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Vol. 22, No. 13

July 9, 1984

USA \$1.25 UK 50p

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- Background to Bombay Anti-Muslim Pogroms



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CIA's mercenaries wage war against Nicaraguan revolution

By Fred Murphy

Nicaragua in recent months has had to confront the biggest invasion yet by the U.S.-backed mercenaries that operate from bases in Honduras and Costa Rica. This offensive is aimed at furthering Washington's goal of overturning the Sandinista revolution. In facing up to this challenge, the workers and farmers government led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) has taken a series of steps to deepen the revolution and strengthen the country's defenses.

The thousands of counterrevolutionary (*contra*) troops that have invaded Nicaragua are wholly dependent upon the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and Pentagon, which have recruited, armed, trained, financed, and transported them. At the core of the *contra* army are the officers and troops who served the Somoza dictatorship and fled Nicaragua when the revolution triumphed. But the *contras* "have been armed and trained to levels never attained by Somoza's praetorian guard," Interior Minister Tomás Borge pointed out in an April 12 speech.

"This is a mercenary army with enormous logistical support, including electronic espionage capable of interfering with our communications; ships, planes, and helicopters that violate our territorial waters and airspace," Borge said. The CIA provides these mercenaries "with a continuous supply of arms, ammunition, food, information, and communication."

The Reagan administration has had bipartisan support for its overall policy of weakening and destroying the Nicaraguan revolution. While some Democrats in Congress have been

hesitant to openly back the terrorist war in an election year, they have presented no serious challenge to its continuation.

The U.S. capitalist press has played up votes in Congress deleting \$21 million in funds for the *contras* from one spending bill, but rather than terminating the anti-Nicaragua drive, this action only provides cover for it. According to the June 25 *Washington Post*, *contra* spokesmen "insist, and most officials in the region agree, that the *contras* now have enough materiel and funding to continue operating without further appropriations from the U.S. Congress at least until next October, when current restrictions on back-door CIA funding expire."

Moreover, such formal restrictions have been systematically ignored by the administration, with Congress offering no real obstacles to the practice. The *New York Times* reported May 18 that CIA and Pentagon subterfuge to "disguise both the value and quantity of military aid the United States has sent to Central America . . . runs into millions of dollars more than Congress has approved. . . ."

Strategy of terror

Operating from the bases Washington has established in Honduras, the CIA has managed to keep several thousand of its mercenary troops inside Nicaragua for weeks at a time. Large, sparsely populated areas of seven provinces have been turned into what Nicaraguan leaders call "zones of permanent conflict." However, the vigorous defense efforts of the armed workers and peasants have blocked the *contras* from setting up a permanent enclave on

Nicaraguan territory that could be used as a stable base of operations.

In early June four battalions of Nicaraguan troops routed the *contra* forces of traitor Edén Pastora from their strongholds along the Costa Rican border. A further "revolutionary counteroffensive" by the army and militia in the north was announced June 13 by Commander Hugo Torres of the Sandinista People's Army.

Washington's strategy, Agriculture and Agrarian Reform Minister Jaime Wheelock explained in a May 1 speech, has been "to use aggression to strangle us economically and financially, to destroy units of production, to break up the [farming] cooperatives, to murder the producers, to destroy efforts at construction, to try to block the arrival of goods at storage centers, and also to mine the ports, to blockade and drown our economy, to bleed the Nicaraguan people dry."

In a May 4 report to the Council of State, government junta coordinator Daniel Ortega put total material damage caused by the U.S.-organized attacks in 1983 at \$128.1 million, equivalent to 31 percent of Nicaragua's annual export income. Such damage has escalated further in 1984: a June 1 raid on the northern town of Ocotal, for example, destroyed a lumber mill, a coffee-processing plant, and a key grain-storage center, and badly damaged the area's only radio station.

Besides sabotaging productive facilities, the *contras* have also assassinated teachers, health-care personnel, land-reform officials, and cadres of the FSLN. Peasants from remote farms and villages have been murdered, kidnapped, or forcibly recruited to the *contras'* armed bands. Through such terrorist tactics, the mercenaries and their U.S. masters aim to blunt the Sandinistas' ability to bring the revolution's gains to the more remote areas and organize the rural population to defend those gains.

Washington's further hope is that the economic hardship *contra* sabotage causes for all Nicaraguans will diminish support for the revolution, weaken the FSLN-led workers and farmers government, and open the way for its military overthrow.

But the *contras'* methods and program are hardly designed to gain them a social base in the Nicaraguan countryside. They have nothing to offer the poor farmers but a reversal of the agrarian reform and the return of the oppressive landlords.

It has become more and more clear in the past few months that the mercenaries remain wholly dependent on the CIA's logistical network in Honduras. As the war deepens and the resistance of the workers and peasants mounts, Washington's mercenaries will not be capable of crushing the revolution. U.S. imperialism will have to try to do this with its own combat troops.

Defense measures deepen revolution

The Nicaraguan workers and peasants are fighting to defend their government because they know its continued existence is crucial to

Top court will not hear Marroquín

Héctor Marroquín, a Mexican-born socialist and union activist who has been fighting deportation from the United States for nearly seven years, learned June 25 that the U.S. Supreme Court has refused to hear his case for political asylum. This leaves in force a lower federal court decision upholding the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) order to deport him.

However, Marroquín is currently in the process of filing for permanent residence status on the basis that he is married to a U.S. citizen. The Newark district director of the INS had earlier written a letter stating that Marroquín could stay in the country until a decision is made regarding his residence status. It will be at least several months before this process is complete.

Marroquín, a member of the Socialist

Workers Party National Committee, fears his life would be endangered if forced to return to Mexico. He fled here 10 years ago when, as a student activist, he faced potential victimization.

Marroquín has won considerable support both in the United States and internationally, which has helped stall the deportation order up until now. Continuing public protest is essential to win Marroquín's right to stay in the United States. Messages demanding that permanent residence be granted to him should be directed to Alan Nelson, Commissioner, INS, Washington, D.C. 20536. Copies of such messages, and funds to help finance the continuing fight, should be sent to the Political Rights Defense Fund, Box 649, New York, N.Y. 10003.

the preservation and extension of the many concrete social gains they have achieved in five years of revolution. Land reform, trade-union rights, literacy and adult-education programs, cheap credit to farmers from the nationalized banks, housing improvements, major gains in the control of contagious diseases, democratic participation in government bodies from the neighborhood to the national level — working people know the imperialists want to wipe all this out and restore a capitalist government beholden to Washington. To prevent this and preserve the revolution's gains, they have sacrificed much and are prepared to sacrifice still more.

As Washington has stepped up the war, the Nicaraguan government and FSLN have responded with measures to deepen the revolution and strengthen its defenses.

- Working farmers are to receive access to more than 1.3 million acres of land this year — a figure surpassing the total distributed in the previous three years. Of this, half a million acres are being taken from big landowners or well-off farmers exploiting tenant labor.

- New blows are being dealt to merchants who hoard scarce consumer goods for speculative purposes. A law adopted June 1 authorizes "strict control" by the government over distribution of "indispensable" products. The neighborhood-based Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS) are collaborating with small shopkeepers loyal to the revolution to ensure equitable distribution at official prices of rice, cooking oil, sugar, sorghum, salt, laundry soap, corn, and beans. Controlled products found outside legal channels are to be confiscated, as are the vehicles of private truck owners found transporting such goods.

- Contra networks in the cities have been exposed and dismantled. Persons linked to terrorist activity were arrested in Matagalpa and Chinandega in early June, and on June 20 Nicaraguan security chief Lenin Cerna announced the breaking up of an "internal front" of the contras' Nicaraguan Democratic Force that was planning acts of sabotage to "create anxiety and fear among our people."

- Four of the nine members of the National Directorate, the revolution's top leadership body, have been placed directly in charge of defense and production efforts in the zones most affected by Washington's war.

Jet fighters needed

- The armed forces and militia have been beefed up through increased mobilization of reserves, longer tours of duty, a second round of conscription, and the acquisition of more sophisticated military hardware.

- New efforts to secure material aid from governments in western and eastern Europe were launched in early June. Daniel Ortega and other top officials made what was described as "a working visit" to the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and East Germany. Before leaving, Ortega told reporters Nicaragua urgently

needed jet fighter aircraft — "be they Soviet MIGs, French Mirages, or whatever" — in order to block the CIA's supply flights to the contras. At present, Ortega noted, the contras "even have more helicopters than we do."

Meanwhile, FSLN National Directorate member Bayardo Arce led a delegation to France, Spain, West Germany, and six other West European countries.

- Other diplomatic efforts have been aimed at keeping Washington on the defensive politically. On June 1, Daniel Ortega met in Managua with U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz. A Nicaraguan government statement released afterwards said Ortega had stated Nicaragua's readiness for "systematic, respectful, and serious discussion" with Washington; however, "Commander Ortega emphasized that verbal statements of willingness to negotiate need to be supported by practical ac-

tions" such as an end to U.S. military maneuvers in Honduras, an end to pirate raids by aircraft and small boats, and an end to the mining of Nicaragua's harbors.

All these moves and measures by the leaders of the Nicaraguan revolution have been accompanied by a political campaign to explain frankly to the country's working people the seriousness of the war situation and the kind of steps necessary to confront it. "Defense of the homeland has already been a heavy burden for our weak economy," Tomás Borge acknowledged in his April 12 speech. "As the aggression increases, this burden is going to become heavier and heavier. Supporting this burden and marching firmly toward victory is possible only if we distribute it equally. There is no alternative but to redouble the effort. There is no alternative but definitive triumph over our enemies." □

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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.

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.

Gandhi regime massacres Sikh rebels

Attack on Golden Temple brings protests, soldiers' revolts

By Ernest Harsch

With a death toll that could mount to several thousand, the massacre of Sikh rebels in Punjab in early June marked the single most brutal repressive crackdown in India since that country won its independence in 1947.

It even surpassed the British colonialists' infamous massacre of unarmed Indian protesters in 1919 in Amritsar — not far from the Sikhs' Golden Temple that was the chief target of the Indian government's June 5 attack.

By ordering the massive army assault on the Sikh protesters — mostly landless peasants, agricultural workers, and students — inside the Golden Temple, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi sought to present an example to all those in India who would dare oppose the policies of her capitalist government: not only the country's 14 million Sikhs, but also workers fighting for trade union rights and higher wages, peasants fighting for a living income, political activists seeking to express their ideas, and those struggling against national and religious discrimination and oppression.

A 'terrorist' smoke screen

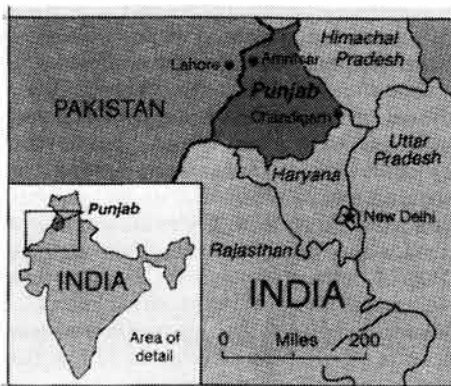
To justify the crackdown in Punjab, the Gandhi regime has gone to great lengths to slander and distort the aims of the movement led by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, the Sikh religious leader who was killed in the Golden Temple complex along with many of his followers.

Following the regime's standard practice of blaming unrest in the country on "outside agitators," officials demagogically pointed fingers at the Pakistani regime — without offering any real evidence.

Bhindranwale and his supporters were also dismissed as religious "fanatics" who engaged in random acts of terror against those who adhered to the Hindu faith and against those Sikhs who disagreed with his course. The government would not yield to "violence and terrorism," Gandhi proclaimed just a few days before the assault on the Golden Temple.

Similar accusations and portrayals were featured in the imperialist news media abroad. An editorial in the June 9 London *Economist*, for example, called the Golden Temple — the Sikhs' holiest shrine — a "command-centre of carnage," and referred to Bhindranwale's followers as a "gang of cold-blooded killers" who operated "holy hit-squads."

The movement in Punjab did raise demands for recognition of Sikhism as an independent religion and for greater political autonomy for Sikhs. This flowed from what most Sikhs see as religious discrimination against them by the Hindu-dominated central government in New



Delhi. But the movement also reflected social and economic grievances — a fact that has been generally obscured in the capitalist news media.

The Sikhs, who are a majority of the population in Punjab, are predominantly peasants. Like other peasants throughout India, they are adversely affected by the country's economic stagnation and poverty and the government's austerity drive. During the course of the upsurge in Punjab, their discontent has been expressed against the agricultural policies of the central government, against local Hindu industrialists and officials, and against big Sikh landlords. Some of this opposition has taken on an armed character.

A calculated massacre

When Gandhi first declared virtual martial law in Punjab on June 2, sending in Indian army units and imposing a round-the-clock, shoot-on-sight curfew, she also ordered all foreign journalists out of the state. Only Indian journalists — who are subject to far greater press restrictions — were allowed to remain. This press blackout was an important part of the preparations for the assault, and subsequent massacre, at the Golden Temple.

Following the fighting at the temple compound on June 5-6, the Gandhi regime issued various accounts of what happened, in general seeking to minimize the number of casualties. Lt. Gen. Ranjit Singh Dayal, the commander of the army force in Punjab, at first put the number of Sikhs killed at about 260 — itself a rather large number.

But within days it became clear that the massacre was of much greater proportions.

A June 10 Associated Press dispatch from Amritsar reported that "army and police sources said bodies were still being removed from the holy lake surrounding the 17th-century shrine and up to 50 bodies at a time were being cremated because there was not enough wood for individual funeral pyres.

"The sources said that so far, 780 bodies had been cremated after being taken from the temple compound in garbage trucks."

A day later, official sources told the same news agency that at least 1,000 people had died in the assault, including 825 Sikh rebels. The final death toll, they said, could reach as high as 2,000.

Summary executions

The government's efforts to portray all of those who died in the temple compound as fanatical terrorists who fought to the death have also begun to unravel. According to a report in the June 19 *Indian Express*, about 150 of those killed were Sikh pilgrims who were caught in the temple at the time of the attack.

A June 13 Associated Press dispatch reported:

"A doctor and a police official said today that army troops shot several captive Sikhs at point-blank range here last week after tying their hands behind their backs.

"Two of the Sikhs whose post-mortem examinations I conducted had their hands tied at the back," said the doctor, a Sikh who normally works in a Government hospital in nearby Jullundur.

"Some of my other colleagues conducting post-mortems also came across young Sikhs who had been shot this way," the doctor said."

While the extent of the bloodbath in Amritsar itself is beginning to come out, little is yet known about what is happening in the rest of the state. The same day that the Golden Temple was stormed, army units attacked Sikh activists in 38 other temples and shrines throughout Punjab. But no figures on casualties in those assaults have been released.

Moreover, a few days after the June 6 massacres, the second phase of "Operation Punjab" — as the army calls it — got under way, with army units sweeping through Punjab's fertile farming areas to hunt down suspected "terrorists." One senior army officer told a reporter that 5,000 such "terrorists" were still at large and that the army campaign could take the rest of the year.

Imperialists cheer

All the major bourgeois opposition parties in India hailed Gandhi's crackdown, some of them even criticizing her for waiting so long.

The imperialist news media has taken a similar stance. An editorial in the June 8 *New York Times*, while noting the risks entailed in the attack on the Golden Temple, nevertheless commended Gandhi's action as an effort to prevent a possible disintegration of the Indian state. "It is the danger of India unraveling that

earns Mrs. Gandhi the benefit of the doubt," it said.

An editorial in the June 9 *Washington Post* made the same point: "Given India's great size, strategic importance and democratic bent, the United States has an immense stake in its success in holding the Asian subcontinent together."

Widespread Sikh protests

On the other hand, Sikhs throughout India responded to the massacre and the attack on the Golden Temple with spontaneous and angry demonstrations in the days immediately following the raid.

In New Delhi and other cities, Sikh youths took to the streets and battled with police. In Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, nine Sikh protesters were killed by police, while in the Kashmiri town of Poonch a crowd of demonstrators stormed the state bank of India. In Jaipur, Sikhs closed shops and observed a fast to protest the attack. In Calcutta, shops were also shut down and a two-day strike was called. In the Punjabi town of Ludhiana, demonstrators tried to stage a march, but were broken up by police.

On June 17 a new wave of Sikh protests broke out in Delhi, Punjab, and five other states.

Large demonstrations were also held by

Sikh communities in the United States, Canada, Britain, and other countries.

The extent of Sikh outrage over Gandhi's crackdown was also reflected in spontaneous and uncoordinated mutinies by an estimated 5,000 Sikh troops in the Indian army at bases in nine states. The rebel troops at the Ramgarh base in Bihar killed their commanding officer.

Sikh officers, who are drawn from the wealthier strata of Sikh society, remained loyal to the government. It was primarily young rank-and-file recruits who rebelled. They are largely from the same landless and poor peasant classes in Punjab that form the backbone of the protest movement. □

Class forces behind rebellion in Punjab

Peasants resist capitalist, landlord domination

By Ernest Harsch

The fierce struggle in India's Punjab state — which climaxed with the June 5–6 army assault on the Golden Temple in Amritsar and the massacre of Sikh rebels — is symptomatic of the class, national, and religious conflicts that are woven into the social and political fabric of the entire country.

Whether in Punjab, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, or elsewhere, India's more than 700 million people suffer from imperialist domination and oppression.

This has meant continued poverty for the vast majority. Unemployment and underemployment are rampant. Millions of Indians are homeless. Disease and hunger are widespread. About 40 percent of all Indians live on less than \$7.50 a month.

Side by side with this endemic misery and squalor exists a small class of wealthy capitalist businessmen in the cities and the countryside. They are often allied with big landlord interests, and look to imperialism for support.

Intermingled with these class divisions are those of nationality, religion, and caste. India itself was a creation of British colonial rule, which brought together numerous nationalities and language groupings. The British sought to heighten these national and religious divisions as part of a conscious policy of divide and rule. Among the Hindus — who are further divided by a hierarchical caste system — the colonialists also reinforced the domination of the upper castes. Although the masses of Indians succeeded in uniting to drive out British colonialism, India today still suffers from that colonial legacy, a legacy that is kept alive by continued imperialist domination.

Class divisions

The class divisions fostered by the growth of capitalism in India, however, cut across all the main nationalities and religions. Urban workers and landless and poor peasants have fre-



Sikh rebels at Golden Temple before Indian army attack.

quently been impelled into struggle against their exploiters — capitalists, moneylenders, and big landlords — whether they speak Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil, or Bengali or whether they adhere to Hinduism, Islam, or Sikhism.

Despite this highly volatile situation, the Indian ruling class has been able to maintain a strong central government in New Delhi, dominated by the Congress Party for most of the period since independence in 1947.

Yet the Congress Party's rule has become increasingly challenged. This has been especially true over the past decade, as India has reeled under the blows of the world capitalist economic crisis. In 1975–77, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was compelled to impose a countrywide state of emergency in an effort to contain the widespread unrest. This included

locking up hundreds of opposition leaders, particularly in the trade union and peasant movements. Those arrested were from all nationalities and religions.

In the past two years alone, India has seen:

- An unprecedented 18-month strike by a quarter of a million textile workers in Bombay.
- A strike by 300,000 dockworkers in March 1984, which paralyzed India's 10 main ports.
- Movements by farmers in various states to protest low prices for agricultural products, farm foreclosures, and the confiscation of land for industrial development.

But because working people in India lack a revolutionary leadership, some of the underlying class antagonisms have taken distorted forms. Some have been reflected through con-

licts around nationality or religion. In a few cases, this has taken a reactionary direction, such as the May attacks by right-wing Hindus on Muslims in Bombay, in which hundreds died.

The ruling class represented by its central government attempts to present itself as above such conflicts. But in fact the government fuels national and religious divisions as a way to divert working people from challenging its rule.

Development of Punjab

On the surface, the conflict in Punjab may appear to be primarily around the religious and national demands of the Sikhs. That is the way it has invariably been portrayed in the capitalist news media. But behind it lie powerful class forces and conflicts.

Before India gained its independence in 1947, Punjab was originally a larger state. After independence, Punjab was divided — with the primarily Muslim section becoming part of the newly created nation of Pakistan.

The Indian Punjab was majority Hindu (most of whom were Hindi-speakers) and minority Sikh (who spoke Punjabi). The Akali Dal, a Sikh party formed in 1920 that became a party of the Sikh big landowners and agricultural capitalists, launched a campaign for a predominantly Punjabi-speaking state. That demand was granted in 1966, when the Hindi-speaking areas were separated to form the state of Haryana. The two states, however, shared the capital, Chandigarh.

The new state of Punjab had a majority of Sikhs. According to the official census, this has now been reduced to a bare majority of 52 percent as a result of an influx of Hindu workers from other states. Yet the Sikh majority is in fact larger, since many of those who belong to the so-called untouchable caste (25 percent of the state's total population) consider themselves Sikhs, rather than Hindus as they are listed in the census figures. There are no castes in the Sikh religion.

Capitalist agriculture

Compared to other Indian states, capitalist agriculture in Punjab is quite advanced. Some 85 percent of farmland in the state is irrigated, compared to the national average of 26 percent. Electricity is available in more of the countryside than in other states. Over the past few decades, Punjab has become India's main wheat-producing state, accounting for some 60 percent of the country's total wheat production. Although Punjab is not a key industrial center (like Maharashtra or Gujarat), some industry has developed.

Class inequalities are glaring. About 20 percent of the population (known as Jats) control 60 percent of the land. Some 70 percent of these prosperous Jat landowners are Sikh and 30 percent are Hindu.

The majority of the rural population, however, are poor Sikh peasants or landless Sikh and Hindu agricultural laborers. As Punjab's so-called green revolution developed, more and more small Sikh peasants lost their land or



JARNAIL SINGH BHINDRANWALE

were driven to the edge of destitution. It was the big capitalist farmers who benefited.

Meanwhile, most commercial enterprises, industries, and urban property are owned by Hindus. Hindus also comprise the bulk of shopkeepers and moneylenders in the countryside.

These various classes have different — and often conflicting — material interests to defend. The basic conflicts are between the capitalists and big landowners on one side and the poor peasants and urban and rural workers on the other. Sikhs and Hindus are found on both sides.

Akali Dal

The two main capitalist parties in Punjab are the Akali Dal and the Congress Party. While some Sikh big landowners support the Congress Party, most have historically backed the Akali Dal. Seeking to present an image as the party of all Sikhs, the Akali Dal, until recently, also had the allegiance of most Sikh peasants.

In October 1973, the Akali Dal, which was then the main parliamentary opposition party in Punjab, formulated a series of demands against the local and federal Congress Party governments, seeking holy-city status for Amritsar, greater state powers for Punjab, the scrapping of an article of the Indian constitution referring to the Sikh religion as an offshoot of Hinduism, and greater access to the waters of several rivers. It did not, however, launch any major actions around these demands.

In 1977, during countrywide elections that swept the Congress Party from power on the federal level, the Akali Dal formed a new government in Punjab. The party's leader at the time, Prakash Singh Badal, became agriculture minister in the new federal government, which

was run by the Janata Party, a national coalition of bourgeois parties opposed to the Congress Party. Many Janata Party leaders had been arrested by Gandhi during the 1975–77 state of emergency and presented themselves as supporters of the popular will. But it soon became clear that they were establishing closer ties with U.S. imperialism. And they smashed many struggles by workers and peasants seeking to improve their situations.

In 1980, however, Indira Gandhi's Congress Party was again voted into office, at the federal level in New Delhi and in Punjab itself. The return of India's dominant ruling-class party to power was not a reflection of newly gained popularity. It only showed that working people had become fed up with the bourgeois opposition and had no mass working-class party as an alternative.

Thus agitation continued unabated across India soon after Gandhi's return to power. The bourgeois opposition parties attempted to capture some of these struggles to use them as weapons against the Congress Party.

Following the Akali Dal's electoral defeat in Punjab, it began to organize protest actions around the demands it had previously formulated, including the demand that Chandigarh become the capital of Punjab alone.

Farmers' grievances

The Akali Dal's campaign also reflected some of the particular grievances of Sikh farmers, especially those of the large capitalist farmers, who wanted the central government to set higher prices for their produce and chafed at the Hindu industrialists' increasing use of the state's water resources. In early May 1984, for example, the large Sikh and Hindu Jat farmers carried out a week-long grain "strike," during which they halted wheat deliveries to the markets and public distribution points to back their demands for higher wheat prices.

But in the context of growing class polarization in Punjab — as elsewhere in India — the landless and poor peasants and agricultural workers began to go into action around their own grievances. Sikh students, who have become increasingly embittered over their declining employment prospects, also saw an opportunity to protest.

Since there was no mass party in Punjab that offered a clear political perspective for the workers, exploited farmers, and other radicalized layers, their protests against the capitalist government in New Delhi and against the local ruling classes were reflected through religious demands, including some of those raised by the Akali Dal. But as the movement became more massive, it escaped the control of the official Akali Dal leadership.

Bhindranwale

Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a previously obscure Sikh religious figure, was thrust into the leadership of this protest movement. Though he offered no clear program, his militant stance toward the Gandhi regime and to-

ward local government officials, businessmen, and big landlords won him considerable support among the poorer classes of the Sikh population.

According to a report in the June 12 *New York Times*, "Mr. Bhindranwale's tirades included occasional barbed attacks on major Sikh landowners, who have prospered the most from Punjab's Green Revolution."

Bhindranwale also called for a "purification" of the Sikh religion, against what he and many other Sikhs saw as the corrupting influences of the wealthier Sikhs, who often tended to adopt the dress and customs of North America and Western Europe.

As in the Iranian revolution, where anti-imperialism was often expressed in Islamic terms during protests against the shah, Bhindranwale's Sikh revivalism also had an anti-imperialist aspect to it. This parallel was a conscious one among Bhindranwale and some of his followers. When asked by reporters if he objected to comparisons with Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in Iran, Bhindranwale replied, "What is the fault in that?" A Sikh student leader told a correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor*, "We are not so unlike the forces behind the Iranian people's revolution."

Although Bhindranwale did not officially advance the demand for a separate Sikh state — called Khalistan — some of his supporters

did, as did other Sikh currents that sprang up in the course of the upsurge.

Beginning in late 1981, the Sikh protests began to take on an armed character. Armed fighters, many of them young supporters of Bhindranwale, clashed with police and carried out numerous attacks on railway stations, government offices, and prominent government, police, and business figures, both Sikh and Hindu.

'They have merged with the people'

The Gandhi regime denounced this as "terrorism." But these armed activists clearly had widespread support and sympathy. A report from Amritsar in the January 5 *Far Eastern Economic Review* noted that few Sikh fighters had been captured because "they have merged with the people, who have more than passive sympathy for their cause."

The bourgeois leadership of the Akali Dal was alarmed by this course of events. Its following declined as more and more Sikhs began to look toward the kind of militant action that Bhindranwale and his supporters advocated. Open splits developed within the party.

The official Akali Dal leadership around Harchand Singh Longowal made repeated attempts to call a halt to the protests and to arrange a negotiated settlement with the Gandhi regime. Pamphlets in Longowal's name condemned the armed actions and branded Bhin-

dranwale's supporters as "barking dogs."

According to a report in the February 11 *London Economist*, Longowal was "said to have been in secret contact with Mrs. Gandhi about a possible deal whereby he would support a crackdown on the Sikh extremists and she would concede his political demands."

Gandhi's 'lesson'

But Gandhi was not interested in negotiating an agreement with the Akali Dal. In the context of a mass upsurge, to concede on any of the Sikh demands would very likely have only encouraged the protesters to press further. The Akali Dal, moreover, was no longer in a position to help bring the situation in Punjab back under control.

Many bourgeois commentators in India and elsewhere have speculated that Gandhi's intransigent stance toward the Sikh demands may have been influenced by the fact that countrywide elections are due to be called before the end of the year. According to this reasoning, Gandhi was seeking to use the Sikh protests to whip up Hindu chauvinist sentiments throughout the country, so as to bolster the Congress Party's sagging electoral fortunes.

While that may have been a consideration, there was a much more basic reason for Gandhi's rejection of the Sikh demands and for her bid to crush the protest movement with massive military force: to provide a brutal lesson to all the oppressed and exploited throughout India that the government will defend the interests of the capitalists and big landlords at all costs.

The Indian ruling class, backed by imperialism, is especially hostile to movements calling for national rights and autonomy. Simply to call for national self-determination in India is deemed a treasonous act.

The military assault on the Golden Temple, where Bhindranwale and many of his key supporters were based, had been carefully planned for several months. And following the attack, official government sources revealed that plans were under way to form a special 23,000-man "antiterrorist" force, to be used anywhere in the country where it might be needed.

With Bhindranwale and hundreds of his followers dead, Secretary of Home Affairs Madan Mohan Krishan Wali claimed that the Sikh protest movement's "back has been broken." That boast may be premature.

Gandhi has presented her lesson. But it remains to be seen how many have learned it the way she would like.

Certainly among the Sikhs themselves, the army assault on the Golden Temple has only served to increase their anger and bitterness. Sooner or later, this sentiment, intensified by the deepening economic crisis, will translate into more organized opposition.

As one young Sikh protester in New Delhi told a reporter, "As soon as we find a new leader, we will fight under him as one." □

India: Large, poor, and diverse

By Steve Craine

India — the second most populous country in the world, with over 730 million people — is divided along religious, national, and linguistic, as well as class, lines. These divisions constitute the background for much of India's history and current politics.

The Hindu religion is followed by about 83 percent of the population, and another 11 percent are Muslims. Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, and others make up the remaining 6 percent of the people, but in some areas, like Punjab, these smaller religions represent important forces.

The languages spoken in India fall into 15 major groups, but as many as 1,600 distinct "mother tongues" have been identified, most of them members of one or another of the major groups. The official language of the entire country is Hindi, although only about 30 percent of the people speak it, and for many of these Indians, it is a second language.

India was once a direct colony of Britain. In the middle of the last century, British imperialism fought wars against the Burmese, the Sikhs of Punjab, the Afghans, and the Sinds and suppressed numerous revolts to

expand and protect its commercial interests in the entire subcontinent.

When, after decades of hard-fought struggle, the mass independence movement forced the British to relinquish direct control in 1947, India was partitioned into the majority-Hindu state of India and the Muslim state of Pakistan. More than 15 million refugees were displaced, about half crossing the borders in each direction. Hundreds of thousands died in communal clashes. In 1971 Pakistan was further divided when an independence movement of the oppressed Bengali people in East Pakistan led to the formation of Bangladesh.

Despite its vast size and fertile land, India is a very poor country. The total annual production of the country is less than that of Australia, which has one-fiftieth as many people. This amounts to only about \$260 for each Indian, and it is by no means evenly distributed. Illiteracy runs as high as 64 percent, and life expectancy is a mere 54 years.

Most of the population lives off the land. Seventy percent of the work force is engaged in agriculture, and 80 percent of the people live in more than 500,000 villages, with only 20 percent in about 200 towns and cities.

Thousands die in anti-Muslim pogrom

Hindu businessmen, cops promote right-wing terror

By Elizabeth Stone

BOMBAY — During the third week in May, this city saw the worst Hindu-Moslem clash in decades. Before it was over the toll of dead and wounded reached into the thousands, with Muslims the main victims. Tens of thousands of Muslim dwellings were burned by Hindu gangs, creating whole communities of refugees.

I first became aware of the violent confrontation on May 21 when I arrived in Bombay and saw Muslims who had taken refuge at the airport. Many of them were crying. Later the next day, a crowd of Hindus brandishing swords passed by the place where I was staying.

During that week, the conflict escalated. Gruesome pictures appeared in the press of mutilated bodies and burned-out areas. Truckloads of soldiers began to patrol the streets.

Reading the newspapers, it was impossible to tell how the clash got started. You were given the impression that the whole thing was a spontaneous outburst — a "riot" for which both Muslims and Hindus were equally to blame.

But the truth is that it was right-wing Hindus who were the main aggressors in this conflict, with Muslims the victims. Hindus are the majority of the Indian population of 730 million, with Muslims representing a minority of about 11 percent. The distorted coverage of the newspapers reflected the pro-Hindu bias of the majority of the Indian ruling class.

Shiv Sena

Nor was this "riot" spontaneous. It was inspired and initiated by a right-wing Hindu group known as Shiv Sena, whose name in English means God's army. Things began to heat up when Shiv Sena called an anti-Muslim "strike." Gangs under the influence of Shiv Sena roamed the streets intimidating businesses and shops into closing in honor of this so-called strike. Then crowds of anti-Muslim Hindus began attacking Muslim huts, houses, shops, and factories, setting them on fire and carrying out mass killings of Muslims. They used knives, daggers, swords, bricks, or whatever weapons were available.

Why did Shiv Sena's call get taken up and turn into widespread violence so quickly? And how can the influence of Shiv Sena be undercut and an end be put to such attacks?

I discussed these questions with two leaders of the Indian section of the Fourth International, Amar Jesani and Vibhuti Patel, both of whom have been active in union struggles in Bombay over the past year. Jesani is a Muslim who as a child had the terrorizing experience of

fleeing his home with his family, narrowly escaping the attack of a Hindu mob.

Patel and Jesani explained that the growth of anti-working class organizations such as Shiv Sena has to be seen in the context of the economic and social crisis in India today. The international capitalist crisis has hit India hard, bringing depressed industries, inflation, rising unemployment, and intensified suffering to the masses of workers, peasants, rural laborers, and many in the urban middle class.

In Bombay, which is the main city in the state of Maharashtra (home of the Maratha people) and the largest industrial center in India, there have been plant closings, layoffs, and systematic attacks on workers' wages and working conditions. Unemployment in Bombay continues to rise, and large numbers of the job seekers coming to Bombay from more depressed areas are unable to find work.

Shiv Sena is a chauvinist organization of Maratha Hindus. It was formed to fight for more influence and jobs for the Maratha Hindus who live in the Bombay area. They oppose immigration to Bombay and blame the high unemployment on Maratha and other Muslims and on workers moving to Bombay from other parts of India. They perpetrate the reactionary idea that Muslims have a high birthrate and therefore are responsible for India's economic problems.

With the ranks of the unemployed growing, and with the ruling capitalist parties carrying out policies that deepen the misery of the mass-

es, many Hindus have become more vulnerable to the demagogic appeals and explanations of Shiv Sena.

Defeat of textile strike

"I believe the situation has gotten qualitatively worse in the past months," Jesani said. "This is because of the defeat of the textile strike in Bombay."

This strike, which involved an 18-month struggle by 250,000 textile workers, has been the strongest challenge by the union movement in Bombay to the employer attacks. According to Jesani, who was active in the support movement for the strike, Shiv Sena had little influence among textile workers during the strike. "Hindus and Muslims fought together side by side," Jesani said. "And conscious trade unionists are still among the strongest opponents of Shiv Sena and the anti-Muslim violence which divides the workers along religious lines.

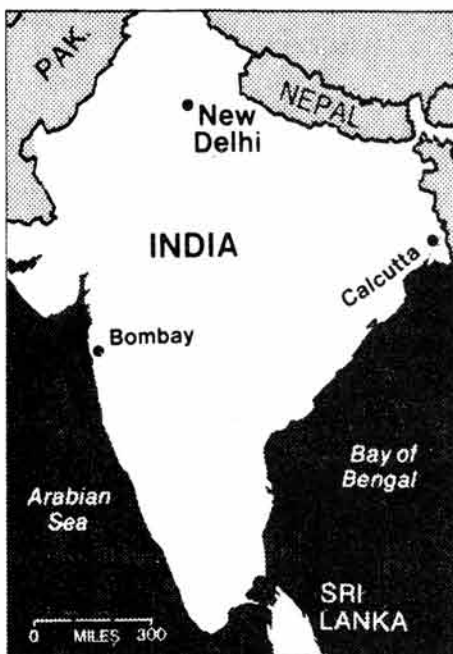
But at the same time, the defeat of the textile strike last fall led to a disillusionment among layers of the Bombay population who had been looking to the unions to show the way forward. It increased the strength of Shiv Sena among the unemployed youth, the middle class, and even among the more demoralized workers.

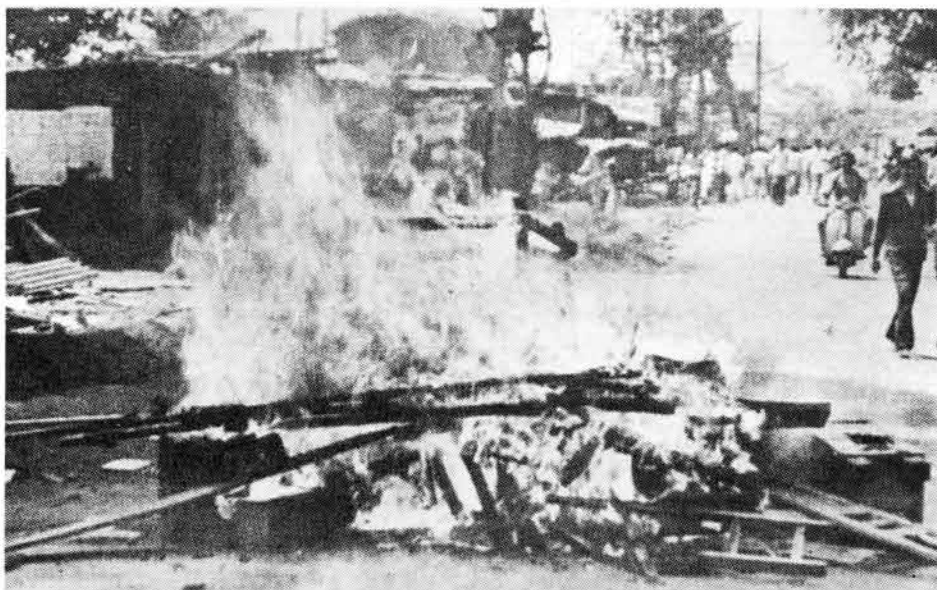
Jesani explained that along with this some Hindu businessmen are pushing the anti-Muslim violence, using it as a cover for burning down the factories, warehouses, and shops of their Muslim competitors. Some of the businessmen have ties with gangsters who benefit from anti-Muslim riots through protection rackets and the burning out of squatters from valuable real estate.

Support for Shiv Sena is also strong among the cops, many of whom also work with the gangsters. Even the pro-Hindu newspapers had to admit that the cops offered little protection to Muslims under attack by Hindu mobs.

Events in the suburban township of Bhiwandi were an example of this complicity of police with the rioters. Bhiwandi is a center of power-loom workers in the textile industry. The majority of residents are Muslims. Here some of the worst rioting took place, and much of Bhiwandi has been reduced to ashes.

In one of the worst incidents, hundreds of Hindu attackers surrounded a farm and small factory owned by a Muslim, where poorer Muslims had sought refuge. For more than four hours the Muslim factory owner, Ibrahim Ansari, tried to get police to provide protection, but to no avail. Ansari and his son were able to hold off the attackers with a pistol and shotgun, but other Muslims gathered there were not so fortunate. They were assaulted





Bonfire outside ransacked shops in Bombay.

with daggers and swords and then set on fire. When it was over, 27 Muslims lay dead, hacked or burned to death.

Vibhuti Patel explained that atrocities such as those in Bhiwandi and Bombay were not isolated phenomena but part of a general trend in the country as a whole toward more violence between religious groups. "This violence has increased from 1960 onwards, and since 1977 a phenomenal rise has taken place," she said. "Moreover, the communal [religious] riots during the 1950s were more the result of sudden outbursts of groups. Now the riots are pre-planned and are very systematically directed against Muslims."

What has been the role of the ruling Congress Party and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in all this?

Patel answered: "Both the Congress Party and the Janata Party, the two largest bourgeois parties, bear responsibility for the violence. The first thing you have to understand is that the secularism of the Indian bourgeois state and any of its bourgeois parties is a big myth. The government and its entire apparatus are consciously geared to propagate upper caste Hindu ideology in every sphere of life.

"The official position of the Congress Party is 'tolerance for all religions,'" Patel explained. "That means the government sponsors all kinds of public shows of religious customs with, of course, Hinduism being pushed more than other religions. Thus there is no adherence to the principle of separation of church and state. This fuels religious intolerance and violates the rights of nonbelievers.

"Religious ideas are incorporated into the constitution, and Indian law recognizes different codes of law for people of different religions on matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance of property. The media is constantly pushing religion, and the Congress Party is introducing religious ideas into the educational system in the name of inculcating

moral and spiritual values.

"The only way to fight this is by opposition to all forms of communalism (that is, all forms of organizing on a religious basis through the political process).

"We stand for the rights of religious minorities, and we strongly defend the democratic right of every individual to practice any religion or no religion, but we are strongly opposed to state or institutionally sponsored public shows of religious customs. Religion should be the private affair of the individual."

Patel pointed out that left organizations in India, including the two mass Communist parties (the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India [Marxist]) have been weak in their opposition to religious bigotry. "While condemning the blatant anti-Muslim violence, these organizations have a history of support to the Congress Party and other parties that cover for or push anti-Muslim, Hindu ideology."

Anticommunism

Patel also pointed out that anti-Muslim violence is also mixed with anticommunism. Groups such as Shiv Sena are violently anti-communist and use riots as cover for murdering leftists and trade union activists.

Patel and Jesani both expressed the opinion that the left, the unions, and other mass organizations in India have to take up the question of communalism more forthrightly. They tied this in with the need for stronger opposition to discrimination based on caste as well.

Within Hinduism there are hundreds of castes and subcastes. The Dalits (untouchables) are the lowest caste and suffer terrible oppression.

"Wherever you have a backward attitude toward Dalits, you will have prejudices and backward ideas about Muslims," Patel said. "And, needless to say, where there is communalism and castism you also find the most

sexist practices and extreme violence against women."

Many Dalits, seeking to escape their degraded position within Hinduism, have converted to Islam. And just as anti-Muslim violence has been on the rise in the past years, so also has there been an increase in the atrocities against Dalits.

In 1979, Patel was part of a group that traveled to areas most affected by caste riots in Maharashtra state. She explained that the anti-Dalit actions had taken the form of killings, rape, burning and pillaging of houses and huts, polluting of wells used by Dalits, killing of cattle, and refusal of employment.

With such attacks on the Dalit population, the potential for organizing the agricultural poor against their exploiters was undermined, Patel said. On the other hand, she found that in areas where agricultural laborers were being organized on a class perspective, this undercut violence against the Dalits.

Divide and rule

As in every capitalist country, the ruling class of India has taken advantage of every possible division to carry out their policy of divide and rule. The British, who ruled over India for 200 years, perfected this technique of divide and rule. As the independence movement gained strength, the British imperialists systematically fanned the flames of distrust and division between Muslims and Hindus.

Patel emphasized that the working class movement is the only force capable of breaking the hold of castism and communalism. "More often than not these divisions are used to break the organizations of the workers and agricultural laborers and peasants by dividing the exploited and oppressed along religious and caste lines. The purpose is to break strikes, to derail mass movements.

"Similarly it is in the interests of the workers movement to fight uncompromisingly against castism and communalism, to defend the rights of the Dalits on such questions as reservation of jobs [affirmative action] and to defend Muslim communities when they come under attack.

"Just as important for the workers and their allies is a perspective of struggle against the employers and their parties, for it is only through struggle that workers begin to feel their potential power as a unified force.

"The bourgeois parties have shown they are bankrupt, that they have no solutions to the problems of unemployment, poverty, and economic stagnation. In fact, they perpetuate these evils through their rule. Support by workers to these bourgeois parties will only increase the tendency for the frustrated middle class and demoralized layers of the working class to turn to right-wing groups such as Shiv Sena for salvation.

"Therefore the workers movement has to chart a clear independent course, leading the fight for solutions to unemployment and all the problems faced by the masses, leading the struggle in a revolutionary direction, which is the only direction that will be successful." □

Show trial in 'pope plot'?

Authorities push 'Bulgarian connection' frame-up

By Will Reissner

Italian authorities have decided to continue their anticommunist slander campaign against Bulgaria and the Soviet Union by taking another giant step in the frame-up of three Bulgarians for supposedly organizing the May 1981 assassination attempt against Pope John Paul II.

An Italian state prosecutor has asked for the indictment and trial of two Bulgarian diplomats and an airline clerk, as well as six Turks. Judge Ilario Martella is expected to rule in July on whether to proceed with a trial.

Bulgarian airline clerk Sergei Antonov has been held in an Italian prison for almost the entire time since his arrest on Nov. 25, 1982, although no charges have ever been filed against him. The two Bulgarian diplomats are no longer in Italy.

A detailed account of the still secret 78-page report of the Italian prosecutor appeared in a front-page article by Claire Sterling in the June 10 *New York Times*. For two full pages, Sterling repeated the accusations contained in the secret report, which she coyly stated "has come into my possession." But the fact is that from the beginning of the so-called "Bulgarian connection" case, she has played a role at every step of the affair.

Claire Sterling is a U.S. "journalist" who has been based in Rome for more than 30 years. At one time she was on the staff of the *Rome Daily American*, a newspaper then owned by the Central Intelligence Agency.

It was, in fact, Sterling who first publicly put forward the theory of Bulgarian involvement in the attempt on the pope's life. Her article in the September 1982 *Reader's Digest*, the most widely circulated magazine in the capitalist world, laid out her charge that the shooting of the Polish pope had been organized by the Soviet KGB through its allies in the Bulgarian secret service. The Soviet motive in trying to kill the pope, she asserted, was to cripple the Solidarity union movement in Poland.

Sterling's article, published more than a year after Turkish ultrarightist Mehmet Ali Agca had been sentenced to life imprisonment for shooting the pope, was largely based on information fed her by Paul Henze, former CIA station chief in Turkey. The article was later expanded into a book.

Her theory has been repeated wholesale in the Italian prosecutor's report. But the whole thing collapses as soon as the particulars are examined.

For example, Mehmet Ali Agca, the man who shot the pope, had previously been convicted of murdering a left-wing journalist in Turkey. After being sentenced to life impris-



SERGEI ANTONOV

onment for that act, Agca walked out of jail in an escape widely believed to have been aided by high officials of the Turkish military junta.

Once out of prison, Agca sent a letter to the Turkish newspaper *Milliyet* bragging that he would kill Pope John Paul II during the pope's November 1979 visit to Turkey. This death threat came more than one year before the Solidarity trade union in Poland even existed!

According to the concoction put forward by Sterling, and now echoed by the Italian prosecutor's report, the Bulgarian secret service began working with Agca to kill the pope in July 1980. Yet this was a month before the Gdansk shipyard strikes that gave birth to Solidarity.

Nor can Sterling, or the Italian prosecutor, even explain why the Soviet government would think that murdering the pope would end the struggle of the Polish workers.

The scenario of the murder plot as outlined by the Italian prosecutor's report, and quoted by Sterling, is so slipshod as to be absolutely incredible.

One would think that the Bulgarian secret service, once committed to such a delicate operation as assassinating the pope, would try to mask its participation. Common sense would indicate that the Bulgarians would do everything they could to limit the number of people Agca could implicate in the plot, and would muddy the trail leading from Agca back to the Bulgarians.

But if you believe Agca, whom the Italian prosecutor admits is a "despicable mercenary" and a liar, the Turkish ultrarightist met with all three Bulgarians at least a dozen times while preparing the attack on the pope. And accord-

ing to Agca, he met with them in their Rome apartments. When he wanted to set up a meeting, his instructions were to do it by telephoning the Bulgarian embassy!

In fact, if you believe Agca's wild tale, all three of the Bulgarians took him to St. Peter's Square on the day of the shooting, stopping first at the apartment of one of them in order to pick up the weapons. Then all three stayed with him in the square until just one hour before the shooting took place.

The Italian prosecutor's report makes no attempt to explain why, once Agca was arrested and could presumably implicate all three Bulgarians, they all conveniently remained in Italy for more than a year, just waiting for Agca to break down and identify them.

In actual fact, there is no link between the Bulgarians and Agca except the convicted hit man's say-so. Interestingly, Agca began implicating the Bulgarians only after he had been visited in his cell by agents of the Italian secret services — the SIDE and the SISME.

Those agents, according to the Italian press, promised Agca a reduction in his sentence from life imprisonment to 10 years if he cooperated with them.

Since then, Agca has spun a wild web of yarns. Each time a concrete detail has been proven false, his story has changed. At one point he even claimed that the Bulgarians wanted him to kill Solidarity leader Lech Walesa along with the pope in a two-for-one deal. This story was so far-fetched that the presiding judge threatened to charge Agca with slander against the Bulgarians.

There are so many holes in Agca's story that it resembles swiss cheese. But the Italian government, undoubtedly with the encouragement of the Reagan administration, seems bent on squeezing every last drop of anticommunist propaganda out of Agca's charges.

And the big business media is clearly playing along, as evidenced by the *New York Times's* publication of Sterling's leaked version of the Italian prosecutor's secret report. With the *New York Times* stamp of approval, the story has been widely repeated in all the mass media.

A show trial of Bulgarian airline clerk Sergei Antonov, with Agca as the star witness, is now a distinct possibility.

In a propaganda crusade to bolster Reagan's claim that the Soviet Union is the "focus of evil" in the world, truth is the first casualty.

But the possibility also exists that having unleashed another binge of "Bulgarian connection" propaganda, the Italian authorities will decide not to go ahead with a trial of the Bulgarians, which could blow up in their face.

Interestingly, Judge Martella, who will make the final decision on whether a trial takes place, ordered Antonov released from prison on June 18 and placed under house arrest so he can receive special medical treatment.

This ruling, which Antonov's lawyer described as a "positive sign," reportedly came over the strenuous objections of the state prosecutor. □

The crisis of capitalist agriculture — II

Government programs favor exploiting farmers

By Jim Pearson

[The following is the second of two parts of an article taken from the May 1984 *Socialist Action Review*, a magazine supplement to the fortnightly *Socialist Action*, which is published in Auckland, New Zealand, and reflects the views of the Socialist Action League (SAL), New Zealand section of the Fourth International.

[The article is based on a talk originally given to a national conference of the SAL in December 1983. The first part, published in our last issue, dealt with the decline in farm income, class divisions among the rural population, and the impact of land speculation. Footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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The mergers of stock and station agents — the big capitalist monopolies that sell farmers most of their fertiliser, seed, machinery, breeding stock, and many other necessary supplies — signal an intensification of the cost-price squeeze on working farmers.

Farmers are unanimous that the cost-price squeeze — that is, the fact that prices of farm inputs (such as fertiliser and farm machinery) are increasing faster than prices of farm produce — is their main problem. "Farm costs had risen 94 percent in the past four years, while product prices had gone up only 58 percent, which included government subsidy payments. . . . Over the past 10 years the consumer price index had increased 239 percent, but killing charges for a lamb had gone up 401 percent," according to Ross Tylden, a Federated Farmers leader, in May 1983. This is often cited as the chief cause of the decline in real farm incomes in recent years.

In spite of the impressive array of figures cited to back up this claim, you tend to be sceptical, since it is made by the capitalist farmers. Tylden, for instance, went on to express support for the wage freeze as a way of keeping down costs. This scepticism is wrong. Working farmers *do* have a real problem of a cost-price squeeze. But workers' wages are *not* the cause of it.

Working farmers' present problem of the cost-price squeeze is due to two main factors: New Zealand's rate of inflation being higher than that of its trading partners (which I will come back to), and also their increased exploitation by the commercial capitalists at both ends of their productive process.

Monopoly control of inputs

The key to exploitation by stock and station agents is monopoly. Their credit facilities are used chiefly for that purpose — to tie the farm-

er to that particular company for all his supplies. This even includes personal needs — the stock and station agencies' shops look like supermarkets, selling everything from groceries to fence posts to liquor. Through this monopoly control, the stock and station agencies can charge a "seller's price" — that is, a price above the value of the goods or services they provide. Monopolisation of the stock and station business has been rapid. In the last year, the second- and third-largest companies, Dalgety and Crown Consolidated, merged. In just a few years previous to that, Crown had taken over Canterbury Farmers Co-operative Association, Newton King, de Pelichet McLeod, Gisborne Sheepfarmers Mercantile, New Zealand Farmers Co-operative, and North Otago Farmers Co-operative. Dalgety merged its stock and station interests in Hawkes Bay with Hawkes Bay Farmers Co-op. The third major competitor, Yates, entered the field by taking over Hodder and Tolley, J.E. Watson, and Allied Farmers.

Discussing the Dalgety Crown merger, *National Business Review* reported that "according to a spokesman for Federated Farmers, most farmer concern about the merger came from the lower North Island where there will be only two options — Dalgety Crown and Wrightson NMA."

Reflecting this monopolisation of the stock and station business (among other things) the prices of farm inputs have for the last few years risen faster than the consumer price index. Meat Board chairman Adam Begg cited figures from the board's economic service on this point in the September 1983 *New Zealand Meat Producer*. In the five years to 1982/83, according to Begg, New Zealand's cumulative inflation was 98.5 percent, while farm input prices rose 112 percent.

Monopolisation of a slightly different kind squeezes farmers at the other end as well — at the point where farmers sell their stock to the meat companies.

The meat companies exploit the working farmers as commercial capitalists. There are two sides to their operation — processing and exporting. In the processing side, their profits are made from the labour of the freezing workers. But the meat companies' monopoly of killing facilities also means that the farmers must sell their product not directly on the market, but to the meat companies, who then take it to market. The meat companies make additional profits from their exporting operation by buying the stock from farmers *below* its value, and selling it *at* its value on the market.

Until the Meat Board takeover of sheepmeat marketing, farmers had a number of options on

how they sold their stock to the meat companies. The two most important were selling "on schedule" and selling "on owners' account." The schedule was the weekly price per kilogram of dressed carcass weight set by agreement among the meat companies and the Meat Board based on the expected return from the market. "Owners' account" was a system by which the farmer pays the meat company a set killing charge, and then the company markets the product and the farmer receives exactly what it received on the market. "Owners' account" sales made up about 25 percent of sales.

In both cases the meat companies take their share of the surplus value produced by the farmers. In the case of owners' account selling, they do this by setting a killing charge above the value of the service. In practice the schedule was always a fairly uniform price — there were minor regional differences, and occasionally a company broke the line and offered a higher price than the schedule if it was desperate to obtain stock to kill — but not often. This reflects the high degree of monopolisation that already exists in the meat industry.

Monopoly control of marketing

The diversification of markets away from Britain spurred another trend in the meat industry — the trend towards further monopoly control of meat marketing. In particular this meant the Meat Producers' Board — that is, the organisation of meat farmers, dominated by the capitalist farmers — going into business itself as a commercial capitalist.

These trends began with the opening up of the US market in lamb. The Meat Board, together with the meat companies, floated a new company, Devco, which holds a total monopoly on this market. The important Iran lamb market, which takes around 30 percent of New Zealand's lamb exports, was originally monopolised by one company, Borthwick-CWS, and later taken over by the Meat Board. These trends culminated in 1982 with the total takeover of sheepmeat marketing by the Meat Board when, faced with a weakening market and record meat stockpiles, the meat companies' schedule price of 90 cents a kilo for lamb fell well below the Board's minimum price of 114 cents. In addition they could guarantee to purchase only 60 percent of the available lamb kill.

Now the Meat Board buys the entire produce at scales, that is, at the end of the killing chain minus offal, hides, wool, and other by-products which continue to be handled by the

meat companies. The companies act as agents of the Board by purchasing stock at the Board's minimum price and are paid a 75-cent-per-carcass buying and administration fee on top of the killing charges. Companies can buy carcasses back from the Board for further processing. Any additional payments to meet the government's Supplementary Minimum Price (SMP) are also paid through the companies. The Board handles bulk carcass sales to centralised buyers like Iran and the Soviet Union, while licensed exporters are appointed by the Board to handle sales in Britain and elsewhere. Licensed exporters are allocated amounts to sell at or above the price set by the Board.

The stated aim of this move is to increase the export price of sheepmeats by eliminating the competition among sellers. The Board feels able to do this because New Zealand accounts for 55 percent of world trade in sheepmeats.

Because the Meat Board is a statutory body, it also effectively puts the credit of the state behind the risks of marketing in an unstable world market. This is what Meat Board Chairman Adam Begg was hinting at when he said "the risks are too great" for any individual company to venture. There is some truth in this. Supporting sheepmeat prices is one of the aims of this move, though how much actual effect it will have on the market price is not clear, given that the New Zealand product is still in competition with other countries.

The other effect of this move, the one which is never mentioned publicly, is that it also abolishes competition at the point of buying from the farmers. Now the Meat Board sets the schedule, and it is totally uniform.

While there has been some opposition from the companies which speculated on the market, or had particular marketing advantages in specialised areas, generally the move has been welcomed by the meat companies.

The opposition of the Hawkes Bay meat companies arises because their competitive advantage in the buying market is lost. For years the Hawkes Bay companies have been able to offer farmers a slightly more attractive schedule price — a lower killing charge — than other regions. In this way they have been able to maintain, and even increase, their stock throughput in recent years despite the increased killing capacity in the region provided by the new Oringi and Takapau works. With a uniform schedule price they are likely to see a decrease in their share of the available kill unless they can find other incentives to offer farmers. It is interesting to note that Borthwick, which is based in the bottom half of the North Island, is offering an entry into a draw for a trip to Hawai'i for every 50 ewes drafted with it in April 1984.

Meat Board acquisition thus eliminates the effects of another change that took place in the meat industry in 1980 — delicensing. Many small farmers welcomed the delicensing of the meat industry because they expected that by making it easier for companies to build new works this would lead to increased competition for stock to kill and might lead to lower killing

charges. Meat Board acquisition prevents that possibility.

But if the Meat Board is controlled by capitalist farmers, that is, capitalists whose interests lie in farming, won't they have an interest in using the Board's monopoly to force a reduction in meat company killing charges in order to maximise their farming returns? The answer is, in general, no.

The Meat Board is now big business in its own right. It is also totally dependent on finance capital — in order to buy the produce, it had to raise \$950 million on the open market. The financiers who provide this money, as well as the capitalist farmers themselves, will also have substantial interests in the meat companies that they will want to protect.

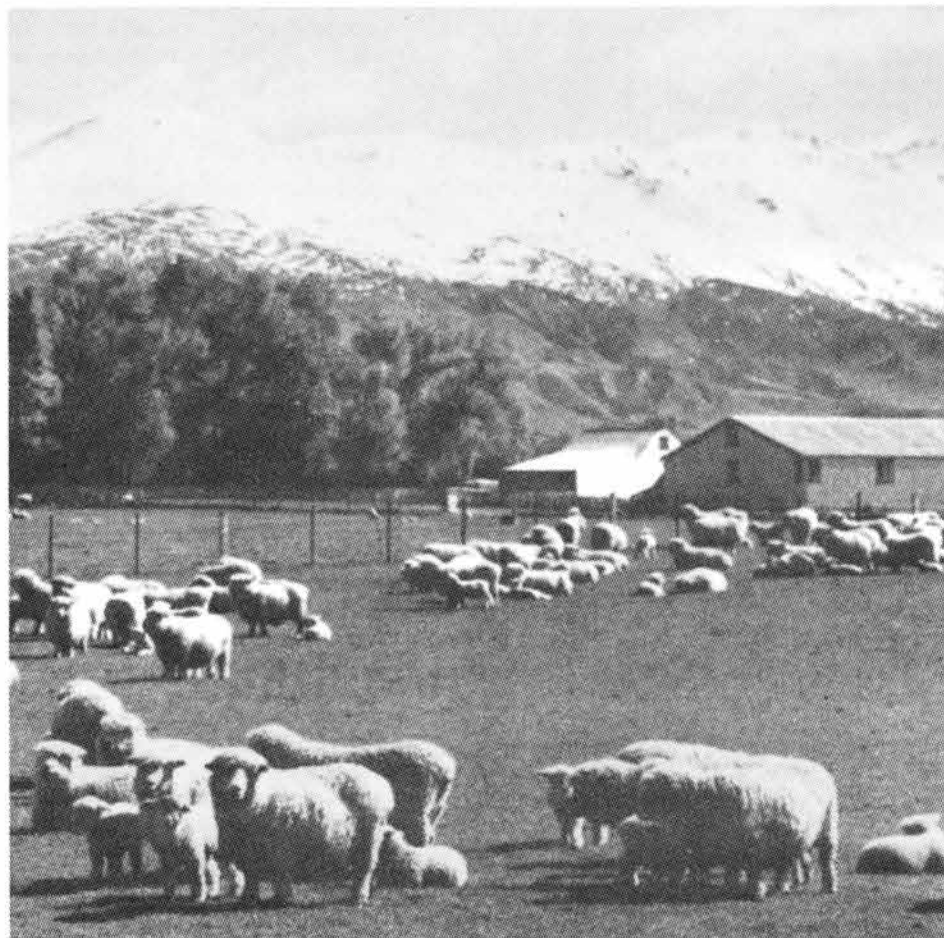
It is true that the Meat Board recently asked the meat companies to drop their killing charges by 5 percent in recognition of the fact that the Board was carrying costs that were previously the responsibility of the meat companies. These cost savings were substantial. The interest bill alone on borrowings to pay for the sheepmeat normally bought by a number of different companies was \$75 million [NZ\$1 = US\$0.65]. However, when no company agreed, the Board didn't use its monopoly position to force a reduction. It quietly dropped the suggestion and instead joined the meat companies in propaganda attacks on the meat

unions, accusing them of holding up progress towards lower costs and increasing efficiency in the industry. Both the Board and the companies have a mutual interest in sharing the increased profit from cost reductions won out of the wages and jobs of meat workers — even if small conflicts on how that is shared out may arise now and again.

In addition, so long as the market price for sheepmeat remains below the SMP set by the government, any reduction in killing charges would not benefit the working farmers since they won't receive more than the SMP. SMPs, together with the removal of the farmer's right to sell on owners' account, have largely eliminated much of the pressure on meat companies for a lowering of killing charges. Given the links between capitalist farmers, the meat companies, and the Meat Board, this opens the way to increased exploitation of working farmers.

Convergence of interests

Meat Board acquisition represents an increasing convergence of interests of rich farmer capitalism with meat and financial capital. (This convergence also took place as part of stock and station mergers, which amalgamated a number of farmer co-operatives dominated by rich farmer capital with big urban finance capital.) This convergence of interests has not



Meat, wool, and dairy products account for more than 60 percent of New Zealand's exports.

affected all capitalist farmers equally, however. There remain capitalists whose interests remain primarily in farming, and who see themselves being disadvantaged by Meat Board acquisition. This is the origin of the Meat Producers' Action Committee, a grouping led by capitalist farmers set up to oppose acquisition, who have linked up with the minority of meat companies who also oppose acquisition for their own reasons. This development represents a serious political crisis for the Meat Board, and opens an opportunity for the labour movement to intervene with its programme.

Key to this programme will be overcoming a fundamental problem of the worker-farmer alliance: the idea that workers' wages are the cause of inflation and increased meat company exploitation of working farmers. Capitalist farmers are fond of quoting the fact that the farmer's proportion of the market price of lamb has dropped from 60 percent to 30 percent over the last decade, because they then go on to blame increases in workers' wages for this fact. But this is a very important statistic, potentially very dangerous to the bourgeoisie, because it is primarily an index of the increasing exploitation of working farmers at the hands of the meat companies which happened over the decade of the seventies. Demands for committees of workers and small farmers to open the books of the meat companies, banks, stock and station agents, etc., to see where their profits are made, can become popular.

The wage-price freeze is another crucial question of the worker-farmer alliance. For a wage earner the price freeze is a mere sham, designed to cover the fact that real wages are falling. For working farmers that is not necessarily the case. Working farmers' incomes are determined entirely by prices. The net farm income is the difference between the revenue the farmer receives for his or her produce when it is sold and what the farmer paid out in farm inputs, such as fertiliser, machinery, etc. The net farm income can be small in relation to the total cash turnover of the farm. In a typical case, the returns from sales might be \$100,000, cost of inputs \$80,000, leaving a net farm income (before interest payments, tax, etc.) of \$20,000. Given that most farm produce is sold on the export market, it was not covered by the price freeze, while farm inputs were to some extent.

In the example quoted, you can see how price rises affect working farmers and wage workers differently. If, for example, the prices of consumer items rise by 10 percent while wages remain unchanged, that means in effect that real income for wage workers has fallen by 10 percent. By comparison, if prices for the farm inputs rise by 10 percent while revenue from sales remains unchanged, the farmer's net income has fallen by 40 percent. And, in fact, for the past few years prices for farm inputs have risen faster than the consumer price index. This situation is complicated by the fact that a certain proportion of agricultural production is for the local market, while a certain



Sheep shearer. Rural wage workers are an important ally of working farmers.

proportion of farm inputs are imported and thus exempt from the freeze.

So, it is not difficult to see why Ross Tylden and other Federated Farmers leaders win support from small farmers when they express their satisfaction with the "wage-price" freeze. The labour movement must be able to clearly distinguish between the two different halves of this policy when opposing the wage freeze. It is not sufficient to say that the price freeze is fraudulent. The labour movement must demand that it be enforced against the stock and station agents and meat companies' killing charges.

Supplementary Minimum Prices

The growing rate of exploitation that I have outlined took place especially over the decade of the 1970s, when its effects were mitigated — concealed — by relatively buoyant agricultural prices and some expansion of markets. It had reached the point that at the beginning of the 1980s the slightest drop in prices on the world market (and in agricultural terms they have been slight, in general, so far!) threatened to send thousands of small farmers into bankruptcy. That is an eventuality the ruling class as a whole very much wants to avoid. So the government stepped in and set up the Supplementary Minimum Price scheme — that is, if market prices for most export agricultural products fall below a certain level set at the beginning of the season by the government, the difference is made up by the government.

For the first couple of years the SMP system was in operation, only a small amount was paid out — approximately \$2 million in the 1980/81 season, for example. By the 1982/83 season the amount paid out rose to \$350 million.

In order to put the SMPs into perspective, we have to understand something of the history

of price supports in New Zealand. Problems of climate, the slowness to respond to the market — all the things that lead to wild fluctuations in agricultural prices — affect all farmers, including capitalist farmers. The rich farmers are not only exploiters of workers and small farmers, but also in competition with other types of capitalists. They have an interest in overcoming the problems caused by the price fluctuations, and in maximising their share of the profits coming out of their farms.

Thus we have seen the capitalist farmers setting up farmer co-operatives in meat processing (Auckland Farmers Freezing Co-operative [Affco], etc.) and the stock and station business (Gisborne Sheepfarmers Mercantile, among others of the companies swallowed up by Crown Consolidated over the past few years). These are attempts by the rich farmers to cut out the commercial and financial capitalist and keep all of their own profit to themselves.

The Producer Boards — Meat, Wool, Dairy, Apple and Pear, etc. — are part of this as well. The Meat Board, for example, negotiates shipping rates with the shipping companies on behalf of all farmers, to ensure that as little as possible of the surplus value produced on the farm goes to the shipping capitalist, and as much as possible to the farming capitalist. Because of the dependence of the whole economy on farming, capitalist governments lend their support to this effort by giving substantial powers to the various producer boards.

The process reaches its highest level in the dairy industry, where dairy co-operative processing companies and the Dairy Board — which are controlled by the capitalist farmers — control all processing and marketing of dairy products. The Dairy Board is the world's largest dairy products exporter and New Zealand's largest single exporter of any product.

The producer boards also have their own price-smoothing schemes. New Zealand's economy was hit by a succession of agricultural price crises from the 1880s onwards, which periodically devastated capitalist investment in farming and threatened the loyalty of small farmers towards the capitalist parties. These caused capitalist farmers serious problems. They needed some kind of guaranteed price if they were to be able to maintain investment through bad seasons. Otherwise they could not compete with manufacturing capitalists. In the 1920s meat and dairy boards were established, but it fell to the first Labour government to introduce price supports. Labour was elected in 1935 with the support of tens of thousands of poor farmers on a promise of price supports to small farmers sufficient to provide every farmer with a living income over and above costs of production.

But the producer board floor prices operated since then were subtly, though qualitatively, different from that promise. Over the years, the basis on which the floor prices were determined was gradually shifted away from the living income basis towards production-related



Longburn freezing works, near Palmerston North. A few huge meat processors monopolize market.

subsidies. The Dairy Board, for example, quietly dropped the "living income" clause in 1956. The Meat Export Prices Committee which sets the minimum prices administered by the Meat Board bases the floor price on the average of the market price over the last three seasons and a forecast of the coming season. Thus, it is determined by the capitalist market.

This key class difference, between simple price-smoothing, where the market holds sway nonetheless, and a living-income type minimum price policy, which gives security to the working farmer, was obscured by the generally buoyant prices which reigned throughout most of the years since World War Two. At any rate, simple price-smoothing was sufficient to enable most farmers to ride out the few crises up to 1980.

SMPs, which were introduced in 1978, are something qualitatively different from the various producer board supplementation schemes. More is involved here than simple price-smoothing. For the past two years SMPs for meat and wool have been significantly above market prices and are expected to remain so. Dairy market prices have exceeded SMPs except during the 1978/79 season, but that is expected to change. If the current payout of 360¢ a kilogram of milkfat is maintained to farmers, the Dairy Board's own stabilisation account reserves of \$368 million, built up over the previous four years of improved prices, are expected to be exhausted within two seasons without an increase in SMPs.

If the market price is below both the producer board minimum and the SMP, as has been the case for sheepmeats and wool, the board pays up to its own minimum and the government then meets the difference up to the SMP level. Total SMP payments plus board subsidies reached a massive \$638 million in 1982/83. The government paid out \$144 million for lamb, \$12 million for mutton, \$17 million for beef, and \$177 million for wool. The Meat

Board paid an additional \$219 million for lamb and \$69 million for mutton. These payments took the Meat Board stabilisation account with the Reserve Bank \$340 million into deficit — a debt of over \$12,000 per sheep farm.

Eight features of SMPs

SMPs are worth looking at in detail because they illustrate the deep contradictions capitalist farming finds itself in and how every attempt to find a way out under capitalism discriminates further against the small farmer. There are eight important features of SMPs to understand.

- It is important to New Zealand capitalism to keep small farmers producing, because it is only that way that working farmers can continue to be exploited by all the dominant rural and urban capitalists whose interests are all in some way tied up with agriculture — whether it be in transporting, processing, marketing, finance, farm supplies, or farming itself.

- If SMPs were removed, it would lead to mass bankruptcies and ruin for thousands of farmers. This would also result in a sharp drop in production and export revenues. However, a big part of the crisis of the whole New Zealand economy is the continuing large deficit on overseas trade. This deficit has led to a massive \$17 billion overseas debt which currently consumes over 7 percent of export revenue just to pay the interest. Any drop in agricultural exports would make this debt even more difficult to handle.

On the other hand, as explained earlier, a drop in exports would bring about little improvement in prices because of this country's small contribution to world production. And, due to the slowness of agriculture to respond to market changes, massive farmer bankruptcies would take years to recover from.

At the same time, this continued production is for a market that is rapidly disappearing. At some point the capitalist economy will find it

impossible to keep subsidising agricultural production given the depressed markets and prices and little prospect of significant improvement. A minority of the bourgeoisie feels that this point has already been reached — there are murmurs in capitalist circles in favour of "letting the market take its due effect." There are even indications that a price collapse is beginning in some products.

Reflecting the real market value for mutton, the Meat Board has reduced its minimum price for mutton to 12 cents a kilogram from last season's price of 42 cents. With SMPs the farmer gets paid 51 cents — four times its estimated market value. The Board's price for lamb has also been reduced, although less dramatically, from 114 cents a kilo to 99 cents. SMPs give the farmer 146 cents — almost 50 percent above estimated market value. Current subsidies amount to \$10.40 on each lamb and \$11.50 for each mutton. Mutton actually costs \$3.50 more to kill and process than the market price the carcass will receive.

- Even with SMPs, net farm income has been falling, and sheep and beef farm investment is below maintenance levels.

Figures cited by Adam Begg in the September 1983 *New Zealand Meat Producer* explain why. While farm input costs rose 112 percent in the five years to 1982/83, farm gate prices rose only 64 percent without SMPs and price-smoothing supports. Even with SMPs, the price received by the farmers rose only 99 percent — still below the rise in input costs. Over the same period there had been a cumulative devaluation of the New Zealand dollar of nearly 21 percent which helped increase export returns in New Zealand dollar terms. The Agricultural Review Committee estimates that farm gate terms of exchange in 1983/84 — that is, the relationship between input prices and product returns — will decline a further 3 percent, to the lowest level since 1974/75, despite SMPs.

The Agriculture Review Committee also predicts that meat production will decline 7 percent and wool 2 percent in the 1983/84 season. SMPs are also falling in real terms, having been maintained at the same dollar rate for the last two years. Little change in SMPs is expected this year.

So although SMPs have kept farmers in business, those to profit from SMPs were the monopolies supplying farmers or buying their produce, whose increased charges were able to continue to be met. Meat Board chairman Adam Begg admitted this fact indirectly when he told the March 20, 1984, *Evening Post*: "It would make much more sense if the SMPs were paid direct to the freezing companies and the transport sector. This would be a more direct route and in the public's eyes would put the responsibility and stigma where it belongs."

Political allegiance of working farmers

- Closely related to the economic problem is the bourgeoisie's need to draw working farmers behind the National Party and capitalist farmers' organisations. SMPs tie the fate of the working farmer, who needs income support to survive, to a scheme that gives the greatest benefit to the capitalist farmer under the guise of treating all farmers equally. Large-scale bankruptcies would also severely shake the support of working farmers for the National Party. They remain a key voting base for that party.

- The necessity for SMPs reflects the weak position generally of the New Zealand economy in international competition. In addition to the intensified squeeze by the monopoly farm suppliers and buyers of farm produce, an important reason for the cost-price squeeze on the farm is that most farm production is exported, and, until this year, New Zealand's inflation rate has been double that of its trading partners since the mid-1970s. This means the price of exports rises more slowly than domestic prices. This has been partly compensated for by continuing devaluation of the New Zealand currency (from NZ\$1 = US\$1 in 1976 to US\$0.65 now), so increasing the price received in New Zealand dollar terms. But even this has been insufficient.

- But if the problem is inflation, the solution being applied is highly inflationary. The government's injection of \$350 million in SMPs directly from the Reserve Bank into the economy would have an enormously serious effect in accelerating the rate of inflation — unless it is compensated by measures which withdraw money from circulation. This is what the government has been doing. It is the other side of its SMP policy.

Total primary sector credit has been cut by 17 percent. Rural Bank lending has been cut from \$467 million to \$444 million, while at the same time interest rates have been bumped up towards ordinary market rates. Various special schemes such as livestock incentive loans, land development encouragement loans, etc., have come to an end. Government financing

through Inflation Adjusted Savings Bonds, the Kiss schemes,⁴ etc., have taken more money out of circulation, and as credit dries up interest rates inevitably rise, in spite of government controls. Working farmers pay for all these measures.

In addition to the problems due to the shortage of farm credit that I outlined earlier, there are more direct ways they pay. For example, one of the government's most savage credit-squeeze measures is the decision to cut back the Dairy Board's access to 1 percent credit from the Reserve Bank for buying produce. Last season the Dairy Board borrowed over \$1,000 million. This season the Board's credit facility was converted into a \$750 million, 40-year loan. This means the Board will have to borrow an additional \$400 million at an estimated cost of \$36 million — \$32 million more than under the old system. Divided by 15,000 dairy farmers, the extra cost will average \$2,133 each.

Land speculation and SMPs

- The twin nature of the government's policy (SMPs plus credit squeeze) becomes clearer when you look at the way SMPs fit into the land speculation cycle. Here the credit question takes priority.

As I explained before, land prices are directly related to the income from the land. Therefore, any government assistance in the form of subsidies tends to become capitalised in the form of higher land prices — as happened throughout the 1970s when, due to plentiful credit through the livestock incentive and land development schemes, land prices rose ahead of production income and consumer price index.

This was the also the case in the first few years of SMPs. However, in the six months to June 1983, the Valuation Department's freehold farmland price index showed a decline in farmland prices of 1.2 percent — the first time since the 1967/68 June year. Sales fell from 2,058 in the first six months of 1982 to 1,130 in the six months to June 1983. The reason for this is that incomes are still falling in spite of the SMPs and there is no credit available with which to buy land.

Thus both the rise and the fall of land prices work against the small farmer. Typically, the small farmer buys land towards the end of a boom at high prices using cheap credit, and is forced to sell it at bust time at low prices — as is beginning to happen now with Gisborne farmers forced to sell by the drought. This credit policy also leaves high and dry the farmers who have re-mortgaged their farms at boom-time values — the value of their farms has dropped, but not their interest bill. Also, any fall in investment on the farm is paid for by the bust-time seller — for example, if a farmer has not kept up the application of fertiliser, the value of the farm will be even lower when he or she comes to sell.

4. A highly advertised sale of government bonds issued in 1983 that paid high interest.

- SMPs also represent a shift in the type of farm subsidisation away from subsidies on inputs, towards subsidies on production. While SMPs (and total subsidisation) have been increasing, subsidies on fertiliser, weedkillers, etc. have been removed or reduced. This further discriminates against the small farmer. Clearly, the rich farmer, with the greatest production, benefits most from the production-related SMPs. Not so clear is the fact that the rich farmer, farming on the best land, has less need of fertiliser and pesticides, and so suffers the least from the removal of these subsidies.

Thus, in economic terms alone, the whole of the government's SMP policy — i.e., SMPs plus credit squeeze plus removal of input subsidies — amounts to giving with one hand and taking with the other. But not in an even-handed way: giving most to the rich farmers, and taking most from the working farmers. The average fall in farm incomes undoubtedly conceals a very uneven spread of this fall. The director of the Meat and Wool Board Economic Service, Neil Taylor, estimates that in 1983/84 30 percent of farms will have a net income of \$10,000 or less.

But perhaps the most important aspect of SMPs is the political one. SMPs represent a transfer of money from city to country, and this has been given great publicity compared to the silence on the rural credit problems. The intention is to accentuate the division between toilers of town and country. This has had some success and is reflected in the call by some union officials for abolition of SMPs — that is, in effect, a call for the ruin of the small farmer.

Interesting, too, is the response of the capitalist farmers to suggestions that SMPs are costing the taxpayer too much. They point to the cost of protectionism of urban industry, which raises the price of goods farmers buy.

This old divide and rule argument is as old as New Zealand capitalism. On one side, the working farmers are told: "Why should the hardworking farmer pay to support inefficient industry in the city?" thus linking his or her fate with the capitalist of the countryside. On the other side, the city worker is told: "If we don't have protectionism, you'll be thrown out of a job," thus linking his or her fate to the capitalist of the city. The argument rages around who should pay for the economic crisis — the urban workers or the working farmers.

For the labour movement to support protectionism not only alienates the New Zealand working class from its allies in other countries, but also from the toilers of the countryside. The call for abolishing SMPs without putting forward positive alternatives to protect working farmers' incomes also cuts across forging any alliance between workers and working farmers.

Class divisions

The only way out of this dead-end argument is to raise demands which expose the class divisions in the countryside. There are some huge objective advantages in New Zealand for the labour movement to form such an alliance. Large sections of the industrial proletariat are

workers in rural-based industries — meat processing, dairy factories, transport. There are a lot of worker-farmers in these industries. For example, towards the end of 1983 workers at the Te Rapa Dairy Co-operative waged a significant struggle over extra payments for using new packing equipment. Among the leaders of the Dairy Workers Union are a number of farmers and former farmers. (Their bosses are farmers also, though of a different class.) Agricultural problems directly affect all these kinds of workers and enter their consciousness.

The key to forming such an alliance is the rural wage workers. Class brothers and sisters of the urban proletariat, they are highly exploited. A high proportion are Maori [indigenous people], especially in the North Island. Due in part to the seasonal nature of the work, they are among the most internationally-experienced groups of workers (shearers, for example, work in Australia and the US). They have no say in the so-called farmers' organisations, Federated Farmers and the producer boards, nor, it must be admitted, in many trade unions. Voluntary unionism may be a new phenomenon for many urban workers, but not to the rural proletariat. Compulsory unionism in this country was never extended to agricultural workers, the only wage workers in production for which this is true. Defending union coverage must include organising the agricultural workers and special efforts being made to raise wages and to extend health, safety, and other conditions that are often lacking in this sector.

For working farmers we must begin by explaining that the catastrophe they face is the direct result of capitalist rule. Solutions to their plight must, therefore, point towards mobilising workers and working farmers in a joint struggle for political power.

An income support scheme needs to be in-

troduced which will guarantee working farmers the equivalent of a living wage after meeting all costs of production. This would replace the SMPs which give the greatest benefit to the biggest producers — the capitalist farmers.

Committees of family farmers should be formed that, together with workers' organisations, can demand that the financial records and pricing policies of the monopolies which exploit them both be opened to public inspection. This would help insure that any income support measures genuinely help the working farmer instead of, as now, being sucked up by the banks, stock and station agencies, and processing companies. This would lead to a struggle to take these profit-gouging monopolies out of the capitalists' hands through their nationalisation by the government. Management of the nationalised companies should be placed in the hands of publicly elected boards whose actions would remain under the scrutiny of the worker-farmer committees. Workers in these industries should control their day-to-day running.

The debt burden which forces working farmers to pay financial parasites an increasing portion of their income must be lifted. Nationalisation and amalgamation of the banks, insurance companies, and stock and station agencies would provide the basis for the state to extend cheap credit, with priority to those who are most needy.

A major part of the debt burden arises from the fact that all working farmers are forced to mortgage their land to obtain the money for the high purchase price of the land, or as a surety for loans to buy the stock, farm equipment, and buildings needed to maintain production. Most will remain in debt for the rest of their lives. Alternatively, they will be forced to pay exorbitant rent to a capitalist landowner, most often in New Zealand through giving up a major proportion of their production under a sharefarming system. Land speculators ex-

ploit these difficulties working farmers face for their own gain.

The system of rents and mortgages is rooted in the private ownership of the land and can only be eliminated by the government nationalising all land. This would not eliminate the family farm, but it would mean that private speculators and financiers could no longer buy, sell, rent, or mortgage land. Family farmers would then be free to decide whether to pool their resources with other farmers in co-operatives, keep farming individually, or leave agriculture entirely to pursue other lines of work. Young farmers could obtain access to farmland as it became available, without having to mortgage their lives to the banks.

Under this system a farmer's life will not be ruled by the dictates of the market. Production can be increased without the fear of going broke. And so long as there are hungry people in the world the government can ensure farm produce reaches those in need. For instance, a workers and farmers government would make a special priority of providing high quality, cheap meat and dairy products to the Pacific Islands, which New Zealand imperialism has helped keep underdeveloped and unable to ensure a balanced diet for their peoples.

To carry through and enforce these measures, it will require a Labour government that truly defends the rights and interests of workers and farmers. Bringing such a government to power will require a fighting alliance of workers and working farmers. Such a fighting alliance can only develop if revolutionary workers are able to transform the unions and Labour Party into organisations committed to carrying through the type of programme outlined to the end. Provided the labour movement can adopt a programme for an alliance with working farmers, we can be sure that the farm question will prove to be the Achilles Heel of capitalist rule in this country. □

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'Vietnam Courier' editor interviewed

How recent economic gains have been achieved

[Hoang Nguyen, editor of *Vietnam Courier*, gave the following interview to *Intercontinental Press* editor Steve Clark and *Militant* correspondent Diane Wang last February. *Vietnam Courier* is a monthly magazine published in several languages for foreign readers. The interview was conducted in English in Hanoi. In this issue we are publishing the first half of the interview.]

* * *

Question. What have been Vietnam's main economic achievements in the last few years? Last year's harvest of 17 million tons of food grains made Vietnam self-sufficient, for the first time in its history.

Answer. The success achieved does not only concern agriculture. We focus on agriculture, of course, but apart from it we cover several other fields.

We are weak, not only in agriculture, but also in industry. Why? Because of the shortage of energy. Now most of the Vietnamese factories can function only at half capacity, partly because of the shortage of electricity.¹

There is the problem of building material. There is also a problem of transportation, especially between the north and south. We may have more rice in the south, and not enough in the north. So how to transport the rice from the south to the north? These are problems.

Now we concentrate on agriculture. At the same time we are dealing with problems of energy, of transport, of building materials, and so on. And in the meantime we are preparing for the next steps. So when we say that we have some successes in agriculture, it does not mean it is our only success, but that it is the most visible success.

In agriculture, as you have stated, we have achieved self-sufficiency this year. Last year we still had to import something like 200,000 tons. But this year, because of the good harvest in 1983, we don't have to import any grain. Our target was reached, 17 million tons.

That makes an average food production sup-

ply to the population of 300 kilograms per head. Of course, this is very low, bare self-sufficiency.² Our final aim is much more; we must at least double it. But for the time being we have now achieved what we had not achieved in many years, self-sufficiency.

What is more interesting is that last year we achieved this success in spite of natural calamities. Were it not for the bad weather, we would have had a surplus of about a half million tons.

Q. Has there been progress in all agricultural fields?

A. We have not achieved our targets in the production of auxiliary cereals. In Vietnam we distinguish two kinds of cereals, the wet rice and the dry cereals such as maize [corn] and potatoes.

For the last several years we have decreased rather than increased the production of all those dry cereals. That trend can be reversed. If we have good weather, and if we pay attention to those measures to boost production of dry cereal, we will have much more than 17 million tons. It is very hopeful for us.

Another thing is that in some regions we have reached very high production targets. The average is only about three tons of paddy rice³ per hectare [one hectare = 2.5 acres] on an average for the whole country. In north Vietnam we have reached only 10 tons per hectare, and there are only a few cooperatives in the north that have reached that.

But then in a few provinces, in particular in central Vietnam, they have done better. One cooperative has harvested something like 20 tons of paddy per hectare. That means the potential is there.

Of course, this requires that we raise at least two crops, even sometimes three crops a year. And of course we must supply much more fertilizer. But that can be done.

So this year we have put the target at 18 million tons, and that is very moderate, realistic.⁴ We think that can be achieved, and in a

number of years we will have 20 million tons and more. That is not something utopian, but realistic.

Q. Are those targets matched against population growth?

A. Yes, that is a real problem. It is now a little more than the population growth, but not enough. So on the one hand we will try to boost production, but on the other hand, we have to limit births.⁵

Q. What accounts for this success? Is it the new contract system introduced into Vietnamese agriculture?

A. There is more than the contract system, something more. That is that the initiative from the people is ever growing.

What explanation can we give to the improvement of production? There are several things.

First of all there is the setting up of cooperatives. Looking back to the history of Vietnam's production and agriculture, we can affirm that this is one of the main factors in the progress of agriculture. Unless and until you set up cooperatives so that there is a collective way of doing agriculture, you can't progress. To muster forces, to improve the system of hydraulics you have to pool your strength.

You know that hydraulic work in Vietnam is still done mostly by hand. We don't have enough oil, enough bulldozers. We have to do things with our own hands. Unless you pool your efforts, work together, you can't solve the problem — so, cooperatives.

The state is there to help peasants. But if the state must knock at the door of each peasant, how can the state do things? If the peasants pool together and form cooperatives the distri-

Ministers in charge of economic affairs, recently told journalists that because of poor weather during the last crop season and the continued high population growth of about 2.3 percent a year, Vietnam expects to import about 200,000 tons of good grain this year.

5. Vietnam has almost 60 million people today. Despite the long war against French and U.S. imperialism, because of improved health care, average life expectancy has risen from about 34 years in 1957 to 63 years for men and 66 years for women. As a result, Vietnam's population is about 2.4 times what it was at the time of the August Revolution in 1945.

Vietnam is pursuing a vigorous voluntary birth control campaign through public education, discussions organized by the Women's Union, and economic incentives. The goal is to bring population growth down to 1.9-2 percent in 1984.

1. To expand its energy-producing capacity, Vietnam is building three large electric power stations and installing a nationwide grid for electric power distribution. The thermo-electric plant at Pha Lai in the north will put four generators into operation by the end of 1986. The hydro-electric power plant at Hoa Binh in the north will operate its first turbine in 1988. Construction is under way on the Tri An hydro-electric plant in the south.

In addition, Vietnam increased its coal production 23 percent between 1980 and 1983 and has recently found oil along the coastal shelf in southern Vietnam.

2. In 1979 Vietnam's per capita food level was only 1,800 calories a day. The average for advanced industrial countries is 3,373 and for underdeveloped countries 2,282. Vietnam's government hopes to raise the daily caloric intake to almost 2,500 by 1995.

In 1979 the average Vietnamese individual's diet included 5.7 kilograms (12.5 pounds) of meat, 6.6 kilograms (14.5 pounds) of fish and seafood, and 21 eggs per year.

3. Paddy rice refers to the threshed, unmilled rice.

4. Tran Phuong, deputy chairman of the Council of

bution of seeds and fertilizers will be made much easier.

So the first thing is the form of organization.

The second thing is the introduction of science and technology in agricultural production. We have better seeds. Our agronomy institute has worked in depth on such problems as fertilizer, seeds, and insecticides.

The general cultural level of the peasants is of paramount importance. Because if we distribute the seeds to the peasant, but the peasant doesn't have a scientific knowledge to use them, how can we solve the problem?

Now in each cooperative we have a team of young people who have graduated from secondary school after seven years of study. They deal with the seeds, in a scientific way.

So the introduction of science and technology in agricultural production is made possible because of the existence of a peasantry that has a certain cultural level. And that is the fruit of a socialist revolution.

You know that illiteracy in Vietnam is a thing of the past. Nearly all the Vietnamese young men and women have done at least four years of study in school. Some of them have had seven years. So we have been able to introduce modern scientific methods for rice cultivation, the cultivation of other cereals, and animal husbandry.

Up to 1979 we had the cooperatives, and we had people developed with a certain level of culture. Then why was progress in rice production so slow? That brings us to the third factor, management. And with that we come to the problem of the contract system.

Before 1979 or 1980 we also had a sort of contract system. The old contract system functioned like this. The cooperative was divided into brigades, each with maybe a dozen members in the team. We allotted a certain number of hectares to a brigade.

We had a system of points and workdays. Each brigade would distribute the points according to what had been done by the individual members of the brigade. At harvest time we would see how many tons of rice we had obtained and then distribute according to the number of points each farmer of the brigade had given to the work.

Q. What was wrong with this old contract system?

A. At first it worked well for a number of years. The introduction of scientific techniques also raised production. And especially during the war, people mustered their efforts and did hard work.

But in the last years, say in 1975 and 1976, we saw that there was a stagnation of production. We looked into the problem and found one thing not working in the system.

We say that we are confident in the zeal of each member of the brigade and that we take into account only the work normally done. For one day of weeding you have one point, for instance. But what's the quality of your weeding? That's the problem. Whether you have done it carefully or not — who controls that?

Members of a brigade are more or less relatives, and they are more or less generous with each other. They say, all of us have done a very good day of work. But that may not be true of each one.

One man may have gone late to the fields, going at 9 o'clock instead of 6 o'clock in the morning. Maybe he went home at 3 o'clock instead of 4 or 5 o'clock.

We are peasants, all are peasants, not working class people, not very conscious. That was the weak side.

Production of rice tended to decrease or stagnate. It was very dangerous for us, as the population kept growing.

So at this point we discovered that there was initiative from the peasants themselves, and they themselves proposed a new system. That was made possible because of the August, 1979, sixth plenum of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party.

Q. What did the sixth plenum do?

A. The sixth plenum dealt with a number of problems of the economy. The main direction was that we must give up the bureaucratic way of managing the economy. We must put an end to the system of subsidies.

The subsidies meant that whatever your factory unit or production unit did, you didn't have to worry because you were sure of getting a subsidy from the state.

That was good in war time, because at that time we had to concentrate everything on fighting the enemy; whatever the cost, we had to produce. The circumstances in the war years allowed us to adopt this system, because we re-

lied, not on our own production, but on foreign aid, on international solidarity. We were doing the fighting against imperialism, and our friends helped us in their own way to fight against the imperialists. They gave us food, commodities, equipment. We didn't have to worry about it; our duty was to fight. That was the situation.

Now, after the establishment of peace, that was no longer possible. We have to live on our own. The system of government subsidy to the various units of production is no longer possible. We have to put an end to it; we now have to give an accounting of cost and benefit.

The main content of the resolution at the sixth plenum was to put an end to the system of administrative subsidies, to the bureaucratic system of management. Now we have to keep to the realities.

If we project this spirit into agricultural production, we can see that the whole old system of the contract was rather bureaucratic, because we contented ourselves with the keeping of books, the number of points, and so on, with no control over quality.

But how to solve the problem? Here we see the role of the masses. The masses invented the new system; it came not from the central committee, but from the masses.

Q. How does the new system of contracts differ from the old?

A. The new system of contracts goes like this. Instead of giving a certain amount of land to a brigade, you give it to a brigade and, at the same time, to each individual farmer.

We analyze the operations involved in wet



Diane Wang/IP

Peasant women selling oranges in country market in Bac Giang.

rice production. We can see that there are eight operations. The first five operations can be entrusted to the brigade, but the three final ones are to be given to each individual farmer. That is the key to the system.

The first of the five operations is to till the land, to prepare the soil for seed. That has to be done collectively by the people. Why? Because only the brigade has either tractors or buffalos.

In our system of socialist organization we have tractors, not everywhere, but sometimes. The tractors belong to the cooperatives and not to individual farmers. Even the buffalos and oxen are kept by the collective.

The second operation is watering, hydraulics, pumps, and so on, when to put more water on and when to drain. That operation is also to be done by the brigade because the hydraulic system belongs to the state or to the cooperative, not to individual farmers. They have to pool their labor to build the trenches or canals, but the canals themselves belong to the cooperative.

The third operation is manuring. The fertilizers are of two kinds. Chemical fertilizers, nitrogens or phosphates, sometimes imported from foreign countries, are provided by the state. Then there is manure prepared by the cooperative from vegetable or animal sources. Each farmer may contribute an additional amount of manure, but the main part is supplied by the cooperative.

We come now to the fourth operation, seeds. The seeds are prepared, not by each individual farmer, but by the institutes in Hanoi. Sometimes we have to go to the Philippines for good seeds. Then they are multiplied and distributed by the state to the cooperative and then to the brigades.

Then, finally, there is insecticide, also chemical. And that too is provided by the state to the cooperative and then to the brigades.

These five problems turn around things the ownership of which is based on cooperatives. The peasants can do the operation, but in doing these things they must be organized by the cooperatives.

But the final three operations are entirely individual. We come to transplanting. Transplanting is always done by hand, and mostly by women. Can it be done collectively? If you organize a team of transplanters, you group them and call them by tocsin at the beginning of each day, but it is of no use. Rather, leave it to the peasant, and it will be done carefully.

Second is the tending of the plant and weeding. After the plant grows you have to tend and weed it for three or four months, according to the variety of seeds.

Finally is the harvest. In Vietnam harvesting is done by hand. Whatever is done by hand individually is given to the farmer.

Say 100 hectares are given to the brigade, and the brigade has ten peasants. In that case ten hectares would be given to each farmer, and the final three operations are done by the farmer under contract.



Diane Wang/IP

Rice farming in northern Vietnam.

The cooperative says that for this soil of such and such quality you must produce a certain quantity, say 80 kilograms. But if you have more than 80 kilograms, then the extra belongs to you.

So, motivated by this material incentive, the peasant will do all his best. He will harvest more than 80 kilograms. Instead of doing things in a superficial way, the farmer will do it very carefully. He will stay in the field the full day, carefully tending the rice plants and carefully harvesting so as not to lose a grain of rice.

Everything will be done all right because there is economic, material incentive.

That is fully in keeping with Marxism-Leninism and the principles of communism. Because the system of organization must be in accordance with the means of production. Your means of production here is all by hand, manual, individual. So you have to have a system that fits this state of things. Instead of dealing with the collective for the last three operations, we are dealing with each peasant. This is much more realistic, you see. It has proved to be very important.

This may last for some time. After we have mechanized the whole process of agricultural production, perhaps at that time we can change, because the means of production will have changed. But for the time being the means of production is by hand, and this is the best way of organizing production.

We put here something of a material incentive, and we deal with each individual peasant. But then the collective system is there for the first five operations.

At first some theoreticians said that in this way we would disband our cooperatives. We said, no, there is no fear of that because the cooperative must be reinforced to realize the first five operations. It is only for the final three operations, for things done by hand, that we adopt this system, which gives more responsibility and more motivation to the individual peasant.

That's the difference between Vietnam and China. They also have their own system, what

they call their system of responsibilities in China. The difference in our system is that we still keep very intact our organization of cooperatives.

That is the essence of the contract system. We call it the contract system based on the final products, in place of a contract system based on points.

Q. Where does the peasant market the rice that he or she has in surplus?

A. There are two ways. First of all the state tries to get them to sell to the state. But the peasant is absolutely free in disposing of the extra rice he raises.

If the state offers a good price, he will sell to the state. If the state offers a lower price, he will sell to the free market. That compels the state to look after the interests of the peasants.

But at the same time the cadres of the party and the state explain to the peasant: if instead of selling to the state you sell to the private merchant, you will only help the bourgeoisie and the new bourgeois element to grow, and that is not in your interest. On the other hand, if you contribute to the state, the state will have more grains to feed the army — your own sons — and to feed the workers in the factories, the civil servants, the cadres, the functionaries of the state, and all of that is in your interest.

The state fixes a price acceptable to the peasants, not too low. But at the same time it conducts explanation to the peasants.

Only four years ago the state could procure only a little more than a half million tons a year, a little more. But last year the state was able to procure 3.6 million tons. That means a readjustment of price has proved to be correct. It satisfied the needs of the peasant and at the same time it kept the prices stable.

So now the state has a certain reserve of grains, controls a certain amount to feed the armed forces, the workers in factories, and nonrice-producing people.

[To be continued.]

Why hundreds have 'disappeared'

Parliament deputy describes military's growing role in regime

[The following is an interview with Javier Diez Canseco, a deputy in the Peruvian parliament from the United Left (IU)¹ coalition and vice-president of the Human Rights Commission of the Chamber of Deputies. *Intercontinental Press* interviewed Diez Canseco on June 11 while he was visiting New York City to testify before the United Nations Human Rights Commission's Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. The interview was conducted in Spanish; the translation and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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Question. Forced disappearances and kidnappings by the repressive forces have been common for a long time in many Latin American countries, but until recently there had been few such cases reported from Peru. Could you indicate what you reported about this to the United Nations?

Answer. We have presented to the UN Working Group some 200 documented cases of "disappeared" persons in Peru. My office has received nearly 650 reports of such occurrences that we are trying to fully document. I should also point out that the former public prosecutor of Ayacucho Province, Dr. Zegarra Dongo, stated at a recent news conference that his office had received 1,500 reports of persons seized and "disappeared."

This situation of widespread forced disappearances has arisen in Peru since December 1982, when a state of emergency was declared in Ayacucho Province and the area was placed under military control — ostensibly to combat the guerrilla group known as Sendero Luminoso [Shining Path]. The first disappearances were reported in Ayacucho in January 1983; since then, multiple violations of human rights have taken place in that region; mostly involving "disappearances" and extralegal killings.

The initial cases coincided with the monstrous murder of eight journalists who had

1. The United Left is made up of most of Peru's working-class political parties, as well as independent leftists such as Lima Mayor Alfonso Barrantes. Among its principal components are the Peruvian Communist Party; Democratic People's Unity (UDP), of which Diez Canseco is a leader; the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR), and the Revolutionary Left Union (UNIR).

The Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), Peruvian section of the Fourth International, supports the IU and participates in its grass-roots committees (*comités de base*). The IU leadership has postponed action on the PRT's request to join the IU, first made in December 1983.

traveled to the Ayacuchan village of Uchuracai in the district of Huanta. After that, the news media stopped trying to cover directly the developments in the countryside of Ayacucho. It has barely managed to function in the provincial capital.

The methods used by the repressive forces are similar to those applied in other Latin American countries. A group of uniformed men without insignia of rank, with their faces covered, and using pseudonyms, arrive at a house — or sometimes a workplace or even a street corner — and detain one or several of the persons they are seeking. The victims are blindfolded, their hands are bound, and they are transported to a military camp or jail to be interrogated and often tortured and killed. A few persons have managed to gain release after passing through this ordeal. This has made it possible to obtain some firsthand accounts that we have presented as part of our testimony at the UN.

Such disappearances are but one of the signs of the militarization of the Ayacucho region and of the growing militarization of the country as a whole. In December 1982 the state of emergency was decreed in five districts of Ayacucho Province. Since then it has been extended to include 13 districts in the provinces of Ayacucho, Huancavelica, and Apurímac. All these areas are under the military and political control of the armed forces.

Militarization in the Andean zones I mentioned has eliminated the role of the civilian authorities; power is in the hands of a military command now headed by Gen. Adrián Huamán.

This process has meant the curtailment not only of the formally suspended constitutional rights but also of a series of other freedoms. It is practically impossible for those detained to have access to legal defense. The role of the public prosecutors has been sharply reduced, both through intimidation exercised against them by the military authorities and also because the prosecutors are barred from traveling in the military zones to confirm reports of extralegal repression.

Several prosecutors have been forced to resign or flee the region as a result of military pressure. For example, Dr. Zegarra had investigated and exposed the massacre of 34 peasants — including 10 children — by a Civil Guard detachment in the village of Soccus in Ayacucho Province. This led to his being severely harassed and threatened by elements of the police, acting under the cover of the curfew. He resigned 48 hours after announcing the results of the Soccus investigation.

Zegarra was replaced by Dr. Madueño, who

lasted a few weeks in the post and then resigned as well, declaring to the press that he lacked the necessary guarantees of his personal security in order to function in the area.

Q. How have other parts of the country been affected by the repression in Ayacucho?

A. The armed forces have more and more become the principal base of the Belaúnde regime, which has become quite isolated from the population. This was reflected in the results of the November 1983 municipal elections — the ruling party barely received 17 percent of the votes.

Peru is being transformed into a police state. Repression against the popular mobilizations and struggles is mounting. Recent strikes have been harshly repressed, with a number of strikers being killed. We could also mention the killing of four students in recent demonstrations against the new university law and an increase in transport fares.

The regime's increasingly violent response to the popular movement has also hit opposition members of parliament, particularly those from the left. On several occasions members of parliament have been beaten during peaceful street demonstrations — Emeterio Tacuri, Manuel Dammert, Hugo Blanco, Rolando Breña, and myself. During the March 22 national work stoppage, Senator Jorge del Prado of the IU was severely wounded when a tear-gas bomb fired from a grenade launcher struck him in the chest.

As this process of militarization has unfolded, human-rights organizations have been accused by the military of being "the most effective legal arm of Sendero Luminoso." Reports of police abuses are immediately categorized by the regime as "part of a campaign by international communism to discredit Peru." News commentator César Hildebrandt, the country's best-known television journalist, was accused of being part of such a supposed campaign after he denounced police abuses on his program. His show was then canceled by the station owners as a result of pressure from the government. Hildebrandt's show was the last of the independent political broadcasts on television; others had been forced off the air earlier.

This process of militarization is ostensibly aimed at suppressing Sendero Luminoso, a dogmatic and extremely sectarian organization that upholds the ideas of the so-called Gang of Four from an earlier period in the People's Republic of China. Sendero considers that the only way to operate is through armed actions and that all other forms of struggle must be re-

jected. It exists mainly in Ayacucho but has expanded its guerrilla columns to several other areas such as Huancavelica and Apurimac. Sendero clearly offers a pretext for the militarization process. But it goes well beyond that, in my opinion.

It is evident that the armed forces' attention is focused on the threat represented by the growth of the popular movement and its search for independent, revolutionary political representation through the United Left. This new political phenomenon expresses an accumulation of forces and experiences by the popular movement over the past 20 years or so. The IU provides the popular movement with an alternative of government and power, combining various forms of struggle.

The United Left is a fundamental axis for the political representation of the popular movement — of the working class, the peasantry, and the urban poor. It is seeking to put itself at the head of a revolutionary nationalist movement capable of achieving real democracy for working people and securing social justice and national liberation. This movement has grown considerably over the past two years and today constitutes the country's main political force.

It is this situation that in my opinion is the real reason for the growing militarization of the country. The context of this radicalization is a deepening economic crisis.

In 1983 Peru suffered a 10 percent drop in its gross national product; this year the economy has continued to stagnate, with a further GNP decline of 1 percent in the first three months. Inflation stands at 125 percent, and underemployment affects more than 60 percent of the population. The official minimum wage barely reaches US\$45 a month, and 60 percent of wage earners receive less than that.

In this disastrous situation, the government continues to put top priority on paying the \$14 billion foreign debt and subsidizing the big raw-materials exporters. Meanwhile, the country's social services are deteriorating in an alarming way.

Finding itself incapable of negotiating or offering concessions to the demands of the people, the regime has based itself more and more on the repressive forces.

Q. What forms has popular resistance to the economic crisis and the repression taken?

A. In recent years the people's movement has been carrying on an important struggle against the government's policies. Four nationwide work stoppages have been held, and the fifth such strike is to take place in coming weeks. Two national peasant strikes have been carried out to protest the government's agrarian policies. A series of student strikes have also occurred, accompanied by street demonstrations.

The people have organized themselves in various forms. Fronts for the Defense of the People's Interests have arisen in various provinces, bringing together diverse sectors of workers and peasants, along with sectors of the middle and petty bourgeoisie. These fronts



usually raise demands against the extreme centralism of the national government and its traditional neglect of regions outside the capital.

The popular movement has also been strengthened at the trade-union level through the formation of the National Unified Struggle Command and the broadening of the CGTP's² influence at the expense of the various labor unions through which the bourgeoisie had exercised influence.

Various forms of organization have also arisen in the urban centers. An important process of organization is unfolding among women in the poor and working-class areas who organize common meals or neighborhood kitchens in order to offset hunger and food shortages.

At the same time, the people's movement has also achieved a significant degree of expression at the electoral level. The United Left has gained control over a series of municipal governments around the country — including in Lima, Cuzco, Puno, and various other towns and cities.

These municipal governments of the left are facing serious sabotage attempts by the national government. They have faced the cut-off of funds and have been prohibited from collecting their own taxes or making changes in personnel in the municipal bureaucracies in order to make them more responsive in the new situation.

In responding to this, the municipal governments controlled by the IU have sought to base themselves on the organization and mobilization of the people. The aim has been to improve the independent organization of the people and at the same time to democratize the city government apparatus and open channels for popular participation. In many cases the municipal governments take part in the big regional struggles, calling mass town meetings (*cabildos abiertos*) and using these to organize the people, thereby helping to strengthen and con-

solidate the movement.

The IU municipal governments have also sought to meet the basic needs of the population. In Lima, for example, an emergency plan was implemented to reduce infant mortality by providing neighborhood clinics that administer anti-diarrhetic drugs — diarrhea always takes the lives of many small children during the summer months.

Another program in Lima is the glass-of-milk program, aimed at providing one glass of milk a day to 1 million children in the capital under the age of five and to pregnant women. This aimed not only at guaranteeing a minimum of nourishment but also helped to organize women to defend their rights. Milk is provided in powdered form to mothers' organizations that take responsibility for preparing it and distributing it in the neighborhoods. This enables women to come together and discuss their problems and organize to seek solutions.

The United Left has become a possible governmental alternative for the country. It would not be surprising for the IU to receive the largest or second-largest vote in the national elections in 1985.

Should the left win the elections, the fundamental question will be the extent of popular organization and the capacity of the people to resist the counteroffensive that will be launched by the reactionary right wing. Along with the appropriate propaganda this level of organization and mobilization of the people will also be able to play an important role vis-à-vis the armed forces, influencing the currents within them that identify with nationalist or democratic positions. At the same time, it will be necessary to confront the reactionary militarists who will aim to block the progress of the people's movement.

A second possibility is that the elections might be won by the APRA party.³ This is the only viable alternative left for the ruling class, particularly for those sectors that were represented by the military regime of Gen. Francisco Morales Bermúdez in 1975–80.

Such an outcome is not out of the question. But progressive currents have arisen inside the APRA itself that seek social change. These will begin taking their distance from the party leadership as it shows that it is incapable of confronting the extremely grave social and political problems of the country. Therefore, I think it is quite reasonable to think that if APRA finally comes to power after 60 years and fails to comply with its electoral pledges, it could face a deep political crisis.

If, in that situation, there exists a combative and organized left with political clarity, it could present itself as the alternative for solving the country's problems and thereby generate a broad mass front able to carry on a revolutionary struggle for the transformation of Peru. □

2. CGTP — General Confederation of Peruvian Workers, the country's main trade-union federation, controlled by the Communist Party.

3. APRA — American People's Revolutionary Alliance, a bourgeois-nationalist party that has long had wide support among the Peruvian masses. On occasion it has won elections but has always been blocked from taking office by military coups.

U.S. socialist candidate on tour

Calls for international solidarity with striking miners

By Margaret Jayko

International working-class solidarity was the theme of Mel Mason's June 4-12 tour of Britain. Mason is the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) candidate for president of the United States.

Mason's tour was sponsored by the British newsweekly *Socialist Action*. It followed on the heels of a 10-day tour of Ireland. Mason participated in antiwar protests there which were organized to coincide with Reagan's visit to Ireland. Mason's Irish tour was sponsored by People's Democracy, the Irish socialist organization affiliated to the Fourth International.

Antimissiles, miners' protests

Mason participated in two important demonstrations in London: the June 9 anti-Reagan action organized by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (see story on page 423) and the June 7 miners' support march and rally, which included 30,000 miners, their families, and other unionists.

Mason used his tour to help get out the truth about U.S. aggression in Central America and the Caribbean, as well as the U.S. rulers' war against Blacks and all working people in the United States.

He extended his party's solidarity to the embattled British miners, who have been on strike for more than three months against the government's plan to close down scores of mines, which would result in thousands of miners being laid off.

Mason also gave working people in Britain a firsthand account of the repression carried out by the British imperialists in Ireland and urged solidarity with the fight of the Irish people for a free and united homeland.

South Wales

The high point of Mason's tour was his one-day visit to South Wales. The traditional militancy of the Welsh miners has put their mines at the top of the National Coal Board's (NCB) list of mines to be shut down.

In South Wales, Mason spoke at a public meeting titled "Solidarity will win." About 100 people were there, the big majority of whom were miners and their families. Two miners also spoke.

Meirion Treble, a young National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) member from Celynen South, declared that the coal in Britain's nationalized mines "belongs to all of us." It is the safest and most plentiful source of energy and could be used to meet the energy needs of working people, he explained. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, however, would rather in-

vest in nuclear energy, in spite of all its hazards, in order to break the NUM.

One of the most encouraging developments in the strike, said Treble, was the role of women as pickets and in other solidarity activities. Women are taking their rightful place, he declared, "side by side with the miners." A member of the women's action committee in the area spoke, and greetings were also read from Paula Frampton, a railroad worker who was the first in her yard to refuse to move coal in support of the strike.

Mason visited the mining centers of Kent, Sheffield, and Nottinghamshire. He also met miners in Birmingham, Britain's second-largest city.

Mason went to a variety of miners' clubs in Kent. Miners and their families were interested in Mason's description of the Arizona copper miners' strike in the United States, which has been going on for a year. On behalf of the women's action group in Aylesham, Kay Sutcliffe presented Mason with a miner's lamp to give to the workers in Arizona. Throughout the tour, miners donated money and proposed other concrete acts of solidarity with the copper miners.

Black politics in the '80s

In Manchester, Mason participated in a panel discussion on what way forward for Black politics in the eighties. The meeting was held in Moss Side, the site of one of the youth rebellions that swept more than 30 cities and towns in Britain in the summer of 1981.

The meeting was sponsored by the magazine *Race Today* and the Labour Party Black Sections Organising Committee. Blacks in the Labour Party have begun to organize Black sections in order to make the party more responsive to the needs of Britain's Black communities.

The other panelists included Mark Wadsworth and Paul Sharma from the Black sections and Gus John, from the collective that publishes *Race Today*. John is also a prominent leader of the Black community in Moss Side.

Mason told the audience, which was predominantly Black, that the struggle of Blacks against their oppression is a central part of the working-class struggle against capitalism. The independent political organization of Blacks, stressed Mason, advances the process of independent political organization of the entire working class.

Blacks in the United States, Mason said, are in the vanguard of working-class struggles. He used the example of the Black-led civil rights movement, which struck a blow for all working people by abolishing the apartheid-like Jim Crow system of segregation in the South.

Mason also talked about the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP), of which he was a founding leader. NBIPP's program, said Mason, is anticapitalist and anti-imperialist.

The revolution in Grenada — the vast majority of whose inhabitants are Black — struck a blow against racist oppression through



Mel Mason at June 9 anti-Reagan rally in London.

G.M. Cookson

putting in power a government of workers and farmers, said Mason. It showed the way forward for Black politics in the eighties.

In addition to speaking at two miners' meetings in Manchester, Mason was able to have a lunchtime meeting with 12 machinists, which was organized by a machinist who is a supporter of *Socialist Action*.

These workers were members of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers. They worked at Coleman Fastener. Mason explained the SWP's program. The workers asked Mason a number of questions about his campaign and that of Jesse Jackson, who is running for the Democratic Party presidential nomination.

They also discussed with Mason the problem of racism — in the United States and at Coleman Fastener, where no Blacks are employed.

Grenada's example

"We of the New Jewel Movement are not anti-American, we're anti-Yankee invaders." That's how Denis Bartholomew, from the New Jewel Movement Support Group in Britain, began his talk at a "No to Reagan's war drive" meeting in London on June 8 organized by *Socialist Action*.

"With Mel here," said Bartholomew, referring to Mason, who was also on the speakers' platform, "I could not possibly be anti-American."

The real reason for the U.S. invasion of Grenada, said Bartholomew, was not that Grenada posed a military threat to the United States. It was the *example* of what was accomplished by the workers and peasants through the March 1979 revolution that Washington viewed as a political threat. However, said Bartholomew, "the invasion came four and a half years too late" to prevent the example from being set.

The struggle for a free Grenada continues, affirmed Bartholomew.

Mason talked about his trip to Grenada and the solidarity activities he helped organize when he was a city councilman in Seaside, California.

Washington feared the Grenada example, said Mason, because it was a socialist revolution that occurred in the Western Hemisphere in a country that was Black and English-speaking.

"If it's in the Western Hemisphere, that means it's too close for the U.S. rulers. If it's Black, that means Blacks can identify with it. If it's socialist, that means Blacks and other working people will start thinking about socialism. And if it's English-speaking, that means they can tell us why and how they made their revolution," said Mason.

The Grenada invasion and the U.S. aggression in Central America are not just Reagan's policies, stressed Mason. They are carried out by both the Democrats and Republicans because both parties are the political servants of the ruling rich. Tracing the continuity of Reagan's policies to those of previous presidents, Democrats and Republicans alike,

Mason said: "Reaganism equals Carterism equals Fordism equals Nixonism equals Johnsonism equals Kennedyism equals capitalism."

Jude Woodward from *Socialist Action's* editorial board, referred to the hoopla in the major media around the 40th anniversary of "D-Day." This was being used, she said, to cover over the fact that millions of people in Europe are "hostile to Reagan," especially because of the NATO nuclear missiles which have been placed in Britain and other Euro-

pean countries.

Woodward mentioned the big workers' struggles against attacks on workers' rights and living standards that are taking place throughout Europe today, including the German metal workers' strike for a 35-hour work week and the British miners' strike.

To turn back the worldwide imperialist offensive, said Woodward, an alliance must be built among European workers and beyond — with the people of Nicaragua, Grenada, and other victims of U.S. imperialism. □

Big protests hit Reagan

Miners join London antiwar demonstration

By Margaret Jayko

LONDON — Tens of thousands of people from all over Britain converged here June 9 for a massive demonstration to protest President Ronald Reagan's presence in England and the stationing of cruise missiles and other U.S. nuclear weapons in Britain. The official slogan of the action was: "Dear President Reagan, please take your missiles home with you when you go."

On the march were several contingents of striking members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

They came from South Wales, Kent, Leicester, and elsewhere. There were also banners from the Barnsley Women Against Pit Closures and Snowden Women's Support Group.

The miners were there to express their opposition to Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's war policies and the placing of cruise missiles in Britain, and to win support for their strike against threatened mine closures and layoffs. And win support they did — a high percentage of the demonstrators were wearing yellow NUM stickers and black-and-white "Coal, not dole" badges. Thousands gave generously to the miners.

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), which organized the action, estimated the crowd at 200,000.

The overwhelming majority of placards and banners were from chapters of CND and Youth CND. "Refuse Cruise" and "Stop Trident," they read. There were hundreds of local Labour Party and Labour Party Young Socialists (the Labour Party's youth group) banners.

There were also contingents from the Transport and General Workers Union, Britain's largest union; National Union of Railwaymen; National Association of Local Government Officers; Indian Workers Association; National Union of Teachers; London Trades Council; African National Congress; New Jewel Movement; Palestine Solidarity Campaign; Anti-Apartheid Group; and supporters of the Irish freedom struggle.

All the major left groups were present on the march.

Opponents of U.S. intervention in Central America and supporters of the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutions distributed thousands of pieces of literature and buttons. They had balloons that said, "Reagan out of Central America."

At the rally, Nicaragua's ambassador to Britain, Francisco D'Escoto, told the crowd that the stockpiling of nuclear weapons is part of the Reagan administration's policy of intervention. D'Escoto said that the Nicaraguan people are in solidarity with the British peace movement, the British labor movement, and the unemployed of Britain.

The mobilizations against Reagan's visit to Europe, said the ambassador, were a rejection of the U.S. policy in Central America and of the U.S. war against Nicaragua.

A Green Party member of the West German Bundestag also spoke.

Reagan claims, she said, to be defending "free" areas against an evil empire — yet he stations new nuclear weapons in Europe against the will of the majority of people there. Contrary to the claim that these are defensive weapons, she declared, they are really first-strike weapons designed for offensive purposes, and are aimed at the heart of the Warsaw Pact nations (that is, the Soviet Union and other workers states in Eastern Europe).

U.S. war plans, she said, require a massive program of new conventional armaments, in addition to nuclear ones. "We need to reject conventional armaments" as well, she said, if we wish to effectively counter the threat of war. She called for unilateral disarmament and withdrawal from the imperialist military alliance, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization).

She paid tribute to the women of Greenham Common, who have maintained their peace camp for two years at the U.S. military base at Greenham Common despite police, U.S. military, and right-wing harassment and violence.

She reported that the upcoming activities of the West German peace movement include a November 3 day of action in solidarity with Nicaragua. This initiative was greeted with applause from the mostly youthful crowd. Nicaragua, she said, has been forced into a war

with the United States. Nicaragua "needs and deserves our support."

She referred to the recent decision by the Netherlands government to delay deployment of NATO nuclear weapons as a sign of the strength of the anti-missiles movement in Europe.

Monsignor Bruce Kent, CND general secretary, came to the march straight from having addressed a miners' rally of 50,000 in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Kent praised the enormous courage of the miners in their fight for jobs. He linked the fight against nuclear power and the miners' strike. "The running down of the mines is part of the plan to increase nuclear plants. What right have we to leave that nuclear filth lying around that will affect generations in the future?" asked Kent.

A representative from Youth CND said that thousands of young people suffer in the form

of unemployment and education cuts as a result of increased spending for nuclear weapons. He condemned "Reagan and Thatcher's warmongering" in Central America.

Our message, he said, to Reagan, Thatcher, Mitterrand (president of France), and Ian MacGregor (the head of Britain's National Coal Board) is "jobs, not bombs."

Rodney Bickerstaffe, general secretary of the National Union of Public Employees, talked about how millions are being spent on nuclear arms while social services are being cut back.

Among the other rally speakers were Eric Heffer, chairman of the union-based Labour Party; Gordon McLennan, general secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain; and Rebecca Johnson, from Greenham Common.

Messages were also read at the rally from several U.S. antinuclear groups. □

where he was kept overnight for treatment.

John McDonald, a Bolsover miner, described to the *Sheffield Morning Telegraph* how Scargill was injured. "A group of us were running away from a charge by mounted police and the riot squad coppers. I saw Arthur Scargill standing near the wall. He was not doing anything wrong.

"I saw a policeman in riot gear run towards him, and as he passed him he brought his shield round and caught Mr. Scargill on the side of his head."

Scargill himself said, "All I know is that these bastards [the police] rushed in and this guy hit me on the back of the head with a shield and I was out."

"The police," Shukla explained, "after believing that they had routed, beaten, and demoralized us, returned to their lines. But the miners, although bloodied, were not beaten. We regrouped and marched back towards the plant.

"This time the pickets stopped short, at a narrow railway bridge, and built barricades to stop any further police charges. Old cars and steel from a nearby scrapyards were dragged into the road, along with fencing and anything that would burn. Behind this flaming barrier, walls along the roadside were demolished, and bricks and stones were heaped into piles to hold up pointed wooden stakes, as a further obstacle to charging police horses.

"A police helicopter appeared overhead, flying low over our lines. Six van loads of police approached our rear, but quickly retreated when the pickets made clear they were now fighting back with no holds barred." The battle of Orgreave was over for another day.

BSC management announced later that "in view of the serious disturbances" it would be halting "temporarily" the transfer of coke from Orgreave to Scunthorpe.

Earlier brutality documented

It's not just the miners who have given testimony to the wanton police violence. The South Yorkshire County Council police committee was recently given evidence of a similar police action at Orgreave on May 29 by Sheffield Policewatch, a group of trade unionists and Labour Party members who have been monitoring police activity since the start of the miners' strike.

Their written report stated, "at 8:20 a.m. mounted police trotted at speed straight into the crowd in wedge formation for no apparent reason."

In Shukla's view, the escalating violence at Orgreave represents an inevitable buildup of bitterness and resentment. "We've been on strike for 15 weeks now. Fifteen weeks of coppers kicking you about, boasting how much overtime they're earning. Fifteen weeks of scabs bragging about the blood money they're getting for crossing our picket lines.

"There's only so much that men will take from police or scabs, now the miners are saying, 'Enough is enough,' and are returning the police attacks in kind." □

Riot cops attack miners

Union president Scargill among dozens injured

By Clive Turnbull

SHEFFIELD — National Union of Mineworkers President Arthur Scargill was among 51 pickets injured June 18 at the Orgreave Coke Depot, in what the London *Times* described as "the worst violence in a British industrial dispute since the war."

Six thousand striking miners from Yorkshire, Scotland, South Wales, Northumberland, and Durham were confronted by 3,500 police, many in riot gear, on horses, or with dogs. The mass picket was the largest in the four weeks since the miners have tried to prevent the British Steel Corp. (BSC) from transporting coke from the depot to its Scunthorpe steelworks.

British miners have been on strike for almost four months in response to a government plan to close down scores of mines and lay off thousands of miners.

The first of the 93 arrests on June 18 occurred when riot police were sent into the coke depot to clear out several hundred miners who had managed to get into the back of the works from across the fields. Forced out after a ferocious police assault, this group of pickets was herded into a yard near the entrance, on the other side of the main police line. Steve Shukla, a young miner from Armthorpe colliery, in South Yorkshire, described the events where the main picket was gathered.

"We assembled facing the police ranks, with everything peaceful at first," he said. "The police brought out riot gear, later claiming this was because stones were being thrown. That's not true, they were clearly trying to intimidate us.

"As the mass of pickets pushed up against the police line, some of the police lifted their riot shields up, edge on, hitting the lads at the

front in the face. Senior police officers picked out individuals, and sent in snatch squads to arrest them. This inevitably led to pickets having to defend themselves.

"Things calmed down after the first convoy of lorries came out of the depot," Shukla reported. "The main body of men drifted off to get a drink, a breakfast, or just to get out of the sun before the second convoy was due in two hours' time.

'We were forced to fight back'

"It was then that the police advanced their lines forward, several hundred yards, driving back the few hundred pickets who were still in the area with considerable force. It was not until this time that the men were forced to fight back with stones, bricks, bottles, or anything that came to hand, to stop the police brutality.

"The police retreated under a hail of missiles, opening their ranks to allow a cavalry charge by 60 mounted police swinging three-foot-long sticks," Shukla continued. "Men were ridden down. Heads were split open by riot sticks. The cavalry were followed by the riot police, wielding shields and truncheons indiscriminately."

Several men who tried to escape across the fields were savagely bitten by police dogs, blocking their path.

The response to the violence of the police action was such that an incident shown on national television news, where a cop was seen to grab a picket, knock him to the ground with his truncheon, and continue to hit him repeatedly, immediately forced the police into conceding an investigation into the incident.

It was at this time that Arthur Scargill was knocked unconscious and had to be taken by ambulance to Rotherham General Hospital,

30,000 miners rally in London

Protest police attacks, win broader support

By Margaret Jayko

LONDON — "Coal, not dole." "Stop pit closures." "Victory to the miners."

Placards and stickers with these slogans covered central London as an estimated 30,000 members of the striking National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and their supporters marched and rallied here on June 7.

Called jointly by the NUM and South East Regional Council of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), this show of strength by the NUM was designed to pressure Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the National Coal Board (NCB) to withdraw their plan to close 20 pits (mines) in the next year. The closures would throw 20,000 miners onto the unemployment lines. The miners have been on strike now for 15 weeks.

Cops brutalize miners

The cop brutality and harassment that has become commonplace at picket lines and in mining communities across England, Scotland, and Wales came to London on June 7.

The government mobilized thousands of cops. One hundred twenty miners were arrested throughout the course of the day.

Also arrested was Labour Party Member of Parliament (MP) Dave Nellist. He was later released without charge.

The marchers were confident and in high spirits, feelings that were buoyed by the great amount of support from passersby. Many workers on their lunch break gave the thumbs-up sign as the march proceeded by them. Others leaned out their windows, applauding the miners as they passed. Cops roughed up miners and their supporters who collected money from spectators on the sidewalks, many of whom were eager to donate to the strike.

Most of the arrests took place after the rally ended, when miners were being organized to lobby Parliament.

Police pushed miners up against the wall outside the House of Commons and charged into the crowd with horses. Cops grabbed as many miners as they could and brutally beat them. The miners held their ground. As each of their brothers was hauled out of the crowd and arrested, miners applauded and derisively gave the cops the Nazis' "Sieg Heil" salute. Two police and eight demonstrators were injured.

Train drivers at the Charing Cross railway station here walked off their jobs at 5 p.m. to protest the police attack.

"We are loyal NUM members from the police state of Notts" read one banner. Many miners in the Nottinghamshire area, however, have refused to join the strike. This is an area where the mines are more productive, with more modern technology. Incentive-pay plans mean higher wages for many of these miners. The NCB has sought to lull these miners into

thinking that their future is secure and not threatened by the plan to close "uneconomic" pits.

The NUM leadership has organized demonstrations and picketing in Nottinghamshire to convince more of these NUM members to join the strike, which is backed by 85 percent of the union's membership nationally. The government responded by sending thousands of police there to harass and arrest pickets and their families, occupy villages, and set up roadblocks to prevent pickets from reaching the pits.

No secret deals

Tony Gould, secretary of the South East Region of the TUC, chaired the rally.

NUM Vice-president Mick McGahey sounded the main theme of the day: the miners will continue the struggle until they win.

Referring to the recent round of secret negotiations between the NCB and the NUM, he pledged that there would be no secret deals. "There will be a principled solution," he said. He concluded with another main point the miners have been making — all working people in Britain have a stake in supporting this strike.

Eric Heffer, chairman of the Labour Party, said that if the miners lose, it will be "the blackest day in the history of the British working class." The Labour Party is 100 percent behind the miners, he said.

'Their rightful place'

Among the most well-received speeches at the rally was that given by Betty Heathfield. She is married to the union's general secretary Peter Heathfield.

She is here, said rally chair Gould, like thousands of other women who have "taken their rightful place in this dispute, right at the center of the struggle."

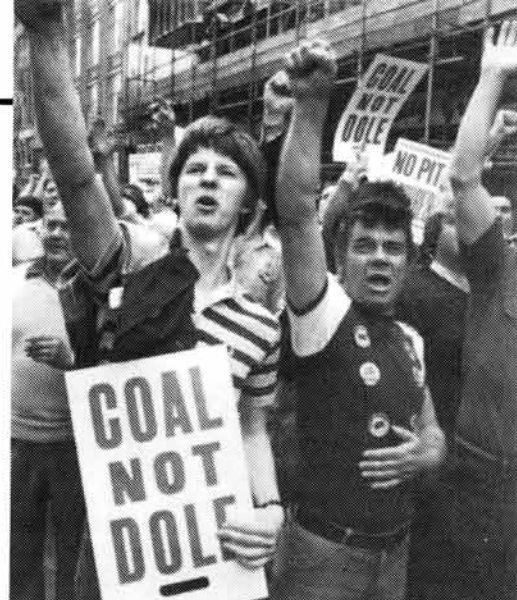
"It's our struggle as well as yours, and in this one we're equal," Heathfield told applauding miners. She said the strike was over a matter of survival for miners and their families, and that the government is out to destroy the NUM and other unions that fight back.

Left-wing Labour MP Tony Benn also addressed the rally. He said he admired the miners who had been attacked by the police yet continued to stand up for themselves and their communities. He highlighted the active and visible role of women on the picket lines, on the soup lines, and at the podiums of strike support meetings.

'Every unionist should be at Orgreave'

When NUM President Arthur Scargill rose to speak he got a rousing ovation.

"I would dearly love to have seen, and would dearly love to see, every single member of my union who is here or on strike and every single trade unionist down at the Orgreave



G.M. Cookson

Angry miners at June 7 NUM rally in London.

plant picketing," said Scargill. The Orgreave Coke Depot near Sheffield has been the scene of big battles between police and pickets as miners try to prevent the NCB from transporting coke from Orgreave to the Scunthorpe Works of the British Steel Corporation.

Scargill sharply criticized the steel-union officialdom for encouraging their members to continue production with scab coal. He recalled that the NUM had sent 4,000 pickets to help the steelworkers in their 1981 strike.

New social system needed

People ask, said Scargill, "why don't you condemn the pickets for violence?" But Thatcher doesn't condemn her "bullyboy police" pointed out Scargill. "I refuse to condemn members of my union who are fighting for their right to work," he declared.

Scargill concluded by saying that the miners' fight to save their jobs can captivate the "hearts and minds of the British public." And if the miners are united, he said, the NUM will win and roll back years of Thatcherism, paving the way for a new system that puts top priority on people, not weapons of death and destruction.

The same day as the miners' march and rally, the executive of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), Britain's largest union, urged its members not to cross miners' picket lines and to stop the movement of coal and oil for power stations. The TGWU has members in power stations, oil refineries, and among oil-tanker drivers.

Leaders of five transport unions, which include rail workers and seamen, also called for a blockage of delivery of oil and other fuels to power stations and action to halt the steel industry.

They accused the police of picket-line violence at the Ravenscraig Steel Works, Orgreave Coke Depot, and at the London demonstration.

In response, railway workers at the Shirebrook Rail Depot voted to stop coal movements from Nottinghamshire. □

Debate on U.S. elections

Discussion continues in 'Bandera Socialista'

The April 16 and June 25 issues of *Intercontinental Press* carried several items on the U.S. presidential campaign taken from *Bandera Socialista*, the fortnightly newspaper of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), Mexican section of the Fourth International. Among these were an article by Enrique Hernández focusing on the campaign of Jesse Jackson and a letter to the editor of the paper from Rosendo Mendoza offering criticisms of Hernández's article.

The May 14-27 issue of *Bandera Socialista* carried further contributions to this discussion among the Mexican Trotskyists. In an article entitled "Appearances are deceiving: presidential elections in the U.S.," Rosendo Mendoza said that the current campaign "has generated a debate about the best form of upholding a policy of austerity, responding to mounting popular disenchantment, and extending U.S. imperialist power, all at the same time."

The differences among the various candidates in the Democratic and Republican parties, Mendoza said, "are merely tactical. None of them call into question the basic values of the system, much less propose radical alternatives." Prospective Democratic nominee Walter Mondale, Mendoza said, is "the supposed continuator of the great 'liberal' coalition that arose during the 1930s and 1940s under the Franklin Roosevelt administration. . . . But the great boom in the capitalist economy that made possible the program of political reforms and economic concessions has come to an end."

As a result, "Mondale faces the task of reviving that coalition with totally empty promises, without being able to offer the kind of programs that could make these credible. His task is made still more difficult owing to the disenchantment of the oppressed and exploited masses both with the liberal Democratic perspective and with the social organizations that had functioned as key parts of this coalition."

"Thus the campaign of Rev. Jesse Jackson — whose possibilities of gaining the Democratic nomination are nil — takes on great importance. The participation of this Black man in the Democratic primary campaign, with radical populist rhetoric, has given rise to a campaign of massive enrollment in this party by the Black population and other oppressed and superexploited sectors."

The May 14-27 issue of *Bandera Socialista* also carried a letter to the editor by editorial staff member Enrique Hernández, responding to criticisms of his view of the Jesse Jackson campaign expressed by Mendoza in a previous issue (see *Intercontinental Press*, June 25).

Hernández said his article had been a "bad" one in that it was "ambiguous" and "introduced confusion." The point he sought to

make, Hernández said, was that Jackson's candidacy "is unacceptable to the Democratic Party because he is Black and because his rhetoric, however reformist, runs counter to the traditional Democratic policy. Therefore, his candidacy can be used by the left to demonstrate to the broad masses of the population (Blacks, Latinos, workers) that such a candidacy is unacceptable to a bourgeois party like the Democrats and that this points to the need for independent political action."

The May 28-June 10 issue of *Bandera Socialista* carried another article by Rosendo Mendoza focusing on the Jackson campaign, as well as a letter to the paper's editors from the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (reprinted below).

Mendoza said that while Jackson's cam-

paigned "can turn out to be the catalyzing factor in a new process of radicalization," the campaign in itself "does not present even a minimal alternative to the oppressive system in force in the United States." First, because "Jackson seek to replace a process of independent self-organization with an individualistic perspective inside the Democratic Party." Secondly, because Jackson's program "does not call for any real change in the capitalist system. In fact, his positions on domestic and foreign questions tend to be liberal versions of the positions taken by Mondale, Hart, and Reagan."

Jackson, Mendoza said, "does not seek to revitalize the independent political mass movements but rather to bottle them up inside the Democratic Party." As a result, Jackson's so-called Rainbow Coalition "represents a dead end for the U.S. left."

On the facing page we are reprinting an article from the U.S. socialist newsweekly the *Militant* that outlines the views of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party on some of the questions addressed in *Bandera Socialista* and in the letter from the United Secretariat Bureau.

Letter to 'Bandera Socialista' from United Secretariat Bureau

[The following letter was published in the May 28-June 10 issue of *Bandera Socialista*. The translation from Spanish is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

To the Editorial Board of *Bandera Socialista*:

In your February 27 issue there appeared an article signed by Comrade Enrique Hernández that dealt with the primary elections in the Democratic Party in the United States. This article took the position that the candidate Jesse Jackson "draws the line: on this side, the exploited and oppressed; on that side, Reagan and his offensive against us all; on that side, too, the big-business candidates in the Democratic Party."

This position, in our opinion, is quite erroneous. There is a general rule regarding U.S. politics going back 75 years (that is, ever since the decline of the old Socialist Party as a mass party with substantial electoral support). Every time there are indications of a mass radicalization among sectors of U.S. working people, the two-party system tries to channel this radicalization within itself. Once this succeeds, the radicalization is politically strangled, independently of the will of the masses so affected or of the "good intentions" of the ones who serve as the instruments of such a maneuver.

Today, Jesse Jackson is such an instrument. Far from helping to raise the consciousness of the masses, he diverts into the Democratic Party the growing anger against the government felt by sectors of Blacks, Chicanos, un-

employed, women, workers, youth, opponents of war, and so on. In other words, he leads this anger into a dead end. It is for this reason that no class-conscious worker or consistent socialist must support Jackson's campaign for the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party, a party controlled 100 percent by big capital.

The situation would be totally different if Jackson were presented as an independent Black candidate or as the candidate of an independent Black party. But this is not the case. Since there is no such candidate at this moment, nor any candidate of an independent workers party, the only class vote that can be cast in the coming U.S. elections is one for the candidate of the Socialist Workers Party, Mel Mason, campaigning for an alliance among Blacks, Latinos, and the trade unions to present candidates independent of big capital.

Revolutionary greetings,
Bureau of the United Secretariat
of the Fourth International

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U.S. SWP on Jackson campaign

[The following article, with the introduction, appeared in the June 15 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary socialist weekly published in New York.]

* * *

The following article by Laura Garza, a national youth coordinator for the Socialist Workers Party 1984 presidential campaign of Mel Mason and Andrea González, was submitted to the *Guardian's* "Opinion and Analysis" page last March. It was written in reply to an "Opinion and Analysis" contribution in the March 7 *Guardian* by Elissa Clarke and David Finkel, members of the editorial board of the International Socialists' magazine *Changes*.

The *Guardian*, a radical weekly published in New York, has been campaigning for Democratic presidential aspirant Jesse Jackson. In their article, Clarke and Finkel wrote, "We believe Jackson would be most responsive to the real, immediate and historic needs and to the mass sentiments of his base if he ran for President as an independent. And we believe activists should advocate that he do this. . . ."

"Those . . . who could be convinced that Jackson's campaign represents an historic opportunity tragically wasted because it remains locked within the Democratic Party are the potential core of a new movement serious about independent political action."

Garza's reply has not yet appeared in the *Guardian*.

* * *

By Laura Garza

How to respond to the candidacy of Democratic presidential hopeful Jesse Jackson has been the subject of much debate on the left. In an article in the March 7 *Guardian*, International Socialists Elissa Clarke and David Finkel assert the only obstacle to socialists supporting Jackson's campaign is that he is running in the Democratic Party. The task, then, is to urge him to break with the Democratic Party.

While I agree that Jackson's adherence to the Democratic Party does not advance the struggle of Blacks and other working people, that is not the only thing wrong with his campaign.

A socialist view of the elections should begin by explaining that capitalism is the source of our problems and both the Democratic and Republican parties are tools of the ruling rich. It is only by charting a course independent of the ruling rich and their parties that working people can develop a mass struggle to overturn capitalist political rule and establish their own government.

What is independent political action?

While Clarke and Finkel indicate they are for breaking from the Democrats and Republicans, they begin with the mistaken foundation



JESSE JACKSON

of believing that Jackson and his program are somehow fundamentally different from the other Democratic candidates and from the Democratic Party itself.

They reduce independent politics to being, simply, organizationally independent of the two dominant capitalist parties. But to have any meaning, independent political action has to be independent of *capitalist politics*. It has to be independent, working-class political action, based on a program that advances the interests and demands of the working class and its allies.

Jackson, his program, and his party all fail this test. Jackson's positions cannot be separated from his candidacy in the Democratic Party because they have the same basis — support for the capitalist system. He believes the way to solve our problems is for us to "renegotiate" with the racists and bosses who run this society, not to get rid of this system. His entire program is one of reforming U.S. capitalism.

When Jackson says that our problems can be addressed and solved within this capitalist system, he misleads Blacks, women, workers, and others to believe that we have a stake in defending it.

That is why Jackson points out that he, like his Democratic Party opponents, is for a "strong defense." He has tactical differences about how much is needed to maintain the domination of imperialism. Cut the waste out of the Pentagon budget, he says; station only 150,000 troops in Europe; but keep the budget and the troops, and the imperialist system they defend.

At a time when the bosses are on a union-busting offensive, Jackson offers as his example of "taking on" corporate America the deal he worked out with Burger King, where Jackson advocates they get a tax incentive for buying cucumbers and building a plant in Alabama.

His answer to the economic crisis is to step up U.S. business' competitiveness in the international market. But it is precisely this same "foreign competition" hype that is the club used by the bosses to impose worse conditions on us and bust our unions.

Jackson's perspective of appealing to "progressive" companies will not blunt the offensive of the bosses and their government. They are driven to attack our rights and living standard to defend their profits. And insofar as Jackson is able to win to his view people who want to fight back against these attacks, he misleads and misdirects their desire to struggle in their own interests.

A mass movement?

Many argue Jackson is leading a movement and a "rainbow coalition" can be built and advanced through support to his candidacy.

First, there is a difference between a mass movement and a mass meeting of people who come to hear Jackson, are told to register as Democrats, work on his campaign, and then go home.

A mass movement, such as the civil rights movement, has its own set of demands, which it fights uncompromisingly for, not tied or beholden to a particular party or someone else's interests. Its strength is based on mobilizing people in action to fight for their own interests, and that is what is needed now to counter the war drive, the rise in racist attacks, the capitalist economic offensive, etc.

Second, the idea of a coalition linking the interests and needs of workers, oppressed nationalities, and women is a powerful and important one. But it would have to be a fighting alliance based on the fact that there are common interests, and this cannot be built in either of the capitalist parties. Jackson, in fact, counterposes his campaign to building an independent movement.

The idea of a coalition uniting those with common interests and a common enemy, in struggle, has been subsumed into a get-out-the-vote apparatus for Jackson and uniting into an electoral bloc in the Democratic Party.

Many believe we must be a part of this because we cannot stand aside from an important discussion among Blacks about how to advance their interests politically.

This discussion is of concern to all working people many of whom look to the Black community for leadership because of its legacy of struggle, and its successes, most importantly the civil rights movement.

But the Jackson campaign is not a continuation of the legacy of struggle, of Blacks leading the oppressed to fight in their own interest. It is the opposite, relying on working with your class enemies.

Independent Black party

Socialists should point out that it was mobilizations independent of relying on capitalist parties that won workers historic gains. Moreover, there is a rich history of struggle to form an independent Black political

party in the United States and we should point to *this* road as a way forward. An independent Black party would be an example for the whole working class and would advance the discussion needed to form a labor party. To defend the interests of Blacks, women, Latinos, and all workers, we need a party of our own, a labor party, based on a fighting trade-union movement.

Socialists should point out that there is a connection between the war against the workers and farmers of Central America and the attacks on workers and farmers here. We should explain that there are classes in society and our problems cannot be solved until society is run in the interests of a different class — the working class.

The problem with supporting Jackson is not only, as Clarke and Finkel say, that you will end up supporting Mondale later, the problem is supporting Jackson *now*. Jackson's campaign, like that of all the other capitalist candidates, keeps the discussion of solutions to our problems within the framework of capitalist politics and solutions. The effect of the support given by much of the left to Jackson is that the source of our problems — capitalism — does not get discussed and exposed.

The Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance have taken advantage of the interest in the elections to discuss socialist ideas and solutions. Through the SWP campaign of Mel Mason for president and Andrea González for vice-president, we have raised

the idea that workers and farmers should run the government, in their own interests. We have defended the revolutionary gains of the Cubans, Nicaraguans, Grenadians, and Salvadorans. We have spoken for the abolition of the entire war budget and the reallocation of this massive wealth for social and economic development here and abroad.

The response we have gotten shows people are willing to listen to those who tell the truth and advance socialist ideas.

Anyone interested in these ideas and the Mason-González campaign can write to Socialist Workers Presidential Campaign, 14 Charles Lane, New York, N.Y. 10014. Telephone: (212) 675-3820.

DOCUMENTS

Discussion on Grenada overturn

UPM of St. Vincent states view on New Jewel Movement

[The April 2 issue of *Intercontinental Press* published an article by staff writer Ernest Harsch on the debate among left-wing and revolutionary organizations in the Caribbean over the meaning of the Grenada events of October 1983. One of the groups mentioned was the United People's Movement (UPM) of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

[The article stated that the UPM "has come out against the U.S. invasion and the dismantling of the [Grenadian] PRG's programs, but disagrees with the Cuban leaders and the central leaders of the Grenada revolution who say [Bernard] Coard and his followers opened the door to the imperialist assault through their own treacherous betrayal of the revolution. UPM leaders told *Intercontinental Press* correspondent Mohammed Oliver that in the dispute between Coard and [Maurice] Bishop

they sided with Coard, who, they said, led a principled, Marxist battle against the 'right-opportunism' of Bishop." Oliver, who went to St. Vincent for both *IP* and the U.S. socialist newsweekly *Militant*, also wrote an article for the March 16 *Militant*, which made the same points.

[We have received a letter from UPM Political Leader and General Secretary Oscar Allen, dated May 23, stating, "No leader of the UPM expressed this view to the *Militant* editor when he visited our offices and spoke with two of our members. Our editorials in *Justice* of November 4th and 18th [1983] are clear statements of the party's considered opinion."

[For the information of our readers, we are reprinting below the Oct. 21, Nov. 4, and Nov. 18, 1983, editorials from the UPM's weekly newspaper.]

house repair programme and new housing scheme, the islandwide process of national education through the CPE [Centre for Popular Education], the provision of never-before opportunities for technical and higher education, the improvement in health and the free milk programme, and, above all, the process embarked upon of grass-roots democracy with ministers being required to report to the masses, the popular involvement in the governing of the country — all those are unchallenged facts of Grenadian life.

At the same time it would be a grave error to attribute these achievements of the Revolution to any one man. The Grenada revolution was made by the Grenadian people led by the New Jewel Movement and not by any one man.

Within that framework Maurice Bishop appeared to personify all the good things within the Revolution and thus objectively came to represent a leader almost above the people.

But here is where the contradiction stepped in and led to the crisis, beginning with the Party's expressed dissatisfaction over individualism and growing one-man rule. Unfortunately, this matter was not resolved in the party as it should have been, and regrettably led to the shooting and deaths of Wednesday, a situation which we deeply regret.

Whither revo?

The big question now surrounds the future of the Grenada Revolution. Already it is clear that the solid unity of the Grenadian people has been impaired by the sad events of the past week.

On top of that the bloodshed of yesterday and the four-day curfew which will help to bring hardship to the poor and working people will not help to endear the Revolutionary Military Council (RMC) to the masses. So there is bound to be internal contradictions.

A Caribbean tragedy

For us in *Justice*, the past week's events in Grenada leading up to the tragic deaths of Wednesday represent not only a Grenadian tragedy but a tragedy for the entire Caribbean.

For Grenada had become the shining example and beacon of hope not only for its people but for those of the Caribbean as well.

This has been a most gainful experience especially on account of our own closeness to the Grenadian Revolution. Not only have the UPM and the NJM enjoyed warm relations but we have also had the opportunity to host visits by NJM leaders including Maurice Bishop, Unison Whiteman, Bernard Coard, and Selwyn Strachan.

That what has taken place over the past week in Grenada did occur, is a source of great grief to us. That others could display the callousness to rejoice at the unfortunate events in our sister isle is to be most roundly condemned

regardless of what are one's personal views on the Grenada Revolution before and after yesterday.

Great benefits

Since last Friday, the crisis in Grenada has been used by reactionaries, local and regional, to spread all sorts of lies and slander about the Grenada Revolution and to try and portray the Grenada experiment as a failure.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In its four and a half years of operation, the Grenadian Revolution has brought more benefits to the Grenadian people than any other government in the English-speaking Caribbean has ever been able to do in our entire history.

The drastic reduction of unemployment from 50 percent to 14 percent in four short years, despite recession and down-turn in the world capitalist economy, speaks for itself. The achievements in housing — the massive

But even more ominous is the threat of external intervention in Grenada's affairs. Much as one may regret the turn of events there, it is our considered view that external intervention of any sort is unacceptable. The best people to restore normalcy are the Grenadian people themselves and not any foreign source.

Then there is the problem of economic survival. The response from CARICOM [Caribbean Community] governments seem to be heading in the way of diplomatic, political, and economic isolation. This, if implemented, will hurt both the Grenadian economy and the Grenadian people themselves.

We do believe that the Grenadian people in spite of all the current difficulties and loss of life if left to determine their own future will turn the setback into an advance.

They have shown through their anti-colonial, anti-Gairy, and revolutionary struggle that they have the mettle to overcome the current difficulties.

* * *

The United People's Movement has come under heavy attack over the past three weeks as a result of the tragic developments in Grenada and the tremendous setback to the revolutionary process there.

Of course the basis of these attacks lie in our close bonds of friendship and solidarity with the NJM and the Grenada Revolution.

Most people felt that our initial statement on the killing of Prime Minister Bishop and some of his colleagues did not go far enough and they wished to see us join in the vulgar chorus of blood-letting that characterised the statements of some of the political, religious, and civic leaders here.

A great tragedy

For us in the UPM there has been no greater shock than the Grenada crisis, no greater tragedy than the bloodshed which began on October 19 and was multiplied manifold by the US invasion.

Yet in spite of our innermost feelings and emotions we recognised the need for a sober appraisal of the facts rather than allow our emotions to be carried away by the rabid propaganda of those who in the past didn't give a damn for Maurice Bishop or the Grenada Revolution.

This was not an easy task especially in the light of the constant flow of confusing and often conflicting reports coming out of Grenada particularly surrounding the killing at Fort Rupert on October 19.

Though deeply shaken by the unwarranted and fatal use of force then, it was the view of the UPM that in view of the real threats of intervention by imperialism, our primary focus was to do what little we could to forestall any invasion, to preserve the gains of the Grenadian people and their right to self-determination. Events since then have proven us perfectly correct.

Climate for intervention

It was our view that while imperialism

wanted to seize the opportunity presented by the split in the NJM and the disunity among the people to invade, the strength of regional and world opinion was a factor which the US would have to take into account. Hence from day one, whatever our views, we concentrated on avoiding creating a climate hostile to Grenada and favourable to invasion. Regrettably, not many other political leaders or prominent individuals seemed to consider this, and their wild statements, wittingly or unwittingly, contributed to creating a climate favourable for intervention.

A big setback

The October events in Grenada represent one of the saddest and most tragic chapters in Caribbean history. They have resulted in a huge setback for the forces of progress and national independence, a temporary reversal of the forward march of the Grenadian people, an unnecessary loss of some of Grenada's finest sons and daughters including Prime Minister Bishop, hundreds of innocent victims of US aggression, and great physical and economic damage to the Spice Isle. Grenada is now nothing but an occupied country complete with concentration camps for NJM members, PRA [People's Revolutionary Army] soldiers, and other Grenadian Patriots.

NJM responsible

For this, responsibility rests fully at the feet of the NJM and its leadership for failing to resolve their problems peacefully. There could be, in our view, absolutely no justification for the resort to bloodshed and killing to settle what was an internal party matter.

While we are still not yet in full command of the facts, it seems to us as though both factions of the NJM leadership had embarked on a collision course to the detriment of the Grenadian people and Revolution.

For us, any settlement of the conflict by peaceful means, within the Party must have been better than the dreadful final outcome.

While we fully understand the principle of collective leadership raised by the NJM we are also convinced that the house arrest of the Prime Minister could only have inflamed the masses whose support he had. Equally the storming of the Fort was an irresponsible act which led to an inevitable and fatal confrontation.

But this must be no excuse for the resort to violence. We think that it is imperative that the truth of the events at Fort Rupert be made known.

A costly error

The New Jewel Movement has made a costly and almost unforgivable error in allowing the situation to deteriorate to the extent where US marines could invade, conquer Grenada, and lord it over Grenadians with the support of some Grenadians.

In the face of constant US threats, maximum unity was necessary. The leaders of PRG, all of them, had constantly said this for four years.

They themselves destroyed it.

There may have been an underestimation of the readiness of the US to intervene and an overestimation of the consciousness of the masses to accept the October 19 events, the imposition of the curfew in a particularly harsh manner and simply to continue. The revolutionaries helped to destroy the revolution.

No justification

Yet there can be no justification whatsoever for the invasion, and those whose reckless statements added fuel to the fire need not now shed crocodile tears.

The dignity and respect of the Grenadian people has been bombed and trampled into the dust by the planes and jackboots of US imperialism.

But all is not lost. We are convinced that the Grenadian setback, no matter how grave, will only be temporary. Four years of Revolution cannot be erased overnight. Four years of People's Power cannot be forever stifled by guns and bombs.

The contradictions between occupier and occupied, between oppressor and oppressed will surface and as sure as night follows day the Grenadian people will rise again to reclaim their proud history, throw off the shackles of imperialism and reshape their own destiny.

* * *

The difference within the NJM

When on Friday October 14th UPM learned via the regional Press of serious differences in the leadership of the New Jewel Movement, we were not only completely surprised but were extremely disappointed that the differences manifested themselves so suddenly and so sharp. Between that date and now, our party never was able to discover the nature of or the reasons for these differences from either Bishop, Coard, or any of the other Grenadian leaders at the time.

Most of these comrades were for us not just comrades but real friends. Before 1979 both Bishop and Coard among others had been hosted by YULIMO* members while they were in St. Vincent on friendly visits. In the absence of discussions with the Grenadian leaders on the differences that arose, we refuse publicly to speculate on what might have caused these differences. That was a matter which, as far as we were concerned, the NJM had to solve itself.

The events of Wednesday October 19th

These events were subject to a host of different interpretations. We were forced to rely on the public media and on releases from the Revolutionary Military Council that assumed control in Grenada. The public media had already demonstrated a propensity for wild exaggerations, speculation, and the presentation of fiction as fact. The Revolutionary Military Council

*Youlou United Liberation Movement — one of the organizations that came together, beginning in 1979, to form the UPM — IP.

cil had its self-interest to protect. For several days we were unclear as to what really happened at Fort Rupert.

Irrespective of what happened and while we were shocked at Bishop's death, we issued a statement condemning the resort to violence but stressing that the revolutionary gains made by the people of Grenada over the last four years should be preserved at all costs. Specifically, we warned against foreign military intervention in Grenada.

The body of evidence, from eye-witnesses and other reliable persons, seems to suggest that Maurice Bishop, Unison Whiteman, Jacqueline Creft, and others were executed. If this is the case, we condemn such execution. There can be no, absolutely no, justification for such action. As far as we are aware, all three were outstanding Grenadian and Caribbean leaders. Our Party does not condone, support, or practise the settling of party differences by violent and bloody procedures.

U.S. presence in Grenada

Let us be quite clear. The U.S. did not invade Grenada at the invitation of OECS [Organization of East Caribbean States]. The US President has already made it clear that he made the decision to invade even *before* the OECS met to decide on the matter. The U.S. did not invade Grenada to protect the lives of the medical students. The Chancellor of the St. George's University Mr. Mordica openly stated in Washington that all the students were in good shape and were safe during the curfew. The U.S. did not invade Grenada because it felt that there would be more violence in Grenada, because the fact is that the U.S. arms, supports, and finances the most bloody, the most violent regimes on earth today — Chile, El Salvador, South Africa, Israel, to name a few.

The U.S. objectives in Grenada are to wipe out the gains of the Grenadian working people; to revive unbridled capitalism in Grenada; to tie and subjugate Grenada's economy to U.S. Imperialism in this region; and ultimately to make the entire region fully subservient to U.S. imperialism. These objectives have nothing in common with the true aspirations of the suffering people of Grenada, with the people of the Caribbean, with the OECS states themselves.

We vigorously denounce the U.S. aggression against Grenada. We call for the immediate removal of U.S. and all foreign soldiers from Grenada. The people of Grenada must be allowed to solve their internal problems free from outside intervention. We also call for the release of the several hundred political prisoners being held in Grenada by the invading U.S. forces.

Vincentian policemen in Grenada

What an irony! Will history ever forgive us? While we were celebrating our anniversary of Independence our policemen were busy raping the independence of our neighbour.

The whole issue of our Police Force and the

Grenada invasion has some very dangerous connotations about it. While "Voice of America" and "Voice of Barbados" were stating authoritatively that Vincentian police were part of the invading force, our own Minister in charge of our police was vehemently denying that fact on Radio Barbados. It turned out that our police were in fact in Grenada. [Deputy Prime Minister Hudson] Tannis did not know! He claimed he didn't send our police to Grenada. He only sent them to Barbados "for training."

The future for Grenada

There can be no talk about democracy and self-determination in Grenada while US troops are in the country.

Undoubtedly, some Grenadians, perhaps most, expressed a welcome for the invasion. This neither justifies the invasion nor makes the continued presence of the U.S. right or legal. That reaction of Grenadian people cannot be seen outside of the context of the events of October 19th (and the days preceding it), the

rabid regional propaganda, and the total curfew imposed on the country by the RMC.

More and more, now that people can reflect on events more soberly, there is a growing apprehension on the part of Grenadian people about the pervasive U.S. presence. We predict that this trend will continue and deepen. We also predict that the Grenadian workers, farmers, police, unemployed, professional ... in short the masses of Grenada, will wage a relentless struggle against the U.S. presence and against any attempt to erase the gains they had won over the last four years. Nor will Parliamentary Democracy without popular controls and with little or no accountability to the people, satisfy a people who were in the process of building a real grass-roots popular democracy.

The contradictions in Grenada are bound to sharpen. U.S. Imperialism cannot solve the basic problems facing the poor people of Grenada. The struggle for a Free Grenada will continue and shall end in victory for the Grenadian people and total defeat for imperialism. □

STATEMENT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Stop the frame-up trials!

Stop victimizations in Morocco, Tunisia!

[The following statement was issued June 7 by the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

* * *

In January 1984, tumultuous mass rebellions, first in Tunisia and then in Morocco, blocked the attempts of the governments of these two countries to apply the policy dictated by the IMF [International Monetary Fund]. The international banking institution had demanded measures whose main effect would be to produce a rapid rise in the price of necessities, that is, to starve the already poverty-stricken masses, in order to "reduce the budget deficit."

Although both regimes had the support of the imperialist countries, they were forced to retreat. They withdrew the hated measures, thereby implicitly recognizing the legitimacy of the mass rebellion. But that did not mean that they were not preparing to take their revenge against the movement.

Today, a series of frame-up trials are being staged against political and trade-union activists in both countries, as well as against young people, often teenagers. The charge against these activists and youth is that they joined the majority of their fellow citizens in the streets and rebelled against the symbols of power and wealth. The conditions under which these trials are being held, both in Morocco and Tunisia, are absolutely scandalous, and have been denounced as such by the human-rights

organizations and lawyers in the countries concerned.

The sentences that have been handed down reflect the great fear that the rebellions struck into these governments and to their determination to intimidate their peoples. The first verdicts have been as follows:

In Morocco, several dozens have been sentenced to prison terms of up to 15 years. In Tunisia, a so-called democratic country, dozens of people have been sentenced to terms at forced labor from six to thirty years. In particular, 10 young people between the ages of 19 and 22 have been sentenced to death in order to "set an example."

The Fourth International denounces these judicial farces and vengeful sentences. It calls on all democratic and working-class forces to mobilize in all countries to force the governments of Morocco and Tunisia to retreat once again and release all those who took part in the hunger rebellions. □

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STATEMENT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Foreign troops out of Grenada!

Hands off the gains of the Grenadian masses!

[The following statement was adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International by majority vote at its meeting of May 10-14.]

* * *

1. The seizure of power by the New Jewel Movement (NJM) on March 13, 1979, started to destroy the semicolonial bourgeois state in Grenada, which is located in the Caribbean, a strategically key area for American imperialism. Gairy's small army and police force were completely destroyed. This process progressed constantly towards a situation in which only the nominal ex-governor survived, completely stripped of political power. A revolutionary regime was set up and a process of social revolution was started.

The forms and rhythm of these revolutionary transformations were largely determined by the objective conditions on this small island:

- Extreme dependence on imperialism;
- Small and extreme lack of resources;
- Great weakness of the proletariat (only a few thousand stable industrial workers) side by side with a large layer of small peasants;
- A relatively large layer of semi-proletarian layers (unemployed, marginal, temporary/short-term workers, etc.).

Despite these very unfavorable starting conditions, the relatively weak political organization of the population at the beginning, and the continuing destabilization efforts of imperialism and its allies in Grenada and the region, the revolutionary regime in the space of a few years was able to bring about a series of impressive gains for the toiling masses:

- Chronic unemployment was radically reduced from 50% of the work force (and 70% of the women) to 12%, while in the rest of the Caribbean the basic tendency is in the opposite direction;

- Over three consecutive years an impressive annual rate of growth of nearly 4% was achieved (3% in 1980, 3% in 1981, and 5.5% in 1982), the supply of running water was increased by 100%, an effort was made to begin to develop agricultural cooperatives and a start was made in planning the economy;

- An important agrarian reform was initiated;

- A vast education campaign meant the number of illiterates fell to 3% of the population, the percentage of school-age children benefiting from secondary education went up from 11% to 36%, and a plan was drawn up for achieving universal secondary education before the end of 1985;

- The poorest 30% of the population were exempted from taxes;

- Progress in the housing field with the renovation of some 18,000 houses, affecting nearly three-quarters of the entire population;

- Introduction, with the revolutionary help of Cuba, of a free health service for the whole population accompanied by a 100% rise in the number of doctors.

In addition to this economic and social progress, there were similarly impressive advances in democratic rights for the masses:

- Mass trade unionization of agricultural and unskilled workers, trade-union membership tripled to 90% of all wage earners on the island;

- Democratization of the trade-union structures, with regular general meetings, election of leaders, opening of trade unions' accounts to any member wishing to consult them;

- Rapid growth of women's and youth mass organizations which quadrupled in membership, and the setting up of a small peasants organization;

- Setting up of embryonic organs of mass self-organization (zonal councils and workers parish councils) that had the power to submit the action of ministers, high-ranking civil servants, and directors to their control and disapproval. They also discussed proposed legislation and the national budget before it was adopted. The Bishop team had a project of transforming these councils into genuine organs of political power;

- Building people's militia.

The rhythm adopted for the collective appropriation of the means of production was relatively slow, and the priority in economic diversification was given to the development of tourism by the building of a modern airport. This was fundamentally due to the backward objective conditions of the country and not to weaknesses or errors of the revolutionary leadership. Under such circumstances, no alternative orientation would have led to better results.

Therefore, these conditions weighed heavily on the economic choices made by the revolutionary leadership as well as on the possibility of establishing a democracy based on councils. The absence of proletarian tradition worked in the same direction.

2. Imperialism considered the formation of Maurice Bishop's revolutionary government as a serious threat, despite the small size of Grenada. This hostility, which was immediately and continually expressed by destabilization operations, was basically due to the following factors:

- The changes taking place in Grenada were likely to favor the extension of the revolutionary process to other Caribbean islands and neighboring countries in a period of sometimes explosive instability due to the economic crisis (Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Surinam, etc.);

- The risk of a Grenada-Nicaragua-Cuba axis and the constitution of an international force of attraction for the masses in this region of the world;

- The fact that Maurice Bishop's government was the first revolutionary government established in a Black, English-speaking country, which imperialism thought could well stimulate a process of radicalization in other parts of the world (North America, Great Britain, Black Africa).

Consequently, imperialism used a dual counterrevolutionary tactic:

- Preparation of direct military intervention by U.S. imperialism, allied with some of its puppet regimes in the region;

- More underhanded pressure, accompanied by limited aid granted under political pressure, from European imperialists to try to progressively "neutralize" Maurice Bishop's revolutionary government.

3. The military intervention of U.S. imperialism and its puppets represents the destruction of the state created after the March 1979 victory (councils, people's army, militia, administration) and the return to colonial juridical institutions. Therefore, it is the victory of a social counterrevolution. It is a grave defeat inflicted not only on the Grenadian masses but on the overall revolutionary process in the Caribbean and the neighboring countries of the region. The initial consequences of this defeat are already making themselves felt — by the temporary consolidation of the reactionary regime in Jamaica, by the break with Cuba by Bouterse's regime in Surinam, and by the creation of a small counterrevolutionary "relay" army in the English-speaking Caribbean around the U.S. intervention forces.

However, the defeat of the Grenadian revolution is not a crushing military dictatorship type of defeat. Imperialism and its puppets are having difficulty in eliminating all the gains of the masses won between March 1979 and October 1983. Centers for mass resistance have been set up. The New Jewel Movement maintains a certain continuity around the initiative of a few survivors of the Bishop leadership. U.S. imperialism is obliged to "moderate" repression due to the disapproval its military operation has run into internationally and even in the United States. Furthermore, the test of

strength under way between the revolution and the counterrevolution in Central America, and the ongoing mass struggles and mass explosions like the one that occurred at the end of April 1984 in Santo Domingo, puts real limits today on the effects of U.S. imperialism's counteroffensive.

It must be noted that this imperialist military intervention did not lead to a military confrontation with all the anti-imperialist forces — both for the reasons outlined by Fidel Castro as well as for more profound objective reasons. It would be irresponsible to reproach the Cuban leadership for this.

Undoubtedly, the risk of having to stand up alone to the U.S. military might well influence the strategy of many revolutionary organizations in the immediate future. The way out of this impasse is the extension of the revolutionary process in the region based on the ripening of internal revolutionary crises in each country.

4. The victory of the social counterrevolution in Grenada, unleashed by the military intervention of U.S. imperialism, was facilitated in a decisive way by the seizure of power by the Coard faction of the NJM in October 1983, which overthrew Maurice Bishop's revolutionary government. The Coard faction which carried out this political counterrevolution was an authoritarian and substitutionist faction of a Stalinist type, whose bureaucratic orientation appeared clearly in the immediate measures which totally removed the toiling masses' possibility of exerting political power:

a) Hefty wage increases were granted for the army (among civil servants similar measures were proposed for party fulltimers).

b) The militia began to be disarmed.

c) It was decided to act against popular feeling expressed massively in the demand for the release of Maurice Bishop (in the council meetings, petitions in the workplaces, strikes, demonstrations, etc.).

d) There was firing on the big October 19 mass demonstration.

e) The deliberate assassination of Maurice Bishop and his closest collaborators on the orders of the Coard faction of the Central Committee and party. The soldiers were only acting on these orders.

f) The declaration of a state of emergency and the imposition of a curfew which in practice meant the neutralization of the councils and militia.

All this went in the direction of a growing militarization of the country. These measures profoundly traumatized and demobilized the Grenadian masses and meant they were incapable of responding vigorously to imperialist aggression. It even resulted in at least a fraction of the masses seeing this aggression as a lesser evil compared to the fear of an increasingly authoritarian regime installed by the Coard faction.

It is important to correctly characterize this faction as a Stalinoid one in order to understand why, even totally isolated from the masses, it nevertheless opposed the imperialist in-

vasion, had its army fight the invaders, and is today subject to imperialist repression.

We must denounce that repression and these abuses of the reactionary regime in Grenada while demanding that Coard and company answer for their crimes before a people's tribunal.

5. The fact that the Coard faction was able to develop inside the NJM, was able to win the majority of the Central Committee and take over the leadership reflects the type of social-economic pressures any ruling revolutionary organization is subject to in a backward country. It also shows the pernicious influence that the Soviet bureaucracy can exert either through its direct intervention or through its objective weight, its example and its ideological influence over political currents without great experience.

The opposition of the Coard faction to the Bishop group cannot be fundamentally explained by Coard's personal defects, his arrogance, personalization of power, or by intrigues, the use of a "secret faction," "cliquist mentality," not to speak of the hypothesis of manipulation by imperialism and the maneuvers of "enemy agents." This split reflected, given the above-mentioned pressures, two diametrically different conceptions of relations between the party and the state, between the leadership of the party and the masses, between the party and masses — two different conceptions of the internal structure of the party itself. These different conceptions reflected, in a historical sense, even if only embryonically, divergent social interests, those of the proletarian masses on the one hand and those of an incipient bureaucracy on the other hand.

Furthermore, the conflict between the Coard and Bishop groups was not a recent phenomenon. Coard was a member of the Workers Party of Jamaica, a hyper-Stalinist group, and was a faithful supporter of it in the 1970s when he set up the OREL. Later OREL was dissolved into the New Jewel Movement but remained a current with another political project.

The survivors of the Bishop tendency are themselves today conscious of the necessity to examine the causes of the Grenadian revolution's defeat. They say it is a subject for discussion and debate that will last for years.

The fact that they approved the rule whereby differences that emerged (which had been the case for at least the final year) inside the Central Committee should not be presented to the party rank and file nor to the masses, undoubtedly weakened the Bishop group and facilitated the bureaucratic faction's victory.

In a revolution like the one which had developed in Grenada, it was difficult during the first stage, for obvious objective reasons, to organize the majority of the working people in their workplaces and into bodies of political power independent of the party. The NJM itself only had a few dozen members. The seizure of power had not, strictly speaking, been preceded by a mass movement bringing about through its actions a dynamic of control and

self-organization, although it immediately led to an impressive mass mobilization, mass activity, and mass organization under the impulse of the revolutionary government.

Under the circumstances, an immediate separation of party and state bodies, given the extreme narrowness of cadre, was further very difficult. In these conditions, the NJM as a whole was bound to undergo, to varying degrees, substitutionist pressures to carry forward the revolutionary process. The conflict which broke out inside the NJM expressed a qualitative differentiation in the response to be given to such social and political pressures.

So, the tragic experience of the Grenadian revolution confirms the vital importance for the consolidation of a revolution of an articulation between institutionalized workers power, a correct conception of the party/state relations, and a Leninist concept of building the party (extension of proletarian base, free political discussion, capacity to launch public discussion related with key interests of masses, etc). Such an articulation, far from holding back the exercise of power by the proletariat or the consolidation of its dictatorship, is an indispensable guarantee for the safeguarding of this power both against the bourgeoisie and imperialism and the dangers of a bureaucratic process. It avoids the masses being taken by surprise by events as happened in Grenada.

The Grenadian tragedy must also help to reinforce the education of revolutionary militants throughout the world on why violence should never be used against the masses or between revolutionaries to settle political differences.

6. The main task of the Fourth International, given the victorious counterrevolution in Grenada, is to participate in the international solidarity movement with the Grenadian masses and revolutionaries against American imperialism and its puppets and to explain the reasons of the defeat, in which the Coard faction's seizure of power played a key role. We will do all we can to build this.

- Foreign troops out of Grenada now!
- Hands off the gains of the Grenadian masses!
- Immediate and unrestricted restoration of democratic rights for the masses!

The Fourth International also participates in the international movement of solidarity with the Grenadian working-class organizations and the Maurice Bishop and Martyrs of October 19th Foundation and works to defend them against any repression attempted by the reactionary regime established in Grenada. It will seek to alert its audience among vanguard layers to the increased dangers of counterrevolutionary military intervention against the Central American revolution, the Sandinista revolutionary government, and Cuba. □

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