricultural city of Chinandega, in the heart of the country's cotton fields. Under a burning 125-degree Fahrenheit sun, 30,000 people, mostly agricultural and industrial workers, took part in the outdoor meeting and march. The main speaker of the day was Commander Jaime Wheelock, minister of agrarian reform and member of the Political Committee of the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front.]

[Wheelock spoke without a prepared text, from occasionally consulted notes. The topics he discussed included the most burning issues of the day: The imperialist war. The internal fifth column, including the political role of Nicaragua's bishops, who recently issued a "Pastoral Letter" calling for "reconciliation" with the butchers of the former National Guard. Low wages and high prices. Shortages. Speculation and hoarding in the marketplace.]

[The speech was broadcast on national radio and television, and a transcription of it was published in the May 2 issue of the Sandinista daily *Barricada*. We have taken the text from *Barricada*, with minor corrections and additions from our own recording. The translation and bracketed notes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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Members of the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction; esteemed brothers of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, of our armed forces, labor organizations, guests from the workers movements who have been visiting here in recent days; brother working people of Nicaragua:

We did not want to deprive ourselves of the heat of the streets, of the heroic people of Chinandega, who were so courageous in the insurrection against Somoza. We wanted to salute the workers, the housewives, those who for many reasons were unable to be present at the combative meeting celebrated in this heroic city. And we are deeply gratified at having experienced the profound affection the people of Chinandega have for the Sandinista People's Revolution and the leaders of that revolution.

This means that the National Directorate of the Sandinista Front, the Trade Union Coordinating Committee, and the Sandinista Workers Federation [CST] made no mistake in celebrating in Nicaragua the International Day of Workers with the heroic people of León and with the heroic people of Chinandega (Applause) — a people who all this time have remained at the vanguard in defense of national sovereignty and at the vanguard in national production. (Applause)

How fortunate are the people of Nicaragua to be celebrating May Day with a working people who are building their own future, with a working people, with a peasantry, with students, with revolutionary women who today hold the reins of national power! (Applause)

How different this is from the situation of other peoples in the world who are also celebrating May Day today. There are peoples who do not even have a homeland, who still do not have a nation, nowhere even to place their remains, such as the Palestinian people, who are still fighting for a country, for a homeland, for a nation. There are peoples who are still subjugated by the repressive and segregationist government of South Africa, peoples who are enslaved but who nonetheless fight as a working class to gain a sovereign nation.

We cannot forget now, at a time when our people are building their revolution, that there are in the world exploited and oppressed peoples who are also celebrating this May 1. Who — even among the Chicago

martyrs 98 years ago, who fought for the eight-hour day in the United States — would have thought that many years after their sacrifice as part of the working class, in that period of darkness of the first stages of the working-class struggle, that one day in Nicaragua, under a brilliant sun, they would be commemorated by a worthy and valiant people who are marking today something they will never forget? We are here as working people who represent on this first of May the thousands of combatants who, in different parts of the country, are turning back the aggres-

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### We are here as working people who represent the thousands of combatants who are turning back the aggression launched against us by the Reagan administration . . .

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sion launched against us by the Reagan administration. We who are here also represent the thousands of workers cutting sugarcane, picking cotton, or preparing land in defense of the people's economy.

On this May 1, 1984, the people of Nicaragua are engaged in struggle, a struggle that is still necessary to attain national sovereignty and to attain a higher standard of living and social progress. How different it is from the May Days of other years, such as in 1963, when worker and student demonstrators were massacred; such as in 1965, when workers were repressed and tortured; such as in 1978 and 1979, when some workers' leaders were murdered, imprisoned, or sent to the torture chambers.

How different it is today, with the people holding a demonstration in freedom, celebrating with joy the Day of Workers. (Chants of "The people united will never be defeated; the people armed will never be crushed!")

What was the reality Nicaraguans faced in the past? Poverty, misery, marginalization, no hope for progress; only the jail cell, repression, sweat, illiteracy, death. The people lived under the most difficult conditions, at times gaining their daily bread in the street, forced to send their children out, unprotected, to work. We inherited a destroyed economy in the midst of a very difficult international situation. And yet how different is the social and political situation of the workers today.

We are carrying out an agrarian reform that benefits the poor peasant. We have given the peasants 750,000 manzanas [one manzana = 1.73 acres] of land, and by July 19 the figure will have reached 1 million manzanas. (Applause and chants of "People's power!")

What did Somozaism accomplish in its entire history? It ended up leaving the peasantry as a whole with scarcely 140,000 manzanas. And yet today, in one day alone, we have given the peasants 70,000 manzanas — in one day half of everything Somozaism left the peasants with! (Applause)

This is a factor that explains the genuinely popular character of this revolutionary government and of this revolution. Also a reflection of its popular character are the steps that were taken to nationalize the banks, to eliminate them as speculative and expropriating institutions and convert them into institutions at the service of the people. Institutions to finance workers' housing, to finance the peasants' harvests, to promote the national production of small and medium producers and of artisans; that is, institutions that are at the service of the people and of the nation. What did we do? We nationalized natural resources, we placed their wealth and production at the service of the interests of the people.

What did the Somozaists and the speculators do in the past with municipal land? They used people's needs as the basis for speculation, forcing our people to wander in search of tiny pieces of land alongside

roads, such as in Rancherías or San José del Obraje [two isolated villages in the far north], in search of the last remaining pieces of land, following the advance of the latifundia and of land hoarding in the cities.

And what is the revolutionary government doing? It is expropriating all these centers of speculation in order to return them to the people. It is giving the people lots on which they can build houses. It is giving the people houses, though they are still humble houses because of the country's poverty. But in the future, with the work and sweat of Nicaraguans, these can be turned into dignified housing.

We are poor. We have inherited debts, destruction, and a people living in extraordinary poverty. We still have a long way to go to reduce to zero the number of children who have no shoes, to eliminate the general poverty of the country. But there is a fundamental factor that must be stressed this first of May.

In 1978 the working class, the entire Nicaraguan working class, was organized into only 133 unions that totalled only about 25,000 members. That was all that was permitted by Somozaism, which in the countryside prohibited the unionization of agricultural workers and peasants. Chinandega is well aware of this, having lived through the persecutions in Santa Rosa del Peñón and the massacre of worker union members in the 1960s. Peasant unionists were hunted down and their leaders were murdered — leaders like Bernardino Díaz Ochoa, who was massacred by the National Guard.

In 1984, instead of 133 unions we have more than 3,000 unions, with 250,000 workers. We have unions through which the working class is organized to improve its working conditions and to hold what are now fraternal discussions with state administrators. We have a Ministry of Labor with which workers can discuss social and wage demands. But what has the revolution done with the workers? Simply organize them in unions? No, we have organized revolutionary power, incorporating into it the working class, because the working class is in power in Nicaragua. (Applause and chants)

How does the working class<sup>1</sup> exercise power? First of all the working class, through its labor organizations and professional and peasant associations, legislates, makes laws, and makes its own voice heard in the nation. The forms of participation the revolution has opened up through the Council of State are a guarantee of workers' interests.

Workers participate in all of the state's consultative bodies. There are no decisions on the economy or prices, on subsidies or wages, on which the working class, through its organizations, does not express itself in a militant way. Workers participate directly in power through the CDSs

## **We still have a long way to go to eliminate the general poverty of the country . . .**

[Sandinista Defense Committees], through thousands of organizations, and in assemblies aimed at reviving and raising production. But most important of all is the fact that the revolutionary leadership, the Sandinista National Liberation Front, is the organization of workers, the organization that returned power to workers after taking it away from Somozaism. (Applause) The Sandinista National Liberation Front is the representative of workers and peasants. It is the Sandinista National Liberation Front that is at the head of power, that is in the vanguard; and with it, the workers of Nicaragua. (Applause and chants of "People's power!")

And we are going to ensure that our people have a form of participation that is much more perfect than people have in those democracies of ballot slips, those song-book republics that deceive the people in an election every five or six years, that make them vote following campaigns poisoned with lies, from which emerge governments that were supposedly elected and representative but in reality represent nothing more than fraud and deceit. We want the elections here to be a culmination of the people's maturity. We have given power to the working

1. In this and most other references to the "working class" in this speech, Wheelock uses the Spanish phrase *clase trabajadora*, which has the connotation of encompassing all the toilers, all those who labor for a living. In contrast, the phrase *clase obrera* would connote only the wage-earning proletariat.



Michael Baumann/IP

From left: Jaime Wheelock, Daniel Ortega, Sergio Ramirez, Rafael Córdoba Rivas.

class, and it is the working class that holds power here! (Applause and chants of "People's power!")

After having taken power, we are advancing. Over the last few years, the revolution has really made efforts, despite the limitations and difficulties. And this first of May finds us carrying out two ferocious battles. It is also a battle of the people, who take it up with sorrow and grief; we all take it up with a heavy heart and dismay. It is the same battle as that fought by Estrada, Zeledón,<sup>2</sup> and Sandino. It is the battle to be Nicaragua, a battle for national sovereignty that has not yet terminated, the battle fought by the people and the youth in particular, to be able to be the youth of Nicaragua, to be able to refer to themselves with dignity as Nicaraguans. This is a struggle the people suffer and feel.

Each time that a young person dies — a young person who perhaps could have become a doctor, an engineer, or a technician for production — we know that their lives have been taken in the struggle we are waging against imperialism. (Chants of "For those who have died, for our fallen, we swear we will defend the victory!") This struggle has been long and hard, and it will continue to be hard as long as the United States retains its imperial will. It is a lie that war is being made against us because we are friends of the Soviet Union, because we are communists, because we have installed tyranny here, or because we do not respect human rights — as the Reagan administration claims.

They intervened in Nicaragua in 1856, when humanity had not even dreamed of a socialist revolution in the Soviet Union. They are not intervening because we are socialists or communists; they are not intervening because we are tyrants. For they never intervened against Somoza or Pinochet, against Duvalier, or against Stroessner in Paraguay, against the Israelis, or against themselves, the worst tyrants and fascists on the face of the earth! (Applause and chants)

There is another struggle — another struggle, another difficult war — and that is the war against the worker's pocketbook, the worker's wages. The situation of shortages is a war that is much more complex and difficult. And just as we have resolutely confronted imperialist aggression, so too we have confronted valiantly and from the beginning this very complex phenomenon. What do workers feel? Workers feel that their wages are not sufficient to buy indispensable goods. Is that true? Is this what you feel? ("Yes!" answer many in the crowd) We began, at the triumph of the revolution, to fight against this, for there occurred at that time a great difference between wages and the prices of essential products.

You will remember the period after the triumph, when Somoza had left us a devalued currency, an economy in ruins, a country in debt. What happened in those first months? There were no beans because nobody had planted any. There was no rice because that had not been planted either. Eggs were in short supply because all the chickens, all the hens, had disappeared. And what happened? The price of eggs tri-

2. Gen. José Dolores Estrada played a key role in the 1856 war to oust the U.S. pro-slavery adventurer William Walker, who had proclaimed himself president of Nicaragua. Gen. Benjamín Zeledón led the resistance to the first invasion of Nicaragua by U.S. Marines in 1912.



May Day in Chinandega.

pled or quadrupled. Why? Because there was a shortage. And when goods are scarce but wages continue to be paid at normal levels, when there is no production, the prices of the items that are scarce go up. We were short of certain products. Sugar, for example, was not scarce, because we had sugar. Milk was not scarce, because we had milk. But eggs, meat, corn, and beans were scarce. What did we do? What we could not produce, we imported. During 1980 and 1981 we maintained ourselves on the basis of imports, on the basis of international loans, using our hard currency to buy corn, milk, beans, and rice. And the shortages were not felt; there was no longer a scarcity.

But following these phenomena, we have suffered others. First among them is the fact that the Sandinista People's Revolution coincides with a crisis.

The crisis is striking blows at all poor economies. Even some strong ones have had to devalue their currencies and throw thousands of work-

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### **The situation of shortages is a war that is much more complex and difficult . . .**

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ers out of work. We have been fighting against this international crisis, trying to prevent the workers economy from being hit.

And what have we done? In the first place, the economic crisis means that we are receiving less money for our products, the same products we exported in 1978 at practically the same levels.

It is not true that the revolution brought about a crashing decline in production. That is a lie of the right wing. Production here has been recovering, year after year, in a modest way, but it is recovering.

Last year, for example, we exported a lot of coffee and we produced more rice, beans, and sorghum than ever before in the history of the country.

But this production is insufficient, because from the beginning we wanted to give our people the best. We wanted to give the peasant more food, the working class more food, and at cheap prices.

The products we sell internationally are going at low prices. The products we buy on the international market are going at very high prices.

In short, *compañeros*, since 1979, and in particular from 1980 to 1983, Nicaragua has lost in international trade, because of the crisis, about \$2 billion. That is what we have lost through selling our products at the prices they impose on us, and through buying expensive goods, again at the prices they impose on us.

Year after year, the country is losing some \$400 million. What could we have done with that \$2 billion? We could have given more support to health care, we could have built more houses, we could have strengthened our economy more. In other words, in addition to the destruction, in addition to the shortages, it has to be explained that the country has had difficulties in reactivating the economy and raising levels of production so as to satisfy the needs of the people.

That is, in a nutshell, there are today certain products of which there

are not enough to meet the needs of all workers.

We produce more rice, but the people are consuming more rice. We produce more eggs, chicken, and beans, but the people are consuming more rice and beans.

The result therefore is shortages that, little by little, are having an effect on prices.

There is another factor of great importance in addition to the destruction left by Somozaism, in addition to the shortages we suffered after the war, in addition to the economic crisis that has weakened our capacity to produce food, to reactivate production, to increase our capacity for defense, to avoid indebtedness. Those are not the only factors that have had an impact. There has also been the impact of the aggression.

The aggression against our people has had a deepgoing impact. In the last two years, as a product of the aggression, some 1,200 agricultural laborers and workers have been murdered. This does not include the soldiers of the revolution who have fallen in combat. We are referring only to members of cooperatives, to workers in production units who have fallen and ceased to produce, whose cooperatives and production units have been broken up.

In addition, because of the war, we have had to move 20,000 people from the north of the country, from the south, from the country's border regions. And these *compañeros* are not producing. They have scarcely been resettled on the land they have been given by the agrarian reform.

This means less production and more consumption. Yet there is still more — there is the fact that it is the policy of imperialism to try to break our economy. Under attack are not only the production units devoted to export products. Also under attack are vehicle storage centers of the Ministry of Construction, which is opening up roads to get products to market. Trucks bringing milk to the cities are being ambushed. Two days ago, while workers from ENABAS [the state marketing agency] were bringing beans from Nueva Guinea that were destined for León, Chinandega, and Managua, they were ambushed and murdered by the counterrevolution. The truck and its entire cargo were burned.

That is, it is a policy to use aggression to strangle us economically and financially, to destroy units of production, to break up the cooperatives, to murder the producers, to destroy efforts at construction, to try to block the arrival of goods at storage centers, and also to mine the ports, to blockade and drown our economy, to bleed the Nicaraguan people dry.

Accordingly, however much effort the revolution makes, we must begin from a starting point that is very difficult to overcome completely — the thousand years of hunger of our people. It will take many years to continue to develop the programs of production that you yourselves see with your own eyes — the plans for basic food items, for rice plantations, for dairies, for sorghum, the agro-industrial plans for the production of vegetables, etc.

This is only a small step toward resolving the problems of the people. The problem of food, of shortages, will be resolved in the long term. But we are not going to be able to emerge from this situation of shortage so long as we have an international crisis that forces us to assign priorities for the hard currency we have left after we pay for the oil, after

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### **In the last two years, as a product of the aggression, some 1,200 agricultural laborers and workers have been murdered . . .**

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we make payments on the debt — that forces us to choose between medicine or houses, milk for babies or toilet paper (we have no paper mills here, we just repackage the toilet paper), deodorant or baby toys. We will have to keep assigning priorities for this hard currency.

It is important that the people understand that some elements of the shortages are part of the price the people of Nicaragua have to pay for real development. For we are setting genuine priorities for the use of hard currency. We are going to spend it only on things that fill an effective and fundamental need of the people.

We are using hard currency to buy, first of all, medicine and milk for children, for mothers, for the sick, and for the combatants. Secondly, to purchase oil to keep the economy functioning. Thirdly, for production.



How could we not assign hard currency to production? It would be easy not to assign hard currency to production or to the purchase of oil and instead import razor blades, soap, and a host of similar products. We could live off a fabulous bonanza for a year, but we would then fall into a terrible ruin that we could never emerge from. So we have to use the

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## **It is the policy of imperialism to try to break our economy . . .**

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money for spare parts, to bring in machinery, to sow cotton, to buy inputs — the little money the international market leaves us.

We have had to make priorities, and among the things we have prioritized, in the midst of this difficult situation we, our people, face, there is an aspect that is important for all workers to comprehend and understand.

This revolution, why did we make it? To remain in misery? To remain an underdeveloped country? Or to resolve the people's problems? We made it to resolve the people's problems. That is why part of the hard currency destined for production is being used for investments whose results we will not be able to see for three or four years. And you know that no country in Central America, and very few in the world, is investing in the future like Nicaragua.

We are investing in agriculture. Last year we invested 10 billion córdobas [one córdoba = US\$0.10] in agriculture and 5 billion córdobas in infrastructure for production, that is, in works for the future. Where do you think the hospitals are coming from? From investment. Where are the roads and bridges we are building coming from? From investment. Where is the Tipitapa-Malacatoya sugar mill coming from, the Chiltepe [dairy plant], the railroad, the deepwater port, all the schools? From investments the revolution is making to improve people's lives.

Today, despite the temporary and harsh difficulties, the revolution is investing in all ways for the future. The present belongs to revolutionaries who are capable of understanding the difficulties of the revolution, and who later, along with their children and their families, are going to enjoy a future of progress and happiness. So we are accomplishing a lot. (Applause and chants)

We have to defend ourselves. This is something we cannot forget. We would like to be able to give you razor blades, soap, deodorant, shampoo, corn, beans, and rice — that is what we would like to do — but we have to do something much more important: to fight for this little piece of land which does not belong to Reagan but belongs to Nicaraguans! (Applause and chants)

This is the most profound meaning of this historical moment. We Nicaraguans are defending territory the United States believes belongs to it by right of conquest. This territory belongs to Nicaraguans, to the people! That is why we are defending it, and that is why we have to have 60,000, 70,000, 100,000 men under arms. (Applause and chants)

And that is what it costs to defend ourselves, to defend this country, a country that is in the midst of reconstruction, that is trying to forge for the first time a genuine future. The cost is to have to have 60,000 working men under arms. What could we not do with these 70,000 or 100,000 men? We could do a great deal. They are not producing. But they are being fed. We have to pay for this. We have to give them medicine, we have to give them food, we have to provide them with transportation, we have to pay them a wage, we have to provide them with fuel. All of this is a tremendous cost for the country, but we have to do it.

So you yourselves speak. Say what you want the Sandinista National Liberation Front to do. What comes first, consumer goods or defense? (Chants and shouts of "Defense! Defense!")

First comes defense of our national sovereignty, for that we can make sacrifices! (Applause and chants of "Defense! Defense!")

What do you want? A comfortable present, with a lot of consumer goods, or a future not for ourselves but for our children? (Shouts of "A future! A future for our children!")

So that means that however many errors we may have made, and you know them well, however many errors we may have made, we believe that in general we have not been mistaken.

We have maintained the country's basic services, what is indispensable for keeping the country going. We have given support to national defense, and that has left us a little weak. We have given support to production, not as much as we would like, but we have done it. And here working people and the industrial workers are managing to resolve the problems. And although we did not have all the cotton harvesters we would have liked, and although we were short 25,000 cotton pickers, what has happened with this revolutionary people that is conscious of its responsibility?

What happened? What happened is that up until today we have picked 5.75 million quintals [1 quintal = 100 pounds] of cotton, thanks to the people of León and Chinandega. (Applause)

Two months ago all that cotton was still unpicked. We had problems with parts for the harvesters, with the harvesters themselves, with spare parts for the crop dusters. And yet with all the effort the people could muster, we came here when the cotton was still unpicked, we made a first effort, we made a second effort, and what was the result?

The result was a landmark in production, because we had 75,000 volunteer pickers from the CDSs, the CST, and the ATC [Rural Workers Association], led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front. The volunteers came from the ranks of government workers, from the armed forces, and from the Sandinista Youth—July 19. And the cotton is now in the port to help resolve the people's needs. (Applause, chants of "People's power!")

So although we did not give enough hard currency to production, and although we still have problems — because we used the hard currency for defense and to buy medicine and milk for the children — when we came up against these problems and had no hard currency to solve them with, we were able to turn to the people and ask them to aid the rest of the people of Nicaragua and the revolution by raising production. (Chants and applause)

Now it is for you to say, should we continue investing, should we build more hospitals, or should we not build more hospitals? More schools? (Many in the crowd shout "Yes!") Productive investments? ("Yes!") Okay, we will continue, little by little, building for the future. (Applause and chants)

However, there is a problem that remains. What is that problem? (A voice in the crowd: "Defense of our country!")

*Defense of the revolution* is the life-and-death task of Nicaraguans. (Applause and chants of "One single army!")

And there remains the problem that wages are very low and are not sufficient to buy products of primary necessity. Even with the efforts we made, the importing that we mentioned earlier of many products — this was not sufficient, and we began to introduce subsidies. Okay, we said, we may see a rise in prices here, because there is a worldwide inflation, but we are going to protect workers' wages. We are going to have transportation at rock bottom prices, subsidized electricity, subsidized beans,

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## **No country in Central America, and very few in the world, is investing in the future like Nicaragua . . .**

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rice, milk, and so on. How much did a liter of milk cost before the triumph of the revolution? (Someone answers, "Three córdobas.") Three córdobas. That is more or less what it costs today, except in a few places where the sale of raw milk is permitted. But this subsidy we have been providing . . . [At this point, someone on the speakers' stand calls Wheelock's attention to the time.]

It won't take much time to finish. A little more time to say something about the question of wages and prices, something which concerns us, something that is another part of the war.

The problem persists. Imports to saturate the market will not solve it. Subsidies will not solve it. Because we are in the midst of an aggression. The phenomenon of shortages, *compañeros*, we are going to have with us for some time.

What has exploded here in the midst of the phenomenon of shortages is the phenomenon of speculation. The Ministry of Internal Commerce

says that a pound of corn should cost 1 córdoba, and yet when you find a pound of corn in the market, what does it cost? [People in the audience shout different figures they have paid recently.] Eighty córdobas a medio [a five-gallon oil can that holds about 20 pounds], 8 córdobas a pound, 3 córdobas. First of all there is an anarchy in the prices; secondly, the official price is not being respected even though there is a subsidy.

What have we set as the price for a dozen eggs? We set the price at 10.70 córdobas a dozen. Yet in the markets it went up to 15, then to 20, and recently as high as 30 to 35 córdobas for a dozen eggs. Some compañeros are saying up to 40.

And milk. It's being sold at 7 córdobas, at 8 córdobas a liter. Beans are being sold at 10 córdobas a pound in some places, at 15 in others, when we say the official price is 3.50 córdobas a pound. Cans of powdered milk are selling for 75 córdobas, when we say the price should be 16 córdobas."

So we are going to assume the following. We have a situation of shortage, and wages are not high enough to buy products. How could this not create many problems inside the family? So some workers, I imagine some of you who are here, would prefer not to continue working at your present jobs, would prefer to seek some other, more lucrative activity, perhaps in commerce or speculation. That is the worst thing you could do.

And it will in no way help if, in face of this situation, the union tells the workplace that wages have to be increased. Because that is not the problem. Here neither strikes nor work stoppages nor discussion nor getting rid of a director are going to resolve the problem. Increases in wages are not going to solve the problem. Because if we raise wages, then prices will go up. If we raise wages, what will happen? Wages are part of the cost of production of beans, cotton, corn, sugar, everything.

So we have to seek an effective set of steps. Has the [guarantee] card, for example, been effective? (Shouts of "Yes!" and "You bet!") Do you have corner grocery stores where you are sure of being supplied at adequate prices, at the prices we set? (Someone shouts, "No! Only ENABAS!")

Okay, we are going to do three things. The first thing we are going to do is finish the reorganization of wages, so that we do not have one truck driver at a sugar mill making 6,000 córdobas [a month], another 10,000, and another 8,000. All should make the same. There should be uniformity in wages. (Applause and chants)

Secondly, we are going to establish realistic wages, not the wages of two years ago. We are going to give a reasonable wage increase, and we are going to give workers a material incentive. The good worker is going to make more money, he who produces is going to make more. So there is going to be a standardization of wages, an increase in wages, and incentives for the better workers. (Applause)

The National System for the Organization of Work and Wages is being implemented gradually, and according to the reports we have, there are now some 28 job classifications incorporated into the system.

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### **How is it possible for us to have workers who cut sugarcane 10 or 12 hours, receive their pay, and then have to turn it over to a speculator? . . .**

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In a few months we will have finished the work of putting the new system into effect, a system that is humanist and progressive. It is perhaps not a system that is going to resolve all problems, but at least it will resolve the anarchy of the past.

The other two measures will be the following. We have to intervene in distribution. We have to direct products through secure channels. We have to remove products from channels where someone is taking advantage of the heroic and patriotic efforts of the people in defense, in the economy, and in work for the future.

How is it possible for us to have here workers who cut sugarcane 10 or 12 hours a day, receive their pay, and then have to turn it over to a

speculator, to a criminal, to a parasite who cannot even be called a revolutionary? (Applause)

So we are going to make an effort to direct through secure channels a large quantity of basic products, so that the people can set their minds at ease, so that people will feel that the work they do and the wages they receive are sufficient to buy the products that are indispensable to them and to their families. (Applause and chants of "People's power!")

We would like, finally, to say a few things about the situation we are living through, and we are going to do it rapidly, in broad strokes. Because — while we are accustomed to having these meetings at 10 or 11 in the morning, under a sun that doesn't bother us much — the children, the workers, and the attention — you can already begin to feel the heat, and the attention is dropping off a little. Are you dropping off a little? ("No!" shouts the crowd.) What? ("No!") Could you hear that? ("Yes!") Well then, pay a great deal of attention to what you are going to hear.

Nicaragua once again is at war to defend the homeland. It is not a minor aggression at one border; at issue is a war that will be decisive for the liberty and existence of Nicaragua.

The Reagan administration is using the economic and military power of the United States to attack a small people, with few inhabitants, with

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### **The people of Nicaragua defeated Somozaism and defeated the policy of imperialism, not only in Nicaragua but in Central America. That is why imperialism wants to regain hegemony in Nicaragua . . .**

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a weak economy, and still smarting from the wounds left by Somozaism.

Why has this unjust and immoral war been waged against us? There is one single reason. In the eyes of that government, which has an imperial vision of the world, a government that is national, sovereign, and has dignity is completely incompatible with its interests.

Who did Nicaragua belong to before? To imperialism. What did imperialism impose on Nicaragua? A sell-out government like that of the Somozas that was content to suck the blood of Nicaraguans, but that was also prepared to let the United States count on Nicaragua for military bases, like those on the Gulf of Fonseca. To have in Nicaragua a territory to be used for its strategic, military, and geopolitical purposes. And to remove from Nicaragua its natural and mineral wealth. A dictatorial and tyrannical regime in Nicaragua was a weapon for guaranteeing the political, economic, cultural, and social domination of U.S. imperialism.

The people of Nicaragua defeated Somozaism and defeated the policy of imperialism, not only in Nicaragua but in Central America. That is why imperialism wants to regain hegemony in Nicaragua. How can it regain it? In two ways. First through treason, through actions like those of Moncada<sup>3</sup> or Edén Pastora, placing the revolution, its thousands, the conquests of the people, at the feet of imperialism. They have been waiting for some time for treason, but the Sandinista National Liberation Front, like Sandino, is not for sale and does not surrender. And we are not going to sell out nor are we going to surrender. We are not going to betray the revolution. (Applause)

What then remains? What is Reagan's solution? Military strengthening of the Panama Canal; military occupation of Honduras; occupation of El Salvador with advisers, armed forces, and equipment; pressure on the government of Costa Rica for the right to occupy highways, airports, and zones of Costa Rican territory.

At this moment there is intervention in four countries. Panama, Costa

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3. José María Moncada led the Liberal side in the 1926 civil war, in which the Conservatives were backed by Washington. Moncada sold out and signed a pact with U.S. envoy Henry Stimson. The only general on the Liberal side to reject this betrayal was Augusto César Sandino, who went on to lead a six-year guerrilla war against the U.S. Marines.



Rica, Honduras, and El Salvador have been intervened by the United States.

Why? To attack Nicaragua, which will not sell out and will not surrender. Left to us is but one road, the road of turning back aggression.

But you should not for a moment believe that this plan to force Nicaragua to yield is based only on military maneuvers, two or three airports in Honduras, or military highways in Costa Rica. No. This plan is a diabolical plan. Why do we say this? What have they managed to do? They have succeeded, first of all, in building a powerful and aggressive platform around Nicaragua, using U.S. forces, rearmed Somozaist National Guardsmen, and hundreds, perhaps a few thousand disaffected elements who left Nicaragua because they had been adversely affected by the popular policies of the revolution.

The bands are part of the armed intervention of the United States. The U.S. objective is to intervene militarily in Nicaragua, and the bands are the bridgehead, the beachhead of that intervention. They represent steps the United States has already taken.

The world, however, has repudiated the U.S. aggression and its military maneuvers. The world is with Nicaragua: the socialist camp, the western countries, Latin America, all nations — with a very few exceptions, like Israel, for example, which is aiding the counterrevolution — support Nicaragua and are opposed to the policies of the United States. Even allies of the United States are opposed to the policy of the Reagan administration.

And it will cost them to intervene here, because the people are mobilized for defense. He who intervenes here can expect to suffer tens of thousands of casualties, to be buried with marines and flags back in the United States — that is, if they manage to get out of Nicaragua. (Applause)

The counterrevolutionary bands are the bridgehead of this intervention; they are also the force being used by the United States to destabilize our economy — as I said before — and shortages are being felt here. But we shall see the response of the people of Nicaragua. We are a people less literate than the people of Chile, for example. There the CIA, following the policy of Henry Kissinger, who has just visited Central America to once again draw up the same plans, imposed a blockade against a government supported by the entire people of Chile. They began to feel the shortages of goods, the problems with medicine. Toilet paper was in short supply. The impression was created that the government was solving nothing, that before the people had everything and never had to form lines. They did not know what a line was, perhaps because they did not know what aggression was, or a war against the most powerful nation on the face of the earth.

Yet when that powerful nation entered the Second World War, it too imposed rationing on all residents of the United States. And what happened in Europe, which has an enormous economic development? Who has not seen scenes of rationing there in the movies? They had rationing too.

Here the fact is that we are at war. This is not a war between the United States and another great power. It is a war between the United States and a tiny country. However we were not rationing when we should have already started to, two or three years ago.

The people of Nicaragua understand this. They understand that the CIA and the Reagan administration want to strangle and demoralize the people of Nicaragua. They want workers to return home and see a child who needs medicine. They want these workers to think more about their government than about imperialism, more about the National Directorate than about Ronald Reagan, who sits at his desk every day approving plans of aggression against a small nation.

The Nicaraguan people must understand that the shortages are also and fundamentally a product of the war of aggression being waged by imperialism. How much have we lost in the way of products with the blockade of the ports, with all the workers who are involved in defense? We have lost thousands, millions, that could have resolved many of the needs of the people.

Imperialism understands that its main defeat lies in the economic triumph of the revolution, a triumph we are already on the road to attaining. When this revolution, without Yankees, provides justice to the entire nation — something *they* always promised — when it is this revolution that actually does that for the first time, on that day imperialism is going to tremble, is going to be destabilized from top to bottom in its policies toward the Third World.

The plan of the CIA is to use the bands to attack this country economically, to make us feel the shortages, to turn the people against the government. But what will happen here? Let us suppose that tomorrow Ronald Reagan, acting in one of his roles, orders military intervention against Nicaragua. What will happen? Tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of marines are going to die here.

But let us leave aside the question of who is going to die and who is going to remain in the end. What we would like to know is what will happen with the more than 700,000 Nicaraguans — not counting the youth — who are in the CDSs, the CST, the ATC, or the Sandinista National Liberation Front, what are these 700,000 activists going to do.

Above all when there are 200,000 under arms. Can another government be established when there are 200,000 guerrillas spread around the country? When there is practically no government in El Salvador, where there are far fewer guerrillas, much more poorly armed. No, there can be no other government, and military intervention is no solution. For that very reason they are going to try to turn and separate the 700,000 from the leadership that is defending national sovereignty.

This is where the role being played by counterrevolutionary priests and the right wing comes in. Because, and think about this, can the counterrevolutionaries really do anything on the borders with the incursions they are carrying out? ("No!" shouts the crowd)

So what can an intervention accomplish? What does an intervention require? Bands striking at the economy, combined with an ideological offensive aimed at the minds of Nicaraguans, a target the counterrevo-

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### He who intervenes here can expect to suffer tens of thousands of casualties . . .

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lutionary bullets cannot hit. And we are concerned because, whether out of naïveté or a completely calculated plan we do not know, we have the recent action of the bishops. They seem to want to play the role of serving platter for imperialist reaction, for ideological destabilization.

They say: Gentlemen, the problem here is not national sovereignty; the problem here is not with imperialism; Mr. Reagan has nothing to do with it; the United States is very far away from here; no ports have been mined here; there are no military bases; it is not the United States that is training the counterrevolutionaries; it is not the U.S. that is flying in Cessna planes in the border area; there were never any helicopters that

crashed. Gentlemen of the CIA, we have never read in a single U.S. newspaper, including the *Washington Post* or the *New York Times*, that there is a plan of destabilization. We have never heard that the U.S. Congress has made military aggression against Nicaragua a law. No, gentlemen, this is not what has happened in Nicaragua. It is other things that have happened in Nicaragua.

In short, these gentlemen are either confused or part of the plan of the counterrevolution. ("They are part of the plan!" the crowd shouts)

We speak responsibly and with all the authority that comes from our struggle, from our heroes and martyrs, and from our revolutionary program, which we are putting into practice. Let us hear what you have to say. Are the differences religious or political? ("Political!")

They are political, because religious differences . . . what contradic-

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## The bishops seem to want to play the role of serving platter for imperialist reaction, for ideological destabilization . . .

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tions are there between the principles of religion and everything we have been doing all these years? ("Between Christianity and revolution, there is no contradiction!" the crowd shouts)

But why is there no contradiction? Do you know why? For a few simple reasons. Is this a government of the rich or of the poor? ("The poor!") Who were those who could not enter the kingdom of heaven? ("The rich!") In fact, it seems that first a camel had to pass through the eye of a needle. So who does this revolution defend? The poor. Whatever the right wing says, is it true or false that we defend the poor? ("True!") Who said, "Blessed be the poor for they shall inherit the earth"? ("Jesus Christ!") And who is giving land to the poor here? Who took land away from the Somozaists and the rich to give it to the poor? (Applause and shouts of "The revolution!")

Teach those who do not understand. Who here is teaching those who do not understand? Who here loves his neighbor? Who here is fulfilling most consistently the principles of Christianity? ("The revolution!") . . . And the Sandinistas. ("The vanguard!")

So there is no material contradiction. They may say you are atheists. Okay, we acknowledge this. But here in the past there was José Santos Zelaya, the Masons; that is, atheism. Here in Nicaragua atheism is something of almost folkloric dimensions. And here in the last century they threw out priests, the Zelaya government threw out priests for less

than these priests are doing here today. (Applause and shouts of approval)

We state openly that there are some in the Sandinista National Liberation Front who, on the basis of their ideas, their ideology, their studies, their questions, have begun to believe that God does not exist. We state this openly. There is no need to discuss it.

But who is it that permits religious freedom here? Isn't it us? There are many more religious schools here now than in the time of Somozaism. Who led the literacy campaign? A priest. Who is responsible for Nicaraguan culture? A priest. Who is the minister of housing? A Christian.

This is a government of Christian and revolutionary principles, a government oriented by Christians. So there is no contradiction, because the Christians are also in power. The fact is that politically they are with the revolution. (Applause)

And yet they tell us: You have to enter into a dialogue, into a settlement, into an accord; you have to have a dialogue with everybody, including those who have "risen up in arms."

First of all, they are ignoring the fact that we are the ones who have most sought peace and not war. We have made dozens of proposals for peace, for dialogue with the United States. But the only response has been aggression. We are the ones who have tried to start a dialogue. But who do they want us to dialogue with? Because I am going to tell them one thing. There are some things we cannot discuss, and some people we cannot hold discussions with. There are some people with whom there can be no reconciliation.

How can there be reconciliation with those who are murdering and torturing our people? Moreover, if in an act of liberalism we were to want to bring about such a reconciliation, the people would not tolerate it. We could not guarantee the security of those people here. (Applause)

What is more, these people left, and they are not going to come back. If they did the people would want to bring them to justice. If they come back here it will not be to hold a dialogue but to massacre the people. Haven't we already offered them a pardon, an amnesty? But there are some we cannot hold a dialogue with. Imagine what those gentlemen, the bishops, would say to us if we told them: You have to bring about a reconciliation with the devil. (Laughter and applause)

They say the counterrevolution is *our* enemy. So why doesn't God have a reconciliation with *his* enemy, the devil? Or why don't they make an effort toward this reconciliation and convert the devil into an angel? This they cannot do and never will do. (Applause)

So with the Somozaists, the criminals, and the murderers, just like

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with the devil, there will be no reconciliation. (Applause and chants of "They shall not pass!")

They tell us we are too deeply involved in hatred and struggle. But at the very beginning it was we who let go thousands of National Guardsmen who had well earned being put up against the wall, a wall the size of the stadium here in Chinandega. We could have filled the

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## How can there be reconciliation with those who are murdering and torturing our people? . . .

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stadiums with all those Somozaist dogs who made the mothers and the people suffer. But we were forgiving. Acting on the principle of concord and unity, we pardoned them, gave them trials, and set many of them free.

Who granted pardons and amnesty here? ("The Sandinista National Liberation Front!") That's right. And if a counterrevolutionary happens to ask the pardon of the Nicaraguan people, we may adopt an attitude of forgiveness and compassion, but not reconciliation. Because if tomorrow, by some miracle, the devil were to appear at the door of [Managua Archbishop] Monsignor Obando and ask for a pardon, at best Monsignor Obando is likely to tell him, quite reasonably, "Okay, come rejoin the flock of the Lord, but we still have a few matters to discuss with you." Let them come here and ask pardon from the people of Nicaragua for their crimes, and then they will learn the response of the Sandinista National Liberation Front! (Applause)

The right wing is trying to deceive people through the media, to undermine the people through campaigns of destabilization and lies. Imperialism is directing counterrevolutionary bands with the aim of carrying out destabilization and murder. Imperialism, the church hierarchy, and the reactionary parties all have the same attitude toward our national sovereignty and the conquests of the revolution.

The moment has come to say, *That's enough from the reaction!* (Applause and chants of "People's Power!")

The gains of the Nicaraguan people are under attack. The people of Nicaragua are being attacked by an imperialist nation, by an immoral foreign power. And neither the people, nor the Sandinista Front, nor the National Directorate can continue to be flexible with the abuses that are being committed in the name of liberty, of our liberality, of our flexibility. We cannot continue to let them harm the revolutionary project. We cannot, at the same time we are confronting imperialism, have scorpions inside our shirts. (Applause) We are flexible, but we also know how to carry out our responsibilities. And there is a moment when flexibility begins to undermine the responsibility one has to lead the interests of the people. We are going to be inflexible and vigilant toward the attitudes of politicized elements that are mixed up in counterrevolutionary activities, that are using the pulpits that really belong to the Christian people of Nicaragua. (Applause and chants)

We are going to act with a heavy hand against the speculators, against those who are causing damage to, who are mining, the pocketbooks of the people who are fighting, of the people who are producing.

We are going to apply the severest sanctions against the speculators and hoarders. We are going to distribute basic products through secure channels, so that the people receive the goods they themselves are producing. (Applause)

Today, on this first of May, we must all be united to defend our conquests. We must be united with the revolution in defense, united with the revolution to increase production, united to raise the levels of discipline in work, the levels of fulfilling production goals.

We must have unity with the technicians, with the administrators, for we do not have fundamental contradictions with them. Our fundamental contradiction is with imperialism. We have to unite, moreover, with the small and medium producers, with all genuine producers, with all Nicaraguans who understand that their task is to forge a Nicaragua for the future and for their children.

The other Nicaraguans, those who call themselves Nicaraguans, like the bands, who are no more than mercenaries in the pay of the United



Michael Baumann/IF

"Only the workers and peasants will go all the way."

States, who of their own accord have stopped being Nicaraguans — these other Nicaraguans will unite with all those who, from the platforms of some professional associations and of the reactionary producers, are trying to destabilize the revolution, like some activists in COSEP [Supreme Council of Private Enterprise], who have joined in the plans of the counterrevolution.

We will deal blows to the counterrevolution, to the mercenary

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## The right wing is trying to deceive people through the media, to undermine the people through campaigns of destabilization and lies . . .

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Somozaist bands, to the speculators, to the internal reaction, to the active agents of the sell-out bourgeoisie. (Applause)

Will León and Chinandega permit the counterrevolution to carry out its plans of destabilization? ("No!") Will León and Chinandega lend a receptive ear to the deceitful and counterrevolutionary messages of a mistaken hierarchy? ("No!") Will they allow the counterrevolutionary bands to come through here? ("No!" "Never!")

In the last few days, 200 sons of the western region of Nicaragua have given their lives in defense of the revolution. This region also had 800 deaths in the insurrection. We must continue making these sacrifices so long as this aggression by imperialism continues. And we are sure that the people of the West will continue responding to national sovereignty and to the homeland. (Applause and chants) And we are sure that you will fulfill the tasks of production.

Long live the unity between peasants and workers! ("Viva!")

Long live the tasks of defense and production! ("Viva!")

Long live the combative unity of the Nicaraguan people! ("Viva!")

Long live the Sandinista National Liberation Front! ("Viva!")

Free homeland . . . ("Or death!")

# Boudin case: attack on democratic rights

*'Terrorist' smears aimed at Black and labor movements*

By George Novack

[The following article appeared in the April 20 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary socialist newsweekly published in New York. George Novack is a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party. He has been active in civil liberties cases dating back to the 1930s, when he was involved in the fight to free jailed labor leaders Tom Mooney and Warren K. Billings, and in the campaign against the racist frame-up trial of nine Black youth in Scottsboro, Alabama.

[Novack was national secretary of the Civil Rights Defense Committee, which defended Minneapolis Teamsters and SWP leaders framed up on sedition charges on the eve of World War II. He headed the Kutcher Civil Rights Committee, which defended legless veteran James Kutcher when the government tried to fire him from his job during the McCarthy period because of his membership in the SWP.

[In the 1960s, Novack was actively involved in the campaign to defend three members of the Young Socialist Alliance framed up on charges of conspiring to overthrow the government of the state of Indiana.

[For the last 11 years, Novack has been active in organizing support for the SWP's federal lawsuit against FBI spying and government harassment. He is treasurer of the Socialist Workers Presidential Campaign Committee and a contributing editor of *Intercontinental Press*.]

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To someone like myself, who has been actively engaged in many civil liberties causes over the past 50 years, it is disturbing to note that forces on the left have given so little attention to the trial of Kathy Boudin now being staged at the Westchester County Courthouse in White Plains, New York.

Boudin is charged with robbery and murder in connection with the holdup of a Brink's armored truck in 1981, during which two policemen and a Brink's guard were killed. Her husband, David Gilbert, and two other defendants were sentenced last year to 75 years to life on similar charges.

Boudin's trial is currently in the jury selection stage. She is being defended by attorneys Leonard Weinglass, Linda Backiel, and Martin Garbus.

Boudin was arrested shortly after the robbery. She was not armed, according to the police, and she is not accused of shooting anyone. No eyewitness at the scene of the holdup has identified her as a participant.

Nonetheless, for two and a half years she

has been unremittingly subjected to vindictive measures by law enforcement officials. Boudin; her attorneys; and her parents, Leonard and Jean Boudin, have conducted a tireless struggle simply to secure minimally tolerable conditions for her in prison and to safeguard her legal rights.

They have initiated motions and lawsuits attacking the harsh conditions in four jails where she has been incarcerated. They have forced the severance of trials and two changes in location, because of adverse publicity marked by media hostility demanding retaliation for the police deaths.

The circumstances of the case and the artificially stirred-up hysteria have tended to deter objections to the abusive treatment of Boudin, the gross violations of legal procedures, and the denial of her democratic rights. They have pushed into the background and obscured the civil liberties issues at stake in the case.

## Brutal treatment

What, specifically, have the authorities done against Boudin? Although she has not been convicted of any crime, she has been consistently denied bail and has been kept in jail for two and a half years. The courts have refused to separate her trial from that of Samuel

Brown, another Brink's defendant who turned government informer in the case.

For almost three months after her arrest, Boudin was in solitary confinement at the Manhattan Correctional Institute. She was not allowed to touch her 15-month-old baby, Chesa, on the pretext of "security" considerations. The authorities said her baby might be carrying a weapon concealed in his Pampers [diapers].

In January 1982, Federal Judge Kevin Duffy ruled that her constitutional rights were being denied and held that "Ms. Boudin, as a pretrial detainee, is not to be punished." She was transferred to a state prison where her codefendants were, including her husband, and was permitted to play with her son when he visited. Even then, it took a fight to get her housed with the general prison population, instead of being held in isolation.

The most flagrant recent episode in her harassment occurred early this year. On the evening of February 3, Boudin was illegally removed from the Orange County Jail and hustled back to the Rockland County Jail. This was in defiance of a state appellate court ruling moving her out of Rockland because of its punitive atmosphere. Rockland is one of the worst jails in the state.

## Boudin sentenced

On April 26, Kathy Boudin pleaded guilty to one count of murder and one count of robbery. A week later she was sentenced to a minimum of 20 years in prison for her role in the politically-motivated 1981 hold-up of a Brink's armored truck. She will not be eligible for parole until 2001.

That Boudin was forced to settle for a 20-year prison term, despite the lack of evidence directly linking her to the robbery or the killing of two cops and a security guard, is an indication of the success of the government's political campaign against her democratic rights — and against democratic rights in general. The fact that she and her codefendants were isolated from potential supporters in the Black and labor movements facilitated this.

In a statement to the court just before being sentenced, Boudin expressed her regret that three men had been killed in the incident, but reaffirmed her commitment to the "worldwide tradition of fighting for a

more just and humane society."

District Attorney Kenneth Gribetz, who prosecuted the case for the state, explained that he demanded a harsh sentence in order to "deter others who may think the injustices of society can be redressed through violence."

The day after Boudin entered her plea, one of her attorneys, Linda Backiel, spoke about the trial at a Militant Labor Forum in New York. Backiel linked the denial of Boudin's rights to the "antiterrorist" campaign of the Reagan administration.

"When the government says it's a case of terrorism, all of a sudden all the rights we had seem to disappear," she said. "To do this," she continued, "the government tries to isolate those charged with terrorism so that others, including those on the left, are in a position to distinguish themselves from the accused. We have to realize that as far as the government is concerned we all fall under the same rubric." — Steve Craine

The appellate court had ruled that Boudin's next transfer should be to the jail in Westchester County, where her trial is taking place. From the Rockland jail, she has to travel a total of an hour and a half each day to and from the court, seriously impeding adequate preparation of her defense. Not a single state official has opposed this illegal transfer, which has even elicited protest from the pages of the *New York Times*.

#### **Deliberate, provocative attacks**

Why have the prisons, courts, and elected officials so deliberately and provocatively attacked Boudin's rights? They aim to take advantage of the pariah status they have imposed on her — and the lack of vocal support on her behalf — to establish precedents that can be used more broadly to take away the democratic rights of other indicted individuals. And they are banking on the intimidating atmosphere generated by the media to get away with such arbitrary acts.

In the 1950s, the case of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg was used by the government in a similar manner.

On top of restricting Boudin's legal rights even to the point of breaking their own laws and regulations, the authorities are taking exorbitant and costly measures designed to brainwash potential jurors and depict her as a terrorist menace, though she has harmed no one. They are enforcing the most elaborate security precautions ever seen in White Plains on the pretext of anticipated trouble from radical sympathizers, although there are too few in the courtroom. The courthouse has been converted into an armed fortress guarded by police dogs.

All this is a setup for a kangaroo court and a railroaded trial. The prosecutors hope to keep her behind bars for the rest of her days.

#### **Government denies politics involved**

Throughout the case the government has denied that politics has anything to do with its treatment of Boudin. District Attorney Kenneth Gribetz, the prosecutor in the case, recently said, "we never mentioned radical, or terrorist, or the Weather Underground, or anything political in the first Brink's trial and we don't intend to in this one."

But the trial, and the years of persecution of Boudin and her codefendants, is political down to the last detail.

Boudin is a well-known radical activist from the 1960s generation. Whatever disagreements one may have with the course she chose in becoming part of the Weather Underground, no serious person on the left can fail to see the stakes in her case for the workers movement as a whole. The government vendetta against her is more broadly directed at Black liberation fighters, unionists, socialists, and opponents of U.S. intervention in Central America. Boudin's association with Black militants alone has singled her out for automatic abuse by racist officials.

The vendetta against Kathy Boudin is also aimed at her father, Leonard Boudin. He is

general counsel of the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee and is one of the most eminent U.S. constitutional attorneys. He has represented opponents of the Vietnam War, such as Dr. Benjamin Spock, Daniel Ellsberg, and defendants in the Harrisburg 7 case and a host of other victims of the government and the courts. At the present time, he handles the legal affairs in this country of the Cuban and Angolan governments and of the Central Bank of Iran.

For more than two decades, Boudin has been counsel in major cases associated with the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance, ranging from the "sedition" indictment against three YSA leaders at Indiana University in the 1960s, to the landmark lawsuit of the SWP and YSA against the FBI, to the current battle to prevent the deportation of Héctor Marroquín, an SWP leader.

All this has made Leonard Boudin anathema to the powers that be. They have seized on his

daughter's case as a long-awaited opportunity to damage his reputation and strike a vengeful blow against him.

#### **Silence must be broken**

The issues in the prosecution of Kathy Boudin go beyond the personalities, ideas, and activities of the individuals directly involved. They should be of concern to every defender of civil liberties. The violations of democratic rights and dangerous precedents being set must be exposed and opposed.

If they are passed over by default, assaults on the Bill of Rights will gain a further boost. Other radicals, unionists, Black liberation fighters, and antiwar activists will increasingly be victims of similar abuses by the courts and prison system.

For these reasons the silence that has surrounded the proceedings in the Westchester County Courthouse must be broken. The denial of democratic rights in the Boudin case must be brought to light and condemned. □

## **Israel**

# **Stop expulsion of Abu Ali!**

## *Campaign under way to defend Palestinian activist*

A defense campaign has been launched in Israel to block the Israeli authorities from expelling Abu Ali Shahin, a veteran Palestinian activist currently being held under virtual house arrest in the village of Duhniah in the occupied Gaza Strip.

Abu Ali Shahin was born in the Palestinian village of Bashit near Ashkelon, within the 1948 borders of the Israeli state. In September 1967 he was arrested and accused of being the commander of forces in the Hebron area belonging to Fatah, the largest group within the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). He spent 15 years in various prisons in both Israel and the occupied territories and was released in September 1982.

In a recent press release, the Committee for the Defense of Abu Ali Shahin's Rights quoted



ABU ALI SHAHIN

a 1982 report by the chief of Israel's Prison Department regarding Abu Ali:

During his period in prison he built himself a status of much influence as one of the leaders of Fatah prisoners in particular and of the prisoners who committed hostile acts [against the Israeli state] in general.

In 1977, Shahin was a leader of the long hunger strike in Ashkelon prison, which brought in its wake many other protest activities and hunger strikes in many other jails. . . .

During all the period of his imprisonment, especially throughout the last six years, he placed a strong emphasis on prisoners held for having committed hostile activities; his orders and directives are held in high esteem by the prisoners, and he is informed of all activities and is held in great respect. . . .

After serving two-thirds of his sentence, Abu Ali was to appear before the parole committee, but he decided not to implement his right to have a third of his sentence paroled in order to serve his full time and not receive a pardon from a state which he does not recognize.

Upon his release, Abu Ali went to live with his wife and children at a Palestinian refugee camp in the town of Rafieh in the occupied Gaza Strip. Almost immediately, the Israeli authorities began claiming he had no right to live there because he had allegedly not been registered in the census conducted in the occupied territories in September 1967. They claimed he had "infiltrated" from Jordan after the census. But Abu Ali's attorney, Lea Tsemel, has repeatedly demonstrated that he was included in the census and issued an identity number. The official papers verifying this

were taken from Abu Ali at the time of his arrest and never returned to him.

In 1983 Abu Ali was banished from his home to the village of Duhnieh near the Egyptian border. The Israeli military governor of the Gaza region ordered him to remain indoors between 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m., to receive no visitors without permission from the occupation authorities, and to give no statements to the news media. Only after numerous appeals was his wife allowed to visit him once a week.

Along with these orders, the authorities began issuing Abu Ali temporary stay permits as though he were a foreign tourist. In December of last year, the Palestinian activist was offered an identity card on the condition that he would publicly denounce the bombing of a Jerusalem city bus, an act for which a Palestinian group had claimed credit.

According to the defense committee's press release, "Abu Ali answered that he was willing

to denounce the bus bombing in Jerusalem, on condition that an identical denunciation be made by the authorities concerning the destruction of the Palestinian population of Lebanon and the occupied territories. In response he was told that he should expect 'retaliation.'"

The retaliation came when the authorities declared they would not renew Abu Ali's temporary stay permit. This amounted to a decision to expel the Palestinian activist from Israel and the occupied territories altogether.

More than 400 Palestinians and Israeli Jews rallied March 24 at the Kibbutz Kerem Shalom just across the border from the village of Duhnieh where Abu Ali is confined. They demanded that the moves to expel him be stopped.

Members of the kibbutz have taken an active part in the campaign to defend Abu Ali's right to live in Gaza. In a letter to the Israeli Knesset

(parliament) in July 1983, the Kibbutz Kerem Shalom demanded "the immediate release of Abu Ali from house arrest, banishment and any other punishment. . . . We cannot stand such an attack on human rights which is taking place right next to our homes."

On March 26, the Israeli High Court granted Abu Ali's request for a temporary injunction against his expulsion until a full hearing could be held.

The Committee for the Defense of Abu Ali Shahin's Rights includes prominent Israeli political figures such as Matiyahu Peled and Uri Avneri; Palestinian journalist Ziad Abu Ziad; and attorney Lea Tsemel. The committee has urged that efforts be made internationally to protest the moves to expel Abu Ali. Letters and telegrams to this effect should be sent to Israeli embassies or consulates.

The committee's address is P.O. Box 20479, East Jerusalem, Israel. □

## DOCUMENTS

# 'The U.S. election circus'

## Australian SWP views U.S. presidential campaigns

By Greg Harris

[The following article, under the above headline, appeared in the April 11 issue of *Direct Action*, the weekly newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party, Australian section of the Fourth International.]

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With the United States presidential elections now seven months away, a question has emerged around Democratic Party preselection fight: Is something new happening in US two party politics?

In addition to the emergence of long-time civil rights activist Jesse Jackson and his "Rainbow Coalition," the front-runner for Democratic nomination, Fritz Mondale, has been upstaged in early primaries by "new ideas" Senator Gary Hart.

While some features of Jesse Jackson's campaign clearly mark it off from mainstream Democratic Party tradition, the same can hardly be said for the Mondale vs. Hart battle. This has come through clearly in results from the primaries.

As recently as January, *Newsweek's* cover asked, "Can Anyone Beat Mondale?" The report was subheaded: "Mondale's machine is simply the biggest and best in the history of US politics."

Early primaries threw a spanner into the works, as Gary Hart won in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Florida, and Rhode Island. At that early stage Hart, who was almost indistinguishable from the rest of the field, gained some ground by playing up opposition to Ronald Reagan's aggressive foreign policy.

But having briefly called for the withdrawal of US forces from Honduras and said that US soldiers shouldn't die for Central American dictators, Hart quickly withdrew to safer ground, publicly declaring that differences of policy between himself and Mondale were just not there.

Interviewing Hart, *Newsweek* magazine asked him to explain why "Polling seems to suggest that the voters aren't quite sure why they're voting for you." The magazine's poll showed that 60 per cent of top Democrats attributed his success to "his new-ideas theme," or "he's a new face."

Within a few weeks, however, Hart's novelty had begun to wear off. By the New York primaries on April 3, Mondale led with 45 per cent, with Hart just 2 per cent ahead of Jackson, who had won a quarter of the vote.

### Hart's record

To look "newer" than 56-year-old Fritz Mondale, long-time supporter of the Vietnam war, of Reagan's invasion of Grenada, and of defence budget growth, was not difficult.

Yet Hart's own record is not substantially different. The *Newsweek* interview quotes his Middle East views:

"I am totally committed to keeping the Strait of Hormuz open as a right of international commerce but . . . I would seek to establish a kind of an international capability to do that, not just American ships, but British, French and others."

On US war plans for Europe, "there's nothing in the 10-year record, armed services, intelligence or otherwise to suggest that I am in

any way outside of what I would call the mainstream of NATO policy."

On military spending: While President Reagan plans an 8 per cent expenditure increase for 1985, and Mondale calls for a 4 to 5 per cent increase, Hart sets his figure at 3 per cent growth. Hart advocates an increase over Ronald Reagan's spending on "readiness of our conventional forces."

There is little to distinguish the candidates on industrial relations. Much has been written about Mondale's union support. However, the most commonly mentioned example of his support to labor was his approval of the massive government loan to the Chrysler corporation when it faced bankruptcy. This money was used to help modernise the car giant, and was repaid by multi-billion dollar cuts in pay and conditions for Chrysler workers. Mondale also favors protectionist trade barriers.

Hart opposed this Chrysler loan in the absence of an overall rationalisation of the car industry, and he opposes protectionist measures because of their effect on United States exports. *New York Times* writer Robert Pear described Hart's approach:

"'We must,' he said, 'find a way to shift from the economy of the past to the economy of the future with as little pain and as much excitement as possible.'

"Senator Hart minimized 'gloomy predictions of job losses from automation.'

"'Jobs will appear with almost magical suddenness,' as the economy demands more engineers, computer analysts, laser technicians and machinists to make robots."

US politicians have long treated workers as stupid, but promising to solve problems with magic takes a fair bit of gall. Neither of these solutions gives workers much hope of defending living standards in a time of economic crises.

### Hart attack

The reason for the apparent shock waves which Hart's victories sent through the US po-



litical system was certainly not the result of his policies.

The main explanation is simply that the entire United States electoral process is a media show. With barely half the eligible population voting in the 1980 presidential elections, and just 25 per cent of those eligible casting a ballot for Ronald Reagan, many US citizens think it doesn't make much difference whether a Republican or a Democrat is in the White House. Any diversion is pumped for all it's worth to brighten up the show.

The second reason that Hart's popularity caused such a shock is that thousands of people who take part in the great election show had thrown in their lot with Fritz Mondale. In the US political system, favoritism and patronage are the main sources of advancement. Huge numbers of hopefuls — advisers, pollsters, journalists, friends of the candidates — had secured what they thought were safe and cosy positions in the Mondale machine on the expectation of a payoff if a Democrat administration was returned in November.

This was why the Democratic Party establishment let out such a shriek of horror when the New Hampshire primaries came in on March 6.

#### Jackson's campaign

Widely predicted by the major media to be an early victim in the primaries was candidate Jesse Jackson. Reverend Jackson is a well known figure in the US Black civil rights movement. His campaign has been marked by major registration drives for Black voters, and talk of a "Rainbow Coalition." The January 18 US *Guardian*, a paper supporting Jackson, described a New York meeting for the campaign:

"The New York meeting at a schoolhouse in Manhattan's Greenwich Village was symptomatic of the variety of forces that will have to be welded together if Jackson's proposed 'Rainbow Coalition' of the disenfranchised and oppressed is to become a national force. The gathering was addressed by community activists, representatives from the labor, women's, lesbian and gay, and peace movements, as well as by Black, Latino and Asian-American activists. The Progressive Coalition for Jackson sponsored the meeting. The coalition is an ad hoc group organized to support his campaign."

Jackson is relying most heavily on Black voters, who have been signed up as Democrats to vote in the primaries. Much to the annoyance of the Democrat party machine, he managed to outlast other hopefuls including ex-astronaut John Glenn and past presidential candidate George McGovern, to make the final three.

This was despite press policy of either ignoring or slandering the candidate. In early weeks of the campaign, the bulk of media coverage for Jackson focused on a *Washington Post* report that, "In private conversations with reporters, Jackson has referred to Jews as 'Hymies' and to New York as 'Hymietown.'"

While first denying the accuracy of the account, Jackson later went on to apologise for the comment, describing it as "noninsulting colloquial language." The press seized on the issue to attack Jackson's expressed support for the rights of the Palestinian people.

As the primaries continued, Jackson's campaign proved it could draw substantial numbers of votes.

Due to gerrymandering in the primaries, Jackson's influence at the Democratic Party convention in July will be significantly less than his popular vote. Interviewed in the April 9 *Newsweek* he explained:

"In Virginia, we won the popular vote — and came in number three in delegates. In Arkansas, Mondale beat me by 400 votes. Mondale got 20 delegates, Hart nine, Jackson six. In Mississippi, the election was Saturday a week ago. Last report, I was winning over Mondale by two to one. The final count is not in yet. It's absolutely a scandal . . . We must challenge, at least, those three. There are some other districts as well. Like Connecticut where we got 12 percent of the vote and one delegate. That's unrepresentative."

Jackson's results reflected a large increase in Black voter registration and turnout. *Time* magazine reports: "in Alabama and Georgia, Blacks for the first time ever in presidential primaries voted more heavily than whites. In Alabama, where Blacks make up 22.5% of the state's registered voters, they were an outside 35% of its Super Tuesday electorate. In Georgia, where they account for 20.6% of the registered voters, Blacks cast an estimated 34% of the primary total.

"In Alabama, according to an NBC poll, Jackson won 60% of the Black vote to 34% for Walter Mondale, who was backed by Joe Reed, chairman of the Black Alabama Democratic Conference. . . . In Georgia, where Mondale was supported by Coretta Scott King and state Senator Julian Bond, Blacks cast 70% of their ballots for Jackson, 24% for the former vice president."

Relatively large numbers of people are being drawn into this project. "In the five southern states that keep track of voters by race (Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina and South Carolina), an impressive 183,000 new Black voters have registered in the last 16 months," reports *Newsweek*.

Jackson's results were won despite major hindrances. The same magazine admits in its April 9 issue that as far as press coverage is concerned, "The one thing everyone seems to agree on is that Jackson's bid for the presidency isn't covered as well as it might be."

In addition to being deliberately under-reported in the mass media, the Jackson campaign is run without the massive funding which has traditionally marked US electioneering. This leaves him without the television advertising which other candidates rely on.

#### Jackson for Hart?

Jesse Jackson's campaign is fast approaching the moment of truth. Having attracted the

support of hundreds of thousands of people, as a protest against the electoral system, his next step is to walk right back into that system. Having begun within the framework of the Democratic Party, he is now caught up in that political tradition of horsetrading.

Interviewed by *Newsweek* he explained: "At some point in July, we must reconcile and negotiate a relationship that will allow us to operate as a team — between July and November."

Within the Democratic Party game, the only role for a third candidate like Jackson is as a power broker, delivering votes to the candidate who promises the most. This reduces the whole movement of support which has built up around Jackson to a vote collecting exercise.

Once this happens, the point of an activist such as Jackson standing at all disappears. What Blacks, workers, farmers, and other oppressed groups in the United States need is independent political action. That includes labor and community organisation, in everything from industrial campaigns and protest movements, through to other political activities, such as standing candidates independent of the Democrats and Republicans.

Within the Jesse Jackson campaign there were elements of such a campaign. Had Jackson decided to stand as an independent in the presidential race he would have drawn many of the same forces around him.

That could have provided the focus for an ongoing movement, which would continue to fight for civil rights, for the interests of the "disenfranchised and oppressed," after the Hart/Mondale twins had fought it out in July.

The weakness of Jesse Jackson's campaign is also shown in the single point of principle which he has said a Democratic candidate must adhere to if he wants Jackson's support: "If the nominee would not commit himself to enforce the Voting Rights Act, I couldn't support him because it would be a suicide endorsement. . . . Beyond that, I think most other matters are matters of debate and degree."

While undemocratic election laws certainly discriminate against Blacks, the experience to date with Black Democrat officials has not been positive. For example, the election of Harold Washington as mayor of Chicago has brought few real benefits for Blacks in the areas of employment, housing, or even reductions in police violence.

While opposition to the policies of the Reagans and Carters remains within the framework of their parties, it will be continually frustrated.

It should nevertheless be noted that the Jackson campaign is a mixed blessing for the Democrats. While it serves as a funnel for votes for conservative Democrat candidates, the party has no way of knowing what these newly organised and mainly Black voters will do when they are sold out once again. □

# 'Our objective is workers power'

## Interview with leaders of oil workers union

[The following is an interview with two leaders of the Oilfields Workers Trade Union (OWTU) of Trinidad and Tobago — Errol McLeod, the union's first vice-president; and Gerry Kangalee, its assistant education officer. It was obtained on February 21 in San Fernando, Trinidad, by *Intercontinental Press* correspondent Mohammed Oliver.]

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*Question. Could you describe the oil fields workers union and who you organize?*

**Errol McLeod.** The Oilfields Workers Trade Union has about 16,000 dues-paying members at this time. We had reached a peak of a little more than 21,000 three years ago. But because of the economic problems, we have been experiencing some retrenchment [layoffs] of workers. This has caused our membership to fall.

We organize workers in the oil industry, both in the big oil companies and in the many contracting firms that provide services for the principal oil companies.

We organize workers in the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission, as well as in the agricultural sector. We are also in the motorcar industry, in the building industry, and in rubber and chemicals. We are in some manufacturing industries, and we have members in the distribution of petroleum products and in the hotel industry.

*Q. Would you describe what the current situation is for the workers you represent, as well as for working people in general in Trinidad today?*

**McLeod.** The situation facing workers we represent is basically the same as that facing workers generally in the country. The economy has been hit by the decline in oil prices internationally and at the same time by the decline in local production of oil. There has also been a further reduction in the tax revenues that the national coffers receive from the oil industry. Tax revenues have declined not only because of falling production, not only because of the falling price on the international market, but also because the government gave concessions to the major companies in Trinidad and Tobago, like Texaco, like Amoco, like Tesoro.

*Q. What kind of concessions?*

**McLeod.** The government has reduced the supplemental petroleum tax from 55 percent to 15 percent. It now bases taxes not on the tax reference price, which was determined by the

government, but on the figures fed to it by the companies.

So we have lost revenues because of all three factors. And since our economy has been and continues to be dependent on oil, every other sector of national life has been seriously affected.

In the public service there is the threat of retrenchment. In the manufacturing industry there is a threat of retrenchment. It is all around.

*Q. Have there been any particular struggles around the retrenchment threat?*

**McLeod.** Yes, there have been some struggles, like at Texaco. The retirement age had been reduced from 65 to 60, as a result of which some 1,100 people were retired early. And the company's initial position was that these people receive no compensation at all for the five years that they would have worked had the company not instituted the early retirement.

We struggled, and the workers received some compensation. Each of these workers received two and a half months' pay for each year they would have worked if the retirement age remained at 65. Of course they are also going to get early retirement pensions. We had quite a lot of struggle around that.

We have been having some struggles with

other companies as well. Some of these are now at the level of the Ministry of Labour and the industrial court.

For example, the Bermudez biscuit manufacturers fired 79 people and has been refusing to meet with the union in bilateral discussions. The company also refused to go before the industrial court.

**Gerry Kangalee.** The original retrenchments and firings there resulted in a one-week occupation of a certain area of the company,

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### Our economy continues to depend on oil . . .

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which ended up with 11 workers and three union officers being jailed for 14 days. That struggle began in April 1983.

*Q. You have mentioned several more or less isolated struggles against the retrenchments. Have there been any moves toward a broader fight-back on the part of workers?*

**McLeod.** Yes. We, as a single union, have been attempting to combine all these struggles. In addition we have been meeting with other unions, both in the private and public sector, because all the unions are affected by this particular problem. We are trying to formulate the kind of broad-based unity that would allow us collectively to fight against this problem.

*Q. You pointed to the governmental policy as being one of the three factors contributing to the worsening situation for working people. What does your union consider the best approach toward dealing with that aspect of the problem — changing the governmental policy?*

**McLeod.** You mean changing the government or the governmental policy? Just changing the government, in our view, will not necessarily deal with the problem. We must change the policies, which possibly could relate to the case of changing the system. It is more a question of the system — the economic and political structures — that one would have to change.

You can change the government tomorrow and put in the Organisation for National Reconstruction (ONR). But they might very well prevent me from even talking to you through laws they might enact. That is their outlook. It is very ultraright, very fascist.

The ONR would try to put into place policies — the kind of system — that will enhance the operations of the multinational corpora-



tions, rather than bringing something that will benefit Trinidad and Tobago and the workers therein.

*Q. In the past, officers of the OWTU have been active in political formations. Could you review that and tell us if you have any plans regarding future political formations?*

*McLeod.* I myself was a member of the parliament from 1976 to 1981, as a member of the United Labour Front (ULF). We had 10 seats in parliament. We thought that we had quite a lot of support from the working-class people.

But the ULF did not work out, and I think that one of the main reasons it did not work out is that the ULF did not relate to structures on the ground. It was not properly organized in the masses of the working class. Therefore it was very easy for it to collapse.

The Committee for Labour Solidarity is not a political party. It is a preparatory organization. We are doing a lot of work in the factories and in the communities. Through the participation of the people, that organization may some day become a political party that would have perspectives different from those of the United Labour Front of today. It would approach the kind of political and economic problems that we now have with a view to correcting that situation and having workers fully participate in the development of the country and enjoy the benefits that come from that.

*Q. Could you describe more concretely the development of the United Labour Front and the forces that were involved in it, what you see as the reasons for its degeneration, and the evolution of the Committee for Labour Solidarity out of that?*

*McLeod.* Back in 1975 and 1976 there were struggles taking place in many sectors of the economy. Oil workers were struggling for higher wages, better working conditions, and were calling for the nationalization of the oil industry.

At the same time, the sugar workers were having difficulties with management and the government. The transport workers were also having problems.

The cane farmers were struggling against the Cess Act, which said cane farmers must belong to a government-sponsored and -funded association, the Trinidad Islandwide Cane Farmers Association. The cane farmers saw that as a violation of their fundamental constitutional right to freedom of association. The cane farmers were victorious in having the court determine that act was unconstitutional. But they were also having problems getting a fair price for their sugarcane.

The farmers organization, the sugar workers, the transport workers, the oil workers — we combined these struggles, and that gave birth to the United Labour Front.

We recognized that you could not just be involved in the industrial relations front and not have the political extensions. So the United Labour Front was formed.



Grenadian government delegation headed by Prime Minister Maurice Bishop at a rally organized by the OWTU in southern Trinidad on July 19, 1983. Seated, from left to right: Lyden Ramdhanny (Grenadian minister of tourism), Unison Whiteman (Grenada's foreign minister, who was slain with Bishop), Doodnath Maharaj (OWTU general-secretary), and Bishop.

It developed in a rather spontaneous way. Real organizing work had not been done. What happened was that some people seemed to have gotten caught up with the popularity of the movement, and there was a struggle for leadership. Basdeo Panday thought the ULF belonged to him. He started making deals with the ruling People's National Movement. He is the president-general of the Sugar Workers Union and leader of the opposition in parliament today.

What happened was that the ULF split. Some of us felt that the workers had to be fully represented in and full participants in the United Labour Front. We thought that we had the making of something that was new in structure and new in perspective and content. But Basdeo Panday did not want that.

So those of us who considered ourselves to be the progressive element in the United Labour Front thought that we still had a responsibility to the workers, and we formed this Committee for Labour Solidarity, and we are doing some political work.

*Q. How did the overthrow of the revolution in Grenada and the subsequent U.S. invasion affect the situation here in Trinidad, and what has your response been?*

*Kangalee.* There were signs that something was amiss in Grenada months before the actual split and coup took place.

Within Trinidad, since about May or June, elements within the Trinidadian movement, some of the supposed political parties, "leftist" parties, had already begun to push the line that Maurice Bishop was sidetracking the revolution, was soft on imperialism, and so on.

From that, it was pretty obvious that there was some conflict going on within the New Jewel Movement (NJM).

When the situation arose in October, our first concern was that the revolution would not be mashed up, destroyed. We were in contact

with the New Jewel Movement in Grenada, and we were concerned that the discussions keep going on. We inquired about the safety of Comrade Bishop, because at that time we had become aware that he was under house arrest.

When the events of October 19 took place, our position was clear. Some political group-

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### **In Grenada, our position was 'no' to Bernard Coard and the counterrevolutionary actions, and 'no' to the American intervention . . .**

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ings stayed quiet for days and days hoping to get a signal from somewhere as to what their position should be. But our position was clear. Our position was that the events of October 19 heralded a counterrevolution because the events of October 19 were an attack on the masses of the people.

There was an ideological struggle going on in the party, and it seemed to me that they kept the struggle away from the people. When the struggle did burst out, people made their choices on what they knew. What they knew was Maurice Bishop, what he had done, what he had promised, and what he was doing.

Many people came to Bishop's defense. When the slaughter took place on October 19, our position was condemnation of the Coard faction.<sup>1</sup>

Our concern is not about which faction is in control. Our concern is the welfare of the people. Therefore we immediately condemned totally the action of October 19 led by the army, and we called for isolation of that re-

1. Finance Minister Bernard Coard led the secret faction within the New Jewel Movement leadership that overthrew the People's Revolutionary Government headed by Bishop.

gime. We also immediately pointed out the danger of American intervention — even before it happened.

Our position was “no” to Bernard Coard and the counterrevolutionary actions and “no” to the American intervention. We were very consistent in that. We did not hide and wait for two or three weeks to make our position clear. We came out and said what we believed to be correct.

For that we have been called all sorts of names by all sorts of people, saying we were engaging in “emotionalism.” They said we should have waited to hear what Coard and his group had to say, etc. You’re talking about people who massacred dozens of people. Yet we were supposed to wait and hear what they had to say before we made up our minds.

Our position was always and will always be that we stand on the side of the people. Regardless of what stage you are at, what stage the revolution is at, it is supposed to be in the interest of the masses. And no matter how you twist the logic, if you attack the masses while saying that you are acting in the interests of the masses, you are counterrevolutionary.

Since then, we have tried to do some propaganda to keep the perspective of Maurice Bishop alive. We had a memorial service and a cultural show.

We remain consistent in the face of all sorts of attacks on our position of opposition to the U.S. intervention. When the [George] Chambers regime here in Trinidad — a regime we have no love for at all — came out against the intervention, we supported that stand because in our view in that context it was the correct stand.

*McLeod.* If I may interject, what really happened was that Chambers supported the stand that we had taken, rather than the other way around. We took our stand before he had taken his, and his turned out to be similar to ours.

*Kangalee.* We pulled no punches in attacking people like Michael Als, who in the heat of the slaughter in St. George’s, came out on the

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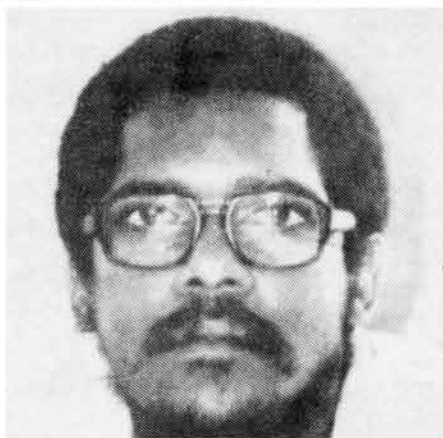
### **We have tried to do some propaganda to keep the perspective of Maurice Bishop alive . . .**

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radio in Trinidad asking the people of Trinidad for support [for the new Revolutionary Military Council]. He has an organization called the People’s Popular Movement. He is the president-general of the Bank and General Workers Union.

That caused a lot of conflict in Trinidad. He immediately became a pariah, unpopular, and has dropped out of sight since then.

If we see things in a particular way, we say it. We don’t court popularity. For this, we have been slandered and called “Pentagon leftists” and so on, because we did not support Coard.



GERRY KANGALEE

Our position is clear. We stand on the side of the people of the Caribbean. We stand on the side of progress. We cannot support any grouping or faction that attacks the people, that tries, under the guise of revolutionary rhetoric, to twist and distort progressive processes and at the same time brings hardship on their own people.

We see people who tend to become lost in theory and in rhetoric. You can justify the devil by quoting scripture. You can justify anything by quoting Lenin. Everybody does it. It is a popular thing. You can quote this and quote that, but the test of practice is what is your relationship to the people, what is your attitude to the people? Do you serve the people, or do you want them to serve you?

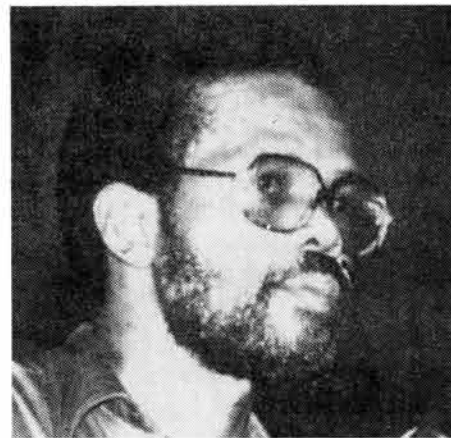
Our view and our stand has always been that you must build a vanguard organization or revolutionary organization or political organization in order to be able to lead the people in carrying out a particular type of process, because the people need leadership. But you do not build a political organization to form elite cliques to take the fruits away from the people, and then justify it by saying that Lenin said this and Lenin said that.

We are totally against dogma and Marxism as a bible. Marxism as we understand it is a guide to action. And what Marxism has taught us more than anything else is that every situation, every process needs to be analyzed in a particular context. Marxism is supposed to be a living methodology, something that can give you a perspective on how to take what you have here and carry it to where you want to go. You have to concretely analyze the particular thing you are dealing with.

But if you look at some of the positions of Coard and his followers, they could be dealing with Nigeria, Indonesia, anywhere in the world, and you would never know the difference. What they were saying was general and abstract. It had no relationship to the concrete situation.

We believe that one of the biggest problems in the Caribbean is an immature understanding of what Marxism is, the view of Marxism as a bible, as scripture.

When you look at some of the minutes — or



ERROL MCLEOD

what are supposed to be minutes — of the NJM, it is pure abstraction, and there was no consideration of what the people wanted.

We were very consistent from day one. We condemned the Coard faction — the OREL<sup>2</sup> faction — or whatever you want to call them. We also made a call from the very beginning for no intervention of any kind, and specifically from the United States and Caribbean

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### **Marxism as we understand it is a guide to action . . .**

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forces, the United Kingdom forces, and Venezuelan forces. This was where we suspected that some sort of intervention would arise.

*Q.* Your union viewed the Grenada revolution as a progressive development in the interest of the Grenadian and Caribbean people. Do you also feel then that the Grenada revolution shows the way forward for working people in Trinidad?

*Kangalee.* People who are not from the Caribbean often look at the region almost as a single unit. But when you go through the islands, you see vast differences in terms of social, economic, and political development.

For instance, the class structure of Grenada is radically different from the class structure of Trinidad. Grenada did not have much of a working class, while we have a large and well-organized working class, with a history of organization, particularly in trade unions, a generation of organization. The trade-union movement in Trinidad is an institutionalized movement. You cannot get rid of it.

Our economic development has been based on oil for three generations now. We are one of the oldest oil producers in the world. We have a much more developed class structure. We have a much more developed relationship with American imperialism in terms of the penetra-

2. The Organisation for Revolutionary Education and Liberation, a political “study circle” led by Coard that served as a basis for his factional activities within the NJM.

tion of the transnational corporations and so on.

It would be a little simplistic to say that the way the thing happened in Grenada is the way it will happen in Trinidad.

What we *can* say is that we support the stated objective of the NJM when they took power in 1979. That is also our objective. As we say in the union: "Let those who labor hold the reins." That basically means workers power. We supported the Grenada revolution in 1979 because we saw it was a progressive step toward that objective of workers power.

As the president-general of our union [George Weekes] always says, our aim is to make sure that it gets across to the workers that although as a trade union we are limited in terms of the scope of our activity, we must not confine ourselves in what kind of education we can give people. For instance, sure we have to negotiate every three years and try to get as much as possible from the employers now. But we don't want to be doing this in the twenty-second century.

Our major objective is workers power. How you achieve that is an ongoing debate that will be subject to the vagaries of history. We understand that in order for the workers to take power there has to be a lot of struggle, maybe violence developing between the ruling class and ourselves.

As to exactly what we are going to do, we have no blueprint for that, and we will never have a blueprint for that. But I can assure you that when power comes up for grabs we will recognize it. It has come up for grabs in the past already, but because of weaknesses, particularly in organization, workers were not able to continue that power.

#### *Q. You're talking about 1970?*

*Kangalee.* In 1970 and in 1937, power was up for grabs.<sup>3</sup> But as to how exactly we are going to do X, Y, and Z, I don't think we can say that.

We have to be able to recognize when the

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### **As we say in the union: 'Let those who labor hold the reins' . . .**

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ruling class is in crisis. We have to be able to recognize when people are in an insurrectionary mood. And hopefully when that comes around we will have the structure in place. We will have our mobilizational activity and so on.

But we cannot go the way of Grenada in terms of seizing power. We cannot have 20 fellows with some World War II weapons go and attack a barracks and say that is taking power. Here in Trinidad the government has some

3. In 1937, a strike in the oil fields developed into a general strike in Trinidad, at a time when labor unrest was sweeping much of the English-speaking Caribbean. In 1970, the regime of Eric Williams was threatened by massive street demonstrations, strikes, and an army mutiny.

very sophisticated military apparatus in place. It is going to be a hard, long struggle. It will have ups and downs and ebbs and flows. But we will succeed.

Also the question of American imperialism is not some very nice abstract concept for us. Right now in Trinidad, the way in which the recession or the capitalist crisis has affected us stems directly from the deliberate policies pursued by the major oil companies. The biggest stumbling block in terms of workers' development in Trinidad is the presence and domination of the oil companies, the domination of

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### **When power comes up for grabs, we will recognize it . . .**

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our economy by the multinationals. It is an even bigger problem than our struggle with the state or with the ruling party. The ruling party simply tries to see what is best for the relationship between themselves and the American multinationals and they settle for that.

The oil majors not only dominate the workers in the industry, but they dominate the entire economy, the entire government. One stroke of the pen in the New York boardrooms of Amoco or Texaco can destroy our economy in terms of the revenue we get and so on.

I'll give you an example of what I mean. In 1981 the oil companies paid 62 percent of the tax revenues collected, while individuals paid something like 13 percent. Today three years later, the oil companies are paying 32 percent of the tax revenue and individuals 30 percent.

What is happening is that the working-class people have begun to subsidize the multinational corporations. It has gone so far that, in order to keep Texaco's operations in Trinidad afloat, the state has forced the national state oil company, Trintoc, to refine its oil at Texaco's refinery, even though the national oil company has its own refinery. It costs them three times as much to refine their oil at Texaco. In one year it cost them an extra \$160 million.

As a result, the national oil company has had to go to the local capital market to meet its deficit. That has also caused a terrible squeeze on investable funds.

There is a liquidity squeeze right now because we are subsidizing Texaco.

Over the years we have worked out our position on the oil industry. We have a well-worked-out position on how we would approach the oil industry if we had workers power.

Our top problem right now is that the state refuses to take up the challenge. They are afraid of the American oil companies. They are afraid of the American State Department, particularly since they took a different position from the Americans on Grenada.

On the one hand, the present government wants to appear to be independent, and on the other hand it is encouraging the multinationals and is begging for American markets. We have a national government that does not serve the

national interests, that squeezes workers in order to keep the multinationals mollified.

Our problem then is that in any hard-fought struggle that we take up against the multinationals, inevitably we have to face the state. For example, in 1975 when we were on strike against Texaco, the government sent soldiers into the refinery to drive the delivery trucks, so that Texaco was able to distribute the gas in the storage tanks.

So we are faced with the basic problem of the domination of Trinidad by the multinational corporations and the state's support for the multinationals.

This is a capitalist government. There are capitalist governments that have acted against multinational corporations, but we don't have that. At times we tried to exploit contradictions between the government and the multinationals, but we could only go so far with that. When it got down to the crunch, they lined up on the side of the multinationals.

The struggle here will not be a simple one. This is a society that has a deeply entrenched class structure, but one that is still in flux, where there is some social mobility. It is not

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### **We have a national government that does not serve the national interests . . .**

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like in England where the class lines are easy to see and quite rigid.

In Trinidad, through education there is still a lot of movement from the working class into petty-bourgeois strata, and people still believe in social mobility.

But that is also coming to an end here because this society is becoming saturated with the middle-man, the professional, the petty-bourgeois layers.

On the one hand, you have a state capitalist government that supports the multinational penetration, and a whole sector of comprador bourgeoisie that developed from the old slave masters, particularly French Creole, the estate owners, who have gone into commerce. They don't produce anything. They make license deals with foreign companies. This comprador bourgeoisie is viciously anti-worker, viciously proimperialist. They support the ONR.

And on the other hand, you have the mass of workers and some strata like the small farmers and so on who basically tend to move with the workers.

In between, you have a large section of people — professionals, small businessmen, petty-bourgeois strata. Some of them will support imperialism, some of them will support the workers. They are divided, as I suppose they always will be.

So it is a complex situation in Trinidad. It is much more akin to a Latin American-type thing than to the class structure in Grenada, St. Vincent, Barbados, or one of those places. It is because of our history of industrialization. □

# Grenadian leader salutes miners

*Don Rojas on European tour*

Saluting "the heroic miners of Great Britain," Grenadian revolutionary Don Rojas presented a written message of solidarity to a large rally in support of the striking coal miners in Lambeth Town Hall in London April 25.

Rojas, former press secretary to slain Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, was in London as part of a tour of several European countries to speak about the legacy of the Grenada revolution, the lessons of its overthrow, and the need for international solidarity with the people of Grenada, who are today suffering under the boot of U.S. military occupation.

Although none of the messages sent by various groups and individuals to the miners' support rally were read out, the chairperson, Ted Knight, acknowledged Rojas' message and explained to the crowd who Rojas was.

Support for the miners' strike also featured in a number of Rojas' public talks in Britain.

Touching on some of the themes that he developed more fully in his public talks, Rojas, in his message to the miners' rally, outlined the gains that working people in Grenada had won during the four and a half years of the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) under Bishop's leadership.

"But today," Rojas wrote, "in occupied Grenada most of these gains and achievements are being systematically rolled back. The programmes of the Revolution which brought so many material benefits for the workers and farmers of our country are being dismantled. Very much like the situation in Britain today, the progressive trade union movement in Grenada is under daily attack."

Rojas went on, "In the spirit of proletarian internationalism, we believe that the Grenada Revolution belonged not only to us but to the working people of the Caribbean and the world. And so its betrayal by opportunist, Pol Potian counterrevolutionaries and its collapse under the boot of Yankee imperialism is your tragic loss as well as ours."

Addressing the importance of the British miners' strike, Rojas wrote, "Your struggle for social and economic justice is an inspiration to working people all over the world and it deserves the fullest support from the entire British working class and its various organizations." He called the struggle of the miners "a clarion call to freedom-loving people everywhere to stand up and fight back."

Following Rojas' visit to Britain, the New Jewel Movement Support Group there decided to emphasize its solidarity with the miners' strike by voting to contribute £50 every fortnight to the strike support fund.

Among the various public gatherings Rojas spoke before in Britain, the largest was at the Third International Book Fair of Radical, Black and Third World Books. Some 250 mainly Black activists turned out during the fair to hear Rojas and others at a forum entitled, "Current struggles in the Caribbean and the way forward." Among his co-panelists were David Abdullah, a leader of the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union of Trinidad; Darcus Howe, editor of the London monthly *Race Today* and a leading radical figure in Trinidad and Britain since the 1960s; Colette Maximim, a member of the Guadeloupean Association of

Information and Research; and Flo O'Connor, a member of the Jamaican Council of Human Rights.

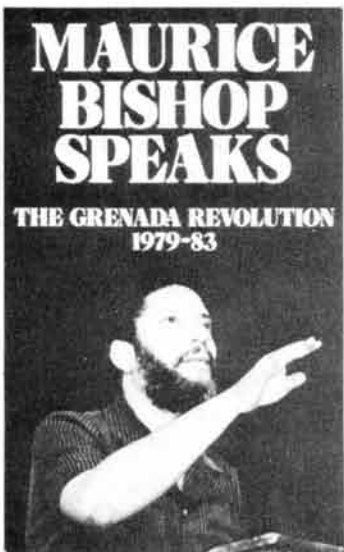
The speakers expressed their views and exchanged opinions about the reasons for the defeat of the Grenada revolution. At one point Rojas touched on the impending trial in Grenada of Bernard Coard and others who have been charged with murdering Bishop and his comrades. Rojas explained that the U.S. ruling class has no right to try any Grenadian, and that a fair trial cannot be held in Grenada as long as it is occupied by U.S. troops. He said that only the Grenadian people could bring Coard and his supporters to account for their anti-working-class actions.

Rojas also spoke in Brixton, a Black ghetto in South London that rose up against police harassment in 1981; in Manchester, near some of the key coalfields; and at a meeting sponsored by the East London Socialist Action.

Interest among Black and labor activists in the events in Grenada was evident in these meetings, particularly since Britain is Grenada's former colonial ruler and boasts a large Caribbean population. (Maurice Bishop himself had been active in the Black movement in Britain in the 1960s, before returning to Grenada to help found the New Jewel Movement.)

Around 200 copies of the Dec. 26, 1983, issue of *Intercontinental Press*, which includes a lengthy interview with Rojas, have already been sold in Britain, and nearly 300 copies of *Maurice Bishop Speaks*, published by Pathfinder Press in New York, have either been sold or placed in bookstores.

In addition to his tour of Britain, Don Rojas spoke at a number of events in the Netherlands. He also attended a conference of the International Union of Students in Sofia, Bulgaria, and spoke at gatherings and to the press in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and East Germany. □



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*Intercontinental Press*, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014

# Workers Party of Jamaica on Grenada

Speech by General Secretary Trevor Munroe

[The discussion among Caribbean revolutionary and left-wing organizations over the lessons of the Grenada events of October 1983 has been wide ranging. While there has been common agreement on opposition to the brutal U.S. invasion of October 25, differences have been sharp over how to interpret and explain the prior overthrow of the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) and murder of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and other Grenadian revolutionaries.

[The Cuban Communist Party and other groups have presented one view, condemning the overthrow of the PRG by the grouping within the New Jewel Movement (NJM) led by Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard.<sup>1</sup>

[The Workers Party of Jamaica (WPJ) has put forward a sharply divergent point of view. A significant group within Jamaica, the WPJ has also had a political influence over the years on other organizations in the English-speaking Caribbean. Coard himself had worked closely with the predecessor of the WPJ, the Workers Liberation League.

[In an Oct. 30, 1983, speech, shortly after the overthrow of the PRG and the subsequent U.S. invasion, WPJ General Secretary Trevor Munroe gave a major speech presenting his views on these events in which he criticized the Cuban leadership's stance. (For some brief excerpts from that speech, see *Intercontinental Press*, March 5, 1984, p. 118.)

[We are reprinting below, for the information of our readers, excerpts from another speech by Munroe, given two weeks later, on Nov. 13, 1983. Entitled "Lessons of the First Grenadian Revolution," it is taken from *Grenada: Revolution, Counter-revolution*, a booklet published in Kingston by Vanguard Publishers and currently being circulated in Jamaica and elsewhere by the WPJ. In addition to this speech, the 165-page booklet includes the full text of Munroe's Oct. 30, 1983, speech and two earlier talks on the Grenada revolution, as well as an introduction by the WPJ

Central Committee, which we are also reprinting.

[In this speech, Munroe — besides outlining the WPJ's political views — presents an account of how the conflict within the NJM leadership developed. Some of the specific facts cited by Munroe diverge from those presented in accounts by supporters of Bishop within the NJM, such as Don Rojas, Kenrick Radix, and George Louison.

[The subheads below are taken from the booklet. The footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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## Introduction

The triumph of the People's Revolution in Grenada on March 13, 1979, was a historic victory not only for the Grenadian people, but for oppressed peoples throughout the Caribbean and the World. It proved yet again that any oppressed people, no matter how small their country, no matter how backward their economy, no matter how religious their beliefs, no matter how experienced they are in revolution, no matter how close to the United States — the mightiest imperialist power known to mankind's history — any oppressed people and every oppressed people can and will *under the right conditions* carry through People's Revolution against imperialism.

This is so not only because of the willingness of every oppressed people "to do or die" when their backs are against the wall but also because oppressed peoples now have powerful and reliable friends in the world socialist community, in the national liberation movements the world over, and progressive forces within the imperialist countries themselves. Imperialism remains extraordinarily powerful and deadly dangerous, but despite the power and the danger, the success of the first Grenadian Peoples Revolution proves yet again that, sure as fate, the world's peoples are in the process of overthrowing and leaving behind the backward and outdated system of imperialism.

Four and one-half years after the triumph of the Peoples Revolution, the U.S. military invasion of Grenada on October 25, 1983, defeated the first Grenada Revolution and installed counter-revolution in power. This invasion has defeated the revolutionary process that was making Grenada genuinely independent; that was reducing unemployment and other scourges of third world peoples, and was giving the grass-roots Grenadian people a real say, for the first time, in the running of Grenadian society. This defeat has been a harsh, bitter

experience, not only for the Grenadian and Caribbean revolutionaries, but for all sections of the peoples who, still under the oppression of imperialism, were looking to Grenada more and more as an example of what improvements a people freeing themselves from imperialist dictatorship may accomplish. It is necessary therefore that full and in-depth analysis of the causes of the defeat be carried out by the Grenadian revolutionaries themselves and by other sections of the revolutionary movement in the region and in the world.

In the meantime a number of things can and need to be said a little more than six weeks after the triumph of counter-revolution: Firstly, the Grenadian Revolution shall rise again for the same reason that the Revolution rose on March 13, 1979, from the needs of the Grenadian people themselves; from the self-sacrificing activity of the sons and daughters of the Grenadian people themselves; because there is simply no other way for the Grenadian people or any other people, subject to imperialism, to come from under its subjection except by taking power from imperialism and its puppets, putting the genuine representatives of the people in power, and calling out the necessary changes to advance the interest of the people.

Secondly now that it has been established, not by imperialist propaganda which all revolutionaries must constantly question, but by objective facts, that Maurice Bishop was executed, all revolutionaries have to condemn such a crime against revolutionary principle and redouble their resolve to ensure that inevitable differences within the revolutionary movement never reach such a level of antagonism which can only provide imperialism with opportunities to crush the Peoples Revolution.

Thirdly, imperialism and reaction are gloating over the temporary victory and are sparing no effort to use the defeat of the Grenadian Revolution to advance their futile aim of trying to turn back revolution everywhere. This is why Caribbean revolutionaries in particular need to do everything to redouble their solidarity with the Cuban and Nicaraguan Revolutions as well as with the revolutionaries in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala in this hour of great danger from imperialist intervention following on Grenada.

It is also why revolutionaries and progressive forces everywhere in the region need to redouble their efforts to preserve the memory of the achievements of the first Grenadian Revolution as well as to draw the correct lessons from the triumph of counter-revolution. The ruling class, particularly here in Jamaica, led by Edward Seaga, have been doing everything

1. For the Cuban position on Grenada, see Fidel Castro's Nov. 14, 1983, speech, reprinted in the Dec. 12, 1983, issue of *Intercontinental Press*, as well as other Cuban statements in the November 7 and November 28 issues. Interviews with Don Rojas, George Louison, and Kenrick Radix — all surviving supporters of Bishop within the New Jewel Movement — appeared in the Dec. 26, 1983; April 16, 1984; and April 30, 1984, issues, respectively. The position of the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union of Trinidad is outlined in the interview published in the current issue. The view of *Intercontinental Press* editor Steve Clark was presented in an article in the January 23 and February 6 issues.

to wipe out the memory of Revolutionary Grenada's achievements and to strengthen the belief amongst the masses that Popular Revolution is neither possible nor desirable. They must not get away with rewriting history nor must the Jamaican working people have no alternative to their reactionary version of history.

This publication by the Workers Party of Jamaica is one contribution to strengthen the working people's ability to resist the spate of ruling class propaganda, to keep alive the inspiration of Revolutionary Grenada and to learn the correct lessons from the victory of counter-revolution. It is made up from talks given by Trevor Munroe, General Secretary of the WPJ, to the Jamaican working people during the course of the people's Revolution and the Imperialist counter-revolution. The first was presented to a public rally in solidarity with the Grenadian people three days after the triumph of the Peoples Revolution. The other three were talks presented to the Nelson Mandela Workers Education Seminar: the first on March 28, 1982, in honour of the Third Anniversary of the Revolution, the second on October 30, 1983, five days after the U.S. military invasion and the third on November 13, 1983, after the triumph of counter-revolution.

These talks have been left very much as they had been presented because despite the subsequent developments their main message remains as true today as when they were given.

Central Committee  
Workers Party of Jamaica  
December 1983

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Comrade sisters and brothers. What I want us to do is to reason carefully and as clearly as we can in relation to the lessons of the Grenada Revolution. I think it is very, very important for us to consider what lessons we can learn for the reason that at this moment the capitalists and reactionaries are trying to teach us what lessons they want us to learn.

Comrades, the first lesson that they want us to learn is that it don't make sense to support revolutionary change because revolution is not possible. That is a lesson which every ruling class from the dawn of history always tries to teach because when they teach that, it means that the poorer class of people will be less willing to overturn the system than they would have been otherwise.

The first point I want to make in relation to that argument that "Revolution is not possible because American soldiers are going to come in and get rid of it" is this: that the American imperialists have wanted to come in [and] get rid of the Grenadian Revolution for four and a half years. The first Grenadian Revolution survived from March 13, 1979, until 30th October 1983, despite the fact that the American administration (first of President Jimmy Carter and then of Ronald Reagan) didn't like it and despite the fact that they wanted to send in marines. That is something we must never

forget, that for four and a half years the Revolution survived, despite American military opposition and despite American determination to intervene militarily.

We must never forget because right now they are trying to rub out of our minds the achievements of the revolution, and we need to write it with indelible ink so that it cannot be rubbed out. *For those four and a half years when they wanted to send in soldiers to get rid of the revolution, the Grenadian people, under the People's Revolutionary Government, did what no other people in the English-speaking Caribbean had ever done, nor can do without a people's revolution. They reduced unemployment from 50% to 14%. They brought about involvement of the ordinary grass-roots people in the running of the country, in a way that no other Caribbean country has done or can do.*

The second consideration that you should remember is this, the military invasion that took place on October 25 and is still going on is not the first military invasion; is not the first use of arms or military invasion against the Caribbean people. We have been through this before.

If you look at the history of the military invasions, there is an important lesson for us to learn. That lesson is this: that no matter how often imperialists send in marines and soldiers; no matter how much they crush the struggle at the time, it always rise again.

#### To survive

The third point I want to make on this question of "Revolution not being possible because of what happened in Grenada," is this. After a revolution takes place, the revolution (especially if we are talking about a peoples' revolution) is able to defend itself successfully when three conditions are met. When you don't have those three conditions then you are in serious worries and the revolution can be overturned by the ruling class which always continues to try and get back in.

First it needs to have and it needs to keep the support of the majority of the masses of the people. This is the first point. Notice comrades I say the majority not everybody; not everybody by any means. In fact no matter how oppressive the system, you will always find amongst the lower classes — because the system crushes them, because it makes some backward, because it makes some afraid — you will always find, amongst the oppressed people, a substantial minority willing and ready to defend the oppressor and we know that.

The second condition for the revolution to keep itself alive is weapons. Weapons available to the masses of the people to defend themselves against the reactionaries who always have weapons available to them.

The third condition, that every revolution if it going to defeat the counter-revolution, is unity in the party that is guiding and leading the revolution. Unity in the vanguard. That is, unity among the best of the workers, the best

of the farmers, the best of the women, the best of the youth who are united in the party, in the interest of defending the revolution. And if you look at any revolutionary process in history, especially in the modern world, you will find that where those three conditions are met, no matter how much imperialism wants to threaten it cannot defeat the revolution.

Look at Cuba. For at least 23 years now, the Americans have wanted to go into Cuba militarily, to do in Cuba what they have done in Grenada. But it cannot, because the three conditions are there. The masses in the majority support the revolution; the masses have weapons available to them to defend every yard, every street corner, to defend every village and district, to defend every factory; and thirdly the Party is united. In Nicaragua at this moment, the conditions also exist.

#### After October 19

Again what we are seeing in Grenada confirms the point about the three conditions that are necessary. American military intervention could not take place before the week of October 19 to the 25th, because up until that time, the three conditions were met: the majority of the masses in support, weapons available to the people, and unity in the party.

After the killing of Maurice on October 19 unity remains in the vanguard. No question about that; the party was totally united on the need to continue the People's Revolution even in these most difficult conditions. Weapons were there, but the masses of the people were confused as to exactly what had happened because what they were hearing from Barbados, what they were hearing from Trinidad, what they were hearing from every other radio station other than their own Radio Station was that he was executed, he was shot in a confrontation where he took up arms along with others against the Revolution. That made a lot of people hesitate. And in that moment of the people hesitating, despite the weapons, despite the unity in the party, and despite the unity in the army, imperialism got the chance that they had not been able to get until that point because all the preconditions for defeating counter-revolution had existed until that point.

The second lesson that the ruling class is trying to teach, so that we can turn away, is that revolution, even where it is possible, is not a good thing, and this is the second line of argument that they carry and the workers drink it in without even thinking. Why is it not a good thing? According to them, they say, "look what happened in Grenada. Look how much violence it bring. Look how bloody it is."

The first thing, Comrades, that you need to understand is that in Grenada, just as in the history of Jamaica, in the history of any country that you name, it is the counter-revolution that is a thousand times more violent than the revolution. If you look at Grenada, the example that they are using now, on October 19, 17 people were killed, including Maurice, three Cabinet ministers, and 13 others.

In the four and a half years of the Grenadian



Revolution, from March 13, 1979, until October 30, 1983, the total number of people killed was 19. In four and a half days of counter-revolution, in four and a half days of Seaga, Reagan, and Eugenia Charles' invasion, the lowest estimate of the number of people killed is 200.

### Differences

The argument goes further. What they are also saying is that within the revolutionary government or within a revolutionary party, what happened to Maurice Bishop is bound to happen to Michael Manley<sup>2</sup> or to anybody else similar to Bishop.

I want to start, comrades, by recognising that there is no political party on earth within which you are not going to get disagreement. You must have differences. Within the reactionary Jamaica Labour Party [JLP], you have differences between Shearer and Seaga. Within the reformist People's National Party, you again have differences — from the beginning of that party until right now. Between the left and the right. That is also true of revolutionary parties. You must have differences within a revolutionary political party — whether that party is communist or whether it is not. You are bound to have differences.

If the JLP is like the WPJ or like the PNP or like the New Jewel Movement when it comes to the fact that there is disagreement — then what is the difference between those kinds of parties and the revolutionary party?

The most important difference between when they have disagreements and when we have disagreement is that within the revolutionary party, when there is a disagreement, *First of all there is a full discussion. Everybody has a chance to put their views. That is the first thing. Secondly, the minority, even if it includes the leader, must bow to the majority within the revolutionary party.*

### No one man

I go into all of this because we really need to be clear on principle. Especially because of the confusion that is now being sown outside. The New Jewel Movement was no different from any other revolutionary party, or from any other party for that matter. Differences within [it] have been there since the day the Party was founded until the present time. Just like how there are differences of opinion within the WPJ.

On a number of occasions Comrade Maurice found himself as a minority in the New Jewel Movement, but as a revolutionary bowed to the majority.

March 12, 1979 — the night before the revolution — I can tell you with certainty, as night follows day, that Comrade Maurice opposed the decision to launch the People's Revolution

on March 13. I never intended to say this, but those who want to provoke truth are going to get truth and the truth is the truth and I will die for the truth. The vote was three for, two against, and he was in the two.

Until now the Grenadian party don't know that, and the Grenadian people don't know that, and that is where history will never forgive the New Jewel Movement for not being sufficiently frank within the Party first of all because certain things will have to stay within the Party. The Comrade opposed the decision and he was voted down, and I ask you to consider if on March 12 the revolutionary principle that the minority will bow to the majority was not implemented, there would have been no revolution in Grenada.

If the reactionary principle was applied that "because the minority have in the leader, then the leader's view must prevail" there would have been no revolution because the leader was the minority. So who wants to say that what the leader say must go, will also have to say that there should have been no revolution. Because the application of the principle that the minority must bow to the majority is why there was a revolution in Grenada on March 13, 1979.

I tell you comrades, I have never talked this thing before, it wasn't necessary to talk it. *But some people are now questioning the correctness of revolutionary principle and they must know the consequences of questioning the principle. The consequences of questioning that principle is that you are saying that there should have been no People's Revolution on March 13, 1979; that the unemployment should not have been reduced from 50 percent to 14 percent; that the Budget should not have been presented so that all the people could participate in it.*

Later on in the revolutionary process the same thing happened on a number of other occasions. I am going to give you one other example. In relation to the *Torchlight* — the *Gleaner* in Grenada that was spreading lie and propaganda in the way that the *Gleaner* did it here against Manley.<sup>3</sup> Because Manley never do anything, that is one of the main reasons why we are under this reactionary Seaga.

So too, when it came to the Revolution moving against the *Torchlight*, Comrade Maurice was opposed to the decision at the time. Again in a minority. But once again, recognising the principle, bowed to the majority and therefore not only agreed with the decision (because the majority was in favour of it) but actually implemented it himself. Again a second case where he was a minority but went along with the majority on principle.

### Serious weakness

Comrades, the Comrade himself was getting

3. The *Torchlight* was a right-wing newspaper in Grenada that was closed down by the PRG in late 1979. The *Gleaner* is a daily published in Kingston, Jamaica, that supports Seaga's JLP and carried out a vicious slander campaign against the previous Manley government.

more and more aware, especially in the last days, of some of these weaknesses which allowed hesitancy, when what was needed was firm and decisive action. And I am going to quote from the minutes. The Americans have the document, reaction has it in America, the revolutionaries must have it in Jamaica. Quoting from the minutes of the meeting of the general membership (full members) of the NJM, Sunday, September 25, which was the meeting at which Comrade Maurice fully agreed, after long debate and persuasion, with the changes that were necessary in the Party in order to restore it, to strengthen it, so that it could carry forward the revolutionary process.

The minutes state, Comrade Maurice speaking: *"He admitted that his style of leadership has led to vacillation, indecisiveness in many cases. He further pointed out that his style of leadership is an error since it calls for a consensus; unity at all costs and this causes vacillation and he is not sure that he has overcome this."* Minutes of meeting, NJM Central Committee, September 25.

What therefore happened on October 7, 1983, is that for the first time the Comrade, having found himself a minority, refused to accept the decision of the majority.

Now Comrades, I want to make one thing absolutely clear. His refusal to apply the principle which he himself had taught, his refusal to bow to the majority — in this case to the entire Party — that refusal did not and cannot provide any justification for execution. Let us make that absolutely clear in case anybody misunderstands me.

The comrades in the NJM would agree totally with what I have just said. They would agree with it on October 19, and they would agree with it now, they will agree with it in the future, as they have agreed with it in the past. What that refusal to bow justifies is disciplinary measures — not execution.

### Disciplinary measures

Therefore, what the membership of the New Jewel Movement voted for on October 13 was that disciplinary measures should be applied, because not only did the Comrade not accept the decision of the Party, which he had always accepted in the past when he was a minority and which principle he had always preached, but instead and on top of that now had begun to actually incite the people against other Party leaders and against the Party.

Therefore, the NJM, to their eternal credit — the Americans have the minutes of that meeting too — those Comrades looked the leader in the face and said, "Leader we love you, but we cannot allow you to breach principles. Because we love, we have to practice what you preach, even when you are failing to practice it." So that is what was justified, disciplinary measures and that was what was being proposed, disciplinary measures. What could not be justified is any killing or any execution.

Comrades, what I have said here is true of every communist party, and I can give you any

2. Manley, the leader of the People's National Party (PNP), was ousted as prime minister of Jamaica in the 1980 elections through a well-orchestrated campaign backed by the U.S. imperialists, who brought in Edward Seaga's Jamaica Labour Party.

number of examples to show that when the leader skids, [it] is not kill, or execute, or assassinate, it is discipline. Krushev, general Secretary and leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU); in 1964 Krushev was seen by the Party Leadership as no longer the best person to lead the Party. He wasn't then killed, or executed. He was relieved of his position as leader of the Party.

Comrades, I go further, it is the ruling class of imperialism, not the ruling class of the revolutionary government, not the ruling class of communism, it is the ruling class of imperialism when the leader skids, they are the ones that kill the leader. President Kennedy, who killed him? Communists killed him? No. The said imperialists and capitalists killed him. Martin Luther King who they are now shedding crocodile tears for, same thing.

The next lesson they are trying to teach you is that however democratic the revolution is, one weakness, whether in a peoples' revolution in Grenada or in socialism in Cuba, is that you don't have the right to vote it out. And they are implying by that argument that under the capitalist system, which we have here, you have the right to vote it out, if you so desire.

The first thing is, Comrades, no system allows itself to be turned back to a previous system that it has overthrown, to be turned back to a more backward system out of which the people have come. No system allows that to happen. And I am going to start with the United States which is there at this time because it overthrew the system that was there before. The system that was there before was colonial rule by England, which they overthrew in 1776.

Secondly, the system that was there before was the chattel slave system like what we had here — they overthrew that in 1865. So that you have capitalism and imperialism in America today as a system because they overthrew the colonial rule from abroad and the slave system from inside the country, which was more backward.

When the Soviet Union, together with the Warsaw Pact countries, had to resort to military means to prevent Hungary from overthrowing socialism and going back to capitalism in 1956, it was doing something very similar to what the American ruling class did in 1865 in waging war against a section of the American people to prevent them from going back to slavery which was overthrown. When the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries in 1968 had to use military means to prevent Czechoslovakia from going back to capitalism — being subverted by the capitalist/imperialist countries and going back to capitalism — it was doing the same thing that the American ruling class did in 1865 to prevent America from going back to slavery. Same thing in 1981, when the Soviet Union supported — this time no violence, no troops — supported the Polish government in imposing martial law to prevent Poland from being taken back to capitalism.

So let us look at this argument that the Party

puts itself above the people — the argument that we need to be clear on, that *no revolution can be made anywhere* without the revolution being guided, being led, by the most serious workers, the most serious farmers, and the most serious youth and women organised in the party. Because if you don't have that leadership, then you will not be able to coordinate the struggle, to defeat the enemy, and keep the revolution going.

Finally, we need to be clear that we cannot make the revolution without applying certain principles, and will not be able to defend the revolution unless we keep applying those principles. The first is *selectivity*. Not every man can become a party member. You have to make certain that those who come into the membership of the party are prepared to make the necessary sacrifice, to give their life if necessary in defence of the people and in defence of the workers and the poorer class.

But comrades — and this is a warning from the Grenadian Revolution — your party cannot be so selective, cannot be so pure, as to exclude from membership the best workers and the best farmers, the best youth and the best women either because they feel the work is too heavy and they cannot manage it or because they believe that the party is for those with higher education who can read and write big book.

Second principle: *Criticism and self-criticism*. Believe me I have come back to this thing as one of the hardest things. There is something about Jamaican society, there is something about Grenadian society, something about Caribbean society, which makes criticism and self-criticism one of the hardest things — and you know why? Because the society is the kind of society where everybody wants to be a big man. And if you want to be a big man anything that is going to prevent you from becoming a big man — you can't take it.

And therefore it is the hardest thing to give criticism in the right spirit and take it in the right spirit, and this is one of the areas in which the comrades in the NJM definitely fell down because when they should have been firm and clear, when they saw the leader whom they loved, and for good reason, going off course, they kept silent.

October 1982 is the first time the NJM leadership really criticised Maurice for being too soft and not giving firm leadership. But none of the Party members knew anything about it. Only the small group at the top, who then did nothing about it between October 1982 and September 1983.

The third thing is *democratic centralism*. The minority must bow to the majority; if the minority is convinced that they are right then time will tell and eventually they will be proven to be correct. If the minority can do what they like in the party, it becomes like the Peoples National Party where there is a minority and a majority and the minority can do what they want to do whether they are on the left or the right regardless of what the majority position is. Again we can see the results of this in

Grenada. Comrade Maurice previously bowed whenever the majority ruled over him, but when he refused to bow, that led to a trail of events which triggered off the counter-revolution and the defeat which is now being experienced by the Grenadian people.

Finally, comrades, as we said earlier no revolutionary party can allow itself to lose its links with the masses of the people. Of course you have people within the party who are disciplined, and educated politically, but they alone cannot do it. The brothers and sisters who are not so conscious, not so politically educated, not so disciplined, we the party members must have the closest ties of brotherly love, closest ties of organisational relationships with them, which means that inside the revolutionary party constant attention must be paid to making sure that the comrades in the party work to build up the trade unions, because the trade union will be an organisation where the majority are not in the party; work hard to build up the women's organisation; work hard to build up the youth organisation, not only to teach but to learn so that the link of the party to the non-party people will be close. Close so that when the non-party people say to the party people, "We think you are going wrong," the party will hear it quickly because the links are close; or when the party say to the non-party people "Come out to defend the revolution," the people will come out because they know the word of the party from experience is to be trusted and to be relied on; where the link is weak or broken the principle of the party is not being applied.

And so, comrades, let us use the opportunity, the sad opportunity but the opportunity nevertheless, of the defeat of the first Grenadian Revolution to learn, to apply these lessons so as to strengthen and to advance our struggles. □

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# Pierre Frank, 1905–1984

By Ernest Mandel

[Pierre Frank, a long-time leader of the Fourth International and of its section in France, died in Paris on April 18. This obituary, under the headline, "Pierre Frank is dead: A generation of revolutionary fighters is vanishing," appeared in the May 7 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a fortnightly English-language magazine published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

With the death of Pierre Frank, the Fourth International loses one of the very last survivors of the generation of revolutionary communists who joined the fight of the Soviet Left Opposition and Comrade Lev Davidovich Trotsky at the time the Soviet bureaucracy exiled the Russian revolutionary leader to Turkey, in 1929. Trotsky had developed a substantial influence among the French Communist Left, partly because of the relations he had established with trade unionists like Pierre Monatte and Alfred Rosmer and Communists like Boris Souvarine during and immediately after World War I.

As a result, beginning in 1923, the various organs of the French Communist Left gave wide coverage and support, albeit often critical, to the struggle waged by the Left Opposition and Leon Trotsky within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist International.

But only a small nucleus grouped around the surrealist Pierre Naville, the trade unionist Alfred Rosmer, and the young chemical engineer Pierre Frank fully identified with Trotsky's struggle. Pierre Frank joined Trotsky on the island of Prinkipo, near Istanbul, and became part of the secretariat formed around the old Russian revolutionary. These young secretaries were the team that helped Trotsky prepare the first conference of the International Left Opposition (ILO) in 1930 and draft the founding document of our world movement.

The 1929–34 period was a period of initial growth for the Trotskyist movement in France. Pierre Frank actively participated in its leadership, with his friend Raymond Molinier. The magazine *Lutte de Classe* ("Class Struggle") and the newspaper *La Verité* ("The Truth") were launched. An intense propaganda campaign was waged against the rise of the Hitlerite fascist threat in Germany. Still more intense was the agitation campaign for the workers united front to stop fascism, first in Germany and then in France. This campaign failed in Germany, with well-known tragic consequences.

But in France, after the Feb. 6, 1934,

events,\* it succeeded and opened the way to a new rise of the workers movement in all Western Europe. But the very successes scored by Trotskyist agitation on the ground created considerable difficulties for the building of an organization.

The small Trotskyist organization of the time, the Communist League, was overwhelmingly outweighed by the two reformist apparatuses of the SFIO (Socialist Party) and the Stalinist apparatus of the PCF (Communist Party) — who collaborated closely to smother the revolutionary anticapitalist potential contained in the expansion of the working-class struggles and mass organizations.

The French Trotskyists had to engage in a series of discussions to determine the correct tactical orientation in that complex situation. A series of grievous differences and splits ensued in which Pierre Frank and Raymond Molinier did not always pick the same side as Leon Trotsky. Still, there were some positive developments for the Trotskyist current during the 1935–39 period: gains in the Socialist left and later in the centrist Socialist Workers and Peasants Party (PSOP) left, with the recruitment of people like Jean Rous, David Rousset, and Daniel Guerin, who stayed with the Trotskyist movement for a time, and Pierre Lambert and Marcel Hic, who joined it to remain the rest of their lives. Nevertheless the fundamental trajectory was not towards growth, but towards stagnation and setback. In

\* An unsuccessful coup attempt by French fascists and royalists. The labor movement responded with a one-day general strike and demonstrations throughout the country.

addition, beginning in 1937 the weight of the Popular Front's defeat in France and of the defeats in the Civil War in Spain, began to bear down, and paved the way for World War II.

Pierre Frank, Raymond Molinier, and their very small group, separated from the bulk of the forces that prepared the foundation of the Fourth International in 1938, were chiefly identified with a thorough-going preparation of antimilitarist and anti-imperialist work that earned them repression and persecution at the hands of the French imperialist government. This led Pierre to move to Great Britain where he was also persecuted by the British government, including being interned in a concentration camp. He was gladdened by the news of a beginning reconciliation with Trotsky shortly before the latter's assassination in August 1940.

In occupied France, the different Trotskyist organizations remained divided by tactical problems, but they all continued the struggle under the occupation and made no concessions at any time to either German imperialism and its superexploitation of the French working class, or French imperialism. The prominent role of these fighters in launching the massive workers and people's resistance in France earned these organizations a new phase of growth, running from 1940 to 1948.

This is when the group connected to Pierre Frank in occupied France, under the leadership of Jacques Grimblat and Rudolphe Prager, began to orient, after some mishaps, towards the reunification of the Trotskyist movement which was actually achieved in 1944, following the European conference of Trotskyist organizations that took place in February of that



Part of procession at Pierre Frank's funeral in Paris, April 27.

year, in the midst of the occupation. Pierre Frank had drawn all the lessons from his own misadventures in the 1930s and rejected blind factionalism; he applauded the course towards unity with both hands.

As soon as World War II was over and he was allowed to return to France, he joined the united Internationalist Communist Party (PCI), became a part of its leadership, and was assigned by the latter to the leadership of the Fourth International that had been reconstituted around Michel Raptis (Pablo). In this capacity, he actively prepared the Second World Congress of the Fourth International in 1948, as well as all the successive congresses of our organization up to and including the Eleventh World Congress in 1979. He was often the reporter on important political and theoretical questions at International Executive Committees (IEC) and World Congresses. He was also the editor in charge of the publication of the magazine *Quatrième Internationale* for several decades, and without his obstinacy that journal would not have the continuity that it enjoys today.

With the end of the post-World War II revolutionary upsurge in Western Europe, that is around 1948–49, the French Trotskyist movement — along with the Trotskyist movement in all Western Europe and North America — went through a new period of stagnation and setback were reflected by increasing internal problems and a series of splits. Pierre Frank participated in all these internal debates and understood they had a function beyond their negative aspects. The fact is, they served to maintain the programmatic and theoretical continuity of our movement through the inevitable readjustments necessitated by the new phenomena revolutionary Marxists had to grapple with, such as the victory of the Yugoslav, Chinese, and Indochinese revolutions led by forces which originated in the international Stalinist movement but were led to break with it on key questions of revolutionary strategy to be able to lead the revolution to victory in their respective countries.

The small PCI survived during this period, led by Pierre Frank. Its main achievement was to understand the importance of the colonial revolution that continued to unfold in the world throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Because of this solidarity work, Pierre Frank was arrested in 1956. Thus, he had the honor of being the only leader of the French workers movement to be arrested for solidarity with the Algerian revolution.

Indeed, the PCI, spurred on mainly by Michel Raptis and Pierre Frank, committed itself to an active defense, including material and political aid, of the Algerian revolution, the Cuban revolution, and the Vietnamese revolution. This enabled it to influence and then win over a broad current of Communist youth in the Union of Communist Students (Union des Etudiants Communistes — UEC) that had spontaneously adopted the same orientation.

This led to the creation of the Revolutionary Communist Youth (Jeunesse Communiste

Revolutionnaire — JCR) and after the thunderbolt of May 1968, to the fusion of the JCR and PCI that gave birth to the Communist League, French section of the Fourth International, the first example in Europe of the transformation of one of the small original Trotskyist groups into a numerically stronger organization with more roots in the working class.

The resurgence of the world revolution in each of its three sectors, with the upsurge of the colonial revolution, the resumption of workers struggle of prerevolutionary scope in a series of Western European countries, and the process that led to the Prague Spring, made it possible for the Fourth International to resolve, at least partially, the problem of its internal divisions and led to the reunification of our movement in 1962–63.

For five years, the Fourth International had to work under conditions of extreme organizational and administrative weakness, with a day-to-day leadership reduced in fact to three people: Comrade Pierre Frank who was its organizational linchpin, Comrade Joseph Hansen, insofar as the reactionary Voorhis Act forbidding U.S. organizations to affiliate internationally permitted, and myself. After the breakthrough and development of our organizations in 1968–69, our movement was able to establish broader leadership structures in which Pierre Frank continued to occupy a prominent position.

His literary work includes many articles and brochures, but two of his books deserve particular mention: *The History of the Fourth International* and especially the monumental *Histoire de l'Internationale Communiste (1919-43)*, whose two volumes were published by La Brèche Publishers in 1979. This book, which is the only scientific, Marxist work on

this decisive topic, illustrates the scope of the experience and lucidity that Pierre acquired in his nearly sixty years of activism. Likewise, it also reflects his fundamental concern for the continuity of communist theory and practice, that is, in the twentieth century, of revolutionary Marxist theory and practice.

Pierre Frank had a very deep sense of friendship, generosity, and the indispensable emotional ties that bind militants committed to the gigantic task of reconstructing the world on a socialist basis. Because our movement embodies an obstinate desire to maintain the continuity of the Communist movement, Pierre Frank attached particular importance to all manifestations of a rebirth of Leninism and Marxism in the Soviet Union and other bureaucratized workers states. The explosion of workers struggles in Poland and around Solidarnosc, the appearance of Comrade Alexander Zimine's book *Le stalinisme et son "socialisme reel"* ("Stalinism and Its 'Actually Existing Socialism'"), produced in the Soviet Union and published by La Brèche in 1983, were a source of joy and satisfaction and marked the last years of his life. In all the conversations I had with him, these were the events, along with the need to give the utmost importance to the differentiations presently developing within the PCF, that occupied his attention.

Farewell dear comrade, dear friend, older brother, your memory will live on in the Fourth International with whose existence and construction your entire life was identified. The growth and transformation of our movement, leading to the future mass communist International, will enable us to keep that memory alive in the entire international working class. □

## Paris funeral for Pierre Frank

[The following article, which appeared under the headline "Adieu, Pierre," is taken from the May 4–10 issue of *Rouge*, weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International.

[A full page of *Rouge* was devoted to the article and to photographs of the April 27 funeral ceremony. The photos showed scenes of the crowd, with clenched fists, at the Père-Lachaise cemetery; marchers carrying a large picture of Pierre Frank; and the front line of the procession, with a caption identifying most of those on it: André Calvès, A. Fichaut, Charles Michaloux, Alain Krivine, Marguerite Métayer, Ernest Mandel, Rodolphe Prager, Raymond Molinier, and Barry Sheppard.

[The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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"Pierre Frank's political biography merges with the history of the Fourth International," said Ernest Mandel in his final homage before Pierre's coffin.

The past and present history of the International, the history of Pierre Frank's battles, was strikingly symbolized by the cortege of 1,500 people that accompanied the coffin from the Place de la Nation to the Père-Lachaise cemetery.

Hundreds of members and sympathizers of the LCR in the Paris region took off work to be present. At their side were delegations from numerous sections of the International.

Also among the crowd were others who came bearing witness to important stages of the revolutionary struggle:

Vladi, son of Victor Serge, sprung from Stalin's jails in 1936 by an intense solidarity campaign, today a well-known painter in Mexico.

Mohamed Harbi, leader of the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) in 1958, when the Trotskyists were the first to raise the flag of the International on the side of the Algerian revolution.

Zbigniew Kowalewski, exiled leader of Solidarnosc, an activist who just a few days earlier was threatened with expulsion by the govern-

ment and was kept in France by the strength of the solidarity movement.

Lautaro Sandino, leader of the Sandinista Youth, travelling in Europe with his comrade Alvaro Porta, whose wreath was placed on Pierre's coffin.

All were blended together in the parade that made its way to the cemetery, singing the old revolutionary songs of the workers movement under long columns of red flags.

Our comrades from Lutte Ouvrière also paid their respects with a very large delegation accompanying Arlette Laguiller and other leaders. All the Trotskyist groups also sent representatives.

Also seen within the crowd were former members who had long since diverged from our battle, and other representatives of the workers and democratic movement: David Rousset; Fred Zeller; attorney Jouffa, who is chairman of the League for the Rights of Man; Marcel Francis Kahn; Jean Maitron, historian of the workers movement; Jacques Toublet of

the proofreaders union. Also present was the cartoonist Wiaz.

In the first rank of all was Marguerite Métayer, Pierre's companion, a working-class militant since her youth, having joined the Trotskyist struggle in the darkest hours of the war. The International and the LCR once again pledged to her their militant solidarity.

Several leaders of our movement gave the final homage to Pierre before his cremation: Ernest Mandel, in the name of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International; José Iriarte Bikila, Basque leader of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR-LKI), who was imprisoned for several years in Spain during Franco's rule; Barry Sheppard, in the name of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States; Jakob Moneta, leader of the German section, former editor of the newspaper of the metalworkers union IG-Metall; Charlie Van Gelderen, a former militant in South Africa, who brought the salute of the British section; and finally our comrade Alain Krivine. □

## France

# EEC imposes dairy quotas

## *Small farmers to bear heaviest burden*

### By Maguy Guillien

[On March 12 the agriculture ministers of the 10 countries of the European Economic Community — the Common Market — voted to reduce milk production in order to cut the EEC's expenditures in buying up surplus production.

[Milk production, which reached 103 million tons in 1983, will be reduced by stages to 97.8 million tons in 1985-86. Each country will receive a milk quota based on its 1981 production. Each country may divide up its quota dairy by dairy, as French agriculture minister Michel Rocard proposed, or by farmer as other ministers suggested.

[Farmers who produce more than their quota will have to pay a heavy tax as a deterrent to overproduction.

[The Irish government has thus far refused to accept the quota system, arguing that Ireland is too dependent on the dairy industry to agree to the production cuts involved.

[Following the EEC meeting, French farmers organized massive demonstrations and roadblocks, demanding higher prices and protesting cuts in milk production.

[The following article is reprinted from the March 23-29 issue of *Rouge*, weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League, French section of the Fourth International. The translation and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

The mass media in France are raising a hue

and cry that the EEC [European Economic Community] budget is bankrupt. Since no one wants to pay more, the government ministers have agreed to curb expenditures. There is no more mention of pointing a finger at those responsible, much less drawing a balance sheet of this Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and seeking the causes of the disaster.

Each minister returns home with the mission of reducing milk production, imposing the notorious quotas on their own farmers. They sweeten the pill by announcing a 5 percent rise in the price of milk at the production level, an increase that further favors the biggest producers.

## Rural workers propose allotments

The National Confederation of Rural Workers Unions (CNSTP) has issued a very serious document in which it lays out the level and price of allotments for milk producers: "The level is fixed at 50,000 liters per nonsalaried worker and with a variation of 30 percent according to regions, taking into account the natural conditions of the land: 65,000 liters in plains regions; 50,000 liters in middle regions (foothills, etc.); 35,000 liters in mountain regions."

The price per liter would be inversely proportional to the level of the allotment so as to cover the overall expenses and provide equal remuneration for work. For ex-

The technocrat Rocard<sup>1</sup> has forgotten his past criticisms of the right. He explains to us that the small and medium producers are the ones who have to go out of business. They will be given a handful of banknotes so they can wait for their death, more or less the same method as in industry.

To the big producers he says: "You will eliminate several cows from herds of more than 50 head, you will feed them a little less imported protein, your needs will be kept in mind, and it is in your interests to lower your production costs."

And for the immense majority of producers (86 percent have between 20 and 50 cows): "You won't make it with costs that continually rise. You must lower your deliveries and improve quality. Only the best will make it."

This is how a Socialist minister intends to solve the problem and adds his share of unemployed to the basket of unkept promises. According to the National Confederation of Rural Workers Unions (CNSTP), 237,000 farmers risk having to close down their operations in the coming years.

And yet it is among the small and medium farmers — caught between the big producers and the agribusiness firms — that the unions opposed to the pre-May 10<sup>2</sup> agricultural policy arose. Rocard is stripping the rural left of its illusions, treating its demands as unrealistic: the allotment system (see box) would be too complicated to apply!

The French minister of agriculture struts about with the leaders of the National Federation of Unions of Agricultural Landholders (FNSEA), lending an attentive ear and treating their arguments as those of all the farmers. Despite this, these new partners from the rural right do not award him any good marks and are quick to up the ante in the well-known style of

1. Michel Rocard, French minister of agriculture, is a member of the right wing of the Socialist Party.

2. On May 10, 1981, François Mitterrand of the Socialist Party was elected president of France. He presides over a Socialist Party-Communist Party coalition government.

ample: at the 65,000-liter allotment level, 30 centimes per liter over the present price; in foothills with 50,000-liter allotment levels, 40 centimes; in mountains with a 35,000-liter allotment, 55 centimes.

Above the allotment, the price per liter would be 30 centimes. The establishment of the allotment would answer five objectives. It would guarantee a decent income to milk producers, lessen the disparities among agriculturalists, divide the production among all regions, lower the milk surpluses that cost everyone a great deal, and maintain the maximum number of jobs in agriculture.

Gattaz<sup>3</sup>: "5 percent increase is not enough, we need 7 percent." And Rocard adds to this: "It is not the well-performing agriculture that is the cause of the excess production, but all the small producers who must be eliminated. They cost society too much."

The agricultural corporations will be encouraged and the big growers will be scarcely touched because the division of quotas will be regulated by the dairy bosses "in concert with each producer."

Inasmuch as the same people often run the professional organizations and the dairies, we can easily see who is threatened by the redivision of quotas. The assignment of a quota could become, as is the case in sugar beet production, a right to produce that will be transmitted (sold?) between farmers under the watchful eye of the dairy industrialists.

Undoubtedly this is an easy method to apply to reduce the dairy surpluses. The big producers will make the law, with the state standing aside except to arbitrate the inevitable conflicts.

But will those small farmers condemned to disappear accept such contempt without reacting?

Will they howl with the wolves and against



European dairy farmers.

their own interests, as did some Breton pork producers, by serving as shock troops in a crusade for free production, meaning survival of the fittest, in agriculture?

Or rather will the small producers who make up the majority understand that their income, the product of their labor, must be guaranteed? For that to happen, there must be price guarantees for each production level, as the CNSTP proposes, with allotments, rather than quotas. The division of quotas would unleash a new wild competition between regions and between producers.

This allotment system would make it possible for agriculturalists to earn a decent income

and would allow agricultural planning that responds to human needs.

The present EEC "disaster" makes it possible to put forward this idea among the farmers.

Already the left-wing agricultural unions as a whole (FNSP, MODEF, CNSTP)<sup>4</sup> reject the establishment of milk quotas by dairies and are organizing united demonstrations in the weeks to come. □

4. French farmers organizations span a broad social and political spectrum. In 1983 elections to regional agricultural bodies, farmers organizations linked to the trade-union movement won 30 percent of the vote.

3. Yvon Gattaz is head of the National Federation of French Employers.

## STATEMENT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

# For a Socialist United States of Europe!

### *Appeal on elections to European parliament*

[The following appeal on the elections to the European parliament was issued April 4 by the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and its sections in the Common Market countries of Europe, a number of which are running slates in the elections. It is reprinted from the April 23 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a fortnightly review published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

The second elections for the European parliament will be held in June 1984. The first were in 1979. Although the European parliament is only a consultative assembly without any real powers, these elections will not fail to have an impact on the political scene.

The parties that directly represent the bosses want to make these elections into a plebiscite in favor of the antilabor and warmongering policies that they support, a plebiscite in favor of austerity and installing the intermediate-range missiles. In Britain, they are represented by Margaret Thatcher; in France by Simone Viel, Giscard d'Estaing, and Jacques Chirac;

in West Germany by Helmut Kohl; in Belgium by the Martens-Gol duo; in the Netherlands by Lubbers; in Italy by the Christian Democrats; and in Denmark by the bourgeois coalition in power.

As for the reformist parties of François Mitterand, Bettino Craxi, and George Papandreou in power in France, Italy, and Greece, they are also applying the line of austerity and stepping up the arms race. But they are doing it in a bit more moderate style and are politically on the defensive, unable to put up any sort of credible alternative against the capitalist offensive.

#### **No to the EEC, instrument of the banks and trusts**

The EEC is a Europe of the bosses. The Common Market was not set up for the benefit of the workers but to bolster the power of the European trusts and multinationals. The EEC institutions act against the interests of the workers. The European Commission is coordinating the attacks on steelworkers throughout Europe. It is promoting an austerity policy in all the member countries.

Voices are now being raised in favor of

equipping this Europe of the bosses with a European army. Such a force would be just as dangerous for peace and the future of humanity as the army of American imperialism or the "national" armies of the European imperialist powers.

The Fourth International appeals to the workers of Europe to put no faith in capitalist integration of this region. European capitalism is no more progressive than that of the United States. In line with this fact, we support the campaign of our comrades in the Spanish state and in Portugal against the entry of their countries into the Common Market. We are sympathetic to the campaign of the British Labour left and the Greek left for the withdrawal of Greece and Britain from the EEC.

However, falling back on the capitalist "sovereign national state" scarcely offers any better deal for the workers in the member countries of the Common Market. This would in fact only provide a justification for still harsher austerity policies under the pretext of defending national industry against foreign competition.

Against the two mirages of capitalist inte-

gration and bourgeois national sovereignty, the Fourth International calls for a struggle for a Socialist United States of Europe, a common fight, a common solidarity, and a common socialist objective for the workers of all countries.

#### **Austerity does not create jobs**

With the support of all the existing governments, the bosses in the ten member countries of the Common Market, as well as those in Spain and Portugal, have been able to direct very wide-ranging attacks on workers, recipients of social benefits, women, immigrants, and youth. In defense of their austerity policies, the governments have invoked the demands of international competition. But the same argument has been used in every country, leading to an unceasing downward spiral in buying power and social benefits.

It is sufficient for one country to lower "labor costs," and a neighboring country will justify an ever sharper cut in the name of "the national interest," that is, in fact, of class collaboration, to the sole benefit of the bosses. Indeed it is false to claim that austerity creates jobs. Since this policy started to be applied in Europe, unemployment has more than tripled, going from 4 million to 17 million. And no variants of this policy of reconversion will halt the drain of jobs. To the contrary, the experts of the bourgeois institutions themselves predict that in a few years the number of jobless in West Europe will reach 18 million.

#### **For European-wide action for the 35-hour week now, without loss of pay**

A different sort of economic policy, with different priorities, is perfectly possible. But it would have to be based not on the rationale of capital, of competition and profit, but on the logic of labor, of solidarity among the exploited. Priority has to be given to full employment and meeting the basic material needs of the masses.

At the time of the first European elections in June 1979, the Fourth International call said: "Almost forty million of us are organized in unions. If this power is mobilized, it can win the 35-hour workweek with no cut in pay, new hiring to make up for the lost worktime, and workers control over the rates of work to prevent a speedup."\*

This call reflected a real need, since today the West German metal workers union IG Metall has launched a vast campaign of action, including strikes, for the 35-hour week. Many unions in other countries have come out in support of this. The time has come to organize, alongside the West German metal workers, a West European-wide campaign of all categories for the immediate introduction of the 35-hour week. It is now or never.

Now is the time also for all members of parliament who claim to represent the working class to introduce simultaneously in the national parliaments and the European parlia-

ment bills that would reduce the legal workweek to 35 hours. Now is the time for the West European unions to call on the American and Japanese unions to join in this campaign. This is the only effective way to stop the drain of jobs, to avert the divisive and demoralizing effects of massive structural unemployment on the workers movement, to force international capitalism to pay the bill for the crisis for which it alone is responsible.

#### **Act now against Euromissiles**

The governments of capitalist Europe are cutting social spending. But they are coming up with more and more money to finance arms spending, to finance their imperialist military interventions in the Malvinas, Lebanon, Chad, and Ireland. They apply the rules of profitability and return to spending on education and health, but no government assesses the "return" from its military spending.

The working masses of Europe are more and more rejecting this insane arms race, which threatens sooner or later to reduce our continent to radioactive ashes. The demonstrations against the installation of the missiles brought out unprecedented numbers of people — millions in West Germany, more than a million in Britain and Italy, more than half a million in the Netherlands, and 400,000 in Belgium. In Britain, the Greenham Common women are continuing their struggle against the NATO base.

This mass opposition to the missiles is clearly oriented in the direction of anti-imperialism and unilateral disarmament. This dynamic must be stimulated, reinforced, and generalized by specific action proposals more and more coordinated on the international level. Among the proposals that could be made, two are particularly opportune. One is the call for a referendum against installing the Euromissiles on the territory of each country or keeping them there. The other is for the unions to organize a general strike, on a West European-wide scale, against the presence of the missiles.

#### **For an anticapitalist alternative, for the United Socialist States of Europe**

The workers movement must organize its opposition to the Europe of the bosses, of the trusts and the multinationals, to the Europe of austerity and greater militarization. It must do this on an international scale. The trade-union movement has not yet managed to do this, either in the case of the steelworkers fighting for jobs or in the case of the struggle for the 35-hour week.

In recent months, there have been big workers struggles, such as the public workers strikes in Belgium and the Netherlands, the exemplary mobilization of the Italian workers in defense of the sliding scale, the miners strike in Britain, the Spanish workers' resistance to austerity, and the strike of the Talbot-Poissy plant in France. But in all these cases the fighting spirit of the workers has run up against the divisions among the traditional leaderships of

the workers movement, their refusal to organize the struggle and to support an anti-capitalist alternative, their capitulation to so-called international constraints and "constraints of competition," that is, their capitulation to the rules of the capitalist game.

Neither in France, nor Spain, nor Italy, nor Sweden, nor Greece, nor Portugal, nor only yesterday in Germany, have the big Social Democratic and Communist parties in government fought back against the attacks on the workers who are struggling against austerity and NATO's ultramilitarist policy. The reason is that these parties and trade-union leaderships refuse to attack the roots of the evil.

In order to throttle the effects of the crisis, it is necessary to break the power of the banks and the financial combines by nationalizing them definitively and without compensation under workers control. The goal must be to put in power workers governments backed up by the workers mobilized and organized in their workplaces and neighborhoods. This means aiming for the expropriation of the economy based on democratic planning by the workers.

This struggle is linked to the fight against the bureaucracy in the Eastern bloc countries, which is reflected in the growth of an independent peace movement. (And it is necessary to declare our solidarity with this movement against the repression to which it has been subjected.) This struggle will open up the way for a Socialist United States of Europe, the only real alternative to the divided Europe of today, prey to parallel crises of capitalism in the West and of bureaucratic rule in the East.

A Socialist United States of Europe will not only offer an effective solution for the working masses of this continent. It will also offer a powerful assistance to the superexploited peoples of the "third world" in their struggle to free themselves from the morass of poverty in which imperialism and capitalism has trapped them. A socialist breakthrough in Europe would offer hope to all of humanity for a way out of the deepening shadows of hunger, unemployment, dictatorship, and war, a road to progress and an assured future.

Forward to active solidarity for all workers in Europe fighting for their class objectives!

Forward toward worldwide solidarity for all exploited and oppressed, in particular those in Central America, the Near East, and Southern Africa, who are the target of direct imperialist action!

Forward to the world socialist revolution!

United Secretariat  
of the Fourth International

Belgium: Socialist Workers Party; Spanish State: Revolutionary Communist League; France: Revolutionary Communist League; Britain: British Section of the Fourth International; Greece: Organization of the International Communists of Greece; Ireland: People's Democracy; Italy: Revolutionary Communist League; Luxembourg: Revolutionary Communist League; Netherlands: Socialist Workers Party; Portugal: Revolutionary Socialist Party; West Germany: International Marxist Group; Denmark: Socialist Workers Party.

\* "For Socialist United States of Europe," *Intercontinental Press*, March 5, 1979, p. 219.

# Behind Reagan's visit

*A cordial, but limited, relationship*

By Will Reissner

President Reagan, accompanied by an entourage of nearly 600 people (including a camera crew from the Reagan-Bush campaign committee), visited China April 26 to May 1. Reagan's trip featured meetings with Chinese leaders interspersed with numerous "photo opportunities" aimed at boosting his reelection campaign back home.

During the visit, Reagan and Chinese leaders signed three agreements that had been worked out beforehand: a treaty limiting double taxation of U.S. companies operating in China; an agreement opening the way for U.S. corporations to bid on contracts to build Chinese nuclear power plants; and a resumption of sports and cultural exchanges, which had been frozen since Washington gave political asylum to a visiting Chinese tennis player who wanted to stay in the United States.

In a broader sense, Reagan's trip pointed up the cordial relations that have developed between Washington and the bureaucrats who rule over the Chinese workers state, as well as the limits to that relationship.

For more than two decades after the Chinese workers and peasants came to power in 1949, Washington did everything in its power to isolate and weaken the Chinese revolution. It banned all trade with China and refused any diplomatic relations with Peking, claiming that the proimperialist regime on Taiwan was the "real" China.

In the early 1960s, when the Soviet Union cut off economic and military aid to China, Washington welcomed the split between the world's two largest workers states and sought to deepen this division to further its own imperialist foreign policy.

But in the late 1960s, as it was losing the war against Vietnam, Washington began seeking China's aid in containing the Vietnamese and other colonial revolutions. President Richard Nixon went to Peking in February 1972 at the height of U.S. bombing of Vietnam. He held out the possibility of normalized relations in exchange for Chinese pressure on Vietnam. A few months later he was hosted in Moscow, where he also sought better relations for the same reasons.

Anxious for U.S. development aid, trade, and diplomatic relations, the Chinese bureaucrats sharply increased support for Washington's allies in the colonial world. To show how useful they could be, they immediately established warm relations with the murderous Chilean junta after the 1973 CIA-organized coup there.

They supported the Reagan administration's

arms buildup and called on the imperialist North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to increase its military pressure on the Soviet Union and the Eastern European workers states.

China grew increasingly hostile to the socialist revolution in Vietnam and began supporting the reactionary Pol Pot government in Kampuchea, which was carrying out armed border attacks on Vietnam. In 1979, after Vietnamese troops helped Kampuchean freedom fighters overthrow Pol Pot, China invaded Vietnam in direct collusion with Washington. The invasion was repulsed, but only at great sacrifice by the Vietnamese people.

But the payoff for these betrayals has been less than Peking expected. Despite Peking's slavish parroting of U.S. propaganda lines, little aid has been forthcoming from Washington. Trade relations have been hampered by the U.S. imposition of quotas on Chinese textile exports to the United States. And Washington continues to arm the proimperialist regime on Taiwan, which the Chinese people consider an integral part of China.

Moreover, the actions of the Peking bureaucracy have led to its extreme isolation among the oppressed peoples of the colonial and semicolonial world. The Chinese regime thus began to take more distance from Washington's policies in Africa and Latin America. In late 1982, a meeting of the Chinese Communist Party called for an equidistant policy between the United States and the Soviet Union, branding both as "hegemonists." The first formal talks between Chinese and Soviet officials since 1969 began.

This shift was reflected during Reagan's visit.

Despite repeated attempts, Reagan was unable to get Chinese figures to publicly endorse his anti-Soviet comments in Peking.

On two occasions, Reagan's anti-Soviet diatribes were edited out of Chinese television broadcasts. On a third occasion, the remarks were left in, but the speech was broadcast without any Chinese translation.

Qi Huaiyuan of the Chinese foreign ministry explained that the deletions were made because "it is inappropriate for the Chinese media to publicize the comments by President Reagan on a third country."

In a similar vein, on the eve of Reagan's arrival the Chinese government announced that a high-ranking Soviet official would visit China in mid-May to discuss expanding trade and technical cooperation between the Soviet Union and China. (On May 8, the Soviet government announced the visit to Peking would

be postponed.)

Chinese officials also publicly took their distance from the Reagan administration's policies in Central America, the Middle East, and Korea.

Chinese Prime Minister Zhao Ziyang — who had visited Washington in January — criticized the U.S.-sponsored war against Nicaragua during Reagan's visit.

Zhao also called on Reagan to open discussions with the Palestine Liberation Organization, and PLO leader Yassir Arafat was given an elaborate welcome in Peking on May 5, only days after Reagan's departure.

Hu Yaobang, head of the Chinese Communist Party, told Reagan of Peking's opposition to the presence of nearly 40,000 U.S. troops in South Korea.

But there was no change at all in Peking's criminal support to Washington's assaults on Vietnam and Kampuchea. □

## New Chinese attacks on Vietnam

As President Reagan and Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping met in Peking's Great Hall of the People on April 28, far to the south Chinese troops were giving the visiting U.S. president a sample of China's usefulness as an ally.

On the same day that Reagan and Deng had their 90-minute private talk, three regiments of China's 40th Division, 14th Army Corps, were sent into action against Vietnam's Ha Tuyen province. The three regiments, comprising upwards of 3,600 troops, were supported by artillery fire.

Vietnam's Foreign Ministry termed the latest attacks a "serious act of war escalation." Hanoi warned on April 30 that "the Chinese authorities must bear full responsibility for all the consequences" if such attacks continue. It also pointed out that these acts are "detrimental to the interests of the Chinese people and of peace and stability in Southeast Asia."

Washington has never given up trying to isolate and "punish" Vietnam at every possible opportunity. The bureaucrats in Peking have been more than willing to help out in this regard.

In 1979, with backing from the Carter administration, Peking sent 600,000 troops across the Vietnamese border, causing widespread destruction and loss of life in Vietnam's northern provinces.

The latest Chinese attacks are also aimed at boosting the sagging morale of former Kampuchean dictator Pol Pot's rightist guerrillas, who are attacking Kampuchea from bases in Thailand. Pol Pot's forces have been hit hard in recent weeks by Kampuchean and Vietnamese troops.

The Deng leadership in Peking also hopes to discourage the growing trend toward dialogue between Vietnam and several member-states of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). □