

INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

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Vol. 22, No. 11

June 11, 1984

USA \$1.25 UK 50p

West German Trade Unions Strike for 35-Hour Week



Metalworkers banner: "Cutting worktime means creating jobs."

Persian Gulf
New U.S. Threats
Against Iran

Argentina
Troubles Mount for
Alfonsín Regime

Ireland
Broad Protests
Hit Reagan Visit

Speech by Daniel Ortega
The Bitter Costs of U.S. War on Nicaragua

The U.S. threat to Iran

By Ernest Harsch

Claiming that Iran is a danger to oil shipping lanes in the Persian Gulf, Washington has significantly escalated its threats against Iran since late May and has taken steps to deepen U.S. military involvement in the region. Its Arab allies are locking arms to increase their own support for Iraq in its three-and-a-half-year war of aggression against the Iranian revolution.

In a May 22 televised news conference, President Reagan estimated the chances of U.S. involvement in a shooting war in the Persian Gulf as "very slight." Yet his administration's concrete actions speak much more loudly.

On May 26, White House officials revealed that the Reagan administration is preparing to supply the proimperialist regime in Saudi Arabia with KC-135 airborne tankers, which would provide inflight refueling for its U.S.-supplied F-15 jet fighters. This would greatly bolster the capabilities of the Saudi air force in the Persian Gulf region.

The Saudi monarchy, along with the regimes in Kuwait and several other Arab states, have been key backers of Iraq, providing it with some \$35 billion in aid since Iraqi President Saddam Hussein launched his war against Iran in 1980.

The KC-135s will remain operationally part of the U.S. Air Force, raising the threat of direct involvement of U.S. personnel in any military clashes between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

A day after the provision of the KC-135s was announced, U.S. officials said that the number of Stinger anti-aircraft missiles being sent to Saudi Arabia would be doubled, from 200 to 400. Under the pretext of training Saudi personnel to use them, between 20 and 30 U.S. troops are being dispatched to Saudi Arabia. Maj. Gen. Edward Tixier, the Pentagon's top Middle East expert, has also been sent to Saudi Arabia, as well as a 15-man U.S. military mission to Kuwait.

Washington has likewise asked the Saudi regime to permit the establishment of a "temporary" U.S. military base on the Saudi coast, and currently has some 20 U.S. warships in nearby waters.

Among Washington's imperialist allies, London has military personnel in Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait, while Paris has troops stationed in Djibouti, at the mouth of the Red Sea.

This imperialist military buildup in the region is directed against Iran, under the guise of protecting international oil traffic through the gulf.

But it is not Iran that endangers that traffic. It is the Iraqi regime. It was Saddam Hussein who started the war. It was the Iraqi regime

that declared Iran's Kharg Island — the main Iranian oil terminal in the gulf — an "exclusion zone," in which any ships are liable to be attacked. And it was Iraqi planes that bombed and strafed nearly 70 ships in the gulf in the past three years. Iran, in contrast, has been specifically accused of attacking just four ships.

If the imperialists and their Arab allies were really concerned about the safety of oil tankers, the first thing they would do is stop supporting Hussein's war. But that is not their concern.

"Washington's concerns," Leslie Gelb frankly admitted in the May 27 *New York Times*, "center on maintaining political stability in the Arabian peninsula and preventing the spread of Iran's version of Islamic fundamentalism." By "Islamic fundamentalism," Gelb means the massive anti-imperialist mobilizations that have fired the Iranian revolution, and the political attraction that those mobilizations hold for

workers and peasants throughout the Middle East. It is because of this concern that Washington supports Iraq in the war.

Yet Iraq has been losing the war. Its troops have been driven out of most of Iran.

By attacking oil tankers in the gulf, the Saddam Hussein regime now hopes to provoke an escalation of the war, leading to more direct intervention by the Saudi, Kuwaiti, and other Arab regimes.

Washington clearly hopes that the involvement of its local allies will prove sufficient to deal a major blow to Iran. But if it is not, U.S. officials are already discussing ways to bring U.S. military might more directly to bear.

"To hear some of these officials talk," Gelb reported in his *Times* article, "they would not mind an opportunity to use American military power quickly and decisively" through a "successful and low-cost operation against Iran."

Such talk, combined with the military moves the Pentagon is already making in the region, underlines the danger that faces the people of Iran. Now, more than ever, they need the broadest possible solidarity in their fight to defeat the Iraqi aggressors and to defend their country and revolution from imperialist attack. □

State-supported terrorists go a step too far in Israel

By Fred Murphy

A massacre of Palestinians as dramatic as that of the Sabra and Shatila refugee-camp killings in Lebanon in 1982 was narrowly averted at the end of April when Israeli authorities decided to dismantle a Jewish terrorist network operating in the occupied West Bank.

The terrorists — whose ranks include some of the top figures in the Zionist settlements in the occupied territories — had placed dynamite bombs aboard five East Jerusalem buses and timed them to explode at an hour when they would have been packed with Palestinian Muslim worshippers traveling home from Friday prayer services. According to the May 3 *New York Times*, "the suspects told interrogators that they carefully chose a bus line running from Jerusalem to the Kalandia refugee camp because they were sure that only Arabs, and no Jews, would be aboard."

In fact, two of the buses had been chartered to carry groups of Jewish and German tourists. Knowledge of this was undoubtedly a factor in the Israeli government's decision to arrest the terrorists and send explosives experts to dismantle the bombs.

Twenty-five of those detained were formally indicted on May 23. All are charged with membership in a "terrorist organization." They are also accused of involvement in one or more of the following terrorist acts or conspiracies, in addition to the bus-bomb plot:

- The June 2, 1980, car-bombings that

maimed the elected Palestinian mayors of Nablus and Ramallah on the West Bank, Bassam Shaka and Karim Khalaf. Shaka lost both legs and Khalaf lost a foot, while Mayor Ibrahim Tawil of Bireh narrowly escaped a third bomb, planted in his automobile. An Israeli explosives expert was blinded when the latter bomb went off.

- The July 26, 1983, attack by masked gunmen on the Islamic College in the West Bank city of Hebron, in which three persons were killed and 33 wounded.

- An elaborate plot to destroy with explosives the two Muslim mosques atop the Temple Mount in Jerusalem — the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque. This site is considered Islam's third-holiest shrine. "Sources said the suspects conducted experiments to determine how much explosive material would be needed and where it should be placed" in order to leave the Western Wall, a Jewish holy place, unscathed, the May 13-20 *Jerusalem Post* weekly edition reported.

Besides those indicted (whose names have all been withheld by the authorities), Rabbi Moshe Levinger was also detained for questioning and held for ten days. Some reports suggested he had been the "spiritual authority" behind the terrorist network. Levinger is a leading figure in Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful), an ultra-Zionist outfit that has long spearheaded Jewish settlement in the areas of Palestine seized by Israel in its 1967 war

against the Arab countries. All the accused belong to the group.

Gush Emunim's settlements include Kiryat Arba, now the largest in the West Bank. They have been established in a provocative fashion directly adjacent to Arab population centers. At the core of Gush Emunim is a private army of settler-vigilantes, armed and aided by the official Israeli military. Shootings and harassment of Palestinians in the occupied territories by these racists have long been tolerated by the Israeli government as a supplement to its own, official terrorism.

In seeking to escalate Zionist terror against the Palestinians and provoke what investigators termed a "mass exodus of Arabs," the Gush Emunim thugs were only following the logic of the regime's policies and going a step further along the course pursued by the Israeli state since its inception. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and his predecessor Menachem Begin themselves led terrorist organizations called the Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Lehi (or Stern Gang) in the 1940s; their operations, such as the 1948 massacre of Palestinians at Deir Yassin, were instrumental in driving out much of the Arab population and clearing the way for the creation of the Israeli state.

The leading role in the 1948 war, in which more than 700,000 Palestinians were uprooted from their homes by force and violence, was played by the Zionist currents now grouped in the opposition Labor Alignment. This bloc governed Israel from its founding until Begin's election in 1977 and was responsible for the 1967 war and the first ten years of occupation and settlement.

The way was paved for the terror network's plots by the ruling Likud coalition's encouragement and toleration of Gush Emunim. One current of thought within the Likud, represented by ex-Defense Minister Ariel Sharon and other top officials, has openly called for the mass expulsion to Jordan of Palestinians from the occupied territories. In February 1983, Minister of Agriculture Mikhail Dekel declared that "it is necessary to strive to deport the Arabs from the area" and settle 100,000 more Jews on the West Bank within two years so that "no government will be able to return it to the Arabs."

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 aimed at smashing the Palestine Liberation Organization so thoroughly that the conditions for mass deportation of Palestinians from the occupied territories and southern Lebanon would be created.

But despite the setbacks dealt the PLO, the Palestinian struggle has not been crushed. The Shamir regime evidently feared that a terrorist outrage on the scale of the planned bus bombings would have called forth massive Arab resistance and sharply accelerated the international discrediting of the Zionist state.

"A bloodbath, as contemplated by those who planted the bombs beneath the buses, would have had worldwide repercussions," wrote Reuven Yaron, ex-chairman of the Israeli Broadcasting Association, in the May 13-

20 *Jerusalem Post*. "It would have created a political climate in which the government of Israel would have found it extremely difficult, if not totally impossible, to resist the tremendous pressures brought to bear upon it." Yaron saw "little doubt that, within a very short time, it would have led to the loss of Judea and Samaria" (the Zionists' term for the occupied West Bank areas of Palestine).

Shamir's move to put distance between his ruling coalition and its own most extreme elements in no way signals a halt to the policy of seizing Palestinian land and settling more and more Jews in the occupied territories. Indeed, Shamir declared in parliament May 21 that "the splendid enterprise of Zionist Jewish settlement of the various parts of the Land of Is-

rael will continue with the support and full encouragement of the government."

Nor does the opposition Labor Alignment, which seeks to replace the Likud in power in elections scheduled for July, offer any alternative. Labor leader Shimon Peres has declared that he will never uproot the West Bank settlements and has pledged to put the Jordan Valley area of the West Bank under full Israeli sovereignty.

The Israeli rulers' determination to pursue this course will continue to run up against the resistance of the Palestinian people. Officially sponsored anti-Arab terror will thus continue to be an indispensable weapon in the Zionists' hands, despite the current arrests and prosecutions. □

—IN THIS ISSUE—

Closing news date: May 29, 1984

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----|--|
| FEATURES | 347 | No progress on acid rain — by Steve Craine |
| BRITAIN | 340 | Miners' wives mobilize to back strike — by Denny Fitzpatrick and Marcella Fitzgerald |
| | 341 | Labor Party youth hail miners — by Paula Frampton, Helen Flynn, and Andy Brooking |
| WEST GERMANY | 342 | Workers strike for 35-hour week — by Will Reissner |
| NEW ZEALAND | 344 | Muldoon aims blows at unions — by Dave Armstrong |
| HONG KONG | 348 | Trotskyists discuss "1997 question" |
| NICARAGUA | 350 | The bitter costs of Washington's war — Speech by Daniel Ortega |
| AUSTRALIA | 353 | Nicaraguan officials on tour — by Gordon Adler |
| ARGENTINA | 354 | Troubles mount for Alfonsin — by Marcelo Zugadi |
| BOLIVIA | 357 | Two general strikes in three weeks — by Fred Murphy |
| SOUTHERN AFRICA | 358 | "Peace" pacts mask war — by Ernest Harsch |
| LEBANON | 360 | New cabinet, old conflicts — by Fred Murphy |
| IRELAND | 368 | Protests hit Reagan visit — by Margaret Jayko |
| SELECTIONS FROM THE LEFT | 361 | |
| DOCUMENTS | 349 | RML of Hong Kong on British withdrawal |
| | 362 | Dominica activist Bill Riviere on Grenada |
| | 366 | The peace movement in East Germany — by Günter Minnerup |
| | 367 | "The Left and the USSR" — by Oliver MacDonald |

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INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS (ISSN 0162-5594) is published every other Monday except the first in January and the third and fourth in August for \$25 per year by Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

flects editorial opinion, unsigned material stands on the program of the Fourth International.

To Subscribe: For one-year subscriptions in the U.S. or Canada send US\$25.00. Subscription correspondence should be addressed to: Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Telephone: (212) 929-6933.

For airmail subscriptions to Britain, Ireland, and continental Europe send US\$35.00 for one year; US\$17.50 for six months. Write for subscription rates to all other countries.

For air-speeded subscriptions to Australia: Write to Pathfinder Press, P.O. Box 515, Broadway 2007. In New Zealand: Write to Socialist Books, P.O. Box 8852, Auckland.

We prefer payment in bank drafts or postal checks payable in U.S. dollars because of the charges involved in clearing personal checks drawn on other currencies. However, personal checks will be accepted, with an additional 5 percent added for clearing charges.

Please allow five weeks for change of address. Include your old address, and, if possible, an address label from a recent issue.

Intercontinental Press is published by the 408 Printing and Publishing Corporation, 408 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Offices at 408 West Street, New York, N.Y.

Miners' wives mobilize to back strike

Thousands march, organize pickets

**By Denny Fitzpatrick
and Marcella Fitzgerald**

AYLESHAM, KENT — The national miners strike in Britain is now in its third month, with approximately 86 percent of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) membership out on strike and more than 121 pits closed (roughly two-thirds). The strike has two major focuses at the moment. First, the picketing of the Nottingham miners who still refuse to join the strike, and second, the picketing of ports, steelworks, and power stations in order to make the strike more effective.

The Nottingham area has had a traditionally moderate union leadership and enjoys higher productivity bonuses than other areas. In spite of this tradition, some 33 percent or more of

The authors, postal workers in London, traveled to the mining village of Aylesham, Kent, to interview wives of striking miners there.

the miners in the area are out on strike, reportedly many of them younger workers. The area has now become a center for mass picketing. And on May 14, 45,000 miners responded to a call by NUM President Arthur Scargill for a demonstration in Nottingham.

At the rally, Scargill appealed to Nottingham miners to support the strike. The effects of their staying on the job are greatly exaggerated by the National Coal Board and the media, but nevertheless the disunity among the miners is what the Tories are interested in, not the amount of coal produced. Scargill pointed out that they, too, were in the firing line. South Notts and North Derby miners faced cuts of 50 percent according to the National Coal Board plans; North Notts and Yorkshire, cuts of 20 percent to 25 percent.

'This leadership will lead'

The miners' determination to win was summed up when Scargill said, "If it takes until November or December, we will win. You have a leadership prepared to lead, not a leadership whose only interest is a seat in the House of Lords. I pledge that this leadership will not accept pit closures. The leadership will lead until we win."

The NUM is also picketing power stations, ports unloading imported coal, and steelworks, which rely on coal to operate. The biggest steel union, the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC), is part of the triple alliance of coal, rail, and steel unions. But the ISTC leadership,

which sold jobs for a small wage increase after a 13-week strike in 1980, is now playing on the fears of those workers left by encouraging them to believe that they can save their plants if they maintain as normal a pace of work as possible. So, although the ISTC is giving moral and financial support to the strike, the union leadership is demanding that large supplies of coal be allowed into the plants.

The NUM, however, is attempting to restrict all coal other than that which is required to keep the furnaces going, and the mass pickets have been posted, especially on the Ravenscraig plant in Scotland, which is itself under threat of closure. The message is, "If the pits close, so will the steelworks. Our fight is yours."

This fight is crucial to the continued unity of the triple alliance and has been recognized in Scotland where a day of action took place on May 9. As the strike has gone on, solidarity on the ground has deepened, and a mood of restrained optimism is in the air. Health workers, teachers, and rail workers are now considering action in their sectors. A major car plant was closed May 21. Rail workers will be in action over their pay claim at the end of the month, and Scargill has publicly asked rail workers to bring their action on pay forward to join the strike with the miners.

Action groups

But there is also a third focus to this strike. Miners' wives have organized themselves to fight the closure of the pits. In an unprecedented explosion of self-activity of working-class women, miners' wives action groups have been set up all over the country.

In Nottingham, the center of picketing directed at working miners, 23 out of 25 pit villages have set up groups to organize action. On May 12, 10,000 miners' wives marched in Barnsley, Yorkshire, to demonstrate and show their solidarity with the miners. At the rally, Arthur Scargill was given a tremendous ovation. The women sang at the tops of their voices, "Here we go, here we go," and "Arthur Scargill, Arthur Scargill, we'll support you evermore."

The NUM women's movement has really taken off. Women are organizing picketing at pits. And last week several were arrested, including Ann Scargill.

The Aylesham women's committee was established during the 1972 national miners strike. It was set up again this year and responded to television coverage of Nottingham wives escorting their husbands to cross picket lines by organizing a coach to Leicester and



Miners have won broad support.

demonstrating in support of the strike to save the pits.

As Margaret Tech explained, "In the 1972 strike, the women didn't have a lot to say in it, really. But in this one, we want to prove that we can be involved just as the men can." Tech went on to say, "In 1972 they had a committee, but not on a big scale, maybe 10 involved, more or less trying to organize things, doing the food parcels and that. But we never had big meetings or marches outside Kent. The women have come out more on this one. In 1972 they never came out of their houses to do it, but this time they have."

A fight for the future

As well as speaking at meetings up and down the country and organizing demonstrations, the women are involved in organizing the whole community around the strike. This includes communal meals for children, Thursday evening meetings for the women, and attendance at the men's daily pit-head meetings in the mornings. They said that they were surprised themselves how well they had stood up for the 10-week strike and felt that this was because they knew it was a fight for the future. There were no complaints, and morale was high.

And as Kathy Loomer put it later, "Women have fought all their lives. Look at the suffragettes and the fight for the vote." We talked about how the strike was to be won, and the response was clear: by sticking together, unemployed and employed.

The women saw that the strike was political because it challenged Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's policies, and felt that what they had seen on their travels was proof of the support that exists throughout the labor movement for this strike.

They felt, too, that the union leadership was partly to blame for holding back those workers who were willing to take action if called on to do so. Similarly, they were critical of the Labour Party leadership's role so far, especially given Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock's position on the national ballot.*

As Mary Golden said, "Neil Kinnock has not been much help. He's lost a lot of popularity amongst the working class now. All he's talking about is calling for a ballot. He's got no right to do that; it has nothing to do with him. We've had our ballots." She went on to note that more than three-quarters of miners are already on strike. The majority rules.

There was general disappointment in Kinnock's leadership. "He's let us down. People feel they've got no true labor leadership."

When asked about Tony Benn, the leader of the 1981 fight for reforms to make the Labour Party more accountable, they said, "He's behind us. Whether it's for votes or not, we don't know, but he's shown more solidarity with us than Neil Kinnock has."

As to how to get a Labour Party leadership that speaks for workers' interests, they felt that national strike action or general strike action would make it clear to the Labour Party just where working people stood. In sharp contrast to Kinnock, they look to Scargill as the kind of leader they require.

When asked if they agreed with Scargill's recent statement that the working class needed a government that was as loyal to them as Thatcher was to the ruling class, they replied, "Arthur Scargill's always right, in our eyes anyway. He fights for the miners."

Oppose U.S. missiles

These women felt they had been educated during the course of the strike. One issue was especially significant.

Supporters of the weekly *Socialist Action* newspaper arranged for them to listen to a woman speaker from the struggle at the Greenham Common U.S. air base in Reading, west of London. This base is the site of cruise missiles that have come to Britain, and the women-only peace camp has been there for two years in spite of continual evictions and police harassment. Although the miners' wives had heard about the protest before the strike began, they felt now that they really understood the issues, especially since the closures of pits is directly linked to the increased use of nuclear power.

As part of the building for the June 9 Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament demonstration

*The Conservative government and right-wing forces in the NUM had campaigned for a national referendum of union members on the strike, in the hope that the Scargill leadership would be defeated.

against Reagan's visit to Britain, the women's committee at Aylesham has agreed to organize a public meeting at which speakers will present a talk and slide show from a recent visit to Nicaragua.

Labour Party youth hail miners

Conference makes strike solidarity top priority

**By Paula Frampton,
Helen Flynn, and Andy Brooking**

LONDON — The National Conference of the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS), held over the Easter weekend, April 20–23, marked a big step forward in the development of the Labour Party's youth organization.

The conference took place against the backdrop of momentous events in the class struggle, from the intensification of the war drive against the Nicaraguan revolution to the miners' struggle in Britain. These events clearly inspired the 3,000 young workers attending the conference, and their response gave the whole event a combative spirit. The impact of the class struggle made this conference markedly different from previous LPYS conferences.

The LPYS, which is the official youth organization of the Labour Party, has for many years been dominated by the Militant Tendency. The newspaper *Militant* around which the tendency is organized, presents itself as the "Marxist paper for Labour and Youth."

However, while the *Militant* has carried articles giving a "Marxist" analysis of the class struggle, the actual political practice of the tendency has been evolving to the right for many years. This movement to the right reflects the pressure brought to bear on the workers movement by the imperialist state and its allies in the labor movement. Indeed, the *Militant's* political capitulation has been most dramatically expressed on international issues: the Militant Tendency is hostile to the national liberation struggle in Ireland, and it refused to come out in opposition to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's war in the Malvinas.

Sandinista youth greetings

This year's conference, however, marked a dramatic turnaround in this process. While not changing their fundamental outlook, the leadership of the Militant Tendency has been forced to respond positively to decisive events in the class struggle.

The most dramatic event of the weekend was the greetings given to the whole conference by a leading member of the July 19 Sandinista Youth of Nicaragua. His speech outlined the gains of the Nicaraguan revolution, going on to extend solidarity to the struggle of British mine workers and to the LPYS itself. The conference responded with a thunderous standing ovation.

Leaders of the LPYS followed this by calling for tens of thousands of young workers to mobilize against President Reagan's visit to

Britain on June 9. When asked if they would be coming on the anti-Reagan demonstration, the Aylesham women said, "If the men aren't, the women will be. We're not only fighting for the miners strike, we're fighting for everyone." □

Britain on June 9.

At least 150 young miners attended the conference, and their struggle, alongside the international issues, dominated the proceedings. Hundreds of pounds were collected for National Union of Mineworkers strike funds. Most significantly the leadership gave a clear line of march for involving the LPYS fully in support of the miners. Local branches were asked to make solidarity with the miners their number one priority by organizing collections in their own workplaces, by supporting the miners' picket lines, and by giving their struggle the maximum publicity through local meetings and leaflets.

Turn toward class struggle

The clear call for the LPYS to involve itself both in the miners strike and in the demonstrations against Reagan's visit marks a radical change in the lead given by the Militant Tendency. Until now they have attempted to keep the LPYS isolated from full and active participation in the class struggle.

This turn toward active participation in the class struggle has been forced on the Militant Tendency by events themselves. Despite its leadership, the LPYS has been recruiting large numbers of revolutionary-minded young workers. In the last year alone some thirty new local branches have been set up, and existing ones have grown. Total membership is now in the region of 10,000.

Many of these youths have joined the LPYS after coming into political activity through campaigns against nuclear weapons and the imperialist war drive. Others joined through their experiences as union militants. Many of the new recruits are already political activists. They are deeply inspired by the development of the national and international class struggle, and they want their organization to play an active part in that struggle. They are not satisfied by the Militant's sterile sectarianism and do-nothing attitude. They know that you cannot build a mass socialist youth organization by propagandist hectoring from the sidelines of the class struggle.

The Militant Tendency leadership of the LPYS has been forced to respond to this pressure as the class struggle intensifies. If carried through to their conclusion, these shifts toward active involvement in the class struggle would enable the LPYS to grow rapidly and to begin to offer a political lead to radical workers in all sections of the labor movement.

However, it was also clear that this turn to

activity has been made without the LPYS leadership altering its basic outlook. In the discussion on Ireland, supporters of the *Militant* were as hostile as ever to the national struggle and to Sinn Féin. Despite the warmth of the response to the Sandinista youth, *Militant* supporters remain deeply sectarian toward the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). Resolutions criticizing the "terrorist strategy" of the Irish republican movement and attacking the FSLN for holding back the Nicaraguan revolution were passed by large majorities.

Supporters of the revolutionary youth paper *Revolution* found that the contradictions in the politics of the Militant Tendency leadership left many *Militant* supporters in a state of con-

fusion. Many were willing to discuss with supporters of *Revolution*.

Many attended a lunch-time meeting on Nicaragua that *Revolution* supporters helped to organize. Later that day, about 50 young miners turned up to talk with Claire Fraenzl, a U.S. woman coal miner and socialist. In both of these meetings *Revolution* supporters stressed the links between the international class struggle and the fight against the reactionary government in Britain. About 300 copies of a *Revolution* supplement given over to coverage of the miners' strike were sold, together with 40 copies of *Intercontinental Press* and numerous pamphlets on Cuba, Nicaragua,

and El Salvador.

The mood of political radicalization and combativity that dominated the conference was summed up by one young miner who — after explaining that he could not contribute financially to the defense of the Nicaraguan revolution because he had been on strike for six weeks — presented the Nicaraguans with National Union of Mineworkers badges in a gesture of international solidarity.

If this spirit can be developed and deepened, then this year's LPYS conference will have marked a major step forward in the battle to build a revolutionary leadership for the working class in Britain. □

West Germany

Workers strike for 35-hour workweek

Major campaign to combat rising unemployment

By Will Reissner

Since February, major West German trade unions have been involved in a campaign to cut the workweek to 35 hours with no cut in pay, as a means of reducing unemployment.

This fight is being spearheaded by IG Metall, the country's largest union, with more than 2.5 million members in the steel, auto, and engineering industries, and by the 145,000-member printers union, IG Druck und Papier.

On May 28, a huge crowd of trade-unionists gathered in a steady drizzle in Bonn to press the demand for a 35-hour week and to protest the government's decision to deny unemployment compensation to some 250,000 workers who have been idled by strikes and lockouts in the auto industry since May 14.

IG Metall leaders estimated that 230,000 workers attended the Bonn rally.

The strikes that began on May 14 had been preceded by warning actions organized in February, March, and April by IG Metall and IG Druck und Papier. These included one- and two-hour warning strikes in individual factories, rallies involving workers from several plants, and actions where workers "tried out" the 35-hour week by leaving their jobs after putting in a seven-hour day.

As Peter Bartelheimer noted in the May 21 *International Viewpoint* (published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International), "in no other West European country has the demand for a 35-hour week without cut in pay come so much to the center of the fight against mass unemployment and austerity as it has in the German Federal Republic."

In the past three years the number of jobless workers in West Germany has nearly tripled, rising from 889,000 to 2.35 million. The

unions estimate that an immediate reduction in the workweek to 35 hours would create 1.5 million new jobs in the country.

Attack on unions

The campaign of the West German unions for the 35-hour workweek took some time to develop. The bureaucratic union leaderships, which are tied to the Social Democratic Party (SPD), have long sought to avoid strike action, striving instead to maintain social peace through negotiated agreements with the employers and government. This was especially true when the SPD was in power.

But in 1982 the SPD was voted out of office and a right-wing Christian Democratic-Free Democratic Party coalition government came into power, signalling a stepped-up ruling-class assault against the power of the West German unions. The rising unemployment rate and the planned "restructuring" of certain basic industries was an important weapon in this.

A section of the union bureaucracy soon realized that its very base in the unions was threatened. For instance, Franz Steinkühler, who was elected vice-president of IG Metall in 1983, noted that the bosses want to make the unions "toothless and tame," and "want to use unemployment to achieve that."

As a result, the leaderships of some of West Germany's unions began to sanction more forceful resistance. This found an enthusiastic response among significant layers of the unions' ranks.

The demand for a 35-hour workweek was first raised in a prominent way during a six-week steel strike in 1978-79. But at the time the leadership of IG Metall settled for an extra week of vacation instead.

Since then, however, the steel industry has shrunk significantly throughout Western

Europe, and it was announced that 25,000 more jobs are to be eliminated in the West German steel industry in the next two years.

As the jobless toll climbed, IG Metall has placed more emphasis on the 35-hour demand. In the past year the shorter workweek became a key focus of the union's organizational and educational activities.

Kohl and bosses dig in

The employers' organizations and the government are putting up stiff resistance to the union campaign for a shorter workweek. The government and bosses argue that anything less than 40 hours will ruin the economy.

West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl dismissed the union's demand as "stupid and ridiculous." The minister of the economy, Count Otto von Lambsdorff sought to red-bait the printers' union, which is playing a big role in the campaign, by calling it a "Marxist cadre organization."

The government and the employers have argued that any reduction in the workweek will make West German products uncompetitive, will cause the shaky economic upturn to falter, and will therefore result in a loss of still more jobs.

The government has put forward its own alternative — early retirement and increased use of part-time and temporary labor. A new law went into effect on May 1 making it possible for workers 58 or older to retire early on 65 percent of their gross wages.

The intense propaganda campaign against the 35-hour week has had a certain impact, including within the trade union movement, given the high level of insecurity many workers feel after three years of sharply rising unemployment.

Eight national union federations have com-

mitted themselves to the fight for the shorter workweek. But five other federations are not supporting the 35-hour week struggle.

In fact, in 1983 the chemical workers union signed a contract confirming the 40-hour week until 1987, and on April 2, 1984, the building, stone, and earth workers union ratified the 40-hour week until 1988. In their propaganda against the 35-hour week campaign, the employers and government have pointed to these contracts as examples of "practical trade unionism."

The government's alternative to the 35-hour week — early retirement at age 58 — would open up only 27,000 jobs each year. And in the hard-hit steel industry in particular, the impact of early retirement would be negligible. As Peter Bartelheimer noted, "the speed-up has gotten so intense that there are hardly any older people still working in the steel and engineering industry." Bartelheimer added that in these industries "the average age of workers leaving the job because they cannot do the work had already fallen to 58 in 1982."

Selective strikes

The tactics employed by the unions have been determined, to an extent, by West Germany's labor laws, which put severe obstacles in the way of the unions putting their full weight behind the campaign. Strikes, for example, are very difficult to call and finance. Before a strike can take place, 75 percent of all the workers affected must vote "yes." This means not only that the strike call must have overwhelming support, but the turnout to vote must also be extremely high.

Once a strike is approved, unions must pay each striker weekly benefits at a rate specified by law. In the case of IG Metall, each worker collects weekly strike pay equal to that worker's yearly dues payments to the union. In a large strike, therefore, the union would very quickly run out of money to pay the strike benefits imposed by law.

As a result of these legal obstacles, IG Metall has tried to maximize the impact of the strikes it calls while minimizing the number of workers called out.

For example, in the present campaign for the 35-hour week, IG Metall has focused initially on the highly profitable auto industry, which is in the midst of a boom at present. The union has called out workers only in key auto-parts plants rather than in the huge assembly plants. By stopping the flow of critical parts, the union has been able to shut down many of the assembly plants without having to call those workers out on strike.

Thirteen thousand workers in auto-parts plants went out on strike May 14. Within days their strike had effectively cut production in the auto industry. By the end of the week, the 21,000 workers in the giant Mercedes-Benz plant in Sindelfingen were idled by lack of parts. Soon after, BMW had to close all its plants in West Germany, and other manufacturers also shut their gates.



Union demonstration in West Germany. Banner reads: "Young and old, German and foreign colleagues, together for the 35-hour week."

Under the impact of the trade-union mobilizations, the two opposition parties in parliament — the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Green Party — have come out in support of the 35-hour week campaign.

When the SPD was in power, until 1982, SPD Chancellor Helmut Schmidt treated the 35-hour week as a worthy but far-off dream. "I hope I live to see it," Schmidt stated. He also linked any reduction in the workweek to a corresponding reduction in wages.

But after the IG Metall convention in late 1983, SPD leader Willy Brandt announced that the SPD stood "shoulder to shoulder" with the union on the 35-hour week. Since then the party has provided some support to the union campaign.

The Green Party, a loose coalition of environmentalists, pacifists, and counterculturalists, did not initially support the 35-hour week fight.

A significant wing of the party opposes what it calls "industrialism" and tends to view trade unions as well as the bosses as the enemy. This wing argued that the demand for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay reflected unhealthy "consumerist thinking." In fact, they asserted, in "an environmentally conscious economy" people might have to work 45 hours per week or even more.

But as the campaign developed, the party gradually came over to the side of the trade unions. The party's 1983 election program contained a call for a 35-hour week "with no cut in pay for lower and middle wage earners" as a means of fighting mass unemployment. The Greens also called for preferential hiring of women for the new jobs that would be created by the shorter workweek, in order to "progressively eliminate sexual discrimination in jobs and give equal opportunity to women."

In an attempt to broaden support for the struggle, the IG Metall leadership has for the first time called for building a broad, mass solidarity movement outside the union's own ranks. In many cities, there have been neigh-

borhood and citizens groups for the 35-hour week established that are independent of the union but work with local union bodies.

Important stakes for European labor

The outcome of the campaign in West Germany could have important repercussions throughout Western Europe. In the ten countries that make up the European Economic Community (EEC), the number of unemployed workers rose from 4.6 million in 1975 to 12.6 million in 1983.

The steel industry in Western Europe has been hit especially hard. In 1974, 792,000 workers were employed in Western European steel mills. Today their numbers have dropped to 500,000, with more layoffs scheduled.

Under current guidelines set by the EEC's European Community Iron and Coal Commission, another 90,000 to 100,000 jobs will be eliminated in the industry in the next two years.

The impact of these layoffs will spread across Western Europe, with up to 25,000 jobs lost in France, 9,000 to 10,000 in Belgium, 25,000 in Italy, 4,500 in Luxembourg, 2,000 in the Netherlands, and an as yet unspecified number in Britain.

The plans to gut productive capacity in the steel industry have already provoked large protests in Belgium and France.

If the West German union movement is successful in winning its objective, that victory would give a boost to the demand for a 35-hour week elsewhere in Western Europe. Peter Bartelheimer noted that "this makes international solidarity for the 35-hour week demand all the more important, so that everyone can work shorter hours." □

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Muldoon aims blows at union movement

Workers press for action against wage freeze, antilabor laws

By Dave Armstrong

AUCKLAND — Union action is growing in New Zealand to end wage controls that have frozen all wages and salaries for almost two years. During that period workers have suffered a significant decline in living standards, with prices rising some 20 percent since the last round of union awards (contracts) were signed in late 1981.

The latest blow came on March 23 when it was announced that the freeze would be extended at least 12 months more, with the only compensation for workers being a general wage order of \$8 [NZ\$1 = US\$0.65] a week from April 1 of this year. After taxes, this gives only a little more than \$5 in the hand to most workers. The Federation of Labour (FOL) and the Combined State Unions, the two national union federations, have conservatively estimated that wages need to rise between \$17 and \$38 a week to compensate for increases in the cost of living.

The government is also insisting that tripartite negotiations between itself, the employers, and the unions over a new system of wage indexing be completed before controls are lifted. The government says such a system must take into account the "broad economic implications" of a wage rise and the "ability of an enterprise or industry to pay." That is, the FOL must accept the subordination of workers' living standards to the profit needs of big business.

In these negotiations the government and employers have insisted on the right of the government to intervene to overturn any wage settlement it considers "excessive." They are also seeking to undermine the system of national awards which prescribe minimum rates of pay for all workers in a given job category across the country.

The freeze was initially imposed in June 1982 along with a freeze on prices, company dividends, directors' fees, and rents. However, increased costs of imported goods could be passed on, and only in the area of wages was no provision made for appeals for exemption from the freeze. The rate of price increases has come down from an annual rate of 15 percent to a little under 4 percent, but this had more to do with a severe downturn in the New Zealand economy that saw registered unemployment (excluding those on special work schemes) jump more than 72 percent — from 47,000 in June 1982 to 81,062 in December 1983.

The freeze on prices, fees, and dividends was lifted on February 29, and on rents April 1. Inflation is now starting to rise again under the influence of the large government deficit

and looser controls on monetary growth designed to stimulate economic recovery for this election year.

The widespread opposition to the wage freeze was expressed on Oct. 28, 1982, in a massive demonstration of 40–60,000 workers in Auckland, the country's largest city, with 800,000 people. Smaller protests occurred in other centers around the same time. This was followed by rolling stoppages by some unions in the first half of 1983 for a \$20 a week wage rise.

Class-collaborationist perspective

Though supported by the FOL, these stoppages lacked a national lead and eventually petered out. From then until the most recent strikes, the trade union officialdom organized little rank-and-file action. Instead, they focused their attention on trying to get a deal through the tripartite talks, despite the fact that employer-government demands had made it clear that no agreement in line with workers' interests was possible.

This approach is consistent with the class-collaborationist perspective of the union bureaucracy — a belief that workers' and bosses' interests can be reconciled.

This view was spelled out during the tripartite talks in a letter to Prime Minister Robert Muldoon from the FOL and Combined State Unions in December 1983, which accepted that wages should be subject to the needs of the capitalist economy. "We acknowledge," said the letter, "that there is a need to allow national economic conditions to be brought to bear in considering the amount of any adjustment that was appropriate in a bargaining round."

The FOL secretary, Ken Douglas, wrote in the December *FOL Bulletin*, "Bargaining should be going on over how industry can be strengthened, how it can become more efficient, how it can become more productive, how it can even become more profitable. . . ."

Douglas of course adds that this should not be "at the expense of jobs, and not at the expense of driving living standards down." But that is the problem. The first and second parts of the statement are incompatible — a fact that should be understood by a man who claims to be a communist (he is also a prominent leader of the pro-Moscow Socialist Unity Party).

An important element in Muldoon's relative success in pushing ahead on his policies has been the fact that the blows of the antiworker offensive have been felt unevenly. Hardest hit are the low-paid, unemployed, women, Maoris, and Pacific islanders.

The government moved to undercut opposition to the freeze and divide workers by intro-

ducing tax cuts in October 1982. The cuts resulted in significant increases in net pay for the more highly paid workers, largely compensating them for the freeze in monetary terms. The big majority of workers, however, benefited only marginally or not at all. Many part-time workers faced tax increases. And of course any decrease in government revenue will be paid for by cutbacks in social services for working people.

But with the union bureaucracy based largely on the more privileged, higher paid, skilled workers with greater job security, the bureaucrats were relieved of some of the pressure for action that might otherwise have existed.

Calls for action

This abject failure of the union bureaucracy to point a way forward has led to increasing dissatisfaction and calls for action by workers. This was expressed at a special meeting of 1,000 union delegates in Auckland on March 26 to discuss the wage order. A number of delegates called for a general strike, and the usual congratulatory speeches for what the FOL has done were largely absent.

Following a special FOL conference in Wellington on April 2, FOL President Jim Knox announced that it had decided to back individual unions taking industrial or educational action in an endeavor to negotiate wages and conditions with individual employers. This still falls short of a nationally led industrial and political campaign, and FOL leaders have ruled out a general strike because "the time is not right." This will undermine workers' confidence in individual unions and workplaces to wage the type of determined struggle that will be necessary to win.

Already a number of workplaces have held stoppages to protest the freeze, and these are expected to grow in number.

The union bureaucracy has in the past argued as an article of faith that "we cannot win a confrontation with the government." Accordingly, the bureaucrats have led the retreat each time the government has thrown down the gauntlet. Now the government is again threatening to call an early election (currently scheduled for November) if widespread industrial action is taken against the freeze.

This time, however, reflecting the pressure they are under, FOL leaders are saying these threats should be ignored.

"Don't be put off with talk of a snap election," Knox told the Auckland delegates meeting. "If we don't do it this side of the election, we never will. The Labour Party will come out and support wage and salary workers — if they

don't they won't be the government."

The success up to now in pushing through the freeze, combined with the weak union opposition, has emboldened the government to attack the legal protection afforded unions by the first Labour government (1935-49) that became known as "compulsory unionism." The Industrial Law Reform Act, which came into effect on February 1, outlawed closed shops or the enforcement of any preference for hiring union members.

Under the system of "compulsory unionism," unions could negotiate for inclusion in the award of an "unqualified preference clause," ensuring that all workers covered by the award were union members. The only exceptions were agricultural workers and public servants, who had "voluntary" unions. As a result, 70 percent of wage and salary earners in New Zealand are union members — one of the highest percentages in the capitalist world.

Despite the penalties under the new law, thousands of workers in hundreds of worksites have made it clear they will not work alongside nonunion labour. In the first seven weeks after February 1, there were 17 strikes involving 4,500 workers that have successfully enforced this decision. As yet no employer has felt game to test the new law by taking workers or the union to court, despite the urging of some government ministers. Again, the FOL has backed workers taking action, and the potential exists at any time that one of the disputes will lead to a major confrontation over the law if any prosecutions are attempted.

At this stage it is unclear what the impact of the new law will be on total union membership.

But the employers are not simply going to sit back and let the workers decide. They will use every means at their disposal to weaken union coverage. Attempts will also be made to set up company and scab unions, the possibility for which is opened up in the new law.

It is workers in small workplaces that will be under the greatest pressure from employers to leave or not join unions. And it is in such places, with their weaker union presence, that the workers have the least power of resistance.

But, as FOL secretary Ken Douglas explained in the December 1983 *FOL Bulletin*: "Having dealt with those small and scattered sections of the workforce, the big monopolies will then have the opportunity to charge into the stronger sections and demand paybacks."

"The real plum on top of the cake for the big employers of this country and for this government are those strong sections of workers. They're the people the pruning knife is being sharpened for, to get their wages, rates and working conditions."

A united national campaign by the union movement against the law has been hampered by the class-collaborationist perspective of the union bureaucracy. Most of the unions' efforts have been directed at getting around the new law by trying to convince employers of the alleged benefits to them if all workers are in the union.

The attempt to eliminate "compulsory unionism" is combined with employer demands to get rid of the system of minimum rate national awards with their blanket coverage of all workers in a given job category. This system was won by workers at the same time as compulsory unionism, and the two have always been interconnected.

In its place, they want what they call a system of "recruitment and retention." That is, the right to hire at whatever wage people are willing to work — and thus to drive wages downward.

The present award system helps protect workers in plants and industries where the union is weaker. Their wages can be tied to those of workers in a stronger position to resist the bosses.

Throughout most of the period since World War Two, the bosses and their government never felt the need to launch such a concerted offensive as now against the system of "compulsory unionism" and blanket award coverage. This was because the full employment of those years meant that it was difficult for bosses to pay wage rates below average for the industry without their workers simply changing jobs.

But there was also an aspect of "compulsory unionism" that the bosses found beneficial — it helped create large bureaucratic structures in the unions protected by government laws and depending on employer cooperation. An arbitration and conciliation system was also imposed, with the union bureaucrats dependent on the goodwill of the Arbitration Court for deciding disputes with the bosses rather than militant rank-and-file action, which would threaten their own positions.

Unions could also be "de-registered" by the government if they failed to toe the line. This meant that a union could lose its bargaining rights and have its funds seized and handed over to a new scab union established in its place, which workers would be forced to join.

This power was used to break up the water-side workers and other unions during a long and bitter lockout on the waterfront in 1951, which broke the back of worker militancy until the 1970s. The arbitration system ensured that real wages during these years remained static despite the significant post-war economic growth and the virtual absence of unemployment.

Following the Arbitration Court's refusal to grant a general wage order in 1968, widespread strikes forced the court to change its mind and grant a 5 percent increase. This weakened the whole arbitration system, and workers began to use strikes more readily to back up wage claims. The average number of workers involved in strikes each year went from 27,000 in the decade 1959-69 to 77,000 in the years 1970-75. These strikes met with considerable success, with real wages rising some 25 percent between 1968 and 1975. This was assisted by a strong boom in the New Zealand economy and a labor shortage during that period.

Following the impact of the world economic recession on New Zealand in 1975, the capitalist class was determined to take back what it felt it had lost. November of that year saw the defeat of the 1972-75 Labour government — itself the product of the working-class radicalization — and the election of a more aggressive National Party government under Muldoon. Since then workers have faced a sustained offensive against their rights and living standards, as the bosses sought to use the escalating unemployment to keep wages down and unions weak.

Muldoon offensive rebuffed

This offensive scored some initial success, with real wages declining 6 percent from 1975 to 1977, as workers took time to adjust to the changed circumstances. But the basic strength of the unions remained intact, and resistance grew stronger despite Muldoon's re-election in 1978. The number of workers involved in strikes each year escalated again to 140,000 in the years 1976-82. Real wages began to rise again after 1977 — up to 8 percent by 1981. (These figures, which compare gross wage rates with price changes, exaggerate the real gains workers have made because the high inflation during the period discussed pushed workers into higher tax brackets, reducing the benefits of real gross wage gains. However the general picture remains valid.)

Attempts by the government to impose wage controls were defeated in 1979-80. A wage control law passed in 1979 had to be repealed following a general strike in September 1979 involving over 350,000 workers and a three-month strike in early 1980 at New Zealand Forest Product's Kinleith plant — the country's largest industrial complex, employing 4,500 workers. (The general strike is not included in the average annual strike figures quoted earlier.)

The government also suffered a major rebuff in its attempt to weaken union organization by requiring all unions to hold ballots of their membership on whether they supported compulsory unionism. Between October 1977 and September 1981, workers covered by 1,247 awards took part in 54 postal ballots and 2,925 special union meetings on this issue. Of those who voted, 84 percent were in favor of keeping the unqualified preference clause in their awards. In the process, many unions were revitalized as union activity, including more regular stop-work meetings and expanded delegate structures, was stepped up to enhance unions' attractiveness to workers.

However, the government and bosses were not about to give up. And following Muldoon's third election victory in 1981 the offensive was renewed — this time more determined than ever.

From the bosses' point of view they have no alternative. New Zealand capitalism has slipped significantly behind its competitors abroad, at a time of deepening international recessions and stagnating world trade. Economic growth has averaged less than one percent a

year since 1975, and inflation has been double the average in the imperialist countries.

A permanent deficit on overseas trade since then has seen the overseas debt grow by 400 percent to over \$14 billion — reportedly the highest per capita in the world. In part this reflects a structural weakness in New Zealand capitalism, which depends on agricultural exports. Meat, wool, and dairy products make up 70 percent of export earnings. World trade in these products is marked by significant overproduction and protectionism. Prices have constantly declined since 1974 relative to the price of imported industrial and consumer goods.

The bosses are determined to protect their profits at the expense of working people's rights and living standards. By cutting real wages, they hope to improve their competitive position. Government economic policy in recent years has also been directed to "restructuring" industry by increasing tax-breaks to export industries while reducing protection for

inefficient domestically oriented industry in the hope investment will be redirected to the export sector.

In the process thousands of jobs have gone by the board.

Toward the end of last year economic growth picked up. Profits are also on the rise — greatly assisted by the wage freeze. But this is only the beginning as far as the bosses are concerned.

The inaction of the union officialdom in the face of the renewed ruling class offensive has only strengthened the hand of the bosses and their government. The antiunion laws threaten a decisive weakening of some unions. However, the growing number of strikes demonstrate that the workers want to fight. And they are beginning to demand a firmer lead from their union officials.

Some are receptive to the class-struggle alternative being presented by revolutionary socialist workers organized in the Socialist Action League. □

New union strategy needed

Editorial from New Zealand 'Socialist Action'

[The following are excerpts from a front-page editorial that appeared in the April 6 issue of *Socialist Action*, the fortnightly newspaper of the Socialist Action League, New Zealand section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

In recent months thousands of workers have been standing up in action against the attacks of the Muldoon government and its big business masters.

This growing militancy at the grassroots level in sections of the labour movement is not, by and large, being reflected at the top of the trade union movement. Despite some strong words at times, the FOL [Federation of Labour] leadership's response, at the level of action, to the Muldoon-employer offensive has been marked by paralysis and timidity.

Those class conscious workers wanting to develop a massive and effective fightback against Muldoon and his masters need to address themselves to this leadership crisis within the trade union movement.

The union officials' efforts have been focused on trying to advance union wage and other claims through negotiations with the employers and the government, with strike action being seen only as a way to pressure the bosses into a change of attitude. In these negotiations they accept that preserving business profits is a starting point in negotiating wages and conditions for workers.

Above all they advise against any union confrontation with the government. This means avoiding any united mobilisation of the unions, precisely those tactics which most

strengthen the self-confidence and political consciousness of the working class and which bring the most pressure to bear on the employing class.

They also show in practice that, although they are prepared to take a stand on broader social and political issues like Maori or women's rights, they feel no responsibility to begin to mobilise union power around them. Unions "must narrowly reflect specific class interests for the workers we represent," FOL Secretary Ken Douglas told the *New Zealand Herald*.

What is needed is a complete break with this strategy of class-collaboration, of looking for non-existent areas of mutual interest between unions and employers. A discussion must begin inside the labour movement on what the goal of trade union struggle should be, and who to look to as allies in this struggle.

Class struggle approach

What is needed is to develop a class struggle approach — one that relies on deepening the consciousness, organisation, and mobilisation of the workers in the interests of all the exploited and oppressed, towards the inevitable confrontations with the government and its big business masters.

Where should class conscious workers look today to begin to resolve the leadership problem in the trade unions and strengthen class struggle trends? They should not look simply to a change of policy or personnel at the top of the FOL and the unions. This problem is not the product of a few individuals, but of a whole trend that has been consolidated in the unions over decades.

Rather they must look to those layers of rank-and-file workers who, with or without the help of their union officials, are beginning to move into struggle against the bosses. These defensive struggles for wage rises, in support of the closed shop, against cutbacks in meat or rail, etc. are the beginning for any fightback movement.

Solidarity

Vanguard workers should seek to build solidarity within their own unions with such struggles and maximise participation in FOL and other calls to action, however limited, whilst at the same time seeking to draw the lessons of their outcome. These struggles form the starting point for the necessary discussion within the unions of how to organise an effective working class fightback.

By the same token, conscious workers should encourage discussion and active solidarity in the workplaces and the unions with political struggles like those of *Te Kotahitanga*, the Immigration Bill protests, and those against the new Vietnam in Central America. Through this process the union membership begins to see who their real allies are — not the employers, but the oppressed at home and abroad — and the kind of political movement of the working class that needs to be built.

Into the discussion within the labour movement, it is also necessary to introduce an alternative economic and political programme which subordinates big business profits to the interests of the workers and all the oppressed.

In the place of the \$8 [per week raise], automatic and regular increases in wages and benefits equal to the rise in the cost of living. In place of unemployment, reduce the work week without loss of pay and launch government-funded public works to provide jobs for all at union wages. In place of factory closures, nationalise the companies involved and reopen them under workers' control.

Labour government

Such broad social measures cannot be won through union action alone. It requires a government as loyal to the workers as Muldoon is to the employers. Such a government can come to power only through the action of the workers and oppressed themselves.

Electing a Labour government is a start, but it is not sufficient by itself. David Lange and the other Labour MPs openly proclaim their commitment to the profits of big business. Only to the extent that the working class mobilises in struggle against the employing class, wins allies among all the oppressed, and fights to make the Labour Party responsible to the unions, will a Labour victory in 1984 open new perspectives for social advancement.

Because 1984 is election year, the attention of broad layers within the unions is being focused on political questions. Significant new opportunities are being presented to win a wider hearing for a class struggle perspective. □

No progress on acid rain

U.S., Canada suffer big environmental damage

By Steve Craine

The U.S. government is becoming increasingly isolated in its refusal to institute meaningful controls on a form of air pollution, known as acid rain, that is causing permanent ecological damage in the eastern United States and Canada.

On March 21, environmental and health ministers from Canada and nine European countries signed an agreement in Ottawa pledging to reduce atmospheric emissions of sulfur compounds, the primary cause of acid rain, by at least 30 percent in the next 10 years. The agreement is part of an effort to pressure the governments of the United States and Britain, both major producers of the pollutants, to join in clean-up efforts.

Demands of the Canadian federal government and the governors of six northeastern states forced President Ronald Reagan to address the issue of acid rain in his January 25 State of the Union speech. But he proposed no measures to deal with the sources of acid rain. He only called for more study of the problem.

But numerous studies have already been made, some of them by U. S. government agencies. All agree that thousands of lakes and streams and vast areas of forest are in danger of becoming unfit for life. The studies agree, moreover, that the source of the problem is the millions of tons of sulfur dioxide that are spewed into the atmosphere each year (26 million tons from U.S. sources alone), and that cutting back these emissions will result in an immediate and directly proportional decrease in the damage done.

While more study would help determine the exact patterns of diffusion of pollutants through the atmosphere, scientists generally agree that over half of the acid rain that falls in eastern Canada originates in the United States and that about 10 percent of the problem in the United States comes from Canadian sources.

Canada's ambassador to Washington, Allan Gotlieb, called acid rain "the most difficult and important issue" dividing Canada and the United States.

Sources of acid rain

The problem originates with the burning of fossil fuels, especially high-sulfur coal in generating plants for electricity. Sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides expelled from the plants' smokestacks mix with air and water vapor in the atmosphere to form acidic liquids and solids. These acids fall back to earth, often hundreds of miles from their source, in the form of rain, snow, hail, fog, or solid matter. Automobile exhausts are a smaller but also important contributor of acid precipitation.

In the forests and lakes of the New England states, Quebec, and the Maritime provinces,

which are downwind of the heavily industrialized Great Lakes region, this acid precipitation has increased the acidity of the water and soil to such an extent that many species of animal and plant life are in jeopardy.

The U.S. Congressional Office of Technology Assessment reported that 18 percent of the lakes and 21 percent of the stream miles in the eastern United States have been altered by acidity, some irreversibly. Already, 4,000 Canadian lakes can no longer support fish life, and it is estimated that 48,500 more lakes in Canada will become sterile within the next 20 years if acid precipitation continues at its present rate.

In addition to aquatic life, forests are being stunted by the changing environment. Acid precipitation carries away minerals necessary to support plant life and in extreme cases has been found to directly attack the outer surfaces of leaves, exposing them to bacteria and fungus infections or causing them to dry out. An overall slowdown in the growth rates of 20 to 30 percent of some commercially important softwoods has been observed over a long period of time in Appalachian forests.

Extensive damage in Europe

Some of the symptoms now seen in U.S. and Canadian forests were observed 20 or more years ago in Central Europe. Scientists fear that the present decline in tree growth may be a precursor to the kind of large-scale tree decline and death now afflicting an estimated 35 to 70 percent of Germany's forests.

"Something very dramatic is happening very

quickly to the forests of the Eastern United States," North Carolina State University plant pathologist Robert Bruck told the *New York Times* in February. "If we are going in the same line as Germany we are facing the ecological catastrophe of the century."

The National Academy of Sciences, in a report issued in June 1983, estimated total damage from acid precipitation at \$5 billion a year in the United States. As much as 8 percent of Canada's entire gross national product is believed to be at risk from the effects of this pollution. (Canada is one of the world's major producers of forest products.)

In 1980 the U.S. and Canadian governments agreed to try to cut emissions of sulfur dioxide, but Canadian authorities say Washington has reneged on this agreement.

Following Reagan's State of the Union speech, William Ruckelshaus, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, explained that Reagan had not called for a program to reduce sources of pollution "because the President is not persuaded we know enough to launch a major control program," which he called a "very expensive and potentially socially disruptive program."

The Canadian government expressed "deep disappointment" over Reagan's decision and pointed to the "virtual consensus that action on emission controls and not simply further research should be undertaken now."

In February Ottawa lodged a formal complaint with the U.S. State Department accusing the Reagan administration of using proposed studies as a stalling tactic to avoid implementation of meaningful clean-up programs. Canada's own pollution control efforts had been limited, pending cooperative action from across the border.

Canadian goals raised

But on March 7 environmental officials announced in Ottawa that Canada would move



European forest suffering effects of acid rain.

ahead on its own, without the U.S. government, to try to cut back emissions linked to acid rain by 50 percent in the next 10 years. The previous goal, set in 1982, was for a 25 percent reduction, with the understanding that more complete clean-up would be mandated only if Washington began to enforce similar standards.

The Canadian Coalition on Acid Rain pointed out that the earlier guidelines had not been implemented. Other Canadian environmentalists have criticized the rather loose rules used to evaluate progress toward meeting these goals.

The technology to eliminate acid rain al-

ready exists. As an immediate measure, flue-gas desulfurization systems, or "scrubbers," can be installed in the smokestacks of coal-burning power plants. These devices inject a mixture of limestone and water into the smokestack, where they react with the sulfur dioxide producing a solid waste that can be easily disposed. If the 50 largest coal-burning power plants were equipped with these "scrubbers" it would eliminate 5 million tons of sulfur dioxide a year — approximately 20 percent of the total U.S. output.

More promising in the long run are methods of removing the sulfur from coal before or during the combustion process. The "fluidized-

bed combustion" process has the added advantage of being able to utilize any grade of coal and even a variety of solid wastes to fuel power plants.

All of these clean-up measures involve significant costs, costs that power companies and other capitalist polluters, whether in Canada or in the United States, would rather avoid or pass on to their customers. Governments of the various states, provinces, and countries involved will attempt to pass responsibility for the problem out of their jurisdictions, but ultimately, as long as these governments defend private profits, it will be the working people who will be forced to pay for the clean-up. □

Hong Kong

Colonial rule and China's sovereignty

Trotskyists discuss '1997 question'

[While in Hong Kong in March, *Intercontinental Press* editor Steve Clark and correspondent Diane Wang discussed Hong Kong's political future with leaders of the Revolutionary Marxist League and editors of *October Review*, a Hong Kong Trotskyist monthly magazine.]

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The "future question" or "1997 question" has been a major focus of discussion in the British colony of Hong Kong for several years. The British lease on most of the colony runs out in 1997 at which point the Chinese government will reassert its sovereignty.

Since September 1982 the British and Chinese governments have been discussing the terms under which China will regain control over Hong Kong and its 5 million residents, nearly 98 percent of whom are Chinese.

The British have been pressing for special privileges in Hong Kong even after its return to China. British rule began in 1842, following China's defeat in the first Opium War, a war triggered by Chinese attempts to stop British sales of opium in China. The colony was enlarged in 1860 and again in 1898.

On April 15, Chinese Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian announced the basis on which Hong Kong will be administered once China regains sovereignty.

While ruling out any official British role there, Wu declared that capitalism would continue to hold sway into the middle of the 21st Century. "After China resumes exercise of sovereignty in 1997," Wu stated, "the present social and economic systems in Xianggang [Hong Kong] will remain unchanged. The way of life there will also remain unchanged. Both will go on for 50 years to come."

Wu added that Hong Kong will be governed as a Special Administrative Region (SAR), with an administration composed entirely of



local residents. He stated that the Peking government will not send officials to Hong Kong, nor will the Chinese Communist Party send cadres there.

Position of Trotskyists

While Chinese and British officials meet to discuss Hong Kong's future, the colony's residents have had no say in the talks regarding their fate.

The Revolutionary Marxist League, one of two Hong Kong organizations affiliated to the Fourth International, blasted that situation in a July 10, 1983, statement (see following document).

The RML called for the establishment of "an all-powerful elected local assembly representing all Hong Kong citizens." Such an assembly, the RML stated, "should be Hong Kong's highest authoritative body," and should give rise to "a people's government which will im-

plement political, economic, and social changes in favor of the working people, as well as determine the relationship with mainland China."

October Review has taken a similar position. An editor told *Intercontinental Press* that the journal favors the establishment of a generally-elected, all-powerful Constituent Assembly to express the will of Hong Kong's people.*

Neocolonialist strategy

October Review's editors explained that in Hong Kong the British are trying to repeat their general neocolonialist strategy, "withdrawing their obvious political influence while at the same time maintaining neocolonial economic control and transferring power to the local bourgeoisie."

To prevent the British colonial authorities from succeeding in this goal, *October Review* has proposed "that the masses should form into political groupings, including "political parties, which are not yet legal in Hong Kong due to repressive colonial laws." In addition, "a wide united front should also be formed by the organizations for democratization in Hong Kong."

Young, a leader of the Revolutionary Marxist League, told *Intercontinental Press* that "the British are trying to mobilize the anti-Communist sentiment that exists among the older generation in Hong Kong, many of whom came to the colony as refugees after the Chinese CP took power," in order to build pressure for a continuing British role after 1997.

As part of the British strategy of encouraging public resistance to Chinese sovereignty, the authorities have gone on a propaganda

* For a detailed presentation of *October Review's* position, see the editorial from the October 1983 issue reprinted in the Oct. 31, 1983, *Intercontinental Press*.

campaign contrasting the "freedom" and "democracy" in Hong Kong with the "totalitarianism" in China.

"Since negotiations with China began," the RML leaders noted, "the British have suddenly developed a very strong interest in democracy." Until 1981, "there was no talk of democracy here in Hong Kong. We lived and still live under a very colonial system. All government officials are appointed by the British governor, as are all members of the Executive Council and Legislative Council, the two main representative bodies."

New 'image of democracy'

According to Young, "in 1981 the British suddenly announced that there would be general elections for an Urban Council, which has no policy-making powers but administers the trash collection system, playgrounds, cultural events, and the like. Since then the colonial government has also floated the idea of having elections for members of the Legislative Council."

In Young's view the new British emphasis on elections and democracy "is an attempt to broaden the base of British rule in Hong Kong." Through elections, he said, "the British hope to bring more middle-class people into the administration and create an image of democracy and freedom so that the working class will resist the return of sovereignty to China."

Peking's position that there will be no economic or social change in Hong Kong for at least 50 years after 1997 makes it more difficult to mobilize workers in the colony, Young stated. "The Chinese Communist Party's position is a straitjacket on the pro-Peking elements here in Hong Kong," he said.

The main pro-Peking forces — the Workers Federation and major Chinese-language newspapers — are placed in a very difficult situation, Young pointed out. "Since the CCP says that we will have to maintain the capitalist system here in Hong Kong, there is no reason to struggle for any radical demands. The Communist Party's position is a brake on the social movement here."

Workers hit by economic crisis

While living conditions for Hong Kong workers are considerably higher than those of workers in China or in other countries of Southeast Asia, the Hong Kong working class faces major problems.

There are about 700,000 industrial workers in the colony, according to the RML, concentrated in small shops in the garment, textile, construction, toy, and electronics industries.

The level of unionization is quite low, perhaps less than 15 percent of the work force, because of the small size of most shops.

Workers normally have a 48-hour work week, in addition to a lot of overtime. There is no unemployment compensation system, and other forms of social security are rudimentary or nonexistent.

The worldwide economic crisis hit Hong

Kong quite hard, Young noted. For two decades there had been an economic boom, which brought a lot of new industry into the colony and rising living standards. But since these industries were mainly geared to markets in the advanced capitalist countries, the economic downturn in Western markets has had a big impact in Hong Kong.

As a result, the living standards of the working class, which had been improving for nearly two decades, are now stagnating.

For a time following the onset of the 1974-75 world recession, the colonial government carried out large-scale public works programs — building housing, a subway system, and roads — which kept the economy growing in the second half of the 1970s.

But faced with mounting budget deficits, the colonial government began to cut back on these projects and started raising indirect taxes, which had a negative impact on workers' living standards.

In September 1983 there was a big demonstration of workers against the increased tax load. And in January 1984, when the government raised license fees for taxi drivers, the drivers blockaded all the main roads in the col-

ony. Their protest soon spread to young workers and unskilled laborers, who fought pitched battles with riot police.

"Given Hong Kong's limited size, the concentration of its working class, and the uncertain economic prospects, the situation here could become very explosive," Young stated.

One economic problem directly related to the "future question" is the large-scale flight of capital from Hong Kong to the United States, Australia, and other countries. "In the past few years some of the biggest capitalists have sold off their operations because of the future political uncertainty and have sent their money abroad," Young reported.

The RML and *October Review* both stress the need to link the struggle for democracy in Hong Kong with the struggle of Hong Kong workers to improve their economic and social conditions, and with the struggle for democracy in China as a whole.

"The fight of the Hong Kong people for democracy is inseparable from that of the mainland people," an editor of *October Review* argued. "A democratic future for Hong Kong ultimately depends on the developments in China." □

DOCUMENTS

'The British should withdraw'

Position of Revolutionary Marxist League

[The following is a July 10, 1983, statement by the Revolutionary Marxist League, one of the organizations in Hong Kong affiliated to the Fourth International. Originally published in the Chinese-language *Combat Bulletin*, this English translation has been taken from the Sept. 22, 1983, issue of the Hong Kong publication *Socialist Organiser*.]

* * *

1. Hong Kong is a part of China's territory. The British in Hong Kong should unconditionally withdraw from China's soil.

2. Sir Edward Youde [the British-appointed governor of Hong Kong] has no right whatsoever to represent the Hong Kong people in the present talks with the Chinese Government. His claim has no reasoned nor legal basis.

3. The people of Hong Kong should seize control of their own destiny. They should overthrow colonial rule, and strive for democratic self-rule of Hong Kong by its own people.

4. The Hong Kong masses must organise quickly to fight for working people's rights, benefits and living standards in the area of social and economic policy; on the political front they need to raise the demand for democratic rights, and fight for an all-powerful elected local assembly representing all Hong Kong citizens.

5. The local assembly should be Hong Kong's highest authoritative body — it will give birth to a people's government which will implement political, economic, and social changes in favour of the working people, as well as determine the relationship with mainland China.

6. As a result of the Chinese Communist Party's bureaucratic misrule, Hong Kong people must struggle vigorously for democratic self-rule, while initiating and strengthening cooperation with all Chinese people in conquering bureaucratic rule, building a democratic socialist system, and completing the reunification of China.

7. The Chinese government must abandon the policy of secret diplomatic talks. They should adopt an open and democratic policy of reporting to and consulting Hong Kong people before and during all negotiations. All negotiated agreements must be subject to receiving Hong Kong people's full consent before implementation. The Chinese government must vigorously support Hong Kong people's struggle for democratic rights and benefits, and defend their living conditions. The Chinese government must grant Hong Kong people the greatest possible right to self-determination — allow Hong Kong people to establish an elected local assembly and a people's government, allowing the policy of democratic self-rule of Hong Kong to be made a reality. □

The bitter costs of Washington's war

Speech by Daniel Ortega before Council of State

[In a speech May 4 opening the 1984 parliamentary session of the Council of State, Daniel Oretaga, coordinator of the Nicaraguan government, explained in detail the economic and social impact of the U.S. war and the steps that must be taken to confront it. The speech was broadcast live on national radio and television and reprinted in full in the May 7 issues of the Sandinista daily *Barricada* and the pro-revolutionary Managua daily *El Nuevo Diario*. We have translated below the concluding portion of Ortega's remarks.]

* * *

The Sandinista people's revolution faces a situation of permanent military aggression by U.S. imperialism, combined with the increasing use of new forms of attack. A dirty war, directed and controlled by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, is being carried out against Nicaragua. The CIA is using its own air force to attack economic and defense objectives, as for example in the air strikes [earlier this year] at Volcán Casita, Potosí, and San Juan del Sur. It is using naval war vessels — such as high-speed launches armed with artillery and mortars — to attack economic objectives, including port installations and fuel depots along the entire Nicaraguan coast.

U.S. ships and destroyers are being used in a more direct way, to back up the high-speed launches. And to top off all this criminal activity, the CIA has laid mines in our country's main ports, establishing a more direct form of commercial and military blockade. These are new elements that have been introduced into the Central American conflict, and as such are a component of the overall conflict in the area.

The attacks on economic objectives have been costly and damaging, resulting in the par-

It is the productive sector that has suffered most heavily from terrorist activity . . .

tial destruction of our material base and in the necessity of reorienting material resources and labor power to defense of the homeland.

An overall assessment of the cost of damage to economic and social activity of both the state and cooperatives — based on figures that reflect only a partial picture of the reality — indicates the following: Replacement costs for damage created in 1981, \$220,000.* In 1982,

*All figures in Nicaraguan córdobas have been converted to U.S. dollars at the official exchange rate of 10 córdobas = US\$1.

\$23.5 million. In 1983, \$165.9 million. The increase reflects the escalation of imperialist military aggression. And from January to March of this year damage totalled just under \$15 million. So from 1981 to the present, the total is \$204.6 million. The main cost has been in material damage, which in 1983 alone totalled \$128.1 million, or 77 percent of total damage.

Another \$37.5 million represents the cost of resettling people from the border areas, victims of the terrorist policy of the U.S. government.

Total material damage for 1983, equivalent to \$128.1 million in hard currency, represented 31 percent of our exports. In national cur-

The U.S. government used its political power in financial institutions to block credits for Nicaragua . . .

rency it represented 3 percent of the Gross Domestic Product, 20 percent of investment, or 6 percent of total consumption by the people.

But an accurate assessment must also take into account the incalculable impact on the cultivation of corn and beans, the delivery of meat and milk to market, the harvest of coffee, fishing, and the extraction of lumber and minerals — all of which suffered as a result of counter-revolutionary attacks on rural municipalities and production units. As is logical, all of this had a negative impact on the revival of production, the effort to increase investment, and the effort to improve the standard of living of the Nicaraguan people.

Damage caused by the mining of our ports — that we have so far been able to calculate — totals \$9.1 million. This includes \$2.2 million for the sinking of fishing boats, \$2.8 million to cover part of the damage done to foreign ships, and \$4.1 million in lost income, primarily in lost revenue from the fishing catches of the five fishing boats that were sunk.

Our production facilities are another favorite target of the counterrevolution, for the Yankee government believes it can in this way weaken our potential for defense and lower the morale of our people. Physical damage to the infrastructure of the productive sector totals \$29.8 million; damage to production itself amounts to another \$42.7 million. It is the productive sector that has suffered most heavily from terrorist activity, with a total of \$87.5 million in damage, that is, more than 40 percent of the total damage.

Counterrevolutionary activity in the northern region and on the Atlantic Coast has caused great destruction in the sectors of agriculture and fishing. Agricultural activity has decreased because of the displacement of peasants who had to be moved to safer areas. Production of basic food items has been among the activities most seriously affected. Counterrevolutionary attacks on cooperatives located in these zones have caused damage amounting to \$19.2 million, to which must be added the great, but not yet calculated, losses suffered by small private producers.

In terms of coffee, tobacco, and other crops, damage has totalled \$16.8 million. Cattle production has suffered losses of \$2.9 million, primarily through the smuggling of cattle across our borders by mercenary groups. This has affected our population's consumption of milk and meat, as well as our ability to export these products. Agroindustrial production has been affected by the shortage of hard currency, which in turn has made it difficult to obtain spare parts and replace equipment. This has had negative consequences for the production of milk, sugar, rice, and other essential products.

Fishing has been one of the activities most affected by armed counterrevolutionary actions. In 1983, we had a fleet of 116 fishing boats. Only 41 percent were actually able to be used for fishing. The rest were out of service either for lack of maintenance or spare parts or because they were being used for tasks of defense. In recent months we have lost 13 fishing boats (6 were stolen, 2 were burned, and 5 were sunk by mines). Their total replacement cost is about \$6 million, to which must be added \$10 million in lost shrimp and lobster exports — catches that never took place because of the destruction of the boats.

In the gold and silver mines, production of industrial gold dropped 11 percent in relation to 1982. The shortage of hard currency, further deepened by the imperialist aggression, resulted in a shortage of raw materials and spare parts. The equipment is obsolete and economic difficulties prevent replacing it or providing the necessary parts or inputs. Energy difficulties at the Siuna and Bonanza mines, a result of the partial destruction of the El Salto hydroelectric dam by the CIA's mercenaries, caused \$1.5 million in losses and will reduce even further the production of industrial gold in 1984.

The imperialist economic blockade has caused delays in the arrival of raw materials, inputs, and parts for industry. The consequence has been fluctuations in the production of consumer and intermediate goods. This in turn has at times provoked a crisis in the supply

of such essential products as cooking oil, soap, toilet paper, powdered milk, and toothpaste. Small-scale industry has also been affected by the shortage of inputs, with negative consequences for the sustenance of thousands of poor families.

Action by the CIA's mercenaries has also noticeably affected the extraction of lumber from the war zones, causing a decline in production of 19 million board feet, a loss of some \$6 million in exports, and delays in the execution of numerous forestry development projects.

Criminal action by the mercenaries has resulted in the destruction of three people's agricultural storage centers, reducing by 8 percent the country's capacity to store basic grains. It has also forced the closing of five people's stores and caused the destruction of transport vehicles. This has reduced the capability to distribute goods in the war zones and made it more difficult to transport harvests to centers of consumption.

In 1984 the mining of our ports and other actions by the CIA's mercenaries cost us \$9.2 million in delays in the export of our coffee, sesame, and beef. In addition, ships carrying powdered milk and butterfat have been diverted to Costa Rica, delaying the arrival of these products and affecting primarily our infant population.

Attacks on economic objectives have also been directed against the economic infrastruc-

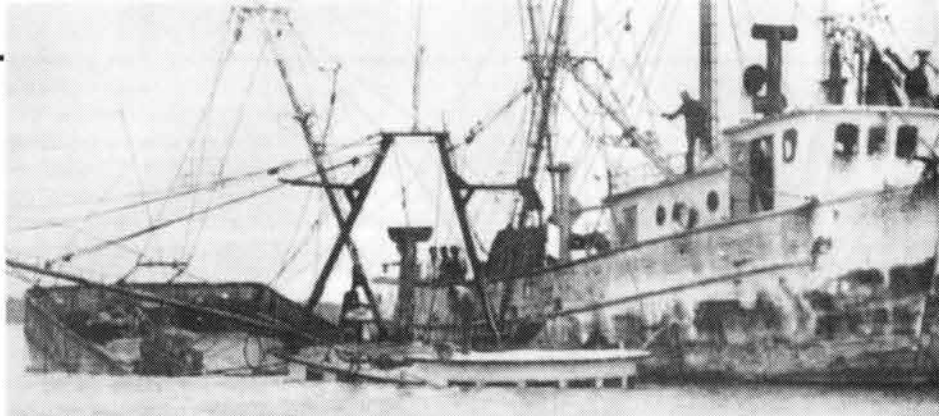
Another aspect of economic aggression has been the cutting off of our channels for trade . . .

ture, causing \$17.4 million in damage. Among the most important have been the following:

- Destruction of fuel storage tanks, high-voltage towers, telecommunications towers, bridges, dams, and storage yards for construction vehicles.
- Destruction of the fuel tanks at Corinto alone signified a loss of \$8 million.
- Destruction of construction vehicles and yards.
- Blockade of means of communication through the mining and destruction of bridges, the attack on Sandino Airport, and the attacks on customs facilities at Peñas Blancas [on the Costa Rican border] and Las Manos [on the Honduran border].

Delays in projects to improve the infrastructure have resulted in additional losses of \$26 million. Taking into account all factors, the effects of terrorist activity on the infrastructure total \$51.8 million, that is, nearly a fourth of all damage.

One of the first manifestations of imperialist aggression came in the financial sphere. Because the tasks of rebuilding the country are great, and the terms of trade are so adverse, the economy requires a considerable flow of external resources. The World Bank calculated the requirements, for 1982 and 1983, at some



Nicaraguan fishing boat destroyed by CIA-planted mine in port of Corinto.

\$300 million a year, of which \$125 million was to come from multilateral sources. But the U.S. government used its political power in financial institutions to block credits for Nicaragua.

Proof of this lies in such concrete facts as the [U.S.] veto of the \$1.7 million Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) loan for farm-to-market roads and in the opposition to other loans for road construction, totalling \$35.5 million, that were supposed to be provided by the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, with special funds from the IDB. There is in addition an open attitude of opposition to any Nicaraguan request for aid from multilateral lending institutions in which the United States participates.

As a result of this aggressive policy, in terms of loan agreements the participation of multilateral organizations in our external financing dropped from 32.3 percent in 1980 to 15.6 percent in 1983.

Another aspect of economic aggression has been the cutting off of our channels for trade which, for a small country like ours, are the lifeline of the economy. A few examples in the commercial sphere are the following:

- The virtual elimination of our sugar quota.
- The reduction of our meat quota.
- The suspension of credits for the import of wheat and cooking oil.
- The closing of our consulates in the United States.

The mining of our ports and the penetration of U.S. war fleets into our territorial waters make crystal clear that a commercial and military blockade is part and parcel of the United States' gunboat diplomacy.

In addition to the economic damage caused by the attacks, defense of the country itself has necessarily represented a considerable economic cost. In 1983 we had to devote 20 percent of the national budget to defense and security, in comparison to 18 percent in 1982. In 1984 it was necessary to raise the figure to 25 percent of the total budget because of the magnitude of the imperialist aggression. The financial cost of defending the country has made it necessary to raise taxes, hold back the expansion of health and education, and has created an inflationary pressure that hits working people above all.

In terms of material goods, defense requires a share of food supplies, construction equipment, fuel, and industrial products. The productive sector has lent its own means of production, including boats and trucks, in support of our Sandinista People's Army. Defense requires the cooperation of workers, peasants, and technicians, of leaders of the people's organizations and young people, and of all who have answered the call for defense, bringing to that historic task the best cadres from our labor force, our principal source of productive strength. All these brothers, the best of our heroic people, could be planning the economy, drawing up projects, building grain silos, and bringing in harvests instead of suffering and dying on the border to defend the homeland from an inhuman and immoral aggression.

From May 4, 1983, until today we have had to mobilize extraordinary resources to confront a criminal and multipronged escalation of imperialist aggression and destruction. Consequently, we have also had to confront seri-

Defense of the country itself has necessarily represented a considerable economic cost . . .

ous difficulties in resolving the problems we face in improving our people's living conditions.

The aggression has forced us to slow down the gradual development of health-care projects, close down many units of primary medical care, and hold up the construction and opening of others. Some vaccination campaigns have had to be suspended, and we have not been able to reach the desired intensity in the campaign to combat malaria. The economic situation of war has considerably affected investment for all health services. In the area of health care, the total cost of the aggression has been \$2.5 million. Seventeen health centers have been destroyed; 15 health workers have been killed, including one doctor, 11 have been wounded, and 13 have been kidnapped, including three nurse's aides.

The Nicaraguan people's social security and welfare programs have been struck a dramatic blow because of the need to divert resources to take care of the populations displaced from the

war zones, now totalling more than 114,000 Nicaraguans. We have had to move these people to new settlements, which require food, medical care, cooking utensils, and housing. Just this aspect alone will require the expenditure of \$53 million, to cover emergency costs for the next six months.

Our children in the countryside are being deprived of their Rural Children's Services (SIR), which have suffered \$900,000 in damage. We have also had to set aside large sums for pensions for the family members of heroic combatants, militia members, and reservists who have fallen in defense of the country.

The supply of basic consumer goods to the population has been seriously affected by the aggression. Production of both corn and beans is concentrated in the zones where the bands are active. Delivery of these products, as well as of essential imported goods, has met with great difficulties, resulting in an inescapable decline in the supply of goods available to

The supply of basic consumer goods to the population has been seriously affected by the aggression . . .

people. Furthermore, destruction of transport vehicles and storage centers, in combination with giving priority for their use to defense, has disrupted commercial patterns.

Within this framework of generalized scarcity, it became necessary in the final months of 1983 to give priority to the regions in combat when it came to assigning supply quotas. Consequently a serious situation of shortage is being felt in Regions III and IV [the predominantly urban provinces of Managua, Masaya, Granada, Rivas, and Carazo]. This in turn has provoked unscrupulous activities of speculation, complicated by a process of ideological diversion. The intent of the latter is to create confusion as to the real cause of the situation, which is the U.S. war of aggression.

The financial consequences of the situation of war, combined with the problems of shortages, raised the rate of inflation for the market basket of basic goods by 40 percent in 1983. This has had a serious impact on the standard of living of the working people, who continue confronting the shortages with heroism and sacrifice.

Employment has also been seriously affected by the destruction of productive capacity, especially in fishing and the mines, but also because of the shortage of hard currency provoked by the economic aggression. Industrial manufacturing has been hit the hardest. If all these sectors were able to work at full capacity, at least 10,000 jobs could be created. As we mentioned, the aggression has also accelerated inflation and reduced the buying power of wages.

Workers have felt the aggression in their own flesh. The cost in human lives, which

have no price, totalled 88 civilian victims in 1982 and 1,550 in 1983. Of the 1,550 in 1983, 605 were killed, 102 were wounded, and 843 were kidnapped. These figures include only government employees and members of agricultural cooperatives.

From January to March of this year, there were 249 victims, of whom 54 were killed, 23 wounded, and 172 kidnapped. The total number of victims between 1982 and March 1984 is 1,877, of whom 747 were killed, 125 wounded, 1,015 kidnapped. These are the victims of the policy of state terrorism the Reagan administration has unleashed against our heroic people.

Nor does imperialism wish to allow Nicaraguans to enjoy the right to education that was won with the people's victory of July 19 [1979]. Fifteen schools in the countryside have been nearly destroyed, construction has had to be halted at 27 more, and imperialist criminal activity has forced the closing of 138 primary schools in the zones affected by U.S. state terrorism.

Several thousand children have been left without primary schooling. The number of primary school teachers who have been killed has risen to 23.

Adult education programs have been a target of the criminal attacks, forcing the closing of 647 people's adult education collectives. The state terrorism of the Reagan administration is soaked with the blood of volunteer adult education teachers, 135 of whom have been killed. Their only crime was to dedicate their free time to helping the rural population emerge from illiteracy and ignorance. These are the dividends of the \$21 million the Reagan administration has requested from the U.S. Congress.

But while Washington discusses financing the murder of volunteer teachers, 1,800 of them have mobilized in the Reserve Infantry Battalions to hunt down the murderers of their brothers and to defend the gains the people have won through the Sandinista people's revolution.

Our struggle to increase the quality of teaching and to improve academic performance has been seriously disrupted by the courageous and massive integration of teachers and students into the militias and reserve battalions, at the cost of leaving the classroom behind.

Cultural programs have also been affected, and three cultural workers have been murdered.

The programs to extend electric light have been affected by the sabotage counterrevolutionary bands have carried out against transmission and distribution towers.

Construction of more than 2,000 housing units has had to be suspended in order to divert material resources to resettlement areas for those displaced by the war.

Programs to provide potable water in [the northern provinces] Nueva Segovia and Madriz and a drainage system in Corinto have been suspended, affecting health conditions in those areas.

In short, the standard of living of all Nicaraguans has, to a greater or lesser degree, been affected in multiple ways by the U.S. administration's policy of state terrorism.

In face of this policy of war, it is necessary to take concrete economic and social measures to confront the aggression. We must begin

We have raised the people's consciousness of the need for austerity . . .

building an economy of defense, although we would much prefer continuing to carry out development projects in a climate of peace.

As a first step, we have established better central control over available resources and have raised the population's consciousness of the need for austerity.

Based on the lessons learned during the military emergency in October and November 1983, we have better leadership of the economy at various critical points — above all in the external sector, that is, hard currency, and in the coordination of distribution. We have managed to share out hard currency with greater efficiency, to the sectors that really have priority — such as defense, supply [of basic goods], health care, and priority production — all within the framework of the 1984 economic plan. These sectors have learned how to use their hard currency with much greater efficiency, with the help of workers in maintaining equipment, making their own spare parts, and economizing with materials.

At the same time, we have attained greater budgetary austerity, aimed at making possible greater spending for defense, reducing the budget deficit to one-half the 1983 deficit, and thereby reducing inflationary pressure.

This has required new taxes on services, gasoline, and big business. It has also meant freezing the budget for health and education. And we have to stop the expansion of subsidies to the consumer, subsidies that have been stolen by the speculators.

Secondly, the hard experience of the last year in terms of supplying the public with consumer goods has convinced us of the necessity of attaining greater social control over the process of distribution of items of basic necessity. The situation of general shortage cannot be overcome in the short term, even less so in the present conditions of war. But distribution can be improved greatly. Despite big difficulties, we have established a distribution system that is a little more fluid and better regulated in terms of prices for rice, beans, cooking oil, soap, salt, and sugar. The same cannot be said for other products, where official distribution channels have been affected by speculation.

In connection with the above, the labor power needed for exports, construction, industry, and priority governmental activities is being drained by a dizzying growth in the sectors of small production, petty commerce, and informal services.

In face of this situation, the revolutionary government is taking a series of measures aimed at acknowledging the genuine costs of production: adjusting consumer prices in accordance with those costs; establishing secure channels for distribution, so as to guarantee a minimum of basic products to the urban and rural population; dealing a heavy blow to the speculators; and returning to productive labor the hundreds of persons who, despite being suited for productive labor, have turned to consumption and speculation.

Thirdly, we have learned from the accumulated lessons of what is now three years of active defense. The revolutionary state has made progress in establishing the correct links between defense and the economy, so as to minimize the economic costs. There have been notable advances in the last year in coordination between the Sandinista People's Army and other governmental institutions in regard to distribution and construction. We have also made advances in effectively integrating the tasks of production and defense, as for example in the establishment of self-defense cooperatives and the use of military contingents to help out in the harvests. In this way the national economy has begun to receive effective support from the defense effort.

We must leave behind the individualist criteria of the dependent capitalism of the Somozaist dictatorship and advance further in the social structuring of the economy. We believe this principle is perfectly compatible with the mixed economy, so long as the producers agree to produce what the economy needs, under production contracts with the state, and so long as businessmen dedicate themselves to distribution, in association with the mass organizations, and not to speculation. What we cannot permit is that while the people fight and

We cannot permit some individuals to take advantage of the shortages and the aggression to speculate and enrich themselves . . .

workers live on insufficient wages, some individuals take advantage of the shortages and the aggression to speculate and enrich themselves.

This cannot be tolerated!

This must be fought!

Defense of the economy requires an extraordinary effort by workers, peasants, technicians, and administrators to maintain production. The revolutionary state does not intend to abandon the priority projects that represent the economic future of our people.

The response of the Sandinista people's revolution to the needs of our people — with or without the aggression — will be to continue to fulfill them to the degree possible. We will satisfy the needs that were for decades denied by Somozaist dictatorship, by political and economic dependence on U.S. imperialism, and by the native oligarchies — in all their political, social, and economic aspects.

The gains the people have won through the Sandinista people's revolution will be defended and consolidated by the people themselves, a people that is conscious, mobilized, armed, and prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice.

Defense of national sovereignty, of people's power, and of the gains won by the people requires, as we have seen, *defense of the economy and an economy of defense*.

It also requires participation of the people in all forms of defense.

The strength of our Sandinista people's revolution lies in the broad social base that sustains it and in the organizational levels that have been attained. We can affirm that the

massive integration of the people in the main tasks has already assured the defense and survival of the Sandinista people's revolution.

This May 4, in recalling the heroic act of Sandino, who neither sold out nor surrendered in face of the arrogance and power of the Yankee invader, we want to extend special recognition to the combatants of the Sandinista People's Army, to the Ministry of the Interior, to the militia members, to the thousands of young people who have joined in the defense effort through Patriotic Military Service, to their mothers and family members, and above all to the heroes and martyrs who have fallen in this daily combat against Yankee intervention. □

Australia

Nicaraguan officials on tour

Trade minister appeals for solidarity

By Gordon Adler

SYDNEY — Over 500 people gathered at the Trades Hall here on February 24 to hear Nicaragua's minister for foreign trade Dr. Alejandro Martínez and four other senior representatives of the Sandinista government answer questions about Nicaragua's economic progress and foreign relations since the victory of the Sandinista National Liberation Front almost five years ago.

The delegation was on an official visit to Australia, with the object of exploring the possibility of improved diplomatic relations with Australia's Labor government and increasing trade between the two countries.

This was the largest and most high-ranking delegation from Nicaragua to visit Australia since the Sandinista government came to power. The meeting was sponsored by a number of Central American and Latin American solidarity organizations.

In his address, Martínez commented on the need for the maximum unity of the solidarity movement in defense of the Nicaraguan revolution and in the preservation of peace in Central America. The meeting was chaired by Margaret Duckett, president of the women's committee of the Australian Labor Party, and the wide-ranging questions addressed to the speakers reflected the presence of a broad audience and a strong desire for more information about Nicaragua.

The questions covered Nicaragua's foreign policy, economic progress, the status of women, the role of the working class in the revolution, and the forms of political organization of the people.

Martínez laid great stress on Nicaragua's view of the gravity of the crisis in Central America and the unreserved support of his government for the "Contadora" proposals for peace in the region.

"This is a Latin American initiative," he pointed out, stating that Nicaragua was prepared to consider any proposals that would safeguard peace in the area. It would also welcome an agreement for the withdrawal of all foreign military forces and advisers from the area.

In reply to a question about the possibility of counterrevolutionary forces using the forthcoming elections as an opportunity to create confusion and foment discontent with the government, Martínez said that while such dangers obviously exist, he had complete confidence in the outcome of the elections because the revolution is a genuinely popular revolution and has the allegiance of the great majority of the people.

Questioned about the role of the working class, he replied that the working class was at the center of the revolutionary struggle. On the organization of popular power, Martínez pointed out, "Nobody came to the people and said 'Now you have the right to organize.'" He explained that the people had organized during the civil war to defeat Somoza, and the organizations of the people that had emerged victorious in this struggle were now the sovereign power within the country. They would surrender neither their rights nor their weapons to anyone.

Martínez noted that despite the economic obstacles, the sabotage, lies, intimidation, and grave military threats from the United States, the country had made significant economic progress during the last four years.

The harvest of the coffee crop had been completed, he said, productivity had been raised, substantial progress had been made in the field of health and the conquest of illiteracy. The elimination of poliomyelitis from the country was one of the outstanding achievements. There would be no turning back to the past. □

Troubles mount for Alfonsín regime

Labor flexes muscles as economic slide continues

By Marcelo Zugadi

BUENOS AIRES — Five months after assuming the presidency, Raúl Alfonsín is still invoking the future and offering promises to the Argentine people. Meanwhile, the economy goes on deteriorating, and the consensus in public opinion the constitutional government had achieved is trickling away.

Alfonsín has shown himself to be powerless to alter the recessive, inflationary, and speculative course of the economy in the slightest way. His human-rights policy has defrauded those who expected justice, but at the same time has angered the military. His attempt to strike a blow against the Peronist bureaucracy in the trade unions has ended in a resounding failure. And his unfulfilled pledge of open admission to the universities has disillusioned the youth and provoked mass student mobilizations.

Thus the government consumed unproductively in only 150 days the credit it had been granted by the workers movement.

On the other hand, because of his failure to set limits on the democratic aspirations of the masses, his occasional demagogic moves that have shaken the confidence of the big bourgeoisie and the landowners, and his futile and ephemeral attempts to index wages to the cost of living and control prices, Alfonsín is now coming under criticism from rightist sectors that voted for him in order to stave off a Peronist victory.

Sensing a chasm opening beneath his feet, Alfonsín has proposed a round of talks with the political parties aimed at achieving some undefined and murky "national unity." The atmosphere in which these discussions are to be held was noted by the president himself on April 9, when he warned the country that the alternative is "national unity or Lebanonization."

Alfonsín and the economy

The rapid deterioration of a government that received 52 percent of the votes in last October's elections and took office with the best wishes of the vast bulk of the population can be explained as the result of the failure of its emergency economic plan. The burden of the foreign debt and the regime's inability thus far to impose austerity on the working class have frustrated Alfonsín's plans to negotiate with the foreign banks from a position of strength. The new president's image as a strong figure able to set limits on imperialist arrogance has been badly damaged.

An opportune leak revealed a secret cable drafted by Alfonsín's personal representative in the debt talks, Raúl Prebisch. The cable set out the terms of Argentina's commitment to

the International Monetary Fund: "readjust policies on wages, prices, forms of exchange, and interest rates; render retroactive wage increases ineffective by replacing them with increments projected on the basis of future inflation calculations."

Alfonsín had tried to resist the IMF's demands by appealing to the goodwill and political savvy of the imperialist powers. The predictable result came about owing to three basic factors:

1. The inflation rate for the month of March reached 20.3%, resulting in a 58.4% rate for the first quarter of the year. (The underlying dynamic in these figures can be seen if we recall that the inflation rate in the first quarter of 1981 was 15.8%; in the same period of 1982, 27.5%; and in 1983, 45.8%.) The March rate confirmed that neither the favorable expectations opened up by the constitutional regime nor the political authority with which Alfonsín began his term could suffice to put the brakes on the inflationary spiral.

2. The total failure of Alfonsín's strategy toward the labor movement. He had hoped to push through a phony "trade-union democratization" scheme whereby government intervention in union elections would have been legitimized. The aim was to replace at least some of the old-line Peronist bureaucrats with new officials who would be politically loyal to Alfonsín and the government. In this way, the regime hoped to bring about a social truce (similar to the "Moncloa Pact" between the unions and the government in Spain after the Franco dictatorship came to an end).

When this plan failed, the only course available was to open political negotiations with the Peronist officialdom, which has already proven incapable of controlling the workers movement. The Peronists, moreover, are prepared to make use of the unions to open political space for themselves and put the Justicialist Party (the Peronist party) back together.

3. The Mexican government's decision at the behest of Washington to head a continental operation to put pressure on Argentina to force it to pay the past-due interest on its foreign debt before the creditor banks' deadline for writing that sum off their books.

No justice for 'disappeared'

But it is not only in economic matters that Alfonsín has demonstrated his shortcomings. While the country has enjoyed broad democratic freedoms in recent months, hardly a single step has been taken to solve the problem of the 30,000 "disappeared" or to punish those

responsible for repression under the military regime. This question remains at the center of political controversy.

The executive branch refused from the beginning to allow a parliamentary commission to be set up with the participation of the families of the victims. Instead, it formed a commission of notables headed by the writer Ernesto Sabato. Aside from the dubious records of some members of this National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (beginning with Sabato himself, a liberal anticommunist who lent legitimacy to the dictatorship by lunching with Gen. Jorge Videla shortly after the 1976 coup), the main problem with this body is that it is strictly limited to receiving, confirming, and compiling evidence. Investigation and punishment of those responsible remains in the hands of . . . military justice!

The commission headed by Sabato has been receiving irrefutable charges in tens of thousands of cases. It has confirmed the existence of concentration and extermination camps at military and police installations. Nonetheless, those accused remain at large, and there are no prospects that they will be put on trial.

Some 10 generals have been detained, but with the exception of Gen. Ramón Camps — who proclaimed himself responsible for the torture and murder of 5,000 persons and thus obliged Alfonsín to issue a special decree jailing him — all the rest are in prison on charges having nothing to do with the repression. The three who face the most serious charges and could even be condemned to death stand accused of having ordered the recovery of the Malvinas Islands in April 1982 — a move that enjoyed near-unanimous support among the Argentine people.

Alfonsín personifies the Argentine bourgeoisie's determination to overhaul the armed forces and lay responsibility for the repression on the heads of a few, while above all responding to imperialism's demand that the military be purged of the dangerous legacy of the Malvinas War. Alfonsín's international support, which helped considerably in his electoral success, was based on the fact that an important sector of the Peronist party had an alliance with the wing of the military that now faces prosecution.

Paradoxically, just as Gen. Leopoldo Galtieri thought that by lending Reagan a hand in the Central American counterrevolution he could get a green light to recover the Malvinas, Alfonsín had the illusion that he could obtain leniency on paying the foreign debt by "de-Malvinizing" the country. But loyalty is not exactly one of imperialism's virtues.

Alfonsín has proven incapable of confusing those who are demanding justice, despite his subtle maneuver of identifying repressive violence with the Malvinas War and punishing the military chiefs for what they did to gain the goodwill of the masses rather than for what they did to smash and annihilate them. Constant activity led by the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo has resulted in a series of rallies and demonstrations, culminating March 24 with a march of 20,000 demanding clarification of the fate of the disappeared and punishment of those responsible.

At the same time, the government must confront the anger of the armed forces: the broad freedom of expression that now exists and cannot be restrained has led to the military's crimes being exposed on a daily basis in the news media. The military is being judged by those who really count politically — by public opinion. The evident impunity of the armed forces is being translated into the discrediting of the government, which sees the specter of opposition rising both to its right and to its left. But the regime does nothing other than repeat vapid calls for "national unity."

Trade-union opposition currents

In the elections last October, a sector of the workers movement set aside its traditional support for Peronism and voted for Raúl Alfonsín. Different estimates put at 12 percent to 20 percent the share of Alfonsín's votes that came from the working class. But few question the fact that it was the layers of the industrial proletariat with the greatest trade-union experience and political understanding that took their distance from the Peronist party, which had enjoyed the support of virtually the entire working class since 1945.

Enthusied by this development and basing itself on certain union officials who for various reasons had become alienated from the centers of the Peronist apparatus, the government launched a vigorous campaign to throttle the unions, under the guise of a battle against bureaucracy in the labor movement.

In launching this drive, the regime sought to take advantage of the process of reorganization unfolding in the unions, something that had become inevitable after eight years of military intervention in the unions and a ban on union activity. The regime's attack took the form of the trade-union law sent to parliament in the opening days of Alfonsín's term. Besides provisions calling for government-supervised elections in all the unions, the law would also have done away with the single union per branch of production and the single national union confederation.

Meanwhile, the political currents inside the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) — which brings together virtually the entire Argentine labor movement — had lined up in various ways in preparation for the reorganization of the unions. The two main Peronist factions that control the CGT apparatus reunified, except for a small layer of bureaucrats who preferred to bask in the government's warmth.



Mothers of "disappeared" demonstrate at Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires.

One nucleus of these displaced Peronist officials, repudiated by the rank and file, organized themselves as the Argentine Union Assembly (AGA). The few labor officials who belong to the ruling party set themselves up as the National Movement for Trade-Union Renewal (MNRS); from their ranks came Alfonsín's first labor minister, Antonio Mucci, a former graphic-arts worker (now replaced in the cabinet by a politician from the wing of the ruling party that had opposed Alfonsín's nomination).

The left-Peronist currents formed the National Trade-Union Assembly (PSN). And, finally, two union leaders of considerable standing, Alberto Piccinini of the metalworkers and Julio Guillán of the telephone workers, launched the National Workers Assembly (ENTRA) with the participation of the Communist Party and other leftist currents.

In reality, the only one of these formations with serious weight in the labor movement is the ENTRA. Despite its heterogeneity and the positions taken by some of its leaders — who do not hide their opinion that it is possible to rely on the bourgeois government in fighting the bureaucracy — ENTRA has brought together a significant number of rank-and-file leaders and militants who seek in this current the reference point that neither Peronism nor the small leftist parties can offer. Piccinini's stature contributes largely to this: he is identified with the battles waged in the early 1970s by the current then labeled *clasista* (class-struggle). Through the joint participation of the militant Peronist Guillán, the CP, and other leftist forces, ENTRA has taken on a pluralist character that entails democratic functioning of a kind that is extremely attractive to young worker-militants.

On April 14, the greater Buenos Aires ENTRA held a meeting to adopt a program that had been discussed democratically for two weeks by three special commissions. More than 600 rank-and-file delegates took part in the meeting, which was also attended by some

5,000 supporters. Meanwhile, the PSN had barely managed to get 300 persons to its meeting and the AGA and the MNRS did not even try to assemble their forces. But all four groupings have set up a Trade-Union Liaison Board that seeks to counterpose itself to the CGT officialdom. This formation has lined up with the government in its conflicts with the CGT leaders.

Labor law fiasco

Once the parliamentary battle was joined over the trade-union law, it became evident that the bourgeoisie itself had not managed to adopt a united stand on Alfonsín's plan. The CGT organized a rally outside the Congress building to pressure the deputies. The 10,000 participants were mainly union officials and their hangers-on, while the absence of the ranks of the workers movement was evident. A little later, the government promoted its own demonstration and doubled the size of the CGT's action. But the workers movement was absent from that one as well, which mainly involved public employees, pro-Alfonsín students, and elegant ladies who shouted fervently against the trade-union bureaucracy.

The progovernment rally gained the support of the AGA and the PSN. A sector of the ENTRA tried to take part as well, but the reaction of the rank-and-file representatives at the assembly that discussed the question proved that it was impossible to lead the active worker-militants down such a path.

Despite the weakness evidenced by the CGT leadership, the bourgeoisie realized that Alfonsín's maneuver offered little hope that the workers movement could be straitjacketed with a new bureaucracy. It acted accordingly: the Senate rejected the draft trade-union law that had already been approved by the lower house. As this occurred, a wave of strikes and mobilizations for wage increases exposed the limits of the expectations Alfonsín's government had aroused among the population.

The second round

The political climate created by the workers' demands contributed in a significant way to the inflationary spiral of the past four months. In a fierce battle over a share of the national income, the bourgeoisie has tried to recover through price mark-ups what the workers wrested away through their struggles. The union bureaucracy took demagogic advantage of this spontaneous — and openly antibureaucratic — upsurge of the ranks.

The government found itself in the crossfire. On top of this was the pressure coming from regimes that were supposedly its allies in Latin America in negotiating better terms with the international banks. (The governments of Brazil and Mexico in particular feared that their own domestic oppositions might call for following Argentina's example in resisting the IMF's conditions.)

Having failed in his attempt to put together a new, loyal union bureaucracy, Alfonsín changed tactics. Instead of attacking

Peronism, he now proposes national unity. Of course, his failure by no means eliminated the government's room for maneuver. In the first place, what is involved is a fiasco for the Alfonsín wing of the ruling party, the Radical Civic Union. The UCR's more rightist sectors, which have sought a strategic alliance with the Peronists since 1968, have consequently been strengthened. In the second place, the Peronists, who had practically monopolized the opposition, are now threatened with disintegration if they should adopt a clear position on any question.

Alfonsín is proposing "national unity" with the aim of consolidating a political front able to impose a plan that can be summed up as follows:

1. Complete the purge of the armed forces, singling out certain officers as scapegoats and thereby putting an end to the ongoing trial in public opinion to which the military has been subjected.

2. Apply the measures imposed by the IMF in order to gain control over the economic crisis. This will entail a sharper confrontation with the labor movement.

3. In foreign affairs, negotiate a rapid agreement with the Chilean government over the Beagle Channel boundary dispute, on the basis of the pope's arbitration; put an end to the state of war with Britain and resume negotiations so as to conjure away the specter of a new armed conflict; and replace Argentina's role in the Nonaligned Movement with a rapprochement with the United States. (After meeting with Henry Kissinger, George Bush, and George Shultz, Foreign Minister Dante Caputo declared that his government is ready to collaborate in finding ways "to harmonize our points of view on the interdependence between security, development, and democracy." He emphasized that "security" in Central America was the basis on which negotiations over peace and nonintervention had to be carried out.)

4. Cut back, slowly and cautiously but in-

exorably, on the broad democratic freedoms the masses enjoy today.

The outcome of Alfonsín's political negotiations is in doubt, but what is certain is that any prolonged stability of a front of the bourgeois parties is unthinkable. While the crisis of the Peronist movement offers Alfonsín an opportunity to broaden his political base, the declining influence of the Peronist bureaucracy over the working class at the same time reduces the government's ability to carry out an overall offensive against the masses.

Besides the dialogue with the government, the Peronists also face their own struggle over control of the party. Five days before talks with the regime were to begin, the Peronists had to ask for a two-week delay because they could not decide who would head their delegation — ex-President Isabel Perón or CGT bureaucrat Lorenzo Miguel. Nor is the internal battle all the Peronists face — there is also the class struggle, which is reflected inside the party through the union bureaucracy.

May Day

The May 1 celebrations presented an accurate reflection of the course being taken in the overall recomposition of social, political, and trade-union forces.

The Trade-Union Liaison Board, with the support of the government, held a rally attended by some 2,000 persons. The speakers were Julio Guillán of the ENTRA and the left Peronist Andrés Framini.

The CGT's rally drew 30,000. The ENTRA itself was divided over the two demonstrations, since while Guillán urged participation in the former, the CP and a class-struggle current called the Rank-and-File Trade-Union Front (FBS) supported the CGT rally. Various groups from a Maoist background attended both, while the Movement for Socialism (MAS) and the Workers Party (PO) refused to join either and instead held their own small

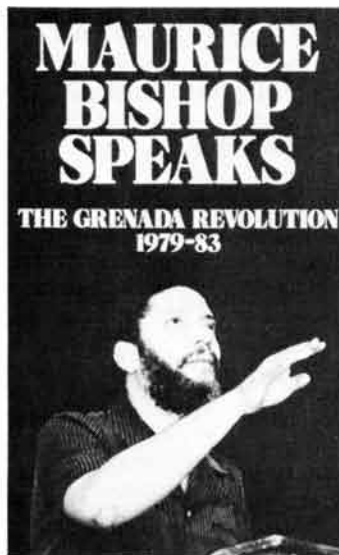
events. (Neither the MAS nor the PO supports the ENTRA.)

The union bureaucracy has managed to avert Alfonsín's maneuver. It brought about the resignation of the labor minister and now presents itself as the only valid go-between for the government in the labor movement. This means a relative strengthening of the Peronist officialdom, compared with the situation it faced at the beginning of the year. But to achieve this it has had to open a process of mobilizations that will be difficult to reverse.

Labor agitation will tend to increase in coming months, spurred by the decline in real wages and by the reorganization of the unions. Elections will be held during the next 90 days to renew the union leaderships. The voting has been preceded by a vigorous process of reorganization of the traditional factory-level institutions of the Argentine labor movement — the *cuerpos de delegados* (delegate councils) and the *comisiones internas* (internal commissions). This process has been led by anti-bureaucratic and politically independent militants, who have already achieved resounding victories at key workplaces such as the steel complex of Villa Constitución, at an important metallurgical center at Campana (both in Buenos Aires Province), and at auto plants such as Ford and Mercedes-Benz.

The leftist currents that did not compromise themselves with the government have big openings in these elections to gain a hearing and converge with thousands of young militants throughout the country. To confront this threat, the Peronist bureaucracy will have to take care to set limits on its own willingness to negotiate with the regime to the detriment of the workers' demands.

So the political dialogue Alfonsín is trying to start up does not guarantee any solid front of the bourgeois parties. Nor does it offer hopes for resolving the crisis of the Peronist party or for closing off the prospects for a fresh labor upsurge. □



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Two general strikes in three weeks

Deepening class polarization confronts Siles regime

By Fred Murphy

Protesting the harshest austerity measures imposed in a quarter-century, Bolivian workers and peasants carried out two countrywide general strikes in a three-week period in late April and early May. Each strike lasted three days and was called by the Bolivian Workers Federation (COB). On May Day, which came in the middle of the second strike, some 100,000 demonstrators filled the streets of La Paz, the capital, while similar marches were held in other cities and mining centers around the country.

The COB had decided to end the second strike on May 4, but many factory workers in La Paz remained off the job for several more days. Their unions had unsuccessfully pressed the COB leadership to call an indefinite general strike until the austerity measures were reversed. Employees at the central bank also continued their protests by refusing to implement the 75 percent devaluation of the peso called for by the regime's April 13 economic decrees.

Those measures struck severe blows to the living standards of the Bolivian people. The currency devaluation forced up prices on all imported goods. Worse, government subsidies on food and fuel were abolished, bringing price hikes of up to 600 percent on flour, bread, cooking oil, urban bus transportation, and intercity rail fares.

These decrees marked a further step in the betrayal of the aspirations of Bolivian working people by the regime of President Hernán Siles Zuazo. Siles' Democratic and Popular Unity (UDP)* coalition came to power in October 1982 in the midst of an all-out general strike led by the COB. Fearing their revolutionary overthrow by the workers and peasants, the ruling military dictators hastily turned the reins over to Siles and the elected Congress they had forcibly dissolved in 1980. Siles had been elected president three times in 1978-80; each

time a military coup had prevented his taking office.

IMF vs. workers

Popular resistance to the dictatorship had been spurred by the military's repeated attempts in 1981 and 1982 to impose austerity measures of the kind Siles' government has now decreed.

Like most Latin American countries, Bolivia faces an economic crisis due to declining prices and demand for its raw-materials exports (tin, oil, and natural gas), rising prices for imported foodstuffs and manufactured goods, and a resulting foreign debt that is beyond the country's immediate capacity to repay.

When the military rulers went to the International Monetary Fund for an emergency loan in 1981, the IMF demanded they devalue the peso, slash subsidies on food prices, and increase fuel taxes. The dictatorship repeatedly tried to oblige, but each time the workers and peasants fought back with strikes, street demonstrations, and highway blockades. In the course of that upsurge, Bolivian working people wrested a wide range of democratic rights and rebuilt their trade unions and peasant organizations, which are now all united in the COB. Eventually they forced an end to military rule altogether.

Siles Zuazo began his term in office by attempting to parlay his popularity into working-class acceptance of the austerity measures the military had not been able to apply. But he was stymied by a fresh round of strikes in March and April of 1983. On the basis of their previous gains, the COB and the powerful tin-miners union waged a series of militant struggles and forced Siles to authorize majority representation for worker delegates in the management of the state-owned mining corporation. Similar gains were registered in the countryside by the United Confederation of Working Farmers (CSUTCB).

The inability of Siles and his coalition partners to apply austerity and make it stick gave rise to concern among Bolivia's capitalists and U.S. imperialism. The rightist parties that hold a majority in Congress were particularly alarmed at the growing political role of the COB as the representative of the workers and peasants.

Meanwhile, the overall economic crisis was taking a still heavier toll. A severe drought in the western part of the country and heavy floods in the east brought a 33 percent drop in domestic food production in 1983. Eighty percent of the potato crop — a staple in the Boli-

vian diet — was lost last year. Inflation topped 300 percent while half the country's productive capacity lay idle.

Mass hunger strike

In December of last year the COB moved to centralize the mounting popular discontent. A list of 17 demands was presented to Siles, calling for such things as a minimum living wage with automatic cost-of-living increases, price controls, direct sale of foodstuffs through the workplace or neighborhood, and a transport corporation under peasant management.

Thirty national leaders of the COB began a hunger strike in La Paz on January 23. The next day they were joined by provincial and local union leaders in nine cities. The movement broadened further to include representatives of the peasants, housewives, street vendors, theater and television personalities, and so on.

As participation in the hunger strike mounted, street rallies and marches were held around the country. A contingent of tin miners traveled to La Paz and took over the Ministry of Planning. Radio stations operated by the trade unions linked up in a nationwide network to broadcast reports on the protests and on the progress of negotiations with the government. This network also served as a means whereby the COB leadership could consult the union's ranks on whether to accept the regime's concessions.

Finally, as the number of hunger strikers approached 10,000, Siles agreed to meet all the COB's demands except for the minimum living wage, which would have entailed an immediate 300 percent pay increase for most workers. The COB accepted this compromise, and an accord was signed on January 29. A key aspect of the agreement was to be food-price subsidies totaling \$68 million over a four-month period.

Outraged by the government's failure to stand firm against the COB, the Bolivian employers mounted a counteroffensive. The Confederation of Private Enterprise held a two-day shutdown and lockout February 6-7, denouncing the regime's "irrational economic behavior" and giving Siles 30 days to implement a "coherent economic policy." The bosses' organization warned that Bolivian "democracy" was "being supplanted by something else of a totalitarian character" and demanded that the Communist Party be ousted from Siles' governing coalition.

(In fact, the CP, which has two cabinet ministers out of 18, has used its influence within the COB to water down the workers federa-

*The UDP is composed of Siles' Left Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNRI), the Communist Party, and the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR). The MNRI is a bourgeois-nationalist formation that arose from a split in the original Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR), which led the 1952 revolution in Bolivia against the old oligarchy. The MIR started out as a radical petty-bourgeois grouping but has moved to the right in recent years. It is affiliated to the Socialist International and is often referred to as social democratic, although it lacks a firm base in the labor movement. The MIR withdrew from the government in January 1983 and rejoined it in April of this year, just before the austerity measures were decreed.

tion's demands and rein in the federation's more militant sectors.)

The deepening class polarization in Bolivia has also found expression in "marches of empty pots" organized by the rightist parties, in a strike by truck owners directed against peasant demands for cheap transport, and in a series of threats and rumors pointing to a new military coup.

Washington uses food weapon

The U.S. government — which provides three-quarters of Bolivia's foreign economic aid — lent a hand in pressing Siles to renege on his promises to the COB. Wheat and rice shipments were suspended by the Reagan administration to force Siles to lift price subsidies on these staples.

At the same time, the imperialists and their Bolivian clients have been reluctant to give the military a green light for a fresh attempt at overthrowing constitutional rule. The officer corps remains widely discredited for its corruption and brutality during 17 years in power between 1965 and 1982. Above all, the level of organization and political consciousness achieved by the workers and peasants over the past three years makes any new coup a risky proposition indeed. In La Paz, the *Wall Street Journal* reported March 2, "government officials, opposition leaders, labor chiefs, businessmen and diplomats worry that the next overthrow attempt could plunge Bolivia into a bloody civil war."

Siles, on the other hand, has been able to play on the COB leadership's fears of a military takeover in order to keep the mass movement from challenging his rule head-on. In arguing down union militants who were pressing for an all-out general strike against the latest austerity measures, COB President Juan Lechín said such a tactic would only favor the rightists. "This government commits one gaffe after another," Lechín said, "but we are obliged to defend the democracy we have conquered."

Siles and his vice-president, MIR leader Jaime Paz Zamora, have also reportedly sought to pressure the COB leadership by threatening to resign; this would leave the presidency in the hands of the rightist head of the Supreme Court and force new elections.

On May 13 the regime reiterated its intention to proceed with the new austerity measures despite the COB's protests, as well as to meet obligations on Bolivia's \$5 billion foreign debt by devoting 25 percent of export income to that purpose. Siles hopes this firm stand will put him in the good graces of Washington and the IMF. Perhaps it will, but what it is bound to do is further reduce the UDP government's already low standing in the eyes of Bolivian working people. This in turn means sharpening the class polarization in the country and raising the stakes for the new rounds of struggle that are coming. □

Southern Africa

'Peace' pacts mask war

Apartheid regime wages more aggression

By Ernest Harsch

Several months after the apartheid regime in Pretoria signed "peace" agreements with the governments of Angola and Mozambique, the peoples of southern Africa remain the victims of South African aggression.

In both Angola and Mozambique, pro-South African terrorist bands continue to attack buses and trains, burn crops, bomb buildings, destroy villages, and murder peasants and workers.

South African troops remain in combat in Namibia, where they are seeking to crush the independence struggle led by the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO). Within South Africa itself, the apartheid police still answer the demands of the Black majority with bullets and clubs and occasionally clash with armed freedom fighters of the African National Congress (ANC).

This direct aggression is combined with economic and political pressures against neighboring Black-ruled states aimed at eliciting more concessions from them, strengthening their economic dependence on South Africa, and imposing further restrictions on the activities of SWAPO and the ANC in those countries.

Yet internationally, Pretoria has adopted a guise of nonbelligerence. With the help of its imperialist allies in North America and Western Europe, it is using the Angola and Mozambique agreements in an effort to polish up its image and break out of its political isolation.

The apartheid authorities have already had some success in this. In early May, the British government announced that it was inviting South African Prime Minister Pieter Botha to meet with Margaret Thatcher the following month — the first time in 23 years that a South African prime minister has been able to visit Britain. Other scheduled stops on Botha's tour include West Germany, Portugal, Switzerland, and Belgium.

Elusive 'disengagement'

While government officials in Western Europe rush to embrace Botha, the latter's troops remain in occupation of parts of Angola.

The agreement with Angola, concluded at a meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, in mid-February, provided for a "disengagement" of South African troops from those areas of southern Angola that had originally been occupied during Pretoria's massive 1981 invasion. This withdrawal was to have taken about a month. Some South African units were moved closer to the border with Namibia. But Pretoria has stalled on completing the withdrawal.

A May 6 radio broadcast from Luanda, the

Angolan capital, reported that the Angolan government "deplored the slow withdrawal from its territory of the South African occupation forces."

Pretoria's footdragging serves two purposes. It puts continued pressure on Angola with the aim of forcing a reduction in Angolan support for the Namibian independence struggle (SWAPO maintains some bases in Angola).

It also gives Pretoria more time to build up the strength of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), the South African-backed terrorist group that operates in wide areas of southern and central Angola. On April 10, the official Angolan news agency cited reports that "puppet forces complementary to the South African racist army are being installed en masse" in southern Angola.

A few weeks after the signing of the Lusaka accord, UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi, in an interview over South African radio, commented, "I think it [the accord] does not harm UNITA at all in any way, but I think we can benefit from it."

UNITA terror

Besides their usual attacks against villages, roads, and bridges in rural areas, Savimbi's forces have carried out several major actions in larger towns and cities since the signing of the accord.

On March 25, several thousand UNITA troops attacked Sumbe, the capital of Kuanza Sul Province. It is located just 190 miles south of Luanda, in an area where UNITA had not been very active before. Angolan troops — supported by Cuban fighters — succeeded in beating off the attack.

Less than a month later, on April 19, UNITA detonated a powerful car bomb in Huambo, a provincial capital in the central highlands. It killed 24 persons and injured nearly 100. Among the dead were 14 Cuban construction workers. An editorial in the Cuban daily *Granma* stressed that the "paws of the Central Intelligence Agency" and the "ominous footprints of its agents are printed all over this brutal terrorist act."

Despite such continuing attacks, the Angolan leadership has resisted Pretoria's political demands. On the same day as the Huambo bombing, a declaration by the Central Committee of the ruling People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola-Labor Party reiterated its "unwavering support for the just struggle of the Namibian and South African peoples led by SWAPO and the ANC."

Mass rallies were organized in Huambo and other cities to protest the bombing. Then on

May Day, workers and peasants took to the streets throughout the country to condemn the South African aggression. In Luanda alone, more than 150,000 took part.

Nkomati: a one-sided accord?

The Mozambican government, which had been under intense South African pressure for years, was compelled to sign a security pact with Pretoria on March 16. As in Angola, the apartheid authorities had carried out a systematic campaign of destabilization by providing training, arms, and logistical support to pro-South African forces called the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo, or the MNR).

Known as the Nkomati accord, the pact called for a halt to the use of either country as "a base, thoroughfare or in any other way by another state, government, foreign military forces, organizations or individuals which plan or prepare acts of violence, terrorism or aggression" against the other.

Although the ANC did not have military bases in Mozambique, its fighters had previously been allowed to travel through the country on their way to South Africa. In line with the Nkomati accord, the Mozambican government put a halt to that. While professing continued political support for the ANC, it also cut off all material aid to the group, ordered a reduction in the ANC's political staff in the country to some 10 people, and insisted that South African refugees in Mozambique break off all contacts with the ANC — or leave. As a result, more than 100 ANC activists and family members have already departed.

By imposing the accord, Pretoria has thus been able to inflict a blow against the ANC. In return, the apartheid regime has promised the Mozambican authorities that it will cut off its backing to the Renamo bands.

Taking Pretoria's pledges at face value — and remaining silent on the setback that has been dealt to the ANC — the leaders of the ruling Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) have presented the Nkomati accord in glowing terms. Rallies have been organized throughout the country to hail it as a "victory." At a ceremony in early April, President Samora Machel proclaimed, "The Nkomati Accord constitutes one of the highest moments of assertion of our sovereignty as an independent state."

At the same time, criticism of the accord has been discouraged. Machel, Foreign Minister Joaquim Chissano, and other leaders have accused those who describe the accord as a setback to the struggle in South Africa of being "ultra-left." One official radio commentary even called them "enemy agents."

While the Mozambican government has stuck to its side of the agreement, there has been little concrete indication that Pretoria has been as scrupulous.

The Renamo gangs remain active in many parts of Mozambique. Twice in early April, Renamo sabotage teams cut off the power to Maputo, the capital. On April 23, Renamo rebels massacred 37 civilians in Tete Province, in the northwest. Mozambican troops have en-



gaged in major battles with the guerrillas, as part of a drive to stamp out Renamo's base areas. Hundreds of Renamo rebels were reportedly killed in Inhambane Province on March 30 and 31 alone.

The Mozambican government has attributed Renamo's continued fighting to the large amounts of aid it received from Pretoria before the accord was signed. According to this view, the South African assistance has now been cut off, and Renamo's armed actions will eventually diminish.

But some officials have expressed doubts about this. "The SA government has been deafeningly silent about their part of the bargain," a spokesperson of the Mozambican Information Ministry told a reporter. "We don't know what action has been taken against the MNR leadership and camps near Phalaborwa in the eastern Transvaal." (Renamo's headquarters for several years has been near the Phalaborwa air base in South Africa's Transvaal Province.)

From Swaziland to Botswana

To one degree or another, Pretoria's offensive against the liberation movements and the independent states of southern Africa is being pursued elsewhere as well.

In Swaziland, a small country located between South Africa and Mozambique, the South African regime won agreement for a security pact similar to the Nkomati accord. The Swazi monarchy then launched a crackdown against ANC refugees in that country in mid-April. Dozens were arrested by Swazi troops and police. Armed clashes ensued, in which three ANC activists were killed. On May 6, ANC General Secretary Alfred Nzo accused the Swazi government of turning four ANC members over to the apartheid regime.

South African-backed opposition forces continue to carry out occasional armed actions in Lesotho. And Pretoria has trained and armed small guerrilla groups that operate in western Zimbabwe.

The Botha regime is likewise pressuring the government of Botswana to conclude an accord that would permit South African troops to enter that country in pursuit of ANC guerrillas.

While some of the Black governments in

southern Africa have been compelled to reduce their material assistance to the liberation movements, most have reaffirmed their political support for Namibia's independence and for the struggle against apartheid.

This was evident at an April 29 summit meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, of the heads of state of the six "frontline" countries: Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia, and Tanzania. SWAPO President Sam Nujoma and ANC President Oliver Tambo also attended.

The summit's final communiqué called on Pretoria to live up to its pledges to withdraw from Angola and halt its acts of destabilization against Mozambique. It demanded "rapid implementation" of United Nations Security Council Resolution 435, which calls for the independence of Namibia. It rejected the effort by the South African and U.S. governments to link Namibia's independence to the demand for a parallel withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. While noting that the participants preferred the abolition of apartheid by "peaceful means," the communiqué stressed that in the absence of genuine negotiations there would be a "continued struggle against that system by other means, including armed struggle."

'The struggle will continue'

Pretoria's refusal to concede on the fundamental question of Namibian independence was clearly underlined two weeks later, when a three-day conference in Lusaka between South African and SWAPO representatives broke down.

The talks collapsed in face of Pretoria's insistence on dragging in the issue of a Cuban withdrawal from Angola, its refusal to agree to implement Resolution 435, and its efforts to promote a motley coalition of pro-South African groupings in Namibia as an alternative to SWAPO.

Commenting on the failure of the conference, SWAPO's "Voice of Namibia" radio broadcast from Zimbabwe stated, "SWAPO remains ready to talk to Pretoria to end South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia, if South Africa is ready to do so. In the absence of this, the struggle for liberation will continue."

On May 12 and 13 — as the Lusaka conference was under way — ANC fighters provided a reminder that the same thing was true for the struggle within South Africa itself. Activists of the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), attacked several prominent targets in Durban, including a Mobil oil refinery and offices of the Department of Internal Affairs and the railway police. Four Umkhonto guerrillas gave their lives in the refinery action.

Pretoria is also concerned about the ANC's increasing influence with the various mass movements in South Africa, particularly the predominantly Black trade unions, which are growing rapidly. On April 20, Gen. Magnus Malan, the defense minister, publicly warned that the ANC would try to create "industrial upheaval." □

New cabinet, old conflicts

Resistance continues against Israeli occupation

By Fred Murphy

Three months after the U.S.-backed Gemayel government in Lebanon collapsed in face of an offensive by militias based in the oppressed Muslim and Druse communities, a new cabinet has been installed in Beirut under Syrian auspices. The cabinet's makeup partially reflects changes in the relationship of forces inside the country, but its instability points up the fact that no fundamental progress has been achieved by the Lebanese masses.

Amin Gemayel, a leader of the rightist, proimperialist Christian Phalange Party, remains as president — a post he has held since the Phalange was installed in power on the point of Israeli bayonets in the aftermath of Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon. When the Reagan administration and its European allies decided in February to cut their losses and pull out of Lebanon militarily, President Gemayel was compelled to shift to an alliance of convenience with the Syrian government in order to hold onto his office.

At the behest of Syrian ruler Hafez al-Assad, Gemayel repudiated the May 17, 1983, pact with Tel Aviv that had legitimized continued Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. This had been a central demand of the Syrian-backed Lebanese opposition forces.

The other key demand pressed by Amal (Hope), an organization with mass support among Lebanon's poor and working-class Shi'ite Muslims, and by the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), based in the Druse community, has been for an end to the discriminatory system whereby the Maronite Christian minority has dominated the Lebanese government and army for decades. This set-up has facilitated the exploitation of the Muslim majority by the largely Christian bourgeoisie and their Sunni Muslim junior partners.

The majority of the new cabinet announced April 30 is made up of long-time Lebanese political figures with a big stake in the maintenance of the discriminatory system. Rashid Karami, appointed prime minister by Amin Gemayel, is a Sunni Muslim with close ties to the Syrian regime. He has held the post nine times in the past, including during the 1975-76 civil war, when his government requested Syrian military intervention to forestall victory by the Muslim-leftist-Palestinian coalition that was challenging Maronite domination.

'Liberation of the south'?

Also given roles in the new cabinet were Amal leader Nabih Berri and PSP leader Walid Jumblatt. They initially balked at accepting the appointments until a special new post was



created for Berri — minister of state for the south and reconstruction. Berri asserted May 12 that "the formation of this ministry is designed to mobilize and utilize all the ministries and departments as well as all of the domestic and foreign political forces for the sake of the south," which remains under Israeli military occupation. "It means supporting the steadfastness and resistance of the people there," Berri said.

The Amal leader has also stated that the new government in Beirut must place "the liberation of the south" at the center of its tasks. It is doubtful that this will happen, since the cabinet also includes the openly pro-Israeli Maronite leader Camille Chamoun and Christian Phalange founder Pierre Gemayel, the president's father. These rightist leaders in turn have close ties to the Lebanese Forces militia, which continues to be armed and supplied by the Israelis.

The new cabinet, moreover, has yet to tackle the most explosive question facing it — the reconstruction of the Lebanese army. During the February fighting, the army partially disintegrated and partially split into antagonistic Muslim and Christian units. These are now deployed in the respective geographic areas where each religious community predominates. The Muslim Sixth Brigade, for example, occupies West Beirut and no longer takes orders from the central command where Maronite officers hold sway.

Chamoun and the Lebanese Forces have called for formalizing the current situation by

carving Lebanon into a series of religious "cantons," each with its own armed forces. Berri has declared that Amal will never accept this and has urged that any restructuring of the military start with the elimination of religious discrimination within its ranks. Heavy fighting broke out in Beirut on the day the cabinet began to discuss the question of the army.

Israelis seal off occupied area

Meanwhile, the Israeli occupation forces have been tightening their grip on the southern one-third of Lebanon.

Lebanon below the Awali River has become "a virtual island," correspondent William Claiborne reported from the southern port of Sidon in the April 17 *Washington Post*. The main coastal highway to Beirut has been closed for months by the Israeli army. Travelers using mountainous back roads to reach the south "face four to six days of sitting in their vehicles as a four-mile-long line of trucks and automobiles inches toward a checkpoint near the village of Bater," Claiborne said.

The Israeli occupiers have also cut off postal, telephone, and telex communications between Beirut and the south. Ferry service from the ports of Sidon and Tyre to the capital area has also frequently been halted.

While disrupting trade between the south and the rest of Lebanon, the Israelis have made certain that their own exports find markets in the occupied area. The Tel Aviv daily *Ha'aretz* reported April 3 that "this year Lebanon will absorb approximately 32 percent of Israeli agricultural exports."

According to some reports, the Israelis are also proceeding with a plan to divert the waters of Lebanon's Litani River to supply irrigation projects in Israel's Negev Desert.

Israel maintains a force of some 10,000 well-armed occupation troops in southern Lebanon. To supplement these units in policing the local population, the Israelis have expanded the mercenary forces once commanded by the late Lebanese turncoat Maj. Saad Hadad. The latter have been merged with units of the Lebanese Forces militia that fled to the south after being driven out of the coastal area near Beirut in February. Together, these forces have been rebaptized the "South Lebanese Army" and put under the command of Maj. Gen. Antoine Lahad, a Maronite Christian said to maintain close ties to President Amin Gemayel and the army high command in Beirut.

While Lahad's army is largely Christian, the Israelis have also sought to establish quisling "militias" in Muslim villages and Palestinian refugee camps in the south. These units were recently characterized by a member of the Israeli Knesset (parliament) as "companies of criminals and mercenaries."

The occupation has called forth growing resistance from the local Lebanese population and especially from the Shi'ite Muslim majority of the south. The most recent in a series of general strikes shut down the region March 30. According to a Beirut radio broadcast, "Activity in the public and private sectors came to a

standstill, and shops, schools, banks, and public institutions closed down. Highways were blocked by rocks and burning tires, and rallies were staged in different parts of the south to protest against the Israeli measures. Prayers were held in mosques to commemorate the martyrs killed by Israeli occupation forces in Jibshit" (a village where three persons were killed and 12 wounded March 28).

Local residents have also taken up arms against the occupiers. "Attacks on Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon have become a daily occurrence," the April 17 *Washington Post* re-

ported, "sometimes numbering three or four roadside bombings, rocket-propelled-grenade ambushes or sniping incidents a day." The Israeli military reported 79 such attacks during the first three months of this year.

Israeli reprisals only serve to deepen the hatred felt for the occupiers. The April 27 issue of the Jerusalem Palestinian weekly *Al Fajr* described this dynamic as follows:

Israeli troops block villages for hours and sometimes days following guerrilla attacks. Dozens of youths are questioned every time and the inhabitants' houses are searched. . . .

Nowadays, an Israeli patrol that enters a Muslim village is usually faced by a hostile public who throw stones and try to block its way with burning tyres. People are warned at village entrances by calls of *Allah Akbar* (God is Great) through local mosques' loudspeakers. . . .

Village religious leaders do not admit any connection between them and the guerrilla fighters, but they unhesitatingly praise attacks on Israeli troops.

Despite such deepening resistance, as well as widespread antiwar sentiment inside Israel itself, the Zionist rulers are determined to maintain their hold on southern Lebanon. □

SELECTIONS FROM THE LEFT

Direct Action

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

Writing in the May 2 issue, Geoff Streeton described the response in the U.S. Congress to new revelations of the CIA's role in the mining of Nicaraguan harbors as a "major setback" for Reagan's Central America policies.

"The mining operations, authorised by Reagan in February, were intended to weaken the Sandinista-led revolution by cutting off the country's foreign trade. Instead, the policy has led to open splits in the US ruling class, pitting the White House against Congress and imperiling the flow of US arms and money to right wing forces in Central America," he wrote.

"Dismayed by the administration's arrogance and ineptitude," he continued, "many Congress members who have no sympathy for the Nicaraguan revolution now appear to have moved into opposition to Reagan's Central America policies. . . .

"How far-reaching the congressional opposition to Reagan's aggressions in Central America will prove is not yet clear. It could, however, force a considerable scaling-down of US operations in the region in the near future."

"Because an earlier US grant of \$24 million to the contras is now reported to be almost exhausted," Streeton added, "the congressional revolt could provide the Nicaraguan revolutionaries with some much-needed short-term relief."

After noting several possible ways Reagan can maintain the flow of aid to both the Salvadoran dictatorship and the Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries despite congressional action, Streeton concluded:

"Although Reagan retains these options, the dissent in Washington now promises to make it far more difficult for him to continue stepping up his war drive in Central America. In the past, the president has been able to discipline his congressional critics by accusing them of preparing to hand over Central America to communism.

"Now, however, Reagan is widely seen as having stepped beyond the bounds of what is acceptable in US foreign policy. The forced consensus the president has been able to maintain around his Central America policies has been shattered.

"It is no wonder that opponents of Reagan's attacks on Nicaragua are heartened by these events. Of course, the considerable breakthroughs for the antiwar forces in the last few weeks will only be consolidated if strong popular pressure is kept on Congress.

"But with a large majority of Americans opposing attempts to overthrow the Nicaraguan government, and the movement of solidarity with the Central American revolutions growing in size and influence, the chances seem appreciable that Congress will remain a serious obstacle to Reagan's aggressions in the region."



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

"Imperialism is losing the war in El Salvador," said an article in issue no. 60 of *Solidaridad Socialista*, published in early May. "The perspective of the defeat of the dictatorship and its army can now be seen; we are facing the possibility of the taking of power by the Salvadoran guerrillas."

However, the newspaper said, this prospect has given rise to "a split in the leadership of the guerrillas as a result of the clash of two different policies. On one side, the policy advised for several years by Fidel Castro and the Communist parties and upheld by the 'official' leadership of the FMLN [Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front]: not to proceed toward final victory but rather to negotiate a ceasefire with imperialism in order to form a coalition government with the Salvadoran bourgeoisie,

respecting the state and army of the capitalists."

Counterposed to this, the newspaper said, is "the policy of carrying the struggle through to the end, overthrowing the dictatorship and destroying its army. We take great satisfaction in seeing that there has appeared a wing of the guerrilla leadership, organized in the 'Salvador Cayetano Carpio' Revolutionary Workers Movement [MOR] and in the 'Clara Elisabeth Ramirez' Metropolitan Front, that has begun to uphold such positions."

Solidaridad Socialista strongly criticized the proposal made by the FMLN and the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) of El Salvador for a "government of broad participation." The objective of this, the paper said, "is to sit down at a negotiating table with imperialism, arrive at a satisfactory agreement, and hand over one's weapons. This is the policy Fidel Castro recommends."

But such a policy "is denounced by the forces that now oppose the 'official' leadership of the FMLN: 'It is necessary not to give ground in face of Yankee imperialism nor to favor negotiations to end the civil war. . . . The revolution is not the product of negotiations but rather of the will of our entire people. . . . We will initiate the decisive battles for the taking of power.' This is what the MOR says in a statement read over the radio on December 28, quoted in the magazine *Nexus* in Mexico."

Thus, *Solidaridad Socialista* said, both the MOR and the Metropolitan Front "uphold a position with which we are in agreement: for the victory of the revolution and the overthrow of the fascist Salvadoran government, achieving what was achieved in Nicaragua and continuing until the final victory."

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'The collapse of the Grenada revolution'

View of Dominica Liberation Movement leader Bill Riviere

[Among the many revolutionary and left-wing organizations in the Caribbean that have expressed their views on the reasons for the overthrow of the Grenada revolution is the Dominica Liberation Movement (DLM).

[The largest left-wing organization on that Eastern Caribbean island, the DLM was formed in 1979 through a merger of several groups, during a mass upsurge in Dominica that led to the downfall of the repressive government of Patrick John. An early supporter of the Grenada revolution under the leadership of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, the DLM was quick to condemn the U.S. invasion on Oct. 25, 1983, calling it "the most brutal act in West Indian history."

[The following are major excerpts from a speech by DLM General Secretary Bill Riviere, entitled "The Collapse of the Grenada Revolution and the Road Ahead for the Caribbean Struggle." It was given on March 14 before the Black Studies Department at the City College of the City University of New York. The excerpts are from an edited copy of the address provided to *Intercontinental Press* by Riviere.

[The sections of the speech that we are not publishing (for reasons of space) include a factual description of the development of the conflict within the New Jewel Movement of Grenada that led to the overthrow of the People's Revolutionary Government and the subsequent U.S. invasion.¹

[The subheads are from the original; the footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Sisters and brothers, it is not easy to talk about the sad events which transpired in Grenada between October 14 and 25 last year. That is because I have been emotionally very close to the Grenada Revolution and have had personal and working relationships with the main actors in the October drama. Maurice was a personal friend as far back as 1973, that is to say, in the heyday of the Gairy reign of terror. Bernard Coard became a close friend with the triumph of the revolution in 1979. I shared a political relationship with them both.

And from 1973 up till the present time, our party, the Dominica Liberation Movement, enjoyed deep, fraternal relations with the New Jewel Movement (NJM). Relations between our two parties blossomed particularly after

July 1980 when the infamous Eugenia Charles became prime minister of my country and accepted United States imperialism's invitation to lead the Caribbean propaganda attack on the People's Revolutionary Government and the Grenada Revolution.

Not only did our party defend the revolutionary process on the local, regional, and international planes. We also hosted annual excursions by boat to allow our people an on-the-ground view of the unfolding new experiment in social transformation. I myself also enjoyed a personal relationship with not only the other revolutionary leaders killed but also with those charged with the massacre.

So you can well imagine the emotional strain imposed on me when I go over the sad events of October and attempt to present a dispassionate analysis.

The split within the party

If we are not careful, sisters and brothers; if we attempt a superficial rather than profound analysis of these events; if we approach the events emotionally rather than scientifically, we are bound to degenerate to the level of taking sides and bringing the wrath of God down on individuals. Unless we examine the course of events dispassionately, however difficult this might be, then we will quickly jump to the conclusion, to the most absurd conclusion, that Maurice was selling out to United States imperialism, or that the Grenada Revolution collapsed because of a conspiracy by B. Coard, which had its beginnings even before the triumph of March 1979, or that the CIA infiltrated the NJM during the early hours of the revolution and masterminded the whole thing.

It is a pity, sisters and brothers, that these are the main lines which, at this moment, appear to be dominant here in New York City.

Of course, CIA involvement cannot be discounted. Or, more precisely, the role of the CIA must be identified. After all, the United States ambassador to Paris has stated publicly that the Reagan administration had begun preparations for an invasion of Grenada about October 5, more than a week before Bishop's house arrest was made public, and two weeks before his assassination. This means that the CIA must have had a direct or indirect line of communication with the Central Committee of the party. And it would have been out of character if the Agency did not use this line of communication to fan the flames of conflict that were eating at the core of the party.

Sisters and brothers, just as the role played by the CIA cannot be underestimated so, too, it cannot be overlooked that there was an element of conspiracy in the behavior of the Coard group.

It is now common knowledge that almost all the Central Committee supporters of the Coard position were originally members of OREL (Organisation for Revolutionary Education and Liberation), a study group formed by B. Coard on his return to Grenada following a distinguished university student and lecturer career in the United States, Britain, and the University of the West Indies at St. Augustine and Mona.

The OREL comrades, mainly because of their disciplined approach to work and study, assumed leading positions within the state apparatus and the party following the March 13 [1979] triumph. In fact, they played leading roles in the overthrow of the Gairy dictatorship. They were allowed by the party to function as the main ideologues, with wide powers of responsibility for party education and organization. And, because of this, not only would they have been in a position to determine membership into the NJM vanguard but, equally importantly, they would have been instrumental in setting the ideological orientation of members.

It is from this vantage point that the move to demote Bishop from the position of party leader to joint leader with B. Coard was made. The Central Committee [CC] minutes make it clear that there was secret preparation, tantamount to conspiracy, on the part of the Coard group. The question of joint leadership of the party had not been raised at the CC level before the meeting of September 14-16 [1983]. Yet the Coard faction had obviously thrashed out the matter in secret, behind the backs of the Central Committee as a body, and entered the meeting with a pre-conceived plan to have their way.

First, they brushed aside the agenda of Bishop and substituted their own. Next, they exaggerated the problems facing the revolution, blamed this on Maurice and his alleged petty-bourgeois outlook, called for what they considered to be a Marxist-Leninist approach, claimed that Coard was the only comrade capable of joint leadership, and, without presenting a view of its practical implications in the specific Grenadian context, they rejected an appeal to withhold voting on the matter until Coard's position was ascertained. Then, once the vote was secured, they moved to consolidate their position in the party and the armed forces.

Undoubtedly, these steps taken so decisively, in so much haste, with such consensus from the Coard group, smell of prior planning and conspiratorial behavior.

Ideology, strategy, and tactics

Yet, sisters and brothers, to explain the fall

1. For detailed accounts of this conflict within the New Jewel Movement, see interviews with Don Rojas, George Louison, and Kenrick Radix — three surviving supporters of Bishop within the Grenadian leadership — in the Dec. 26, 1983; April 16, 1984; and April 30, 1984, issues of *Intercontinental Press*.

of the Grenada process in terms simply of a conspiracy would be to circumvent the problem rather than attack it at its roots. An explanation must be sought elsewhere.

First of all, let us dismiss the nonsense propagated by the imperialist media that the crisis developed out of an ideological conflict between Bishop and Coard. In support of this, it is said that Bishop's visit to the United States in July of last year indicated a willingness to toe the United States line, a policy to which Coard was fanatically opposed.

That is foolishness. The visit of the Grenadian leader was merely the kind of magnanimous gesture made by all civilized nations, that was extended by the head of one state to another, aimed at establishing goodwill and friendship between the people of Grenada and that of the United States, in which country thousands of Grenadians have been forced to make a living.

There is also the view that acceptance of the 1983 International Monetary Fund (IMF) terms represented a similar capitulation to imperialism on the part of Bishop. That, too, lacks basis. The agreement was a party decision, guided by Coard as minister of finance and planning. And it was dictated less by wishful thinking than by the economic realities facing the young revolution.

It has even been suggested that the process that had been set in motion towards holding elections in Grenada after the ratification of a new constitution was the work of Bishop independently of the party. And it marked the beginning of Bishop's return to the imperialist fold.

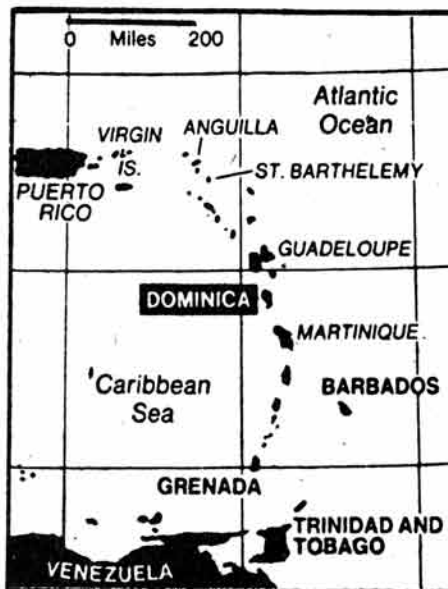
That charge is unfounded. It is no secret — and Bishop made this fundamentally clear during the course of his visit to the United States — that the whole NJM leadership embraced the position that Western-style democracy, as exemplified by the Westminster parliamentary system, was dead in Grenada, and that the elections envisaged were intended to consolidate the process of popular, grass-roots democracy that was taking place in the country.

The fact is, there was no ideological split. The party was united on the notion that the age-old problems facing the people of Grenada originated in the exploitation of their human and material resources by the forces of colonialism and imperialism. It was united on the notion that lasting solutions to these problems could only be found in escaping the present stranglehold of imperialism and constructing a socialist society in preference to the existing dependent, undeveloped capitalist situation.

The party was united, too, in the knowledge that the movement from capitalism towards socialism was a process rather than an act. It constituted, that is to say, a period of transition called the stage of national democracy.

Where disagreement occurred was in terms of the dynamics of that transition period. There were differences not of ideology but in terms of strategy and tactics.

Such differences appear to have been the underlying reasons for the resignation of Coard



from the CC and PB [Political Bureau] late in 1982. The Coard group felt that the pace of the revolutionary process was being needlessly slowed down because of incorrect direction set by Bishop and other leaders of government such as Whiteman, Creft, Bain, Ramdhanny, and Radix.² These leaders were variously described as "petty bourgeois" and "revolutionary democrats," as opposed to the "Marxist-Leninists" led in the government by Coard and in the party by the majority of the Central Committee.

The Coard group saw speeding up the revolutionary process in terms of nationalizing the whole economy and declaring Grenada on the road to socialism on March 13th 1984. Bishop, who was very much at home with the level of class consciousness of the Grenadian masses and, most importantly, in tune with the regional and international situations, thought otherwise.

What is obvious is that these disagreements in strategy for advancing the revolution were never seriously discussed, let alone clearly articulated. Had this been done, as is the business of all revolutionaries, there would have been no room for the kind of internecine name-calling which characterized the last month of the People's Revolutionary Government. And there certainly would not have occurred the criminal shooting down of the people and the execution of the finest revolutionaries the English-speaking Caribbean has given to the world.

The conflict in terms of strategy and tactics within the Grenada process raised three broad questions which have been faced and must be faced by revolutionaries everywhere who seek to escape the stranglehold of imperialism and take their countries to a higher form of social organization. Firstly, at what stage of the revolutionary process is the particular country?

2. Unison Whiteman, Jaqueline Creft, Norris Bain, Lyden Ramdhanny, and Kenrick Radix. The first three were executed along with Bishop on Oct. 19, 1983.

Secondly, how are the masses of the people going to be organized to accomplish the objectives sought at that stage? Thirdly, who must hold the power to make decisions? It is answers to these questions that make or break a revolution.

The Grenada revolution collapsed, firstly, because the Coard faction, despite their claim to be Marxist-Leninist, provided incorrect and, in fact, un-Leninist answers to these questions. And, secondly, because Bishop and those who embraced his line, although they instinctively knew that the Coard position was incorrect, lacked the ideological sharpness required to convince the Central Committee and the party rank and file.

National democratic stage

The Coard group imagined that the national democratic stage of the revolution had been completed, and the time was ripe to commence the socialist stage. Therefore you needed to nationalize the whole economy, in the process putting even the local private sector under "heavy manners."³ You needed a strictly Marxist-Leninist party, that is to say, a Workers Party, a Communist Party to guide the revolution. And you needed to "manners" revolutionary tendencies and take leadership of the party out of the hands of all except the staunchest Leninists.

Sisters and brothers, the national democratic stage — to explain it generally — is a state of transition between capitalism and socialism. It is the stage when the objective and subjective preconditions for building socialism are laid down. It is the stage when you hit imperialism hard, but you are not strong enough to kill it.

You implement measures that will lay the basis for a modern agriculture and industry. You effect actions that will gradually take ownership and control of the economy away from foreigners and place them in national hands. You undertake an agrarian reform that will win the support of the rural peasantry. You introduce programs that will not only increase the size of the working class, but will also heighten its class consciousness in preparation for the leading role that class is destined to play in the socialist stage. You take measures that will guarantee the support of the national bourgeoisie and the intermediate strata whose support is critically necessary at this anti-imperialist stage of struggle. You diversify your economic and political relations with the outside world, without unnecessarily inviting the hostility of imperialism. And you set in train a process of cultural rejuvenation that will free the masses from the mental and psychological effects of colonialism and racism.

Any dispassionate and scientific analysis of the Grenada process as it stood in September 1983 would conclude that although the national democratic stage had been well under way, it was far from completion. The productive base had not yet been securely laid. The

3. A Caribbean expression meaning to suppress, discipline, or restrict.

working class was only slowly growing, and its class consciousness was advancing only moderately. Besides there is no indication that an alliance of workers and peasants, which is vital to the completion of the national democratic stage, was in an advanced state.

Undoubtedly, the revolution enjoyed enormous prestige and support regionally and internationally, especially among the nonaligned and socialist countries. Yet with the Reagan administration openly threatening invasion, the revolution could not count on the support of the widest sections of the intermediate strata. These forces were loyal to the man, Bishop, rather than supportive of the revolutionary process that was taking place.

Organizing the masses

In such a situation it was not necessary to organize the masses of the population around a classical Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, membership of which is restricted to revolutionaries steeled in Leninist theory, discipline, and methods of work. Sisters and brothers, you need such a party to build socialism. And one of the tasks of the national democratic stage is precisely either to develop a working class or, if objective conditions preclude this, to proletarianize members of other classes and strata, so as to provide a body of cadres with the discipline and class consciousness required for membership of a Marxist-Leninist party.

But the objectives of the national democratic stage can be adequately met by a party led by a vanguard core of revolutionary democrats, with broad rather than selective membership among the masses. It is possible to do this because what this stage calls for is the accomplishment of democratic, national, and anti-imperialist rather than socialist goals.

Of course, because scientific socialism can only be built under the guidance of a Marxist-Leninist party, the revolutionary democrats leading the national democratic stage must be capable of making the transition to Leninist ideology if they are to maintain leadership during the stage of socialist construction. But revolutionary democratic consciousness is all that is required to fulfill the tasks of national democracy.

Of course, the March 13th revolutionaries had opted to build a tightly-knit Marxist-Leninist party to supervise the completion of the national democratic stage. The masses on the outside were to be linked to this party; they were to be organized and their class consciousness raised through the vehicle of mass organizations of workers, farmers, youth, women, and pioneers and in parish and zonal councils.

If conditions are ideal, it is quite possible to accomplish national democratic objectives in this way. But, as the Coard group itself admitted as early as July 1983, adverse rather than favorable conditions prevailed. Not only was the party rank and file silently rebellious against its main bodies of leadership, but because the mass organizations had virtually stopped functioning, the party was almost totally isolated from the masses. In fact, the

major tangible link between the party and the masses was the individual, Maurice Bishop.

It seems fairly obvious, then, that the solution to the crisis facing the party and the revolution was to maintain that major link with the people as top priority. At the same time there was need to resuscitate the mass organizations by either more appropriate methods of mass work or by creatively developing new forms of organization. And to relax the rigid requirements for membership so as to open up the party much more to the masses. Instead the Coard group called for making the party even more selective and rigid, which in practical terms meant isolating it even further from the masses. The group also opted for joint party leadership which meant, in the Grenadian context, destroying the vital point of contact between the broad masses and the revolution.

Who holds power?

Of course, sisters and brothers, resolution of the organizational crisis in this way was clearly connected with the question of who should hold decision-making power. This question, like the others before it, was not unique to the Grenadian revolutionaries. Like the others, it is a question which must confront revolutionaries in power everywhere, because that is the central question of revolution.

Both students and architects of revolution are united on the notion that revolutionary change involves the transfer of power from one social class to another. Where disagreement arises is on the question of the dynamics of that transfer.

The Third Universal Theory, articulated after 1974 by Muammar Qaddafi, leader of the Libyan revolution, in the Green Book, takes the position that power, once it is captured by the revolutionaries, must immediately be transferred directly to the masses of the people through the vehicle of popular congresses and appropriate mass organizations rather than, either in the short-term or the long-term, held in trust by representatives of the people even when they use that power to secure the best interests of the people.

Unless this is done, Qaddafi postulates, there is the practical danger that the temporary holders of power might degenerate into a bureaucracy and wield power permanently on behalf of the people. In that event, effective power will have been held not by the people themselves but by their representatives.

Marxist-Leninists think differently. There is general agreement that the ruling class of capitalists is still comparatively strong economically, ideologically, and administratively at the moment power is taken from them. Because of this, it is almost impossible to transfer that power from the revolutionaries to the comparatively unorganized masses as an immediate act. Instead, the masses must assume power through a process. The duration of that process and its character are not predetermined, but are conditioned by local features and the international situation confronting the particular revolutionary context.

There is no doubt, sisters and brothers, that the Grenada revolutionaries genuinely attempted from the outset to establish structures for the speedy transfer of power to the masses. A Center for Popular Education conducted mass literacy campaigns. Political education programs reached the workplace as well as the communities. Mass organizations of workers, farmers, youth, women, and children were set up. Workers, parish, and zonal councils represented the future organs of people's power. There was mass participation in the annual formulation of the budget. And no major piece of legislation obtained legal validity until it had received popular approval, following nationwide discussion.

In the meantime, the party, still largely small, weak, and without firm links among the masses, was in the process of gradual development. In that situation, it would seem that, although theoretically the Central Committee of the party was the source of decisions, for all practical purposes power in fact rested for the moment in the hands of the state through its leaders in government.

By September 1983 the question that was raised was whether decision-making power should continue to remain in the hands of the state or should it be transferred, in reality, to the party.

Of course, it was not put in precisely these terms. The charge of "one-manism" levied against Bishop. The categorization of him and other ministers of government variously as revolutionary democrats and the "petty bourgeois tendency." The blaming of the problems allegedly confronting the young revolution on the individual Bishop, rather than on the leadership as a collective. The charge that ideological weaknesses made Bishop unfit to continue leadership in the revolutionary process.

In these and other ways, the Coard group was saying that it was against the best interests of the revolution to maintain power in the hands of the existing state led by Bishop. The advance of the process, or more correctly, the very survival of the process called for a transfer of such power to the party. And the proposal for joint leadership, which made Coard de facto leader, was the machinery for effecting such a transfer. The party must be all-powerful. The broad masses aren't yet ready. So they said.

The joint leadership proposal was taken to the party rank and file, a tiny handful. But it was kept away from the mass organizations. It was hidden from the masses. In fact, it was precisely when Bishop threatened to take the matter before the people that he was placed under house arrest.

So, sisters and brothers, the collapse of the Grenada process must be traced to a failure of the revolutionaries to resolve these fundamental strategic, tactical, and organizational questions. The Coard group incorrectly decided it was time to take the process on to the socialist stage. It incorrectly resolved the problem of the party's isolation from the broad masses. It

incorrectly opted to make the party the source of all power. In a nutshell, the Coard group applied Marxist-Leninist principles in a rigid and orthodox rather than, as it should have done, in a flexible and creative way.

The elements of conspiracy and CIA involvement have relevance only insofar as they are examined within the context of these questions, and the responses of the Grenadian revolutionaries to them.

If we continue to regard these elements as independent factors, having momentum of their own, not only will we be doing a disservice to those in Grenada who are presently fighting to overcome the October setback and to revolutionary and progressive forces struggling in other parts of the region and, in fact, to the world revolutionary movement. We will, at the same time be doing the imperialists' dirty work for them.

We will be denying the Caribbean liberation struggle the ideological and organizational clarity that is of such critical importance at this time. We will be expending our energies in uselessly taking sides and making accusations and counteraccusations. We will be laying the basis for divisions within solidarity and support organizations here in this country and for verbal warfare, to say the least, between them. In the end, it is imperialism rather than the Caribbean revolutionary forces that will benefit.

The imperialist presence in the region

As it is, the reactionaries in the Caribbean have done enough to allow imperialism to consolidate its economic, ideological, political, and military presence in the region, following the criminal invasion. Only the governments of Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Belize, and the Bahamas had the courage to oppose the flagrant violation of the universally-accepted principle of nonintervention in the internal affairs of sovereign states and respect for their territorial integrity. Only they had the courage to condemn the illegal and immoral invasion of 133-square-mile, 111,000-peopled Grenada by the militarily most powerful country in the world.

By contrast, Eugenia Charles, prime minister of my own country, through a combination of lies, deceit, and outright treachery, paved the way for the rubber-stamping of the American invasion by paramilitary policemen from Dominica, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Antigua, Barbados, and Jamaica.

Today, thanks to Sir Paul Scoon and his interim government, Grenada is a country under occupation. And plans are afoot to make it a veritable colony of the U.S.A.

In the Eastern Caribbean a similar end is being forged through other means. Playing upon the peoples' love for Bishop, the puppet regimes there secured support for the invasion by fooling the masses into believing that the action was intended in retaliation for the assassination of Bishop by the Coard supporters and the military. In this atmosphere, United States troops have been brought into Dominica, St.

Lucia, St. Vincent, and Antigua to build local armies. In all these islands, the physical structures of army camps have already been set up, and the first batch of graduates in counter-insurgency have been produced. In my own country, Dominica, both a Treason Act and a State Security Act have since been enacted, without discussion by the people. Threats against revolutionary and progressive leaders have escalated.

And a Security and Military Cooperation agreement earlier signed by Antigua, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Barbados has now been extended to pave the way for the creation of a regional army, with heavy funding by the Reagan administration. Its purpose is pretty obvious. Arms and ammunition rather than markets and financial assistance under the terms of the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) have been by far the biggest form of help provided by the United States. Needless to say, adverse propaganda has escalated enormously.

What this means, sisters and brothers, is that the situation confronting the liberation movements in the Caribbean since the fall of the Grenada revolution has become doubly difficult. United States imperialism has said "No more Grenadas" in the region. And it is moving to wipe out the example of Nicaragua and prevent a triumph in El Salvador. The imperialist monster is on a world-wide rampage and, humiliated by defeat in Lebanon, it is desperate. Small, comparatively weak nations like Grenada and others in the Eastern Caribbean offer a sure opportunity for it to display its manhood.

Yet Caribbean revolutionaries take courage in the knowledge that the solutions to our age-old problems are no longer a practical mystery. The all-round, universally-acclaimed achievements of the Grenada revolution during the four and a half years of its existence; its dramatic successes in the areas of education, in health, in agricultural restructuring, in job creation, in women's rights, in the protection of labor, in popular democracy.

This record tells us that the only way forward for the working people of the Caribbean is for us to free ourselves from the imperialist net and creatively establish structures and institutions that place all power in the hands of the masses. March 13th 1979 to October 19th 1983 has undoubtedly pointed the way forward for the mini-states of the region and the world.

We find comfort, too, in the historical knowledge that, in the just struggles of the oppressed and exploited, setbacks are not irreversible. The road to success is paved with a mixture of setbacks and advances. Once setbacks are scientifically examined and mistakes identified rather than rationalized, advances are guaranteed.

Caribbean revolutionaries are heartened too, sisters and brothers, by the fact that United States imperialism is no more than a paper tiger whose threats are totally out of proportion to its strength. Despite the sophistication of its war machine, United States imperialism could

not stand up to the under-equipped liberation fighters in Vietnam. The same big-and-bad United States imperialism was easily routed on Cuban soil in 1961. Despite its firm military support for both the shah of Iran and the Somoza dynasty, both the Iranian and the Nicaraguan peoples have made their revolutions. In the face of massive United States financial and military backing to the butchers in El Salvador, the triumph of the children of Farabundo Martí is only a matter of time.

But, sisters and brothers, it was their mission to Grenada which truly betrayed the weakness of United States interventionist forces. Faced by a revolutionary force comprising 600 regular soldiers and about 2,000 militia men and women. Faced by so tiny a force, demoralized and more than half reduced because of loyalty to their fallen leader Bishop, the American invaders had predicted complete victory within 4 hours.

Yet, though composed of the crack troops of the U.S. armed forces backed up by 16,000 men, 2 aircraft carriers, more than 30 helicopter gunships, an equal number of jet bombers, and virtually unlimited weapons and ammunition, full five days later they were still conducting mopping-up operations. This was an undoubted testimony not only to the valiance of the Grenadian fighters but to the ineffectiveness of United States troops against a revolutionary people.

As Caribbean revolutionaries, therefore, the task confronting us is to struggle to convert our present setback into an advance, employing extreme vigilance and creatively applying revolutionary theory. In the name of Kofi and Akkara, Toussaint, Fedon, Sam Sharpe, Nanny, Balla and Farcel. In the name of Bogle and Gordon, Martí and Che, Albizu Campos and Sandino. In the name of Garvey, Sojourner Truth, Nat Turner, Medgar Evers and Malcolm X. In the spirit of Walter Rodney and Maurice Bishop, the struggle for a free, sovereign Caribbean continues.

Long live the working people of the Caribbean!

Long live the anti-imperialist struggle all over the world!

Long live the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions!

Long live the Caribbean revolution!

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The peace movement in East Germany

View of British CND member

By Günter Minnerup

[The following article, under the headline "Peace beyond the Berlin Wall," appeared in the April 6 issue of *Socialist Action*, a revolutionary socialist weekly published in London. The newspaper identified Minnerup as "a member of the Labour Party and CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament), and an editor of *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, which provides in-depth coverage of the East European peace and dissident movements."]

* * *

"Where are the peace demonstrations in Russia and Eastern Europe?" is a question most CND activists are only too familiar with. The simple answer, of course, is that they do exist — in Moscow, Prague, and East Berlin — but that they have great difficulty in making their voices heard in face of the repression against them. Olga Medvedkova of the Soviet "Trust" group has just gone on trial; the Hungarian "Dialogue" group has been forced to dissolve itself; members of Charter 77 have been detained for initiating protests against the deployment of Soviet nuclear missiles in Czechoslovakia; and East German peace campaigners have been arrested, sentenced, and expelled to the West.

But this simple answer, true so far as it goes, would be misleading in one crucial respect. The East European peace movements which are independent of the party and the state are not simply extensions of CND beyond the "Iron Curtain." There are of course similarities, such as opposition to the new cold war and the arms race, the prominent role of the Church in some of them, and the adoption of certain "bloc-transcending" symbols and slogans.

But in another way they are very much the product of the internal contradictions of East European and Soviet society and cannot be understood in terms of some spurious East-West symmetry.

By far the largest independent peace movement in the Soviet bloc, and the one which most closely resembles those of the West, is that in and around the Protestant churches in East Germany.

Almost every major town and city in the German Democratic Republic (and many minor ones) has its group of predominantly young people meeting both within the structures of the churches' youth work and in informal circles of friends to discuss questions of war and peace. They exchange views on, books about, and experiences with, militarism, organise poetry readings, musical and theatrical performances, and peace services.

Many of these groups do not remain content within the confines of the church and seek various ways of reaching a broader audience: by circulating petitions, staging demonstrative events (candlelight vigils, open workshops, art exhibitions), or daubing slogans on walls. Such activities tend to get them into conflict with the local police as well as, all too often, the church hierarchy — which is nervous of "provocative excesses" threatening its relations with party and state.

The sharpest conflict so far took place in the industrial city of Jena where an especially cautious local church pushed the "Jena Peace Community" into particularly bold public activity: marches under their own banners, demonstrations in the city centre, public expressions of sympathy with *Solidarity* in Poland. Most of its members have now been arrested and expelled to West Germany.

In East Berlin, where the church is more supportive, open air workshops attracting thousands of participants have so far been possible without provoking reaction on this scale. But there have been some arrests, in Weimar, Leipzig, Cottbus, and Karl-Marx-Stadt.

Much of what goes on in these East German groups would be very familiar to any CND activist: the serious discussions of international politics and the technology of the arms race, the concern not only with peace and disarmament, but also with ecology and feminist issues.

In the GDR, where West German television and radio can be easily received and where most people have some kind of link with West German relatives and friends, the influence of the Western peace and women's movements and especially of the West German Greens play a major role.

The "German Question" itself is never far below the surface: the demand for a withdrawal of all foreign troops from both German states and the creation of a nuclear-free zone in Germany, with all that this would imply for the status quo in that divided country, is occasionally articulated quite openly.

What is the significance of this movement? Although closely associated with the Protestant churches, it is certainly not a religious revival movement. The churches simply provide a space which is relatively free of the otherwise all-pervasive ideological regimentation and party supervision. The pacifist implications of some Christian teaching articulate the widespread antimilitarism among East German youth.

A religious motivation is the only one accepted for conscientious objectors to military service, who serve in unarmed but uniformed

"construction brigades." Such former objectors often proved the backbone of the independent peace groups. Conscripting, together with the compulsory military education in schools — introduced against a wave of protests in 1978 — are their main practical concerns rather than nuclear missiles as such (although that may change now that the Soviet Union is deploying them, for the first time, on East German territory).

Military service and the education system are also, of course, the main points of contact between young people and the authority of the state. Rather than just a single-issue peace movement, these groups and their activities are an expression of a broader alienation of East German youth from their "workers' and farmers' state."

The peace activists tend not to be students — who have too many privileges to lose and are generally conformist — but young workers whose first clashes with authority may have been quite unrelated to the peace question.

Most of the members of the "Jena Peace Community," for instance, saw themselves as to the left of the ruling SED [Socialist Unity Party]. Some had links with the long-established "dissident" current in the town which had already been involved in protests against the expulsion of communist songwriter Wolf Biermann in 1976.

There is nothing pro-Western in these activities. Those who persistently seek to embarrass CND by asking about the demonstrators on the other side of the Berlin Wall would get little solace from a conversation with any of the East German peace campaigners recently expelled from the GDR (and, incidentally, little more from Charter 77 and others elsewhere in Eastern Europe). They do not demand surrender to imperialism, but a surrender to the people; not the reintroduction of the capitalist market, but an end to the political monopoly of the bureaucracy.

The slogan of the East German peace movement "Swords into Ploughshares" — a biblical quote, but taken from a sculpture donated to the UN by the Soviet Union — does not translate into naive unilateralism, but into the desire for a world-wide order in which humanity can reap the fruits of its labour without fear of wars. It is thus fundamentally democratic and socialist in content. It is the duty of all socialists and peace activists in the West to give this movement their full and unconditional support. □

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'The left and the USSR'

'Labour Focus' editor on NATO's aims

By Oliver MacDonald

[The following article appeared in the April 6 issue of the London weekly *Socialist Action*, under the above headline. The author is the editor of *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, also published in London.]

* * *

E.P. Thompson's notion about "Exterminism" — that there is a war drive that has nothing to do with the logic of capitalism but has a momentum of its own — has rightly been attacked from many quarters on the left. But much of this attack has focussed on the sociological roots of the arms race. Too little attention has been paid to the foreign policy aims of the West's military build-up, in other words, what kinds of changes NATO is trying to bring about within the USSR itself.

Too often people fail to realise that weapons like cruise and Pershing are not just for use in a war. They are already in use at this very moment, as foreign policy instruments for changing realities inside the USSR. The staggering growth of the U.S. military budget over the last three years is exerting a profound political influence inside the USSR and Eastern Europe, trying to push these societies in directions that correspond to American interests.

And as ideas spread in and around the peace movement about "alternative defence policies" less reliant on nuclear weapons, the Americans are responding with new strategies of their own, such as *AirLand Battle* which could in the future replace battlefield nukes and even tactical nukes with conventional weapons that would achieve these same foreign policy goals, perhaps even better than the existing nuclear deployment in Europe.

For the Labour left to be able to fight the Reagan and Thatcher governments over defence policy it must therefore raise its own discussion away simply from military hardware to dealing with the left's foreign policy aims towards the USSR. And by foreign policy aims we do not just mean phrases like "restoring détente" or "improving relations with the USSR." We mean also changing the internal course of events inside the USSR and Eastern Europe.

For many decades, bourgeois circles in the West have had a settled set of aims towards the USSR, long-term goals for changing Soviet society, and for preventing other changes in it that would greatly harm the capitalist world. We can briefly list some of the main goals of this policy.

The first and most obvious aim has been to undermine those features of the Soviet state that make it inclined to support revolutions in the third world — the aid it has given to Cuba, Angola, Vietnam, Nicaragua, and so on. It doesn't take much imagination to see that what

needs to be broken in the USSR for this purpose is the planned character of the Soviet economy and the ideological commitment that corresponds to such a fully nationalised economy.

The West has therefore sought to bring pressures to bear on the USSR — both carrots and sticks — that would lead to the opening up of the Soviet economy to Western capital, that would marketise the USSR, destroy the monopoly of foreign trade, and tie the Soviet economy to the West.

The second great NATO aim has been to prevent any positive political development within the USSR or any big advances in the social position of the Soviet working class, changes that would make the Soviet Union more attractive to workers in other parts of the world. It thus exerts pressures designed to limit Soviet social spending and to strengthen the authoritarian institutions of the Soviet state.

The main tools of this NATO foreign policy are military and economic. Since the end of the war, the USSR has been ringed by many hundreds of American bases and has been permanently threatened by huge military arsenals. From this starting point, the West can then influence internal Soviet developments by either increasing the military pressure or offering to ease it in exchange for the changes in Soviet behaviour that the West wants.

In the economic field, the Americans have organised all the main capitalist states for economic warfare against the USSR — through such institutions as *Cocom* [Coordinating Committee on Export Controls]. It can thus alternately offer attractive economic packages that would stimulate Soviet economic growth while making the USSR dependent on Western capital, or it can close off economic links, trying to hit the bottlenecks in the Soviet economy especially hard.

Thus, at the present time, the U.S. administration is using a massive military build-up and economic warfare to ensure that the USSR becomes more internally authoritarian and repressive and to hit the living conditions of working people in the USSR and Eastern Europe.

There is remarkably little discussion on the left about what active aims it should have for changing the USSR. Too often discussion gets bogged down in interminable debates on how good or bad life is in the USSR or on how "friendly/unfriendly" we should be towards it. But a serious *policy* discussion must start with a different question: what features of Soviet society do we want to strengthen, what do we want to undermine, and how do we achieve these objectives?

On any sober assessment, the USSR is an extremely authoritarian state lacking any au-

thentically democratic mechanisms of popular control over the government. It must be a prime objective of the left to seek political changes that enable the working people of the USSR to strengthen their control over the affairs of state. We want to achieve this not only as a matter of principle but because of the enormous practical impact of such changes on world politics.

It is surely an ABC of politics for socialists that such democratic development is a matter of political pressure and struggle by the working people of the USSR and the working class everywhere can best exert its power in politics when it is in the strongest possible economic and social position.

This means that the left must want to strengthen to the maximum the social and economic rights that working people in the USSR possess: full employment and economic security, cheap food, nominal rents, nominal transport prices, nominal fuel bills, plentiful and cheap cultural facilities, an ambitious housing programme, rising wages, egalitarianism in income distribution.

The point is not how fully all these points are at present implemented or how high living standards are at present. The point is that we want to strengthen these things.

Again, this is not only a matter of general principle: the more these social rights are strengthened in the USSR, the greater difficulty the bourgeoisies in Western Europe will have in obliterating what welfare rights exist in the capitalist world.

And finally, the left must want Soviet aid to those in the Third World trying to break out of the bloody stranglehold of imperialism to be increased and not diminished. And this too depends upon pressing ahead with policies designed to strengthen the positive domestic features of the Soviet Union.

So how can the left achieve these aims? In the first place by fighting tooth and nail against the NATO military pressure against the USSR, the main means of buttressing the authoritarian structures of Soviet domestic policy and policy towards Eastern Europe. In the second place the left must break up the machinery for economic warfare against the USSR and work out a programme for massive, planned trade between Britain and the Soviet Union. There is enormous scope for a huge increase in trade, provided that it is organised on a long-term basis. Thirdly, the left must maintain its ideological debate and struggle against authoritarian-bureaucratic models of socialism.

Such a programme could meet with very wide support within the working classes of Western Europe and should be taken up within the peace movement. And those trying to construct so-called "constructive," "nonprovocative" defence strategies for NATO should be forced to answer the basic question: what political aims do they want NATO to pursue towards the USSR? When the discussion moves onto this ground, the absurdity of notions fashionable in the Labour Party now about turning NATO into a "progressive" alliance can be easily exposed. □

Broad protests hit Reagan visit

Score U.S. aggression in Central America

By Margaret Jayko

DUBLIN — More than 3,000 people marched through the streets of this city on May 26 to protest President Ronald Reagan's upcoming visit to Ireland and the U.S. war in Central America. Among the Dublin marchers was Mel Mason, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president of the United States.

Protests will dog Reagan's every step during his June 1-4 visit. Ben Kearney, president of the Dublin Council of Trade Unions, said "we hope this will be a massive demonstration against President Reagan and his foreign policies."

Reagan's visit has sparked a countrywide discussion and debate in Ireland. The discussion centers on opposition to the U.S. war on the peoples of El Salvador and Nicaragua as well as Washington's backing for dictators around the world, from President Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines to Prime Minister Pieter Botha who heads the racist regime in South Africa.

Also unpopular is the decision by London and Washington to place cruise missiles, armed with nuclear warheads, in Britain.

The future of Ireland — a nation divided, oppressed, and exploited by British imperialism — has inevitably become a key part of the controversy around Reagan's visit.

The Irish government, while claiming to disagree with aspects of U.S. foreign policy, is adamantly opposed to any protests while Reagan is here.

SWP presidential candidate Mel Mason has been a prominent participant in the current protests and discussion. Mason arrived here May 25 for a week-long visit at the invitation of People's Democracy (PD), the Irish organization affiliated to the Fourth International.

When the Irish government invited Reagan to visit and liberal opponents of the Reagan visit invited Democratic Party presidential candidates, PD decided it was important for the only socialist candidate for president to take part in the anti-Reagan protests and tell the truth to the Irish people about Washington's aggression in Central America.

The SWP candidate's statement that he is also here to show "solidarity with the Irish people's struggle against British imperialism" has been widely reported in the newspapers and on radio.

The May 26 march and rally in Dublin was one of several such protests being organized. It was sponsored by the Irish Campaign Against Reagan's Foreign Policy, a coalition that includes Latin American solidarity groups, Catholic organizations, and disarmament groups.

A contingent of Catholic nuns led the march. Several carried a coffin with the names

of the four U.S. nuns who were raped and murdered by death squads in El Salvador in 1980.

Marchers sang "We Shall Overcome," the theme song of the U.S. civil rights movement. This reflected the strong identification here with the struggle of Blacks in the United States to end their oppression.

Many contingents carried signs condemning Washington's war in Central America: "Nicaragua will be Reagan's Vietnam"; "Marines Out of Honduras"; "Support Nicaragua"; "'Mine' Your Own Business," referring to the CIA's mining of Nicaraguan ports.

Several contingents were from the Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), including the Irish Trade Union CND.

A contingent of Chilean exiles marched, and there was a banner from the Dublin Council of Trade Unions.

Among the left and workers parties that participated were Sinn Féin and its youth group, the Republican Youth Movement. Sinn Féin, which has close political ties with the Irish Republican Army (IRA), is the largest of the groups opposed to British rule of Northern Ireland. Its goal is a united democratic socialist republic of Ireland.

There were also contingents from People's Democracy, the Irish Labour Party, the Workers Party, and the Communist Party of Ireland.

A brief rally was held in front of the Department of Foreign Affairs, where Tom McGarry, president of the Federated Workers Union of Ireland, told the crowd, "We're here because we're opposed to Reagan's foreign policy."

The Dublin Council of Trade Unions opposes the Reagan visit, as do two of the three main teachers unions in Ireland. Several members of parliament from the Irish Labour Party have announced they will boycott Reagan's June 4 address to the Dail, southern Ireland's parliament. This announcement was particularly embarrassing to Irish Prime Minister Garret FitzGerald since the Labour Party is part of the government coalition.

Sections of the Catholic church hierarchy are also backing the protests. Bishop Eamonn Casey of Galway has refused to be part of the welcoming platform for Reagan.

Behind the broad opposition to Reagan's visit and the U.S. war in Central America is a strong identification with others in the world who, like the Irish people, are fighting for dignity, economic justice, and self-determination. Supporters of the struggle for a united, free Ireland have been in the forefront of organizing opposition to Reagan's visit.

In their fight to rid themselves of British domination, the Irish people have had to confront the U.S. rulers as well. The U.S. ruling class has been a staunch supporter of British rule in Northern Ireland.

Washington also cooperates with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in harassing and jailing supporters of the Irish freedom struggle in the United States. In addition, many leaders of the Irish freedom struggle are prevented from entering the United States to explain their fight. □

Mason, Irish activists speak in Dublin

About 150 people packed into the Irish Women Workers' Union hall in Dublin May 25 to hear U.S. socialist presidential candidate Mel Mason and a panel of Irish activists.

The meeting, sponsored by People's Democracy, heard PD National Secretary Anne Speed announce PD's support for Sinn Féin's candidates in the European Economic Community elections.

Sean Crowe of Sinn Féin pledged his organization's support for the anti-Reagan actions and for national liberation struggles around the world. Crowe welcomed Mason to Ireland and wished him luck in his election campaign.

Long-time leader of the Irish nationalist struggle Bernadette Devlin reminded the audience that when she toured the United States during the 1981 hunger strike in Ireland, Blacks, Indians, and Salvadorans turned out to express their solidarity. She emphasized the importance of these people seeing thousands of Irish people protesting Reagan's visit and standing with them in their fight for dignity.

Mel Mason told the audience that "your centuries-long struggle is an example for freedom-loving people everywhere," and promised to share what he learned in Ireland with working people in the United States.

Mason told his Irish listeners of the bipartisan support for Reagan's war in Central America. The U.S. rulers have always considered Latin America their backyard, he said, and "they don't want to give up their empire any more than the British want to give up Ireland."

Mason concluded by stating that "if Malcolm X were alive today, he would be supporting the Irish freedom struggle, and he would be confident, as I am, that Ireland will become for Western Europe what Cuba has become for the Western hemisphere," an example and an inspiration. This prediction was met with stormy applause.

The PD-sponsored meeting was also addressed by Joe Duffy, outgoing president of the Union of Students of Ireland; and by Eddie Conlon from the Reagan Reception Campaign. □