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Britain: Stakes Rise in Coal Miners' Strike



Morning Star

Miners' wives and other women march in London, August 11, to support strikers. See story, page 501.

Report from Belfast

Police Attack March, Kill Irish Protester

Nicaragua

Sandinistas Launch Election Campaign

Jackson Candidacy: Socialists Debate Lessons

Red Sea mines: a pretext for imperialist buildup

By Fred Murphy

In order to increase their military presence in the Middle East, the Reagan administration and its British and French imperialist allies have used the pretext of a series of unexplained explosions that have damaged merchant ships in the Red Sea.

Under the cover of what the *New York Times* asserted is "a noncontroversial humanitarian mission" to remove mines, Washington, London, and Paris have dispatched naval vessels, helicopters, and hundreds of military personnel to the Red Sea, which separates Egypt from the Arabian Peninsula.

Another U.S. unit involving three helicopters and 120 troops has been sent to the Saudi port of Jidda on the sea's eastern shore. The RH-53D Sea Stallion helicopters are of the same type that were used in the abortive U.S. raid on Iran in April 1980.

Pentagon spokesman Michael Burch said August 9 that the U.S. military deployment would be "open ended." Heading the operation for Washington is Commodore Alvin Newman, chief of naval forces attached to the U.S. Central Command (formerly called the Rapid Deployment Force).

Blaming Iran and Libya

Accompanying these imperialist military moves has been a barrage of threats and accusations against the governments of Libya and Iran. While admitting they have no evidence, U.S. and Egyptian officials have repeatedly claimed that either Tehran or Tripoli or both must be responsible for the Red Sea explosions.

The blasts have struck more than 15 cargo ships from a wide variety of countries since early July. Vessels from China, Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, East Germany, Poland, and the Soviet Union have been among those hit. Damage in all cases has been slight, and no deaths have been reported.

Telephone callers to London news agencies in early August claimed a group known as "Islamic Holy War" had placed some 200 mines in the Red Sea to "punish imperialism." Radio Tehran reported this claim on August 7 and expressed approval. But on August 9 Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini denounced the mining and sharply criticized his government's radio station for making "unsound statements . . . which defame Iran." The attacks on Red Sea shipping, Khomeini said, were "against the sentiment of the world, Islam, and reason."

The Iranian Foreign Ministry charged in an August 8 statement that the U.S. and Israeli governments had placed the mines in the Red

Sea themselves as part of a provocation designed to discredit Iran and retaliate for the "U.S. and Israeli defeat" in Lebanon.

An August 12 statement by the Libyan Foreign Ministry termed the U.S. and allied military deployment in the Red Sea an "imperialist-Zionist plot" and said efforts to "implicate Libya" were a "premeditated attempt to cover up for the real parties that planned and executed this new conspiracy."

Iraqi offensive in Persian Gulf

The phoniness of the imperialists' sudden concern for the safety of international shipping in Middle East waterways was pointed up during the second week of August when the Iraqi regime launched yet another series of air raids on merchant vessels in the Persian Gulf. On August 7 a Greek tanker was attacked with French-supplied Exocet missiles near Iran's Kharg Island oil terminal. An oil platform south of Kharg was struck by Iraqi planes two days later, and on August 11 Baghdad claimed its aircraft had destroyed five more merchant ships near Iran's main southern port of Bandar Khomeini.

These attacks, far more severe than the Red Sea explosions, evoked not a word of condemnation from the imperialists. This is not surprising, since Washington and its allies have been more and more openly backing the Iraqi war of aggression against Iran. The unsupported charge that Iran is responsible for mining the Red Sea provides further cover for the Iraqi attacks.

The Reagan administration's hypocrisy in deploring the Red Sea explosions is also pointed up by Washington's own proven re-

sponsibility for the mining of Nicaraguan harbors earlier this year. Bombs planted by the CIA damaged ships from the Netherlands, Japan, and other countries and evoked worldwide repudiation. Nicaragua secured condemnation of the U.S. mining by the World Court, and a similar move by the United Nations Security Council was blocked only by a U.S. veto.

Longstanding plans for intervention

So the imperialist military deployment in the Red Sea has nothing to do with "humanitarian" sentiments. Washington's aim is rather to legitimize and press ahead with its longstanding plans to station U.S. combat units in ports around the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Such a step was first proposed by the Carter administration to shore up the Saudi monarchy and other proimperialist regimes against their own peoples in the aftermath of the popular insurrection that brought down the shah in Iran.

One site proposed as a U.S. military base is Ras Banas, Egypt, a port on the Red Sea. According to U.S. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger's 1984 report to Congress on U.S. military plans, "access to Ras Banas in time of crisis . . . would allow us to deploy forces to Southwest Asia or the Middle East much sooner than if we had to wait until we could directly enter the affected country." The August 12 *New York Times* suggested that Ras Banas would be "a convenient land base" for the U.S. minesweeping helicopters currently operating from an amphibious ship in the Red Sea.

Washington policy makers also viewed as an important gain the Saudi monarchy's formal request for military units to secure the approaches to its harbors at Jidda and Yanbu. Saudi reluctance to be too openly identified with Washington has until now been a hindrance to U.S. plans for intervention in the region. The August 15 *Christian Science Monitor* pointed to the fact that the Saudi and Egyptian rulers "have openly sought US and other Western help" as an important element "in making the Red Sea crisis, at least so far, a comparatively 'good' one for the West." □

U.S. upset over Philippine unrest

By Fred Murphy

As the first anniversary of the Aug. 21, 1983, slaying of Philippine opposition leader Benigno Aquino approached, the Reagan administration was reported to be increasingly concerned at the inability of the Marcos dictatorship to stem urban strikes and protests or quell widespread guerrilla resistance in the countryside.

Washington had hoped that by allowing the more conservative sectors of the bourgeois opposition to win a large minority of parliamentary seats in the May 14 elections, Marcos would be able to effectively divide and divert the burgeoning movement against his rule. But

protests continued before, during, and after the voting.

A broad coalition involving trade unions, student groups, and certain bourgeois opponents of the regime called for an active boycott of the election. Probocott demonstrations involved up to 50,000 persons, and between 30 and 40 percent of the electorate defied criminal penalties to stay away from the polls.

Millions of others took the opportunity of the election to register their hatred of the dictatorship at the ballot box. Marcos had to resort to extensive fraud to make sure his New Society Movement (KBL) retained a majority of seats in the rubber-stamp National Assembly.

Blatant vote-rigging in the city of Cebu touched off a May 19 attempt by 5,000 protesters to storm the provincial capitol. Police killed three persons in putting down the rebellion.

On May 1, some 60,000 workers rallied in Manila, the capital, to call for the overthrow of the Marcos regime and to protest stepped-up repression against strikers. Police had fired on a picket line at Foamtex Industries April 6, killing two. Another armed attack on strikers at the Artex clothing factory in Manila July 10 left seven workers dead and 27 wounded. Some 100 trade-union activists were reported jailed between April and July.

Smaller opposition demonstrations ranging up to 20,000 have been held in the capital on an almost weekly basis since the elections, and a huge turnout was expected for protests August 21 marking the first anniversary of Aquino's assassination.

Accompanying the ongoing marches and rallies against the Marcos regime has been a surge in armed attacks by the New People's Army (NPA), which according to all reports has grown substantially over the past three years. Led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the NPA is now said to have 20,000 full- and part-time fighters organized in 45 guerrilla fronts on most of the principal islands of the Philippine archipelago.

"According to a variety of sources including government officials, diplomats and some military officers," a dispatch from the Philippines to the August 14 *Washington Post* said, "the New People's Army is steadily winning its battle for the support of Filipinos in the countryside. In addition, it has been making inroads with the urban poor."

The NPA recently began operating in company-sized units of 60 to 100 combatants, ambushing government patrols and inflicting considerably higher casualties. Smaller units have begun operating in urban areas, inflicting a heavy toll on Marcos' police.

The NPA's main stronghold is the southern island of Mindanao, where fully half of the regime's military forces are currently tied down. But it has also been making gains among peasants in central Luzon, north of Manila. It was there that Marcos decided to launch a well-publicized offensive by more than 3,000 troops in mid-June. U.S. military advisers reportedly accompanied the two government battalions, which terrorized peasant communities with bombing and strafing but evidently failed to engage any NPA units.

According to the August 17 *Washington Post*, the Reagan administration decided in July "to begin a major new interagency study of policy toward the Philippines" as a result of "intensified concern . . . about the gains of the New People's Army insurgency."

One Pentagon official told the *Post* that the NPA's growth "without apparent external support" was "great cause for worry" in Washington.

U.S. military support to the Marcos dic-

tatorship is already being stepped up. Joint maneuvers in late May climaxed with an amphibious landing on the east coast of Luzon by marines from both countries. "This represents a clear signal to our potential enemies," said Philippine Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Fabian Ver.

In June, Ver and Adm. William Crowe, chief of the U.S. Pacific Command, announced a new joint defense plan whereby U.S. troops from the Pentagon's huge Clark

and Subic Bay military bases in the Philippines would go into action in the event of an "external attack" on the country.

Writing in the August 8 *New York Times*, Democratic Congressman Stephen Solarz warned that a "Communist victory in the Philippines" would have "extremely adverse consequences" for U.S. imperialism. The Philippines, Solarz lamented, now "bears a certain resemblance to South Vietnam in the late 1950's." □

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Outrage over police attack

Protester killed by plastic bullet

By Rich Palser

BELFAST — One man was killed and at least 20 people were injured when the British Army and Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) attacked a peaceful demonstration in West Belfast on Sunday, August 12.

Sean Downes' heart stopped when he was hit in the chest by a rock-hard, four-inch-long plastic bullet fired at close range. Others — including children — were injured as the RUC hit out indiscriminately with batons and plastic bullets.

The march — an annual event — had been called to commemorate the 13th anniversary of the introduction of internment without trial in British-ruled Northern Ireland. Despite being officially ended, internment is still maintained in Northern Ireland through other means. Activists in the freedom struggle are tried in special juryless courts. Convictions are made on the uncorroborated evidence of paid perjurers, and those charged may be held up to two years in custody before even coming to trial.

British miners join delegation

As in previous years, this year's march was joined by contingents from the U.S.-based Irish Northern Aid Committee (Noraid) and the Troops Out Movement (TOM) in Britain. Among the Troops Out contingent were striking coal miners who are increasingly concerned about the use against miners' picket lines of police tactics first tested in Northern Ireland.

Having seen firsthand the false press reports of their own strike, the miners had come on a three-day visit to Northern Ireland organized by the Troops Out Movement to see for themselves what life is like for the oppressed Irish community.

The TOM contingents headed the August 12 anti-internment march. As we set out from the Falls Road, British troops, rifles at the ready, were stationed at every street corner along the route.

The Royal Ulster Constabulary were also present in great force to prevent Irish Northern Aid publicity director Martin Galvin from joining the march.

The British government had banned Galvin from entering Northern Ireland with the 130-person Noraid delegation, claiming his presence would "not be conducive to the public good."

Irish Northern Aid, which raises funds in the United States for the families of political prisoners in Northern Ireland, has come under attack from the U.S. and Irish governments as well as British authorities.

Galvin's only crime, however, was that his

political views have more in common with the 100,000 people in Northern Ireland who voted for Sinn Féin, a legal party that supports the struggle of the Irish Republican Army, than with the British government's views.

In a statement issued through the Noraid delegation as it entered Northern Ireland, Galvin said, "The British do not have any right to be in Ireland, much less to exclude anyone from any part of Ireland. I intend to be in the north of Ireland in the near future and further intend to be there after the British terrorists are out of Ireland."

Galvin subsequently embarrassed British colonial authorities by appearing at a press conference in Derry and announcing that he would attend the Belfast demonstration.

Brutal assault

The massive army and police presence at the Belfast demonstration showed the authorities' determination to enforce the ban against Galvin.

As the head of the march arrived at the Sinn Féin headquarters in Belfast's Andersonstown district, the RUC were already trigger-happy. When one youth watching the march threw a bottle that hit a policeman, breaking the discipline that Sinn Féin and march organizers had repeatedly called for, the RUC immediately fired plastic bullets into the crowd, hitting a child marching in a pipe band.

When the firing stopped, marchers — who had taken cover in the gardens of houses alongside the Sinn Féin headquarters — reassembled in the road to await the start of the rally. Many people sat down in the road to hear the speeches.

A speech by a striking British coal miner was greeted by cheers, as was a message from the Troops Out Movement delegation.

Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams addressed a plea to the RUC and British soldiers to note the peaceful character of the demonstration and the presence of large numbers of women and children.

Adams then introduced Martin Galvin. Galvin's appearance on the platform was the signal for an RUC assault on the crowd in general and the Sinn Féin headquarters in particular.

The police acted with indiscriminate brutality as they moved against the crowd. People trying to flee or taking cover on the pavement were clubbed. Plastic bullets were fired at close range at specific targets, despite official rules against such use.

Galvin was not caught. But 22-year-old Sean Downes lay dead, and many others had serious injuries.

Gerry Adams later put the blame for the

army and RUC assault squarely on the British government. "The Thatcher government gave them the authority to arrest Martin Galvin at all costs. It just shows that nothing in this country has changed since the civil rights marches in 1968, which police broke up with batons."

On the following day, the RUC claimed they had used force only in self-defense. John Hermon, chief constable of Northern Ireland, said that police first fired only into the air to warn the crowd to disperse and later fired at youths throwing stones.

Another senior police officer claimed that there was evidence that Sean Downes was killed by accident when a plastic bullet ricocheted off a wall.

But film of the shooting taken by an Irish film crew and later broadcast on British television showed that the plastic bullet that hit Sean Downes was fired at close range at chest height.

Plastic bullets are four inches long, one and a half inches thick, and weigh more than a quarter of a pound. They are fired from special guns at a speed of 160 miles per hour. Since they were introduced in 1973, more than 40,000 have been fired at Irish demonstrators.

Downes was the 15th person to die in Northern Ireland after being hit by plastic or rubber bullets. Hundreds more have been severely injured or blinded.

In an attempt to deflect growing criticism of the RUC, Britain's Northern Ireland Secretary James Prior stated that the decision to ban Galvin's entry into Northern Ireland was probably a mistake as it placed the RUC in the position of having to enforce the ban.

This has not pleased the pro-British Loyalist politicians. Frank Miller, general secretary of the Official Unionist Party, responded by saying that Prior should have resigned months ago.

The attack on the August 12 demonstration did not succeed in driving demonstrators off the streets. Gerry Adams stated at a press conference the day after the march: "Republican people have a right to demonstrate. Republican people have a right to assembly. Republican people have the right to make public statements."

That night, 10,000 people marched through West Belfast carrying black flags in a largely silent protest of Sean Downes' murder by the RUC.

Protests in Britain

With vicious police attacks on miners' picket lines in Britain becoming an almost daily occurrence, the events in Belfast are awakening a new concern in the British labor movement over Britain's role in Ireland. Two months ago, an article entitled "From Belfast to Blidworth" appeared in the National Union of Mineworkers' newspaper *The Miner*, likening police tactics in Britain to those being used in Ireland. This comparison was repeated last week by left-wing Labour Party Member of Parliament Tony Benn.

In particular, many miners are now asking

how long it will be before plastic bullets are used against their picket lines.

In London, the National Council for Civil Liberties has called for a full judicial inquiry into the use of plastic bullets at the Belfast demonstration, saying that the film evidence suggests that the RUC violated even its own rules on when and how plastic bullets may be

used.

The presence of striking miners on the Troops Out Movement's three-day delegation to Ireland and on the Belfast demonstration will greatly strengthen the campaign for immediate British withdrawal. So too will the publication of a bill proposed by Benn for withdrawal of the troops. Benn said "the situation

in Northern Ireland is now far worse than it was in 1969" when British troops went to Northern Ireland in large numbers. He added that "it is obvious that there can be no military solution. The root cause of the continuing crisis lies in partition [of Ireland] and, until this is brought to an end, there can be no real progress towards peace." □

Britain

Miners' wives march on London

'We're fighting for the next generation'

By Antonia Gorton

LONDON — In a stirring, magnificent display of working-class combativity, about 25,000 striking coal miners' wives from all over Britain, their children, and labor movement supporters sang, chanted, and roared their way through central London in a mass demonstration against pit closures August 11.

At the rally that followed, National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) leader Arthur Scargill declared, "We have seen for the first time in our history the development of women's support groups. Nowhere in Europe has such a thing been seen. This has unleashed a force like of which has never been seen before. Women and wives fighting to save their own industry, their own communities, and the jobs of their sons and daughters."

Since day one of the 22-week-old strike, women in virtually every mining community throughout Britain have come together to back the strike, to raise money, provide communal food, and join the picket lines. This fight is their fight.

Their placards said "We'll eat grass before we give in" and "Save coal, burn Maggie," a reference to Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

One banner deliberately evoked the great Spanish Civil War cry, "They shall not starve."

Many songs have grown out of the struggle, showing the women's hatred of scabs, police violence, Thatcher, and National Coal Board (NCB) head Ian MacGregor. Among the favorites was "I'd Rather be a Picket than a Scab." And to the tune of "What'll We Do With a Drunken Sailor," the women sang "What'll we do with Ian MacGregor," with the refrain "Burn, burn, burn the bastard, early in the morning."

Reflecting their respect for their union leader Arthur Scargill, they sang, "We'll follow King Arthur anywhere he wants to go, anywhere he wants to go, anywhere he wants to go."

Women from South Wales sang sweetly in Gaelic to their police escorts, who grinned foolishly. The cops might have changed their



Part of August 11 miners' wives demonstration.

expression if they had understood that the women were actually calling them every insulting name under the sun.

'We are prepared to stick it out'

In personal discussions, the women were only too eager to explain what the fight means for them.

Several from Scotland explained that the Polmaise pit is the last village coal mine in Scotland, with 250 men working in it. Polmaise is on MacGregor's hit list for closure, and if the pit goes, the village goes.

There are 300 women involved in the Polmaise strike support committee, and they are planning a big rally. They prepare 120 to 140 three-course meals a day. This is important because single men on strike, for example, get no money at all. One woman said that she and her husband and three pre-school children get

£14.40 [£1 = US\$1.32] per week to live on. "How can you say no to a bairn [child] wanting a packet of crisps [potato chips]?" she asked. "But you have to."

"We're fighting for the next generation, for a way of life and we need money desperately. We've cashed in our insurance policies, sold our furniture, our cars. Everything we have worked for all these years is gone. We're asking all women everywhere to support us. We depend on them."

Another woman said that they are worried about the winter, which is very severe in their area. "Of course, we won't get our usual concessionary coal, and we all have coal heating. It will be hard but we are prepared to stick it out. We'll eat Margaret Thatcher before we'll go back."

Margaret, Jane, and Janet are striking miners' wives from the heart of the predominantly

nonstriking area of Nottingham, from Retford, home of the Bevercotes Colliery. They described how scabs on the local executive committee of the National Union of Mineworkers blocked funds that were intended to feed striking families. They cook dinners for 75 families every day. In order to raise money, they hold raffles, jumble [rummage] sales, and do a market stall every Friday especially to raise money to send their children to the seaside.

They depend on money from outside the area because of the split in the local union. The hatred and bitterness toward the scabs shows through. Margaret, an older woman who was born in the area, explained: "I'm disgusted and I can't believe it. The scabs don't think of their fellow workers. They're all right, they're not interested in the union, just in themselves. They won't look at you. I don't know what it will be like after the strike. I can't imagine us ever being able to get together again in the same union."

Police assaults

The working miners have been supported by vast battalions of police sent in by Thatcher to "protect their right to work," and towns and villages have been virtually occupied by police bent on provoking incidents and intimidating strikers.

It is clear that the ability of the strike to hold out in the face of such intimidation is going to depend to a high degree on these women — both on the material role they play and the morale they give the men.

Peter Heathfield, general secretary of the NUM, said, "It's an important development in an industrial dispute to see the involvement of our women partners. It increases our strength. It encourages us and has been a tremendous morale booster to have the women alongside. It increases our confidence that we will win."

Heathfield told *Intercontinental Press* that "it is obvious from the funds coming into the Sheffield office that working people from around the world are seeing the importance of this strike. Money has come from as far afield as Iceland, Australia, and Latin America. It is an indication of the concern by working people about what is at stake."

"The miners," Heathfield added, "are in the vanguard of the working class, and the victory or defeat will have repercussions throughout the working-class movement. So I ask working people to step up their support, reminding them of their class commitment to our struggle."

Boost to women's movement

The organization of the Women's Support Committees on this scale is unprecedented in the recent history of the British labor movement. One would have to go back to the days of the Chartists in the 1830s and 1840s to find similar bodies of working-class women organizing autonomously around class demands.

We can see here the shape of the mass proletarian women's movement that will be built as women take up the fight against sexual and

class oppression.

Women have undergone a dramatic change, one that they recognize themselves. Time after time the women say that they will continue their organization after the strike is won.

In addition, their example is giving strength to other women in struggle. For the first time in the history of the construction workers union (UCATT), the union banner was carried by women members who have broken into the traditionally male industry in recent years. Valerie, a laborer working in North London, said, "I see this as part of my fight to get women into jobs that we have been barred from, and to have a voice in how things are done."

Who is responsible for violence?

On the same day as the demonstration, the Thatcher government launched a new offensive in the propaganda campaign against the miners. Home Secretary Leon Brittan accused the NUM leaders of "fomenting violence, in-

timidation, and vandalism as a deliberate tactic." This theme was echoed in a similar speech by Ian MacGregor.

Anticipating this, Scargill told the cheering rally that he had been asked to condemn members of his union for so-called violence. "Mine is a principled stand — and a class one," he declared. "I am not prepared to condemn the magnificent young men and women who stand on our picket lines, comrades whose only crime is fighting for the right to work."

"During the past six months," Scargill continued, "there has been a carefully orchestrated campaign against miners and their communities by the government and the NCB and their lap dogs in the media."

"The media talk about violence. What about the 2,000 miners injured, the two who have been killed and the one who is fighting for his life right now?"

"Don't talk to me about violence," Scargill said. "Talk to this government and the police. They are responsible." □

Kent miners' leader hails Central American revolutions

[On July 21, some 200 people turned out in London for a double celebration: to mark the fifth anniversary of the Nicaraguan revolution and the 31st anniversary of the attack on the Moncada barracks in Cuba led by Fidel Castro. The commemoration comprised a day of workshops, speeches, films, and dancing.

[Among the speakers at the rally were Jaime López, the spokesperson in Britain for the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) of El Salvador; Gerry McLaughlin from Sinn Féin in Ireland; Annabel Kitson from the British Anti-Apartheid Movement; Umberto López, the director of the University of Nicaragua; and Jack Collins, the general secretary of the Kent area of the National Union of Mineworkers.

[Jaime López, Annabel Kitson, and Umberto López discussed the struggles in El Salvador, South Africa, and Nicaragua and explained the necessity of solidarity among fighters in different countries. Gerry McLaughlin stressed in particular the significance of the Cuban revolution to the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland, stating: "Cuba is a true friend of freedom fighters everywhere. Your freedom fighters inspire our guerrillas and political activists. When the free republic of Ireland comes, we will proudly join the Cubans and Nicaraguans."

[The following is the address by Kent NUM General Secretary Jack Collins to the rally.]

* * *

I bring greetings from the striking miners of Britain. How the plunderers of the world would have hoped that the events we are celebrating had never happened. These are proof that the people will be victorious.

Who are the people who condemn and murder the people of El Salvador, Central America, and Ireland? They are the same disgusting plunderers who poured napalm on the children of Vietnam. They are the same gang who are trying to force the miners into submission by starving our kids.

When this gang attack the revolutionary leaders in Central America and they attack our leaders, I am proud that they line us up together. I am proud that they line us up with the builders of an honorable society and the class fighters in Central America. It is these revolutionaries and class fighters who stand for what is dignified in the world.

"The capitalist class will never understand this. There is no compassion among these people who would assault the people of Nicaragua, Cuba, and Ireland. They will never understand the compassion and love in our communities."

I am not in business to give advice to Thatcher, but I will say this: If you don't settle now, the struggle will get harder. The miners will not be defeated, and we are over the worst.

The struggle in Central America cannot be separated from ours. The enemy we are fighting is the same — international capitalism. The only difference in Central America, Ireland, and Britain is that the struggles are conducted in a different way and at a different level.

The attack on Moncada lit a flame, not only in Latin America but across the world. We must never forget that the victories we celebrate today, the revolutions in Cuba and Nica-

ragua, were only successful because of the victory of the Russian revolution in 1917. This was a revolution that built a country up from nothing to a formidable country in the world. So we must salute the people of the Soviet Union.

Thatcher is now up against the best organized sections of the working class. We are going to take her to the cleaners and teach her

what the class struggle is all about. The miners are determined. We are a proud people with a proud history.

The struggle we are engaged in today, we will take up time and time again, until we get rid of the capitalist system. The struggle goes on. It will not be ended, even if they keep all the pits open. We have not led Kent miners into action over words. We have to get a four-

day week, longer holidays, and more investment. This is what we expect. Every week we are on strike, we should put more demands on the table.

I've seen the problems in this struggle. But I've also seen the determination to overcome them. With all their spies, police truncheons, and judges, they can't defeat us, like they can't defeat the people of Central America. □

Stakes rise in coal miners' strike

NUM appeals for support from Trades Union Congress

By Andy Brooking

LONDON — After 22 weeks of strike action, the struggle of the British mineworkers against pit closures is set to enter a decisive new phase. The determination of a majority of miners to see this fight through, coupled with the unbending attitude of the employers, the National Coal Board (NCB), and the Tory government, has ensured that the stakes have gotten higher and higher.

The strike has shaken up and divided the whole of British society, including the organizations of the working class.

Against this background of deepening class polarization, the annual conference of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the highest body of the trade-union movement, meets in September. The TUC conference offers the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) important opportunities to mobilize other sections of the labor movement in support of their struggle.

The need to mobilize support on a broader basis has become clear to many workers, as the attitude of the ruling class has continued to harden.

In late July, the National Coal Board sabotaged peace talks with the NUM. Behind the smokescreen of making some apparent concessions to the NUM, the Coal Board maintained its fundamental position on pit closures, the issue that provoked the strike in the first place.

This, the Coal Board claims, is their final offer.

Propaganda offensive

Since the breakdown of these talks, the ruling class has upped its antistrike offensive on a number of fronts. The Thatcher government has done all in its power to bolster the Coal Board. In the week before Parliament recessed for the summer, Thatcher and her cabinet ministers launched a sustained verbal attack on the miners. NUM President Arthur Scargill was equated with Argentine former dictator Leopoldo Galtieri (who was president during the war with Britain over the Malvinas Islands in 1982), and the ranks of the union were dubbed the "enemy within."

These attacks form part of a management strategy aimed at promoting a "drift back to work." A much publicized Nottinghamshire

scab, code-named "Silver Birch," claims to have toured major coalfields in an effort to convince strikers to return to work. The operation of "Silver Birch" and his undisclosed business backers dovetails with a major Coal Board effort to get miners back to work and pits reopened after the summer holidays.

Striking miners received their third "personal" letter from Coal Board chairman Ian MacGregor, in which he threatened to withdraw the board's "final offer." However, despite the coordinated efforts of scabs, the Coal Board, and the police, the return to work failed to materialize.

Official NCB figures showed that only 81 more men went back to work after the holidays.

The bosses' courts

On top of these attacks, the ruling class is increasingly using the courts against the miners union. On July 30, the South Wales area of the NUM was found guilty of contempt of court after refusing to comply with a court injunction to cease picketing private truck operators. Under the government's antiunion laws, the entire assets of the NUM's South Wales area could now be sequestered.

In response to this attack, the Welsh miners turned their headquarters into a fortress, barricading the doors with furniture and barbed wire. NUM area President Emlyn Williams told 2,000 miners assembled outside the office on July 31: "We are staying put and we can take on an army."

Rather than take on the mass resistance of the Welsh miners, the court officials have opted to freeze the union's bank account. So far they have frozen over £1 million [£1 = US\$1.32], including money raised to feed and clothe striking miners and their families.

Far from breaking the union, however, the effect of this operation has been to deepen the solidarity of the workers. As Wales NUM research officer Kim Howells explained: "It is up to the trade-union movement to help us with donations. We will deal in cash from now on!"

The ruling class is also using the courts to interfere in the union's internal affairs in an unprecedented manner. In June the courts ruled that the NUM delegate conference could not change union rules in order to crack down on

scabs. Undeterred, the conference made the changes in the union rules anyway.

The escalating attacks on the NUM show that the ruling class is determined to beat the miners at any cost. Chancellor of the Exchequer Nigel Lawson spelled this out on July 31. He said that "even in narrow financial terms" the strike, which is estimated to have cost the ruling class between £350 million and £1.2 billion, was a "worthwhile investment."

It is equally clear that as the strike continues, the bosses will have to further increase their "investment," with the prospect of a declaration of a state of emergency and the use of troops to move coal.

Strikers firm

For its part, the resolve of the NUM and of the mining communities remains unshakable. All the efforts of the ruling class and their media to divide the ranks of the strikers and to turn them against their leadership have come to nothing. This fact was dramatically underscored by the thousands of miners' wives who marched through London on August 11.

This same determination was expressed by NUM delegates in a meeting in Sheffield the day before the demonstration. The NUM special conference unanimously endorsed the leadership's rejection of the Coal Board's final offer and resolved to continue the strike indefinitely.

In the absence of delegates from Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, and South Derbyshire — the main areas of opposition to the strike — the conference overwhelmingly voted to endorse the new rules for disciplining scabs that were agreed to at last month's conference.

As well as endorsing the leadership's conduct of the dispute, the conference also began a campaign to win further support for the strike from other sections of the labor movement.

NUM President Scargill explained that the mineworkers union will be "taking its case to the floor of the Trades Union Congress in September. We will be asking for total trade-union support for our dispute." Scargill noted that through its strike action the NUM was "carrying out TUC policy by campaigning against job losses and against the government's anti-union laws."

The miners' strike now poses a blunt ques-

tion before the whole labor movement. Will it step up support for the miners or will it stand aside and force the NUM to face the ruling-class onslaught alone?

This question will dominate the proceedings of the TUC conference. As one Labour Party leader commented in the August 5 *Sunday Times* newspaper: "The question for the TUC is now whether they back the miners or do what they did in 1926." In that year's general strike, the TUC betrayed the miners, leaving them to fight alone and go down to defeat.

Today, however, the prospects for broadening support for the miners at the TUC conference are good precisely because the strike itself has deeply shaken up the labor movement.

On March 19, at the very start of the strike, the NUM wrote to the TUC leadership asking them not to intervene in the strike. The miners feared that given the slightest chance, the right-wing bureaucrats who head up the TUC would attempt to defuse and sell out the strike.

Twenty-two weeks later, the momentum of the strike and the deep support for it among many sectors of the working class have forced these right-wing leaders into a corner.

Although Labour Party and TUC leaders have made sniping attacks on the NUM leadership and on alleged picket-line "violence," they have been unable to take control of the dispute. Moreover, the strike has taken the political initiative out of their hands and has given it to the NUM and the left-wing in the

unions and the Labour Party.

Just one year ago, the TUC was dominated by talk of "new realism," collaboration with the government, and moves toward company unionism. This year, extending and deepening the class struggle will top the agenda.

In the period leading up to the TUC conference, NUM leaders have mapped out a campaign of solidarity actions with leaders of other unions, including the transport workers, rail workers, and seamen. This campaign will include fighting for the TUC to call on all unionists to respect miners' picket lines; extending financial support for the miners, including levying all trade-union members; and organizing a campaign of industrial action, including strikes, in support of the miners.

Although stopping short of calling for an all-out general strike, these proposals, dubbed the "big bang" by the press, would significantly strengthen the miners' fight. They have a special importance for other groups of workers who want to link the fight to save their own jobs to the miners' strike.

British Rail workers, for example, face 38,000 job losses through cutbacks in the rail workshops, on London Transport, and on the main rail network. Staff in the rail workshops took action on August 10. A policy of non-cooperation with management will be carried out by all British Rail workers on September 10, and there will be a further day of strike ac-

tion in the London area on September 12.

This action enjoys support from rail workers, many of whom felt let down that their leadership accepted a modest pay rise earlier this year when strike action alongside the miners could have won significantly more.

They now see the chance to have another crack at the British Rail Board and at the same time step up the solidarity that they have already been showing the miners by refusing to move coal.

This rank-and-file pressure for stepped-up solidarity action will be focused outside the TUC conference by a mass lobby organized by the Broad Left Organising Committee. BLOC organizes rank-and-file activists from a number of trade unions around a series of radical, left-wing policies. Its lobby of the TUC meeting will support moves toward a "big bang," and will add a call for a 24-hour general strike in support of the miners.

All early indications are that this lobby will be very sizeable.

If the NUM and its supporters are successful in rallying the TUC delegates around the campaign of solidarity actions, the miners will go into the next stage of their battle massively reinforced.

On top of this, any isolation of the right-wing bureaucrats could have profound long-term consequences for the whole of the British labor movement. □

Greece

Growing working-class discontent

PASOK fails to keep promises, implements austerity measures

By Yiannis Felekis and
Alexandra Topping

ATHENS — The tension between Greece's two largest parties — the governing social democratic Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) and the right-wing New Democracy Party — gave the June 17 European parliament election the character of a referendum on whether to proceed with "socialist change" or return to a right-wing government that had been thrown out of office in national elections in October 1981.

The European election campaign focused largely on Greek national questions, with little discussion of issues concerning the European Economic Community.

The results on June 17 were a warning for Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou's PASOK government, which must face new Greek elections in 1985. PASOK's share of the vote dropped from 48 percent in the 1981 national elections to 41.6 percent in the European poll.

This drop reflects two different factors at work. On the one hand, it marks the falling away of the marginal right wing of PASOK,

the conservative petty-bourgeois layers who have seen their businesses decline with the continuing economic crisis and blame PASOK for the deterioration of their situation.

Many of these elements voted for the New Democracy Party, whose share of the vote rose from 35.9 percent in 1981 to 38.1 percent.

On the other hand, the drop in PASOK's vote reflects the discontent of working people, particularly in the urban centers, where the decline was most evident.

This discontent has been fueled both by the stringent austerity programs that the PASOK government has been applying and by PASOK's abandonment of its electoral promises after it took over the government.

Papandreou's pledge to pull Greece out of the imperialist North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has not been mentioned since the 1981 election campaign ended. The promise to take Greece out of the European Economic Community has been transformed into greater involvement in the EEC.

Instead of kicking the U.S. military bases out of Greece, the question was postponed

until 1988, and the U.S. imperialists can keep their bases for five more years. The Greek and U.S. ruling classes hope that by 1988, when the issue comes up again, the New Democracy Party will be back in power and the U.S. bases will be allowed to remain.

War spending is mounting rapidly under the pretext of a threat of war with Turkey. As a result, funds for major social programs proposed by PASOK during the 1981 election campaign remain only on paper.

Instead of the promised nationalization of big business, Papandreou imposed antistrike measures that deprive workers in existing state-owned enterprises of the right to strike.

Instead of free trade-unionism and trade-union action, the PASOK government contented itself with replacing the appointed right-wing union bureaucrats with faithful PASOK functionaries, whose main activity is to make apologies for the austerity policies and other anti-working-class measures of the government and the Greek bourgeoisie, using the argument that everyone must help "our" national

economy to recover and help "increase productivity."

Under the same pretext, numerous strikes of industrial workers and public-utilities employees for higher wages and other demands have been slandered by the "socialist" government, which charges they are instigated by suspicious forces. Strikers are accused of fostering selfish craft interests and acting against the common good and the national economy.

Conflicts between the government and the workers and farmers during the two and a half years of the Papandreou government have been so numerous and widespread that PASOK has lost a great deal of its influence among the workers. Public sector workers such as the transportation workers, who were at one time the most heavily influenced by PASOK, were among the first sectors to come into conflict with the government during their lengthy strike.

This broad discontent with the government was not reflected in an even larger drop in PASOK's vote only because the sole immediate alternative to PASOK seemed to be the New Democracy Party. No progressive or socialist-minded worker would vote for the New Democracy because of its record of brutal repression and reactionary policies while in power, and many voted for PASOK as a "lesser evil."

The New Democracy Party tried to exploit all the contradictions that exist between the working class and the "socialist" government it helped elect. In the last year, after recovering from its shock at losing the October 1981 national elections, the right wing went on a counteroffensive with a demagogic campaign around rising unemployment, skyrocketing prices for basic goods, and low wages.

While it was in power from 1974 to 1981, the New Democracy never said a word about these problems and refused to implement a sliding scale of wages. Now, however, the New Democracy is calling on the working class to fight for a sliding scale of wages and blasts the PASOK government for dragging its feet on the issue.

For the first time, the right wing issued posters and leaflets criticizing the low prices for agricultural goods and the poor conditions that face farmers.

Despite all of this, few workers or poor farmers shifted their votes to the New Democracy Party, whose 2.2 percent increase came largely from right-wing elements of the middle class.

A disquieting feature of the elections was the right's success in channeling discontent among sectors of the youth into support for right-wing parties. These young people did not have direct experience with the military dictatorship that ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974 or the policies of the New Democracy government in the years after the dictatorship fell.

A few days before the elections, the New Democracy, in collaboration with industrialists and other ruling-class circles, called for an "empty pots demonstration," as the



right-wing parties had done in Chile in 1973 against the Salvador Allende government there. But there was virtually no response from the population to this call.

The far right, which has reorganized since it lost its seats in the Greek parliament in 1981, received 2.29 percent of the vote on June 17 and won one seat in the European parliament under Greece's proportional representation system. This vote share does not mark a big gain for the far right, as was the case in the European elections in France, where Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front got 11 percent of the vote.

Exiles back Turkish hunger strikers

By Yiannis Felekis and Alexandra Topping

ATHENS — Eleven masked Turkish political exiles occupied the offices of the United Nations in Athens June 25 to show solidarity with hundreds of political prisoners who have been waging a hunger strike to death in Turkish prisons since April 11.

The demonstrators called on Amnesty International to send a team to investigate the situation in prisons in Turkey and Turkish Kurdistan.

Police charged the occupied building several hours later and removed the Turkish refugees. One exile being taken to a police van told reporters, "We won't stop here. We will continue our struggle for our comrades who are rotting in the prisons of [Turkish president Gen. Kenan] Evren."

The same day, 40 Turkish and Kurdish refugees dressed in mock prison uniforms began a two-day march from a refugee camp in Lávrion to Athens. The slogans of the marchers were "General amnesty for political prisoners in Turkey," "Down with the fascist junta of Turkey," and "Freedom for the political prisoners in Turkey and Turkish Kurdistan."

Arriving in Athens on June 26, the marchers rallied at the Turkish embassy and UN offices. At the Turkish embassy they left a statement condemning the junta for the murder of the hunger strikers.

On June 19, a group of Turkish refugees occupied the Pan American Airlines offices in

The traditional working-class parties — the pro-Moscow Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and the Communist Party of Greece Interior, which is usually described as "Eurocommunist" — did not present any alternative to PASOK, and neither party made substantial electoral gains from the discontent of the broad masses.

The vote for the KKE went up from 10.9 percent in 1981 to 11.6 percent, while the KKE-Interior's vote rose from 1.3 to 3.4 percent of the total.

The KKE's message during the elections had been to vote for the KKE to pressure PASOK to keep its promises, or to pressure PASOK to accept the KKE as part of its government. The KKE has limited its political activity to the parliamentary struggle, where no credible challenge and no real change can take place.

The bankrupt strategy of the two Communist parties does not offer any solution to the economic crisis or any hope for the working class.

With no apparent trend to the left parties, the 1985 elections are shaping up to be a rerun of the June 17 voting. The workers will again be presented with the dilemma of having to choose between a government of PASOK or a government of the New Democracy. □

Athens to protest the Reagan administration's military and political aid to the Turkish regime. Turkey is the third largest recipient of U.S. aid in the world.

In addition to aid from the United States, the Turkish regime gets huge amounts of capital from the European Economic Community. Turkey is presently an associate member of the EEC, and the government is preparing for full membership.

The hunger strikers are demanding recognition as political prisoners, an end to torture and to the death penalty, an end to isolation cells, the right of prisoners to meet with their lawyers without prison guards being present, and the right to wear nonprison clothing.

Prime Minister Turgut Ozal has vowed that no dialogue will take place with representatives of the prisoners. More than 10 hunger strikers are known to have died already, although the exact number has been kept quiet by Turkish authorities. □

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FSLN candidates for November vote

Sandinistas present 'Plan of Struggle' to Nicaraguan people

The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) announced on July 17 its candidates for the presidential and legislative elections to be held in Nicaragua on November 4. The announcement was made at a public session of the Sandinista Assembly, a broader advisory body to the FSLN's nine-member National Directorate.

Commander of the Revolution Daniel Ortega will be the FSLN's presidential candidate, and Sergio Ramírez will run for vice-president. Both are now members of the ruling Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction.

The November election will also choose a 90-member constituent assembly that will draft a constitution and carry out legislative functions. Members of the assembly will represent regions of the country in proportion to population.

Among the FSLN's candidates for the assembly are Daniel Núñez, president of the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG); Dora María Téllez, FSLN political secretary in Managua; Lucío Jiménez, general secretary of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST); Carlos Carrión, general coordinator of the Sandinista Youth — July 19 (JS-19); Santos Buitrago, mother of Julio Buitrago, one of the numerous FSLN leaders who fell in the years-long struggle against the dictatorship; and Carlos Mejía Godoy, a well-known Nicaraguan musician and songwriter.

We are publishing here the speeches by Commanders Daniel Ortega and Tomás Borge to the July 17 public session of the Sandinista Assembly, along with a report by the FSLN daily *Barricada* on the FSLN's campaign platform or "Plan of Struggle" for the November elections. □

rilla columns; it is the general strike; it is the retreat;¹ it is the heroic battle of the people and the 50,000 heroes and martyrs; it is the heroes of San Jacinto, the stirring song of Darío; it is Zeledón; it is Sandino; it is Rigoberto; it is Carlos Fonseca defeating the Yankees and the traitors on July 19, 1979.

To defend the people's program

Today, history calls upon the people to defend their program, which is the program of the Sandinista Front.

Today, when we again face the ever-present enemy, Yankee imperialism and the traitors who would sell their country, this same heroic people is waging the battle — this people of workers and peasants, youth, Indians, Blacks, mestizos, whites, peons, artisans, shopkeepers, market vendors, students, women, small and medium farmers, loyal businessmen, professionals and technicians, religious workers, intellectuals and artists.

This same people will go on waging the battle for the new Nicaragua, with its historic vanguard, the Sandinista National Liberation Front, defending its plan of struggle in the first free elections ever held in the history of our homeland.

There was never any other alternative of power for our people than the FSLN; the options presented by the traditional parties were always lies. We were the choice the people made by taking up the rifles of liberation in order to overthrow the dictatorship and eradicate imperialist domination from Nicaragua.

We are the alternative the people have supported throughout these five years of the revolutionary process, years filled with deepgoing transformations of the social and economic reality, just as the Sandinista Front promised in its historic program of struggle, which is now being carried out.

The Sandinista Front was forged with heroism and sacrifice in the clandestine guerrilla struggle in the cities, countryside, and mountains. Through wisdom, patience, tenacity, and sacrifice during many years, the road to victory was opened, leaving along the way the blood shed by our best leaders, the leaders of the people.

1. On June 28, 1979, FSLN units fighting Somoza's National Guard in the eastern neighborhoods of Managua decided to conduct a retreat to the nearby city of Masaya. Accompanied by hundreds of the capital's residents, the Sandinistas succeeded in keeping their forces intact and reaching Masaya, already liberated from the dictatorship's army. The tactical withdrawal from Managua proved to be a turning point in the war and a key to the victory of the insurrection three weeks later.

Speech by Daniel Ortega

FSLN presidential candidate launches campaign

[The following is the text of the speech delivered by Commander Daniel Ortega to the Sandinista Assembly on July 17. The speech was published in the July 18 issue of the FSLN daily *Barricada*; the translation and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

The Sandinista National Liberation Front is the continuator of the struggle Cleto Ordóñez launched in favor of the exploited classes at the dawn of independence.

The Sandinista Front is the unforgettable example of the peasant soldiers who defeated the Yankee filibuster at San Jacinto in 1856.

The Sandinista Front is the anti-imperialist stance and social advocacy of Rubén Darío.

The Sandinista Front is the heroism of Zeledón, who rose up in defense of our sovereignty when it was violated by the Yankee marines in 1912. And above all, the FSLN is the immortal struggle of Sandino and his Army to Defend National Sovereignty, which from 1927 on implanted in the consciousness of the workers and peasants the historic program of struggle for national independence and the transformation of our society.

The Sandinista Front is the just action of Rigoberto, who launched the beginning of the end of imperialist domination in 1956. It is the heroism of Ramón Raudales in 1958, of El

Chaparral, of the Patriotic Youth, of the New Nicaragua Movement, and of July 23 [1959] when the students of León were massacred.

The Sandinista Front is the patriotic, worthy, anti-imperialist history of the heroic people of Nicaragua, which Carlos Fonseca with his popular wisdom understood how to synthesize.

The Sandinista Front is the program of Sandino, upheld by the sons of Sandino in Bocay, Managua, El Patuca, Río Coco, and Walakistán in 1963.

It is the red and black banner of Sandino, defended in blood and fire at Pancasán in 1967; at Zinica in 1970; in the action of December 27, 1974; in the October 1977 offensive; in the popular mobilizations of January 1978; in the seizure of the National Palace [in August 1978]; in the September 1978 insurrection; and on the Carlos Fonseca Northern Front, the Pablo Úbeda North-Central Front, the Rigoberto López Western Front, the Camilo Ortega Central Front, the Benjamín Zeledón Southern Front, and the Roberto Huembes Eastern Front. [These were the names of the FSLN's zones of operations in the June-July 1979 war against the dictatorship.]

The Sandinista Front is the fire of popular justice in the final insurrection, with the dictatorship's barracks surrendering to the guer-

The Sandinista Front, at the head of the people in the struggle and the insurrection's victory, buried the past of betrayals, pacts, and electoral maneuvers by the traitorous parties of Yankee imperialism.

The Sandinista Front will remain at the head of this people, who today are struggling without quarter against the genocidal and traitorous mercenaries, paid, armed, and directed by Yankee imperialism in an attempt to bring back the past of imperialist domination and exploitation.

In the first free elections in Nicaragua's history, which only the Sandinista revolution has made possible, this same people will reiterate on Nov. 4, 1984, the vote for the revolution that it casts every day in the factories, trade unions, cooperatives, neighborhoods, shops, classrooms, in the building of the new Nicaragua.

In this way, the people will also be reiterating their daily votes on the battlefronts, in the trenches, in the struggle to the death against the mercenaries and foreign invaders.

The people will vote for their program, their plan of struggle.

The people will vote for their conquests and gains in the revolution.

The people will vote massively for the Sandinista Front.

The people will vote for the National Directorate.

The people will vote for their candidates of the Sandinista Front.

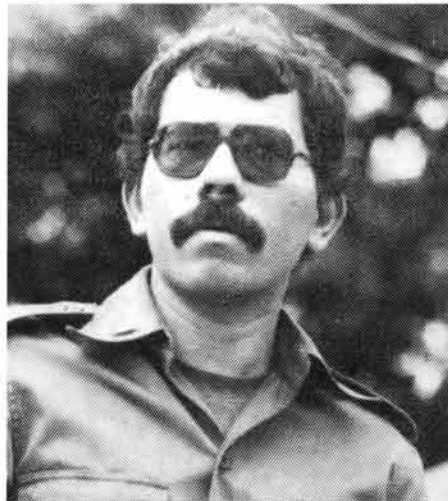
The people will be voting for the people, harvesting a new victory in defense of peace, national sovereignty, and the building of their new society.

Let's go forward! With the Front!

The 23 points of the Plan of Struggle²

- I. People's power
- II. Defense of the homeland
- III. Security and tranquility for Nicaraguans
- IV. The struggle for peace
- V. Human rights and public freedoms
- VI. The new economy
- VII. Peasants and land reform
- VIII. Food supplies and wages
- IX. Workers, trade unions, and labor
- X. Artisans and small manufacturers
- XI. Professionals and technicians
- XII. The revolutionary state
- XIII. The Atlantic Coast
- XIV. Health, welfare, and social security
- XV. Education, culture, and sports
- XVI. Intellectuals and artists
- XVII. Housing, basic services, and recreation
- XVIII. Transportation
- XIX. Children
- XX. Youth
- XXI. Women
- XXII. Religion and the revolution

2. At this point in his speech, Ortega read the FSLN's election platform or "Plan of Struggle." *Barricada* summarized this section of the speech by listing the headings of the platform's 23 points.



Michael Baumann/IP

DANIEL ORTEGA

XXIII. Remembering our heroes and martyrs

Let's go forward with the Front!

Our heroes and martyrs

The Sandinista Front will educate the generations to come in respect and veneration for all the men and women of our homeland who, in the course of all our struggles, have shed their blood for the conquest of a future of peace and justice.

They are the ones who died fighting without

rest against imperialist domination and its instrument, the genocidal dictatorship.

They are the ones who since the revolutionary victory have fallen in defense of our sacred rights to freedom and independence, in the war we are waging against the invaders and in the day-to-day battle for the reconstruction of our homeland.

They are the ones whom we must emulate in struggle, in everyday tasks, and at the moments of greatest tests and sacrifices. They are the ones who will guide our course toward the future, and their example of sacrifice and heroism will live forever in our consciences and in our hearts.

The Sandinista Front and its National Directorate, the top political leadership of the people of Sandino, commit ourselves to guarantee faithful compliance with our historic program and to continue fighting without rest and with all our strength and energy to defend the right of the people to build this new society, free of exploiters and exploited, for which more than 200,000 Nicaraguans have fought and died during the past century.

This is the homeland our heroes and martyrs dreamed of.

This is definitely the homeland for which Zeledón, Sandino, Rigoberto, and Carlos Fonseca gave their lives, living up to our slogan of Free Homeland or Death!

Let's go forward with the Front!

Sandino yesterday, Sandino today, Sandino forever!

A history of struggle

Daniel Ortega makes a series of references to historical figures and events in Nicaragua's long struggle for national independence and freedom from imperialist domination. The following notes should help clarify these for readers not familiar with Nicaraguan history:

Cleto Ordóñez led an 1823 rebellion against rule of Nicaragua by Agustín de Iturbide, then emperor of Mexico.

In September 1856, an army of Nicaraguans and other Central American patriots defeated the proslavery U.S. adventurer William Walker at the battle of San Jacinto. Walker had proclaimed himself president of Nicaragua and was seeking to annex the country to the United States as a slave territory.

The Nicaraguan Rubén Darío (1867-1916) is widely regarded as Latin America's greatest poet.

Gen. Benjamín Zeledón led a rebellion against the occupation of Nicaragua by the U.S. Marines in 1912.

Gen. Augusto César Sandino led an army of workers and peasants against the U.S. Marines from 1927 to 1933. He was assassinated on the orders of National

Guard chief Gen. Anastasio Somoza García in February 1934.

Rigoberto López Pérez assassinated Somoza García in September 1956.

Ramón Raudales was a veteran of Sandino's army who attempted to start guerrilla warfare against the Somoza regime in 1958. Another short-lived guerrilla effort around that time took place at El Chaparral. The Patriotic Youth and the New Nicaragua Movement were anti-Somoza organizations of the late 1950s. Students demonstrating against the dictatorship were gunned down at the National University in León on July 23, 1959.

Carlos Fonseca Amador, along with Silvio Mayorga and Tomás Borge, founded the Sandinista National Liberation Front in July 1961. The FSLN's first guerrilla actions against Somoza took place in 1963 at Bocay, El Patuca, Río Coco, and Walakistán. Later major guerrilla fronts were opened at Pancasán in 1967 and in the Zinica Mountains in 1970.

On Dec. 27, 1974, a Sandinista commando unit invaded a party hosted by top Somozaist official José María Castillo and seized hostages. They thereby secured the release of a number of political prisoners.

Unity and the FSLN

Speech by Commander Tomás Borge

[The following is the text of a speech delivered by Commander Tomás Borge, member of the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), at the July 17 meeting of the Sandinista Assembly (the FSLN's central committee) in Managua. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Nicaraguans:

It has been five years since our people brought down the Somoza dynasty. Five years ago hopes replaced repugnance and death. Five dramatic and splendid years. Five years that have brought to fruition the prophetic struggle of that simple worker, that unparalleled guerrilla leader who was and will always be, for ever and ever, Augusto César Sandino.

Five years of bringing to reality in this land the dreams of Sandino's continuator, the clearheaded and wise thinker, the strategist who taught us to summon the willpower to carry out the revolutionary transformation of our national reality — our founder, our chief, our brother, Carlos Fonseca.

Almost two decades of war in mountains, cities, and consciences, with thousands and thousands of dead — this was the necessary price to pay in order for Nicaragua to begin to exist. Without the struggle of those years, pressed forward and headed by the people's vanguard, the Sandinista National Liberation Front, there would have been no July 19.

Our vanguard has grown and multiplied. Since its birth, our vanguard has renounced routine and fear in order to launch itself audaciously into the application of a revolutionary perspective that today is in the process of being fully realized. The results of the heroic prophecy of Sandino and of the correct strategy of Carlos have now begun to make up part of our everyday life.

One million Nicaraguans studying; three million manzanas [1 manzana = 1.73 acres] of land affected by the Agrarian Reform to benefit the people; infant mortality reduced by at least one-third — these are a few of the conquests that we have the pleasure of celebrating today.

The unity of the Sandinistas was the result of a historic necessity, but it was also the consequence of the political maturity of the leaders of this revolution. During the time of clashes and disputes, the unity of the FSLN came to be a demand on the part of its militants. Today the unity of the Sandinistas is something more than a demand, it is an order that cannot be challenged, an order issued by the entire people of Nicaragua.

It is not a question of artificial unity, forged at the price of cover-ups or falsifications, but



TOMÁS BORGE

rather unity around a clear program and an outstanding banner. It is not a question of some makeshift unity, dogmatically imposed, but rather of a living unity that reflects the contradictions of life and is nourished by them. Therefore such unity is bound to deepen, because our unquestionable National Directorate, the top political expression of the collective character of the Sandinista People's Revolution, is working today and will always work to apply and develop constantly all the fundamental principles that have inspired and will inspire our struggle and that are like the air that we breathe.

The challenge presented by the dismantling of the power apparatus of the dictatorship has consolidated Sandinista unity. And the institutionalization of the revolutionary process ought to spur it forward. This institutionalization in Nicaragua is nothing other than a contribution to the essential requirement of deepening the revolutionary process. The complex process of organizing the state apparatus in all its multiple dimensions never broke the equilibrium inside the revolutionary government. Instead, it helped us to gain maturity and confidence. The defense of our homeland, threatened by mortars and slanders, attacked by murderers and liars, has likewise fortified the unity of the Nicaraguan revolutionaries.

These five years in the development of a revolutionary power that grows without artificial fertilizers have enabled a group of young leaders, my brothers of the National Directorate, to become experienced rulers and skilled political leaders. Their work inspires the living

hopes of the founders of the Sandinista National Liberation Front.

These five years laid the bases for the accumulated experience to be projected into the immediate future. The birth process that shook the foundations of this land has been accomplished. It is now a question of deepening the revolution, of lending continuity to the historic fact of July 19.

The institutionalization of the process calls for advancing with renewed energy in the development and consolidation of the party of Nicaraguan revolutionaries, the Sandinista National Liberation Front. It is the spinal column of the revolution, the sentinel of revolutionary purity, the guarantee of strategic firmness.

In that way we will consolidate the defense of our right to be ourselves, and the inalterable course toward the construction of a superior social framework. Thus we will insure that national dignity will remain erect, never to be subjugated. The preponderant role of the revolutionary classes will thereby be guaranteed.

Of all the conquests of the revolution, the most important and sacred one is that for the first time in history, Nicaragua is Nicaragua, and we Nicaraguans are Nicaraguans. Nicaragua had been condemned to be a torture chamber and a theater of fools; a country of men without land, of children without schools, of sick people without hospitals; a faceless homeland.

Now Nicaragua is celebrating its fifth year of life. Nicaragua finally exists, and it is because it exists that we have carried out the literacy campaign and revived cultural life. Freedom to create exists because Nicaragua exists. Because it finally exists, we will be implacable with those who seek to deny to our homeland the right to exist, those who want it to go back to being a humiliated colony, the echo chamber of a foreign voice, the shadow of another body.

Nicaragua exists through the unleashing of the creative energy of its people, who were never sheep and who know very well how to distinguish between fraternal and fruitful criticism and the poisonous work of their enemies. The people have the right and duty to express themselves freely — not only their desires but also their criticisms. The revolutionary who does not exercise criticism and self-criticism is surely a conformist and under suspicion of becoming a counterrevolutionary.

Nicaragua finally exists, and because it exists we have taught half a million people to read and write, put an end to poliomyelitis, saved the lives of many children who were dying like flies from hunger and sickness, and turned over land and rifles and hope to the people.

Nicaragua finally exists, and because it exists we have been able to confront so successfully the tremendous and continual aggressions. It exists because we have been able to face up to our own errors.

Our enemies do not propose to destroy the FSLN as a political party but rather to eliminate from the face of the earth what the FSLN

represents as a historic project. But history is stubborn like a Chontales mule, and has pointed like a compass needle in one single direction — so long as the revolution exists, Nicaragua will exist.

So long as the revolution exists, national sovereignty will not be negotiable; nor will the people's economy, nor the democracy of people's power.

The revolution will go on living so long as revolutionaries give it life and remain willing to give their lives for the revolution.

Neither backwardness, nor poverty, nor aggression, nor imperialism, nor anyone can destroy this revolution. The only ones who could ever manage to destroy it — that is, who could allow Nicaragua to cease to exist once again, as the lessons of history show — are we revolutionaries ourselves.

Many have asked themselves, Where does the secret of such power reside? How is it possible that the people of such a small land, impoverished and eaten up piecemeal, manage to survive and triumph? How is it possible that this country of no more than 3 million inhabitants fearlessly confronts the all-powerful em-

pire that fabricates and exports wars and dictatorships, and toys shamelessly with the fate of billions of human beings?

We found the answer in a humble woman of Ocotol, the same day that that city of ours, so close to the border, heroically and victoriously repulsed a counterrevolutionary attack. That woman, Compañera Petrona Zelaya, told us, lifting her rifle and looking up, "They shall not pass this spot. Because here we are — my children, my brothers and sisters, my parents, my neighbors. We will not let them pass. And if we die, the children, brothers, sisters, parents, and neighbors of other barrios, blocks, and towns will not let them pass."

That day we felt ourselves once again atop the peak of El Chipote, in Sandino's invincible fortress, and we again lived through the days of hunger and cold on the guerrilla fronts of Río Coco and Bocay, of Pancasán and Fila Grande. "They shall not pass this spot." Yes, compañera of Ocotol, our compañeros everywhere, our brothers and sisters of Nicaragua:

They shall not pass! We are an invincible people, and we have all the moral right in the world to cry, Free homeland or death! □

'Forward with the Front!'

'Barricada' reports on FSLN election platform

[The following article was published in the July 18 issue of the Managua daily *Barricada*, official organ of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

At the head of the Nicaraguan people, the Sandinista Front has been consolidating a popular, democratic government. In practice, this means power to the workers and farmers, making possible in turn the participation of all sectors of the nation through political pluralism and the mixed economy.

This is the fundamental principle of the FSLN's Plan of Struggle, made public last night by Commander of the Revolution Daniel Ortega. As a candidate for president of the Republic of Nicaragua, Ortega pledged to strengthen people's power by keeping weapons in the hands of the people. He stressed that the people's organizations "will always be the inexhaustible source of revolutionary power."

Addressing a capacity crowd at the César Augusto Silva Convention Center — including 200 Nicaraguan and foreign journalists — Daniel made public for the first time the slogan for the coming elections, the next battle in the liberation of Sandino's people: "Forward with the [Sandinista] Front!" (*¡De frente con el Frente!*)

The second of the 23 points in the Plan of Struggle is defense of the homeland. This is priority number one in face of the imperialist aggression. It includes strengthening the Sandinista People's Army, State Security,

people's organizations such as the Sandinista Defense Committees, and Civil Defense, which handles natural disasters.

Daniel contrasted the third great goal of the vanguard and the people, security and peace for Nicaragua, with the terror, threats, murders, and torture offered by Somozaism. The FSLN is committed to maintaining internal stability in Nicaragua, preventing crime, and promoting mutual respect and peace among Nicaraguans through the professionalization and continued technical development of the Ministry of the Interior.

Peace, human rights, and the new economy

Today we are independent. We have a truly nonaligned foreign policy. Under Somoza, Nicaragua was dominated by imperialism, but we have defended our national integrity at the international level. We will continue this policy. We will continue to struggle for world peace, and we will continue the search for peace in Central America, Daniel declared.

The right to a job and to land; the right to organize and mobilize; the right to decent housing; the right of workers to have access to the news media; the right to education and to equality of opportunity; the right to criticize, discuss, and raise demands; the right to good health — in sum, the right to a full and human life — these are all rights that took on a new dimension with the victory of the revolution. U.S. imperialism is the worst violator of these rights, but we are going to defend them, Daniel said.

The sixth point of the platform is the new

economy. We have received financial aid from many countries. The revolution has been creating the conditions for freeing ourselves from the economic dependence we inherited, and we will continue along this road.

Land reform is upheld by the FSLN to provide justice for Nicaragua's peasants. The revolution will continue this process. Already, 44,110 peasant families have received more than 1.5 million manzanas of land [1 manzana = 1.73 acres].

Wages and food supplies are the eighth point of the FSLN's Plan of Struggle. The FSLN is committed to periodic wage adjustments as the prices of basic products increase. It will energetically combat hoarding, speculation, and shortages.

The workers

The basic force of the revolution, the workers of the cities and countryside, with their more than 1,500 trade unions, will remain the "apple of the eye" of the vanguard. "We will continue consolidating the organization of the working class," Daniel said in stating the platform's ninth point. "We are going to overhaul the labor laws and pay close attention to their enforcement so as to benefit the workers."

Artisans and small manufacturers will get the full support of the revolution. This will help the thousands of families who work in these productive sectors. Recognized as well in the Plan are the professionals and technicians, whose valiant support for the revolution is acknowledged by the FSLN. We will seek to enhance their capabilities, and we will establish uniform wage scales.

The FSLN also committed itself to punish and make examples of any government employees who commit abuses of any kind. The revolution must put an end to the inefficiency and corruption inherited from Somozaism.

Social services and the Atlantic Coast

While committing itself to go on respecting the culture and religious beliefs of the ethnic minorities of the Atlantic Coast, the FSLN will also continue to preserve and encourage the development of the native languages and defend the right of the Miskitos, Sumos, Ramas, and Blacks to farm their own lands. It will likewise defend their rights to organize and take part in the affairs of government.

The fourteenth point taken up by Commander Daniel had to do with health, welfare, and social security. The same imperialists who isolated the Atlantic Coast in order to steal our natural resources left behind a legacy of high infant mortality, polio, malnutrition, and chronic stomach disorders among the country's children. The FSLN will continue to step up social programs in the countryside, consolidating the National Health System and bringing health services to the rural areas.

In combating the legacy of illiteracy left by Yankee domination, the Revolution has already waged an important struggle that reduced the illiteracy rate to 12 percent. New human beings will be forged through scientific and humanist education. We will go on en-

couraging popular participation in cultural activities. The news media will be oriented toward new forms of information and entertainment. Free public education will continue to be broadened, and support for sports activities will be maintained.

The work of intellectuals, artists, and journalists are covered by another point in the FSLN Plan of Struggle. The FSLN remains committed to freedom of cultural creativity and to the support of a new kind of critical, constructive, and incorruptible journalism.

Housing, in the past one more immoral form of commerce, will be dealt with by providing to every family, as a minimum, the right to a plot of land on which to build a house of their own. The Sandinista revolution has thus far provided 22,648 plots with streets, electricity, and running water, and we will continue along this course, Daniel said. He also took up the question of urban transport, noting that the fare had been frozen at one córdoba [1 córdoba = US\$0.10]. We will proceed despite the attacks against us, Daniel said. He also dis-

cussed transportation to the Atlantic Coast and the construction of many kilometers of highways.

The Plan of Struggle closes with sections regarding children, youth, women, the most absolute respect for the religious beliefs of our people, and veneration of our heroes and martyrs. In fact, the people of Sandino have already been carrying out this plan for the past five years, through heroic struggles in the factories, the classrooms, along the borders, and in international forums. □

Paraguay

Stroessner's rule facing opposition

As Washington seeks 'democratic' cover for military base

By Marcelo Zugadi

BUENOS AIRES — The wave of antidictatorial struggles that is shaking Latin America's Southern Cone has begun to reach Paraguay. After more than 30 years of despotic stability, the regime built around Gen. Alfredo Stroessner is bound to fall along with its seriously ill chief.

Nestled between Brazil, Argentina, and Bolivia — three countries where economic crisis, political instability, and social mobilization are mounting apace — Paraguay has been chosen by U.S. imperialism as a base of support for confronting the region-wide upheaval that is taking shape on the horizon. Washington has a democratization farce in the works, accompanied by steps toward the establishment of a military base. The aim is to turn Paraguay into the Honduras of the Southern Cone.

A stormy history

Until 1811, Paraguay formed part of the Spanish crown's Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata. In that year the country declared its independence from Spain and rejected the hegemony of Buenos Aires. Paraguay's historical isolation dates from that period, when the government of Dr. José Gaspar Francia had to withstand simultaneously the Spanish crown, the British Empire, Brazilian expansionism, and Buenos Aires' hegemonic ambitions.

Such forced isolation was all the more serious in that Paraguay's geographic position demanded free transit down the Paraná River for the export of the country's products — tobacco and *yerba maté* (an herb from which tea is made). The situation caused the Paraguayan growers to strengthen their state, which imposed a protectionist policy and monopolized foreign trade.

Accumulation in the hands of the state, combined with the fragility of the country's international commerce (which was at the mercy of Buenos Aires), spurred a process of capitalist industrialization considerably more

advanced than that of Paraguay's much larger neighbors. With the state as the main capitalist and the notorious Dr. Francia as a dictator set on modernization and independence, Paraguay achieved such a level of development as to provoke alarm and a reaction on the part of Brazil and Argentina. It was not only an example but also a territorial base where oppositionists gathered to plot against the Buenos Aires oligarchy that was turning Argentina into a country dominated by British imperialism.

Paraguay was an intolerable danger for the landowners and merchants. In 1865, the historical rivals Brazil and Argentina joined together with Uruguay in the War of the Triple Alliance and virtually wiped Paraguay off the map.

The horrendous massacre that nearly left Paraguay without a male population was combined with the systematic dismantling of its economic foundations. A journalist of the time wrote that Asunción "has been converted into a liquidation sale. Twenty-five thousand traders and peddlers of all kinds have made rendezvous in what was once the capital of Paraguay" (*Le Courier de Plata*, Feb. 26, 1869).

It was an accurate premonition: 115 years later, Asunción remains a center of all kinds of traders. In that capital, for instance, functions a hiring office for Argentine military officers who want to serve as mercenaries in Central America. (The Malvinas War made it impossible to contract them right in Buenos Aires.) Drug dealers, assassins, and gangsters of all kinds gather in Asunción, along with CIA operatives and arms smugglers from all over the world. The ousted Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza sought refuge in the Paraguayan capital, and, as a fitting sign of the new times, met his death there as well.

Thanks first to British imperialism and later to U.S. imperialism and its regional clients, the proud and advanced Paraguay of the past century became an impoverished, underpopulated, industryless country ruled by an incredibly brutal and corrupt regime. Smuggling accounts for fully 80 percent of the country's

economic activity.

But this cruel paradox of history today threatens to repeat itself in the opposite sense, turning the nest of gangsters, spies, and smugglers into a major headache for imperialism and its regional partners. Once again as in the past century, but this time in a preventive fashion, with more experience but with less efficacy, an attempt is under way to stave off the union of the Paraguayan people with their neighbors who are struggling against the same enemy.

Stroessner's regime

General Stroessner's dictatorship was consolidated in the 1960s, after having smashed every trace of trade-union, peasant, and political opposition in the aftermath of the defeat of the 1959-64 guerrilla movement involving the Communist Party and radicalized bourgeois sectors.

Like Somoza, though to a lesser degree, Stroessner not only monopolized political power but also concentrated economic control in his own hands and those of his ruling clique. This included the profits reaped by charging smugglers a commission, selling passports, and so on. For 20 years an economy centered on contraband and speculation was the basis of his stability.

Beginning in 1973, however, commercial development and then the impulse provided by the huge Itaipú Dam on the Brazilian border brought on an economic boom. This in turn spurred the Paraguayan workers and people's movement, within evident limits. Still, it was precisely the economic growth sustained throughout the 1970s that allowed the Stroessner regime to keep control over the situation.

During the past three years, however, this tendency has been reversed. The economic recession has been accompanied by the resurgence of a bourgeoisie reluctant to submit to the voracity of Stroessner's gang. There has been a relative strengthening of the workers and peasants movement. The antidictatorial

conquests in neighboring countries are having an impact, and the biological end of the president-for-life is approaching.

Paraguay's economic crisis is just as serious as those in the other Southern Cone countries. In fact, the only palliative visible today is the joint project with Argentina to build the huge Yacyreta Dam downstream from Itaipú. Counting on Argentine investments now is rather like hoping for a blood transfusion from a dying anemia patient.

Unemployment affects more than 30 percent of the active population; the figure in the construction industry approaches 70 percent. Argentina, which had always absorbed labor from Paraguay, has since 1976 expelled the majority of its Paraguayan residents. Even the Paraguayan Confederation of Labor — whose bureaucracy is as corrupt as the regime it serves — found itself forced by the pressure of reality to demand that the National Minimum-Wage Council meet to study an urgent pay increase. The peasant movement, with a great tradition of struggle but totally smashed in the 1970s, has begun to revive. And students have felt the winds of change blowing through the region and have begun to organize against the regime. Political reactivation is under way, conditioned by the country's social-economic structure and an entire historical period of uninterrupted terror.

Opposition begins to mobilize

On May 4, General Stroessner and his Colorado Party celebrated 30 years in power. Aside from that record itself, there was little to celebrate.

Two months earlier, the Revolutionary Febrerista Party (an affiliate of the Socialist International) had held a public meeting denouncing the regime. It was the first opposition rally in Asunción in more than 20 years, and it marked the start of a series of protests. The so-called National Accord* held several meetings and rallies, raising the possibility of a formal multiparty alliance like the kind set up to succeed the dictatorships in Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile. Stroessner had to jail three members of his own party's dissident wing (the Colorado Authenticity Movement) in order to prevent their presenting opposition slates in the party's internal elections and thereby endangering his control over the organization.

At the university's Law Faculty, a traditional Stroessnerite bastion in the student population, two Colorado Party slates confronted each other, and the apparatus had to bring all its weight to bear to achieve a narrow victory for its candidates. At the Medical Faculty the independent Medical Students' Front bested the official slate by a wide margin.

Also in the unusually active month of May,

*The National Accord is a loose bloc involving the Revolutionary Febrerista Party, the Authentic Radical Liberal Party, the Christian Democratic Party, and the Colorado People's Movement (MOPOCO). The latter has close ties to the U.S. Democratic Party.



the government murdered José Martínez, former leader of the Agrarian Leagues, in order to try to intimidate protesters and block the reorganization of the peasantry. But another sign of the new relationship of forces was the fact that Stroessner was forced on May 22 to release Sgt. Guillermo Escolástico Obando, who had launched a hunger strike after spending 22 years in prison for his alleged role in a 1962 coup plot.

The government had to allow delegations from the United Workers Federation (CUT) and the National Students Union (UNE) of Brazil to travel to Asunción in May to meet with the most radical sectors of the opposition — the Paraguay Journalists Union, the Bank Workers Federation, and independent student and trade-union groups. The progovernment daily *Patria* denounced the latter groups in the following terms: they aimed "to divide the Paraguayan family and promote class hatred through the creation of a Workers Party of a Marxist-Leninist-Andropovist stripe, counting on the spurious support of these subversive agents who arrive surreptitiously in our country at the invitation of irregular groups." The political primitiveness of the official daily nonetheless portrays the government's fears perfectly; above all, if one takes into account the fact that the visitors completed their mission despite the threats.

U.S. seeks to manage succession

This situation has precedents in the trade-union and student mobilizations of 1983, in which the opposition resorted to hunger strikes, antidictatorship agitation and propaganda, gaining unheard-of political space that is now beginning to widen further. In face of this, the regime has found it impossible to organize its own continuity. Gen. Andrés Rodríguez, hand-picked some time ago to succeed Stroessner, is today publicly pilloried for his well-known participation in drug trafficking. He is an inviable candidate as far as the U.S. embassy and sectors of the Colorado Party are concerned.

The struggle over the succession has fractured the ruling party, reducing Stroessner's arbitrary power to a minimum. The banning of

the capitalist opposition daily *ABC Color* on March 22 reflected the clash between those who seek to maintain the total continuity of the regime and those who seek an accord with the opposition in order to convoke elections that would meet Washington's specifications.

It is in this atmosphere that exiled opposition figures, encouraged by the political revival of recent months, have denounced the fact that a Pentagon envoy, Gen. Robert Schwitzer, discussed plans in November 1983 for installing a military base in the Paraguayan Chaco. The U.S. precondition for such a project would be a process of "democratization." According to the revelations, the U.S. base would be located at Pozo Colorado, a strategic point from which it would be possible to closely follow the unfolding crises in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Bolivia, and Peru; train commandos; organize provocations; and eventually back up U.S. military intervention in the region.

Although the prospect of Washington having to resort to military force to maintain control over the Southern Cone could seem distant at this time, it is evident that the region's bourgeoisies are being hemmed in by economic crisis and social protest. With every passing day they show themselves less capable of guaranteeing their own stability. After the failure and proven incapacity of military dictatorships to maintain political control and contain social unrest, the bourgeois-democratic regimes that are replacing them are fragile and just as powerless.

The perspective is not one of stability and consolidation of the bourgeois regimes, but the contrary. For U.S. imperialism, the possibility is fading of coming to the aid of its agents and allies with credit and support for industrial development (however deformed). On this plane as well, the contrary is the case — the economic crisis in the advanced capitalist countries is one of the decisive factors aggravating and making unmanageable the situation of the semicolonial bourgeoisies. Faced with this, Washington has begun to seek the strategic basis for duplicating in the Southern Cone its policy of intervention and war now being applied in Central America. For this it needs a replica of Honduras in the area. It remains to be seen if it can build one before another Nicaragua arises. □

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Debate on strategy in elections

Mexican, U.S. socialists draw different lessons from Jackson candidacy

By Doug Jenness

[The following article, written for *Perspectiva Mundial*, a Spanish-language biweekly published in New York, is scheduled to appear in the September 17 issue of that publication.]

* * *

Rev. Jesse Jackson's campaign for the Democratic Party presidential nomination is over. However, broader questions of strategy and election policy for the working class posed by Jackson's Democratic Party campaign are still being discussed by socialists in the United States and other countries.

One viewpoint in this discussion has been expressed by Manuel Aguilar Mora, one of the most well known Trotskyists in Mexico and a central leader of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), the Mexican section of the Fourth International.

Aguilar takes up the significance of Jackson's Democratic Party campaign in an article that first appeared in the July 4 and July 5 issues of the Mexico City daily *Uno más Uno*. It was subsequently published, with a short introduction, in the July 23–August 6 issue of *Bandera Socialista*, the PRT's newspaper.

Aguilar's article follows several others that have appeared in *Bandera Socialista* over the past few months discussing Jackson's campaign for the Democratic Party presidential nomination. Aguilar and other PRT leaders draw what they think are the correct lessons of Jackson's election campaign for revolutionary workers both in Mexico and the United States.¹

Border rallies

Aguilar's article focuses on a report on two Jackson election campaign rallies held on the Mexico-U.S. border on July 1. Jackson spoke at a rally in San Ysidro, California, just south of San Diego. He then led 2,000 people across the border to join hundreds in a rally in Tijuana.

Aguilar states that standing to Jackson's right at the Tijuana rally "was Rosario Ibarra, former presidential candidate of the PRT. To his left was Rosalinda Palacios, leader of the U.S. Mexican-American Political Association (MAPA). Just behind them was José Dolores López, a peasant leader and deputy [in the Mexican parliament] from the PSUM [United Socialist Party of Mexico]."²

1. Aguilar's article was reprinted in the August 6 issue of *Intercontinental Press*. Other articles from the discussion in *Bandera Socialista* appeared in the April 16, June 25, and July 9 issues of *IP*.

2. The United Socialist Party of Mexico (PSUM) was formerly called the Communist Party. It

in Tijuana, "banners could be seen at the rally from the PSUM, the PRT, the PMT [the Mexican Workers Party], the Socialist Current, the MRP [Revolutionary People's Movement], and other organizations."

Aguilar, reporting favorably on Jackson's speech, noted that he:

- criticized the Simpson-Mazzoli bill as "racist, unjust, and oppressive" and the "most serious threat in decades against Hispanics" [Latin Americans or those of Latin American heritage].

- "proposed the renegotiation of the foreign debts of Latin American countries, the only way to allow them to recover from the crisis."

- "spoke extensively on the urgent necessity of negotiations among all sides involved in order to achieve peace in Central America." Aguilar also stated that Jackson "reported that he had been the bearer of a proposal for dialogue and negotiations on the part of the FMLN [Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front] to President Duarte of El Salvador."

- "defended his visit to Cuba and his meeting with Fidel Castro against Reagan's attacks." Aguilar reports that Jackson said, "Ten years ago President Richard Nixon took a risk by promoting dialogue with China, the biggest Communist nation in the world. We have talks and trade with the Soviet Union. Why can't we have them with Cuba?"

According to Aguilar these "initiatives — visits to Nicaragua and El Salvador, meetings with the FMLN and with Duarte, a meeting with Fidel Castro, liberation of the Cuban prisoners, a demonstration crossing the border between the United States and Mexico — go far beyond the limits of the traditional bipartisan policies of the Republicans and Democrats."

Aguilar contends that "Jackson is becoming a spokesperson for the democratic and egalitarian aspirations of many left-out and oppressed sectors of U.S. society, a sum of minorities that, according to Jackson himself, could come to be a majority in the United States."

What is independent working-class political action?

Before examining Aguilar's view of Jackson's candidacy and how working people should relate to it, it will help clarify the discussion if we first outline the strategy the working class needs.

In order for working people to end imperialist war and class exploitation, it is necessary to build a mass revolutionary party that can lead the struggle to overturn capitalist po-

litical rule and establish a workers and farmers government.

A party that can accomplish this task needs to understand that the interests of working people and the capitalist rulers are diametrically opposed. It must expose the lies and treachery of the capitalists and their political representatives, organize working people in struggle against them, and clearly chart a course independent of capitalist politics.

This strategic road includes recognizing that political power will not be wrested from the capitalists through elections, but only through revolutionary action. Capitalist elections can be used by the working class to help educate and win support for the course of independent working-class political action. In fact it would be foolish to ignore this arena of struggle. But elections cannot serve as the vehicle for getting rid of capitalist rule. And when workers utilize the electoral arena, tactics must be developed in such a way that they serve the strategic goal of advancing independent working-class political action and the struggle for political power. Political education is the fundamental criterion for judging the results of working-class activity in capitalist elections, not the number of votes.

In the United States today, working people do not yet have a mass independent party. The Socialist Workers Party and its candidates in the 1984 elections propose that the existing mass organizations of the workers — the trade unions — establish a labor party based on the unions. At the same time they point to the fact that Blacks, who are overwhelmingly working-class, are more politically conscious and combative than the working class as a whole. And Blacks have more than two decades of rich experience with attempts to organize an independent Black political party. The formation of such a party would advance independent working-class political action and the formation of a labor party. The small nucleus presently organized in the National Black Independent Political Party could help play a role in this process.

Jackson election campaign an obstacle

Jesse Jackson's campaign for the Democratic Party presidential nomination did not advance independent working-class political action; rather it was an obstacle to this strategic goal. It depoliticized those attracted to the campaign and helped demobilize those opposed to U.S. intervention in Central America and those fighting the employers' attacks on working people at home. It harmed, not helped, the possibility of moving forward to forming an independent Black party or labor party.

changed its name in late 1981 when it fused with four smaller reformist groups.

For this reason it is necessary for class-conscious workers to explain the truth about the Jackson bid for the Democratic nomination and not dress it up as something that it was not.

Far from going "beyond the limits of the traditional bipartisan policies of the Republicans and Democrats," as Aguilar argues, the Jackson candidacy was totally within the framework of those policies and geared toward preventing a break with them.

Jackson is a liberal capitalist politician, not a spokesperson for "left-out and oppressed sectors of U.S. society," including the Black community. Similarly, Democratic vice-presidential nominee Geraldine Ferraro is a liberal capitalist politician, not a representative of the interests of women.

Nor is Jackson a reformist in the usual sense that term is used to designate persons whose stated goal is to achieve socialism through reforming capitalism. Jackson's goal is to improve capitalism, to make it work a little better for the "left-out and oppressed." He makes no pretense of being for socialism. Like all liberal politicians he does not challenge U.S. imperialism, and all of his criticisms of U.S. foreign policy are in a proimperialist framework. Rather than calling for the total elimination of the imperialist war budget, for example, he just calls for getting rid of the "waste" in it. Democratic presidential nominee Walter Mondale has also picked this up as one of the themes of his campaign. This position assumes that the interests of U.S. imperialism need to be defended.

Simpson-Mazzoli — and Roybal

Aguilar points to several of Jackson's positions and actions in an attempt to show how the Democratic contender was going beyond the limits of capitalist politics.

First, he cites Jackson's criticism of the Simpson-Mazzoli bill, a racist, anti-immigrant, antilabor measure that has been adopted in both houses of Congress. Jackson's criticism, however, is not unique. There are other liberal Democrats who also take issue with this bill. For example, Edward Roybal, a California Democrat, has proposed a substitute bill, which he says will eliminate some of the worst features of Simpson-Mazzoli. Although Aguilar does not mention it, the *San Diego Union* reported that Jackson, at his rally on the border, declared that his supporters would not rest until "we . . . secure the Roybal alternative."

But the Roybal proposal has the same aim as the Simpson-Mazzoli bill — restricting the ability of workers in oppressed countries to come to the United States to find work and to escape what are oftentimes U.S.-backed dictatorships. The Roybal bill calls for stricter enforcement of federal wage, hour, health, and safety laws — not to ensure greater protection for the undocumented workers, but to discourage bosses from hiring them.

In addition, the Roybal bill calls for more federal funding to expand the border patrol — the armed cops of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Aguilar says that Jackson's proposal to renegotiate all foreign debts of Latin American countries is "the only way to allow them to recover from the crisis." But this is false and serves to muddy the true nature of imperialist oppression.

Renegotiating loans means that countries oppressed by imperialism can, at best, get a temporary reprieve in making their payments. In fact imperialist banks often renegotiate loans so they can keep collecting payments rather than permit debtor nations to default. This in no way will end the worsening economic crisis colonial and semicolonial countries face as a result of imperialist oppression and exploitation. The entire lending system, with its outrageous interest rates, is one of the central ways that the imperialist banks squeeze profits out of working people in the oppressed nations and force their governments to impose harsh austerity measures.

Jackson's proposal is made from the standpoint of a liberal representative of U.S. imperialism. The approach of U.S. working people, however, should be quite different. We should demand that all debts be canceled and long-term, low-interest government loans be offered as well as direct grants of food, medical assistance, and technical aid.

The call for negotiations in Central America

Aguilar praises Jackson's activity in support of negotiations "among all sides involved in order to achieve peace in Central America." But urging all sides to negotiate is no break from imperialist politics. To the contrary, many liberals, including loyal Democrats and Republicans, advocated that Washington enter into negotiations during the Vietnam War. And today Jackson is far from the only capitalist politician calling for negotiations in Central America.

This stance is compatible with imperialist foreign policy because it assumes that Washington has some rights in Central America that are negotiable. It also assumes that the FMLN and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) have some obligation to negotiate with Washington. These assumptions are based on the lie that the FMLN and the Sandinista-led government in Nicaragua share responsibility with Washington for the war in Central America. But it was imperialist oppression that drove the working people of Nicaragua to overthrow the Somoza regime and establish their own workers and farmers government. And it is Washington that is attempting to overthrow that government. Likewise in El Salvador, Washington is helping to ruthlessly suppress the struggle of working people against the miserable conditions created by imperialism.

From the standpoint of working people in the United States — in the oppressor nation — there can only be one demand on Washington: withdraw all U.S. military aid. All the advisors and military equipment should be withdrawn, and U.S. military bases dismantled. All aid to the Nicaraguan counterrevolution-

aries should be halted. The economic boycott of Nicaragua should be lifted, and a massive economic aid program launched.

The liberation fighters in El Salvador and the Nicaraguan government are calling on Washington to negotiate, and Washington's refusal to do so exposes its aggressive policy. While class-conscious workers in the United States wholly support the right of their fellow workers in Nicaragua and El Salvador to demand negotiations and help to publicize this demand, it would be an error for us to demand that the FMLN and FSLN call for negotiations. It would be a diversion from concentrating our fire on Washington — the aggressor in Central America.

Jackson's call for all sides to negotiate is not the demand of U.S. workers. It represents the view of a sector of the U.S. ruling circles that thinks a negotiated agreement would more effectively preserve imperialist domination in Central America.

Aguilar fails to mention that at the border rally Jackson also called for the withdrawal of both U.S. and Cuban forces from Central America. This demand is flawed by the erroneous notion that Cuba is in part responsible for the war in Central America. It accepts the State Department lie that Cuban "intervention" shows the need for more U.S. forces to be sent into the area.

Demands on Cuban government

Aguilar points approvingly to Jackson's visit to Cuba, his meetings with President Fidel Castro, and the "liberation of the Cuban prisoners."

Here again, Jackson did not visit Cuba to advance the interests of working people in the United States or to defend the Cuban revolution. It was a campaign junket designed to attract publicity to his Democratic Party campaign. There was nothing that he said or did in Cuba that was inconsistent with this objective or that went beyond the bounds of proper conduct for a capitalist politician.

His main demand was not on Washington, but on the Cuban government. He urged that Cuba release U.S. and Cuban prisoners jailed for committing violent acts against the revolution, drug dealing, and other related activities. Far from being a progressive achievement, Jackson's request gave ammunition to the imperialist propaganda lie that Cuba has unjustly jailed political prisoners.

The Cuban government responded by releasing the prisoners, thus attempting to defuse this issue and at the same time trying to get a hearing for its request that diplomatic relations with Washington be normalized.

Most notable is what Jackson did not do as part of his trip to Cuba. He did not demand that Washington drop its travel ban to Cuba or that it close down its military base at Guantánamo.

Jackson was not the first liberal capitalist politician from the United States to go to Cuba and meet with Cuban leaders.

In April 1977 Democratic Senators George McGovern and James Abourezk of South

Dakota and Congressman Les Aspin (Democrat from Wisconsin) led a 90-member delegation to Cuba to probe the possibilities for normalizing relations between Washington and Havana.

The Cuban government insisted that a precondition for improving relations was for Washington to lift the trade embargo imposed against Cuba in the early 1960s. When McGovern returned from the highly-publicized trip, he publicly urged President Carter to lift the trade restrictions. "The embargo has never made any sense from the standpoint of U.S.-Cuban relations," McGovern stated. "[The U.S.] can trade with Peking, we can trade with Moscow. I don't see why not with Havana."

Although McGovern, on his return, more vigorously advocated lifting the embargo than Jackson did, his basic framework was the same. Like Jackson, he did not seek ways to defend the Cuban revolution or to win support for it, but to urge a shift in governmental relations with Cuba that would better serve U.S. imperialist interests.

Jackson's exclamations during his speech at the University of Havana of "Long live President Fidel Castro!" and "Long live Che Guevara!" were easy to make to that audience. The real test would have been if he had denounced the travel ban and economic boycott in his nationally-televised speech to the Democratic Party convention where he had an audience of tens of millions of Americans. But speaking for more than one hour, not one word about Cuba crossed his lips.

While some right-wing and racist critics of Jackson, including President Ronald Reagan, criticized his trip, this soon subsided. The July 18 *New York Times*, for example, reported, "The president also said last week that he was 'grateful' that Mr. Jackson's trip to Cuba last month had led to the release of Cuban and American prisoners, just as he had thanked him earlier for his successful effort to persuade Syria to free a Navy flier downed in Lebanon."

According to a *Washington Post* article on the same day, White House spokesman Larry Speakes stated that if Jackson wished to go to the Soviet Union to obtain the release of physicist Andrei Sakharov, "We would not stand in his way . . . and if he can be helpful in the Sakharov matter, it would be good."

An antiwar movement?

Bandera Socialista's introduction to Aguilar's article states, "The Rainbow Coalition brings together a much broader movement against war than that which came about regarding Vietnam; it involves Blacks, Chicanos, and other minorities. It is a movement that has already developed and has taken on expression in a massive way on various occasions, going beyond support for Jackson as a primary candidate."

This is a total misunderstanding of the nature of the Jackson campaign for the Democratic Party nomination. It was not a *movement*; it was an election campaign. The "rain-



Bandera Socialista

Photo from July 23–August 6 "Bandera Socialista." Newspaper's caption reads: "Rosario Ibarra, Jesse Jackson, and Rosalinda Palacios during the march that crossed the border." Palacios is a leader of the Mexican-American Political Association (MAPA), a pro-Democratic Party Chicano electoral formation in the United States.

bow coalition," insofar as it took organizational form, was a campaign committee that organized meetings and raised funds for Jackson. Rallies like those held on the U.S.-Mexico border were organized to advance his election effort.

While the Jackson election campaign was not a movement, the considerable support it received reflected the shift that has taken place in U.S. politics in the past two decades. Since the voting rights act was adopted in 1965, Blacks have increasingly looked to elections to improve their conditions. As a result thousands of Blacks have been elected to public office, including as mayors of many major cities. Jackson's election campaign was part of this process.

The notion that Jackson's election campaign could even be compared to, let alone presented as broader than, the movement against the Vietnam War, is false.

The Jackson electoral effort drew in Black, Chicano, and Native-American leaders, farmer activists, and a few union officials, and is therefore presented as a broad coalition, reflecting the entire spectrum of the rainbow. But no matter how broad this coalition is painted, the fact is not altered that it was not an antiwar movement.

The anti-Vietnam War movement of the 1960s and early 1970s was based on organizing actions in the streets *independent* of the electoral aspirations of any capitalist politicians. There were many attempts by liberals and reformists to channel the antiwar movement into an electoral course, but these were successfully defeated, making it possible for the movement to broaden its support and or-

ganize actions of up to 1 million people.

The truth is that not only was the Jackson Democratic Party election campaign not an antiwar movement, it harmed the development of an antiwar movement. Trying to convince people to participate in and change the Democratic Party serves to demobilize the potential forces for opposing U.S. intervention in Central America. It is not reforming the Democratic Party nor participating in Democratic Party election campaigns, but organizing unionists, Blacks, farmers, and soldiers that can build a broad, independent movement to demand an end to U.S. intervention.

Jackson's apology

Aguilar's article was written before the Democratic Party convention, so we do not know how he sees Jackson's performance there. But Jackson's role at the convention should have come as no surprise, as it was neither contradictory to nor a betrayal of what he had been saying and doing during the entire election campaign. It was an affirmation of his perspective. Neither his goal nor the result of his actions was to go beyond the limits of the Democratic Party. To the contrary, it was to convince Blacks to turn deeper into the Democratic Party and win more Black convention delegates and register more Black voters as Democrats.

As he stated in a speech in Los Angeles on May 19, "This time around, we do not need to march outside the convention, we will be inside the convention. This time around we will not need to carry signs saying, 'End the mining of harbors' and 'Stop the Death Squads.' I will be at the table saying it."

Jackson, like other Democratic contenders, was granted time at the convention to give a nationally televised speech. Here was a big opportunity. Would he say anything to the largest audience of his election campaign about the Palestinian liberation struggle or his criticisms of Washington's Central American policy? Would he describe the new schools and other social advances he saw in Cuba or blast the travel ban? Would he defend Louis Farrakhan, a leader of the Black nationalist Nation of Islam, against the racist attacks leveled against him?

The Democratic Party chiefs and the ruling circles that control them were confident that he would present a "responsible" address. As expected, Jackson urged support for Mondale and Ferraro and expressed his loyalty to the Democratic Party.

Then he went on to show the extent of his servility to the Democratic higher-ups and the few dozen families that rule the country by giving a groveling apology to the racists who attacked him for his earlier criticisms of Israel and his refusal to repudiate the anti-Israel statements of Farrakhan, one of his most prominent supporters.

"If in my low moments, in word, deed or attitude, through some error of temper, taste or tone," Jackson said, "I have caused anyone discomfort, created pain, or revived someone's fears, that was not my truest self." Jews and Blacks, he went on, "are co-partners in a long and rich religious history — the Judeo-Christian traditions. . . . We are bound by shared blood and shared sacrifices. . . ."

"We must share our burdens and our joys with each other once again. We must turn to each other and not on each other and choose higher ground."

This apology, of course, won quick praise from the more conservative sectors of the Democratic Party, right-wing columnists, and the leaders of the major Jewish organizations, most of which are pro-Zionist. Mondale hailed Jackson's address as "one of the great speeches of our time."

Long history of derailing Black movement

Throwing roadblocks in the way of independent working-class political action is not a new role for Jackson. In fact he has established quite a record in this regard.

In March 1972, some 8,000 delegates and observers attended the National Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana. It was the most significant and representative gathering held by the Black movement in decades. The convention adopted an agenda and a preamble that outlined a radical political perspective for the Black liberation struggle.

Although a majority of the participants favored the formation of an independent Black political party, this perspective was sabotaged by the misleaders of the Congressional Black Caucus and other pro-Democratic Party forces. Jackson was among those who played a key role in sidetracking the formation of an independent party.

Jackson and Gary Mayor Richard Hatcher gave the two main addresses to the gathering. Both tipped their hats to the idea of an independent Black party. But when the Louisiana delegation put a motion on the floor favoring the formation of an independent Black party, Jackson clinched the operation to pigeon-hole the motion.

He argued that the formation of a National Black Political Assembly made up of some 400 Black politicians and community leaders would eventually lead to realization of a Black party.

While proposing that the creation of a Black party be postponed, he urged the convention to seek "delegate power" at the 1972 Democratic Party convention. That is precisely the perspective he is still carrying out in 1984, a dozen years later.

Independent or Democrat?

In an article in the February 27 issue of *Bandera Socialista* Enrique Hernández argued that candidate 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 article led the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International to write a letter to *Bandera Socialista* taking issue with Hernández. The letter, published in the May 28-June 10 issue of *Bandera Socialista*, stated 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."

But then the letter asserted, "The situation would be totally different if Jackson were presented as an independent Black candidate or as the candidate for an independent Black party."³

Like all "what if" hypotheses, this statement is virtually meaningless. It is highly unlikely that Jackson could run as an independent rather than as a Democrat without other elements of the situation changing too.

But if we accept the statement as it is presented — that nothing is changed except Jackson running as an independent rather than as a Democrat — then the United Secretariat Bureau letter makes an error in assuming that his candidacy would deserve working-class support. If Jackson were to run as an independent candidate on the same procapitalist, proimperialist program that he ran on in the Democratic primaries, his campaign would not represent a step forward for independent working-class political action. Rather than being a Democratic liberal capitalist candidate, he would become an independent liberal capitalist candidate.

Independent working-class political action means more than just breaking from the Dem-

ocratic and Republican parties; it means a break from capitalist politics.

The two-party system so dominates U.S. politics that breaking from it is often equated with breaking from capitalist politics. But while exceptional, there have been instances of other capitalist parties participating in the elections. For example, in 1924 Senator Robert LaFollette from Wisconsin ran as the Progressive Party candidate. In 1948 former Vice-president Henry Wallace ran as the Progressive Party contender.

Even though the radical demagoguery of both of these capitalist candidates was to the left of Jackson's, neither of these third party election campaigns helped advance independent working-class political action. Neither deserved the support of working people.

Whether there are three, four, or any number of capitalist parties or candidates, the strategic objectives of the working class remain unchanged. It must map out its own independent course in order to mobilize a mass struggle to take power.

Jackson's 'peace' conference

Aguilar gives a lot of attention in his article to a meeting in San Diego, following the July 1 action, that issued a call for a Conference for Peace and Justice in the Hemisphere. He reports, "Present at that gathering, held at the Holiday Inn hotel in San Diego, were members of the Jackson campaign, representatives of the churches and peace movements of the United States, and five Mexicans: Antonio Tenorio Adame, a leader of the CNC [National Peasant Confederation] and ex-deputy for the PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party, Mexico's ruling party]; Adolfo Gilly, a writer; Gerardo Unzueta, a leader of the PSUM; José Dolores López, federal deputy from the PSUM; and this writer, Manuel Aguilar Mora, a leader of the PRT."

The following day at a news conference, Jackson announced the results of the meeting. According to Aguilar, he stated, "We will bring together government leaders, legitimate [?] political forces, and religious leaders from the entire Western Hemisphere who support the peaceful solution of conflicts through dialogue and negotiations. We will prepare another meeting soon to form a broadly based committee that will work to unite diverse segments of our societies. We will organize a series of activities that will lead up to the Conference for Peace, and we will participate in the activities of other groups seeking to convert the Western Hemisphere into a zone free of wars."

Aguilar and Gilly, also a member of the PRT and one of the most well known Trotskyists in Latin America, participated in the meeting that called this conference. They apparently think it will advance the struggle against imperialist war. But this is not the case.

The call for the conference does not focus in on the war actually going on in Central America and the Caribbean, but refers generally to the need for "peace" in the Western Hemi-

3. The United Secretariat Bureau letter was translated and reprinted from *Bandera Socialista* in the July 9 issue of *IP*.

sphere. It does not target Washington as the instigator of war and call for the withdrawal of its military forces and aid from Central America and the Caribbean. Rather it makes a vague appeal that "conflicts" be resolved "through dialogue and negotiations."

This is not a call that will advance the development of an independent working-class movement against U.S. intervention in Central America. In fact, it is not oriented to the working classes of either the United States or Mexico. Its vague pacifist character opens it to being utilized by a wide range of capitalist and petty-bourgeois politicians in both the United States and Mexico to advance their own electoral aims. This was certainly Jackson's goal.

United working class tickets?

The PRT's favorable view of the Jackson campaign is tied to its opinion that the campaign offered socialists in the United States an opportunity to draw together forces for a broad electoral front. A declaration issued by the PRT Political Committee and printed in the April 23–May 6 issue of *Bandera Socialista* stated, "The U.S. class-struggle and socialist movement must take serious steps toward building a united working-class pole that goes beyond the traditional propagandistic-sectarian posture on the elections."

The PRT proposed that a basis for a common platform for such a front was "the struggle against austerity and capitalist restructuring of industry; and the struggle against the imperialist intervention in Central America."⁴

An election campaign simply run on this minimum program totally avoids the purpose of socialists participating in capitalist elections — to politically explain the working class's strategic road to power along the course of independent working-class political action.

The PRT's advice to class-conscious workers in the United States is totally consistent with how it approaches its election activity in Mexico.

In the 1982 presidential elections, the PRT sought an electoral bloc with the class collaborationist PSUM and other parties in support of Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, an independent civil liberties leader. The PSUM rejected this offer, but the PRT's proposal was accepted by various other organizations, and the campaign was run as a "movement campaign" with its line set by Ibarra and whoever else spoke on behalf of the campaign.

The PRT is presently attempting to put to-

4. A translation of this declaration by the Political Committee of the PRT appeared in the June 25 issue of *IP*.

gether a ticket for the 1985 state elections with some of the same organizations that participated in the border rallies and in the meeting with Jackson supporters following the actions. The PRT is calling for a united electoral ticket of the left against the governing PRI and other "rightist and proimperialist parties." The principal organization they hope to unite with in this "left front" is the PSUM.

The proposal is to have a minimum common program while each organization would present its own platform. The result of this approach is that making a good showing in the elections against the capitalist parties takes precedence over political clarity. The PRT's participation in the Jackson border rallies with the PSUM and other Mexican radical groups was part of the process of attempting to cement this united ticket.

Mel Mason and Andrea González, the Socialist Workers Party candidates for president and vice-president in the United States, reject such a course. They say that the road forward for the working class requires clearly explaining the need for independent working-class political action. They tell the unvarnished truth — that Jackson's Democratic Party election campaign and the host of petty-bourgeois radical organizations that supported him are an obstacle to this strategic course. □

DOCUMENTS

Speech by Dominican revolutionist

Socialist Bloc General Secretary Rafael 'Fafa' Taveras

[The following is the text of a speech by Rafael "Fafa" Taveras, opening the First Congress of the Socialist Bloc of the Dominican Republic, held in Santo Domingo June 28–30. Taveras is the general secretary of the Socialist Bloc. The translation from a corrected transcript provided by the Socialist Bloc is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Dear comrades, foreign delegates — and I say "foreign" because that is how I express myself, but I feel as if you were our compatriots. Dear comrades, foreign delegates who are representing fraternal forces:

Dear brothers and sisters of the Dominican Left Front;¹

Dear Comrade Jorge Puello, with whom I have shared heroic and unforgettable years of political activity:

Dear Comrade Rafael Chaljub Mejía, with whom I have shared prison and the streets;

Invited friends, who honor us with your presence;

Comrades, representatives of the mass organizations;

Dear comrades of our Central Committee;

Comrades All:

At the moment when this first congress of the Socialist Bloc is beginning, the Dominican Republic is undergoing the worst crisis in its history. We are approaching the gravest moment of this crisis. The government wants the people to wait meekly, like the ancient Christians did in the Circus, while the lions of the International Monetary Fund are unleashed to devour us.

I was thinking sadly that they are leading us at a forced march in the same way the Nazis led the Jews into the ovens and the immense gas chambers, where they were sent on the pretext that they were to be purified. I was thinking about that, telling myself, "The IMF is worse than the Nazis."

They are saying in all the news media, presenting the faces of all the exploiters in this

country, that the agreement with the IMF is indispensable. Indispensable to correct what they claim are distortions in the Dominican economy. Indispensable to overcome the shortage of foreign currency. Indispensable for opening international markets to the capitalists. And they recommend that we have patience, because the effects of this accord are to be temporary. But the effects are so terrible that they caused this country to experience throughout every inch of its territory the massive protest of the people, who responded to the initial blows of the Monetary Fund.²

So we are at a moment of great significance for the political destiny of the Dominicans. In a certain way we are facing "the worst" — using the words of the president of the republic. It is as if we had gone into the street and saw mounted on every corner a guillotine, with the government as executioner, announcing that fuel prices will be adjusted to accord with the

1. The Dominican Left Front (FID), formed in June 1983, includes the Socialist Bloc (BS), the Dominican Communist Party (PCD), the Dominican Workers Party (PTD), the Anti-Imperialist Patriotic Front (UPA), the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), and the Movement for Socialism (Unity).

2. A three-day nationwide rebellion against IMF-imposed austerity measures broke out on April 23, 1984.

parallel currency market [entailing a sharp price hike].

And since all this is not simply a question of economic measures but rather of decisions that will have deep and immediate significance for Dominican political life, we can understand that this moment in which we are holding our first congress could perhaps be characterized as the most dramatic moment in our history.

We are holding this congress in the midst of a wave of repression. Comrades have been arrested. There are delegates who could not reach the capital from other parts of the country, and foreign delegates who were not allowed to enter the country. Some of the comrades here with us just left prison, and others had been functioning clandestinely. And in the midst of this wave of repression, the government has reiterated its determination to go on implementing its economic policy. At the same time, and as a consequence, it is evident that we are witnessing the liquidation of what remains of democracy in this country.

I was telling a friend that this might be one of the last congresses a left organization holds publicly in this country.

So we can understand why this congress has profound significance, because it is being held on the eve of a critical moment. But as Comrade Octavio [Rivera] already noted, it has profound significance as well not only because of the government's growing determination to carry out the IMF's genocidal policy, but also because it is being held at a time when the unity of the Dominican left has achieved the highest level since 1959.

The fact that this gathering is being held in the headquarters of the Dominican Communist Party [PCD] saves us the trouble of explaining the level unity has reached; that says it better than any speech.

Earlier, at the headquarters of the Dominican Workers Party [PTD], we held the plenary session where our ranks were brought together and the Unified Central Committee of the Socialist Bloc was established. But the unity of the PCD, PTD, and Socialist Bloc is not expressed only within our country. We recently attended in Havana the First Consultative Meeting of Anti-Imperialist Organizations of the Caribbean and Central America. This was the first time we were able to get together with representatives from 21 Caribbean countries and exchange experiences and learn about each other's processes. There in Havana, Comrade Narciso Isa Conde [PCD general secretary], a personal representative of PTD Chairman Comrade José González Espinosa (Eduardo María), and myself acted as one single delegation, as a delegation with a single voice.

Black crepe at the congress

But in speaking at this moment we have to inform you with much sadness that before dawn this morning, a serene and combative activist of the Socialist Bloc, Zenón Tavárez, the bloc's organizer at La Romana [the country's biggest sugar mill], died at a hospital here in the capital. Zenón suffered from hypertension.

He had undergone persecution and imprisonment and had not abandoned his people. He had shown great perseverance in the effort to build the Socialist Bloc among the workers and to develop the Dominican Left Front. He will certainly be remembered by all the comrades of the Socialist Bloc, because he was perhaps the only militant who brought his positions in writing to all our assemblies — positions he was able to defend against all comers, even if he remained alone. This comrade died this morning, in a certain way another victim of the political repression and persecution.

We know that as a result of Zenón's persistence and determination, and even his occasional courage to be stubborn, virtues that must also be encouraged among the people, he will be remembered in the Socialist Bloc and among all the comrades who will share with us tomorrow the responsibilities of the Dominican revolution.

The 'General Line' of the Socialist Bloc

Thirteen months ago the Socialist Bloc circulated a pre-congress document entitled "Draft General Line." In that draft there appeared for the first time the notion that popular revolution was imminent in Santo Domingo. This statement caused difficulties for some comrades who urged that we simply state that the revolution was inevitable.

At that time the Socialist Bloc was suffering from internal struggles and general disorder among its ranks, arising particularly from the fact that we had existed as separate organizations and had just taken on a commitment to advance toward coordination and the consolidation of unity, without a shared overall consensus.

So it took considerable courage to dare to say that the revolution was imminent. Since the "General Line" was a document for our congress, it was simply a theme for discussion and did not require anyone to adjust their work to such a proposal. In that sense the "General Line" did serve as material for many discussions, and its content was sometimes termed infantile and adventurist.

I think that since April of this year, the judgment that the revolution is imminent can be shared by the entire Dominican left.

So then, is it correct to say that the revolution is imminent? Is the revolution possible in the short or medium term in the Dominican Republic? What is the content of these statements? We are accustomed to speak vaguely of the revolution as something that is simply going to come. But our concern today is the following: Is the revolution possible for this political generation? Is it possible for the left to lead the revolution? For *this* left to lead the revolution? Is it possible to make another revolution against the North Americans in this region?

I think such questions are now to be found not only in the feverish heads of the security forces but also among many people who want the revolution and are ready to work for it.

We believe that this congress is being held

to provide an answer to those questions, to put forward the Socialist Bloc's views, the deep conviction we have that the Dominican people's revolution is imminent.

It is enough to look at the situation of the bourgeoisie and the government in the midst of the terrible crisis that afflicts our country, and the volatile discontent of the people.

The government and the bourgeoisie in the midst of the crisis

As [Nicaraguan leader] Sergio Ramírez has said, it is certainly difficult for someone else to explain poverty to the poor, because they are the ones who feel it. So I understand that we don't have to demonstrate to anyone here the existence of the crisis, the deepgoing crisis of Dominican society, because the people are not just hearing about it, they are feeling it themselves. What we can do is take a bird's-eye view of the situation of the government and the bourgeoisie in the present circumstances.

Friends, the bourgeoisie and the government are making efforts to halt the erosion of their system. They are trying to achieve its expanded reproduction, and they cannot do so. They are trying to recuperate, rapidly, and the only hope they have of confronting this crisis, which we do not have to explain here, is the proposal from the International Monetary Fund. And the worst thing for them is that there is no proof to be found anywhere that such a prescription has ever produced the results the bourgeoisie is hoping for.

They told us when the Extended Facility Agreement began that it would resolve the fundamental problems that were blocking the development of the economy. Those problems have now gotten worse. What's more, the deterioration of the living conditions of the population has accelerated.

The bourgeoisie today, drawing the lessons of the April experience, is making big efforts to persuade the people to resign themselves to having the boot at their throats, to tighten their belts and let the bourgeoisie recover its lost profit levels. The bourgeoisie is trying to prove that such sacrifices will benefit the people, but it hasn't managed to convince anyone of this. And it won't be able to, because life is giving the lie to the bourgeoisie's claims every day.

You see then that this problem of not having an alternative plan for confronting the crisis, not being able to prevent the masses' overwhelming rejection of the IMF policy, is keeping our bourgeoisie awake at night.

That is to say, capitalism has not been able to contain this crisis, nor have the people been able to tolerate it.

In that sense, it is probable that the illusions fostered by Peña Gómez³ about asking the bourgeoisie to pay for the crisis will not get very far, since the bourgeoisie is determined to

3. José Francisco Peña Gómez is mayor of Santo Domingo and general secretary of the ruling Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD). He generally attempts to distance himself from the unpopular policies of the government.

make the poor pay the cost of their crisis.

There is a consensus among us on the difficulty the bourgeoisie has in facing this new situation. At the same time, we are aware of the power and strength of the people's upsurge in April as an expression of protest. With those elements in mind, we could ask, Does this crisis really have characteristics indicating that it could bring to reality what we've been saying — that our revolution is imminent?

What April showed

For those who thought that April explosion was an accident, or just a *poblada* [riot] as Professor [Juan] Bosch [leader of the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD)] deprecatingly called it (as if it were a thunderstorm on a summer night that falls without warning), or that it was simply spontaneous, as others dismiss it, I have brought some data from an investigation carried out at the request of the Socialist Bloc's Political Commission, into the antecedents of that April explosion.

Owing to urgency we limited ourselves to a review of the written press, seeking there all reports of protest actions, all evidence of diverse expressions of struggle, as well as their forms and origins and the government's response.

We found the following: From May 1983 to May of this year, 1,423 popular protests were reported. Of these, the largest number involved the workers movement — 386. This is in response to those who were surprised at the role the workers federations have played in building the protests and leading the popular movement.

Next, 375 protests involving the peasant movement were reported. Those involving communities and barrios — 229 protests. Seventy were reported that involved women — a new sector that is emerging among the popular layers. While among the students, reflecting the bitter reality of a prolonged downturn, only 23 incidents of protest were reported.

But to better appreciate this, let's look at the cycles in which the protests unfolded. In May 1983, the first month of this summary, there were 151 popular protests; in September, 159; in November, 165. That was when the leadership of the Socialist Bloc raised the idea of a National Civic Strike, taking note of the fact that a tendency was developing that needed a reference point to bring the rising movement into focus. In March of this year, 185 protests were reported.

We have not only registered the protests, but also the official response. May 1983 saw 26 repressive actions aimed directly against popular sectors; in June, 28; in August — when the tale about the guerrilla school was circulated⁴ — there were 42; and in March of this year, 55.

That is, as the IMF policy was applied, popular protests mounted and repression did

also. That cycle was unfolding, and it was that dialectic that gave rise to the crisis in April of this year.

This alone explains how, without a national coordinating structure, without a leadership representative of the diverse layers of the people, without anyone preparing the outbreak on that day, the beautiful cry of Capotillo filled the country like a dust storm in a single morning.⁵ In other words, there was a generalized readiness among the popular sectors through which clear opposition and rejection of the government's economic policy came to be expressed.

The left's presence

Meanwhile, what was the left doing during this entire year?

Notice that we began our investigation in May 1983, one of the early months of the IMF policy. Those were months of propaganda, months of a lot of commotion. We began in May because by then an inflationary trend in the prices of necessary goods was making itself felt very directly, but also because the Dominican Left Front was constituted one month later, in June. One of the factors that favored the establishment of the FID, besides the common critical consciousness present in the movement, was the evident tendency toward the development of the popular struggle.

The left then initiated a campaign clarifying the meaning of the IMF, making the IMF the main target, making it a slogan. I recall that the campaign began right here in this headquarters on Feb. 26, 1983, with a seminar on the effects and consequences of the agreement with the International Monetary Fund.

But the left did not stop there. It built protests in towns and entire regions — in the northeast, the southeast, here in the capital. Important organizing efforts with marches, picket lines. It encouraged all the popular organizations to get involved. When the government tried to blackmail us with the so-called guerrilla school, we responded by saying we supported the protests, we were going to organize them and we understood that we had to keep doing so.

So the left was continually making clear its support for the popular protests. Some of the mobilizations organized by the left or supported by it were in a certain sense the forerunners, the examples that helped the Dominican people to know how to respond to the enemy on April 23, 24, and 25.

A process under way

That April explosion therefore makes it possible to perceive a tendency that is present in Dominican society in the midst of this crisis. One can confidently draw out some considerations on the prospects of the expansion and development of this tendency in the future.

You know that no sooner had the masses

taken to the streets than the government responded as if the country had been invaded. Massacres were carried out against a population that had not fired a single shot, that had not felled a single soldier — an obviously unarmed population. Despite that, it took more than 60 hours to impose order in this country — to impose it with 100 killed, more than 500 wounded, and 4,000 prisoners in less than 72 hours' time.

What these facts indicate is that there is a very deepgoing process under way here. Despite the force of that explosion, everyone shares the president's judgment that "the worst is yet to come." But everyone also knows that we are on the threshold of "the worst." In that sense the government has simply stated with the current persecutions that it is ready to proceed to the worst and is preparing for it.

That is why the government cooked up and embellished the story about the guerrilla school. It has also organized a clandestine group, the so-called "February 27 Nucleus," which uses reports prepared by the National Investigations Department in order to accuse the Cuban and Nicaraguan governments and sectors of the left of organizing the protests that they know very well their own economic policy has generated. They don't yet dare to make the accusation directly, but all indications point in that direction. They are using the usual front men to leak official reports in that sense.

Yesterday we were in the Senate, advising that chamber of the left's concerns about the mounting repression. One of the senators told us that this government has said that the Dominican Left Front received \$3.5 million from Fidel Castro. In that way they are sowing in official circles the notion that there is an international conspiracy, seeking to cover up the real source of the April protests.

But the course of this crisis also has its effects inside the government. The tensions between the regime and the bourgeoisie have been growing. The honeymoon that had existed between the Government of National Concentration and the National Council of Businessmen has been affected by many tensions, because reordering the Dominican economy by means of the IMF's plans calls for, and is already causing, certain sacrifices on the part of some bourgeois sectors in order to favor others.

Differences between the Senate and the Executive branch are deeper now than at any other time. Furthermore, there are deepening divisions inside the official party itself, and between that party and the government, as a result of the repression and their inability to satisfy a single one of the most elementary needs of the population. All this indicates that we have a government that at this moment has neither legislative chambers on which it can rely, nor a party that can back it up with authority and mass support, nor any guarantee that the existence of political democracy, however restricted, can withstand the conse-

4. Peña Gómez circulated allegations in mid-1983 that the FID had set up a military training school for guerrillas. The National Police used this claim to detain more than 50 FID activists.

5. Capotillo is the working-class neighborhood of Santo Domingo where the April 1984 rebellion was initiated.

quences of the economic policy it is carrying out.

In a situation such as this, taking into account the fact that none of the bourgeois factions is presenting any alternative different from that of the IMF (since even though they protest in order to take advantage of the government's helplessness, neither the Reformist Party nor Wessin nor even the PLD have any alternative to the IMF),⁶ there is arising from this crisis a growing popular rebelliousness accompanied by serious divisions among the ruling sectors.

But as we said, the worst is yet to come. The worst is now on the way, and the government is preparing for it.

The worst, they say, will come with the rise in prices of all petroleum derivatives, gasoline in particular. And in connection with this gasoline hike, plans are afoot to intimidate the people. The military is occupying the countryside; special forces have been brought into the cities, supposedly for training; and revolutionary and popular activists face persecution, raids on their homes, illegal detentions that violate the constitution, release followed by fresh persecution, and innumerable similar attacks.

In this way as well the security forces are making efforts to find out how their victims protect themselves, seeking the hiding places of the left activists, how they function, and so on, with the aim of putting the security forces in position to carry out at any moment a massacre with a single blow, Jakarta-style,⁷ thereby eliminating in a massive way the political and popular leaders.

We denounced this plan in early June. At that time we indicated the jail where the initial groups were being trained for this dirty plan of political repression. We denounced the fact that the official with perhaps the most influence in this government, Minister of the Presidency Hatuey De Camps, was involved in these plans.

So far as we know, no official spokesperson has responded to our revelations in any form. They have evidently found it convenient not to clarify this repulsive affair.

So the government is both preparing the worst and preparing for the worst. What the government is preparing is a criminal escalation against the people, both economically and politically. Economically, the agreement with the IMF and all the hunger, poverty, and death this entails. Politically, liquidating what still remains of democracy and installing terror pure and simple as the form of domination. In that way the regime would eliminate, in passing, the only element of state legitimacy it

currently possesses — its so-called "democratic institutionality."

And the worst the government is preparing for is the inevitable popular protest: the rebellion of the hungry and oppressed masses of workers, peasants, unemployed, women, and youth, who will combine in the powerful, generalized explosion that will open the doors to revolution.

And the revolution, undoubtedly, in the present circumstances of our country, given the panorama and its prospects, is not only obviously necessary, eventually possible, but even historically imminent.

We are living through a prerevolutionary period

This is a prolonged crisis for which the bourgeoisie has no solution. That is, we are going to go on suffering the effects that we can now see and others still to come.

I pointed out earlier that to place petroleum products on the parallel market is a provocation that will plunge this country into a state of emergency, a sort of civil war. The people cannot accept the consequences of such a measure, which would raise the prices of all consumer goods. To place petroleum on the parallel market is going to exacerbate the industrial paralysis and even the paralysis of agricultural production.

In these circumstances, only a lunatic could believe that this country is going to passively accept the continuation of the economic policies the IMF has imposed. We are clearly facing the facts. No one can have any illusions about halting the crisis at its current level, much less improving the situation. In other words, there is no chance of creating illusions that the economic situation can remain as it is at present.

We should recall here that revolutions are heroic actions, extreme actions that peoples arrive at through struggle, when they have no other options left. The masses do not support revolutionary action unless they have the profound conviction that it is the only door left open to them by life, the only door through which they can pass not only to go on living but to substantially improve their conditions of existence.

And we are now reaching a dead end, they are cornering us, as I said at the beginning, just like the Nazis did to the Jews in the gas chambers. Here the gallows are the skyrocketing prices of food and medicine; the massive and mounting unemployment; the terrible shortages of housing and clothing; the loss of opportunities, prospects, and hopes; hunger and ill-health — in sum, acute misery — all of which is sending thousands of Dominicans to their graves.

In a situation such as this, knowing that the government has decided to press on because it conceives no other possibility than to try to suppress the population with blood and fire in order to impose its measures, the people are not all going to die, nor will they accept these measures.

This is not a people that has the patience of Job. This is not a people prone to resignation. In fact, one thing the people drew from April was confidence in their own power and the understanding that they can count only on their own power.

From the show of struggle the people have continued to put up, from the level of organization that exists in the country, from the consciousness the revolutionary movement has of the gravity of the crisis and of its own limitations and potential, I conclude that it is not illusory to think that the Dominican left can act on the understanding that we are moving toward a definitive and transcendental moment, that this is an obviously prerevolutionary stage.

I have said on earlier occasions — at our consultative conference last March 11, for example — that this generation of revolutionaries has been presented with an exceptional historic opportunity. Never before have there coincided such a profound crisis of the old order without possibility of recovery and with a bourgeoisie without alternatives; a popular movement on the rise; an evident development of the social forces of change; a left front that opens the way to overcoming great weaknesses and deficiencies among the revolutionary ranks — the material conditions, consciousness, and overall opportunities that make a revolutionary explosion both possible and necessary.

At a time such as this, being deeply conscious of the level of antagonism present in our society, seeing the organized development of the popular forces, and placing things in their appropriate regional context, we are profoundly convinced that this political generation can confidently speak of the possibility of power being within our grasp.

We speak of the possibility of making the revolution because the majority of the population has taken a stance of resistance and has been learning through their own experiences the limitations of the state and the nature of the ruling party. It is certain that no one is going to lead them astray with false hopes. We've had 12 years of Reformist Party rule and six years of the PRD, and we are worse off than when we started. What's more, there is no possibility of creating illusions that things can get better.

We are reaching a point where the material conditions for the revolution are mature. The counterrevolution cannot turn back. Capitalism has no alternative but to press forward, but in applying its policies it only incites broader and broader resistance, provokes confrontation, and places the people in a situation where they have to organize for their own survival.

It is in this dramatic moment that we are immersed. The worst is arriving for many peoples of Latin America, and never before has the basis for the revolution been so present in Latin America as it is now.

Therefore, we believe that we are on the crest of a revolutionary wave. Sometimes the

6. The Reformist Party, led by ex-President Joaquín Balaguer, is the principal capitalist opposition party. Gen. Elías Wessin y Wessin led the military junta that took power on the defeat of the April 1965 revolution. He is now the leader of a far-right party.

7. The reference is to the October 1965 massacre of the Communist Party of Indonesia in which more than 300,000 were killed.

actors who participate in a historic event do not grasp its significance until much later.

I have said that in 1804, with the independence of Haiti and the freeing of the slaves there, the process of Latin American independence began. It culminated, we could say, in the Congress of Panama in 1825. In 20 years' time the new political map of Latin America was almost complete.

Now we have another chance to see a cycle of social emancipation, despite Reagan's arrogance, despite the establishment of a multinational military force in the English Caribbean, despite the defeat in Grenada. Every day the base of support for U.S. capitalism is reduced further among the social forces of this region.

Thus imperialism has not been able to turn back the Salvadoran forces. It has not been able to contain the progressive advance of the Sandinista revolution. It has not managed to annihilate the resistance in Guatemala or to block the struggle and unity of all the region's organizations. And to the extent that that process of imperialist aggression unfolds, the greater will be the unity of the other side, unity of a kind never before achieved in this Caribbean region.

Not only are the popular sectors and revolutionary forces unifying among themselves in this region, but also among the people of the United States forces are coming forward to challenge the system there, forces able to go beyond their borders to come and strengthen the current of continental unity against imperialist might. We have an example of this in the delegation that has joined us here.⁸

I believe, therefore, that we are living through a time of deep historical significance. That we are, as I said, on the crest of a revolutionary wave that is going to sweep away the power of capital in more than one Caribbean country.

The Caribbean today is the point of greatest U.S. military concentration in the world. But it is also the zone where the antagonisms are deepest and where there exists perhaps the most generalized resistance.

And in this Caribbean, we understand that the Dominican Republic is the weakest link in the chain of imperialist domination, and that this, our society, is the one closest to being transformed.

The value of revolutionary unity

In such a situation, I place high value on what unity efforts represent. I value this because we have managed to overcome very strong resistance that kept us divided for a long time. We have managed to understand — as the delegate from Spain said — that the starting point has to be what unites us, that there is much more that divides us, but that working along the lines we have in common we can resolve the differences that still separate us, con-

8. Present at the Socialist Bloc congress was a delegation from the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, including SWP vice-presidential candidate Andrea González.

sidering ourselves what we are indeed — comrades.

This process of left unity has enabled us to attain a Political Accord, a little government program, an idea of the power that we are seeking in this country. This process has been advancing through the coordination inside the popular movement of forces that were so contradictory in the past — the PTD, the PCD, the Socialist Bloc, the Trotskyist currents. A new united version of the revolutionary forces has come into existence, now that we are conscious that the people are, in a way, up against the wall, with a bandit aiming at their head.

Under such conditions there is no room either for sectarianism or for vacillations, because we are obliged to choose: either resist or be smashed.

And it is with that spirit and that conviction that the conditions are present here for understanding that it is necessary to face up to the possibility of the revolution as an imminent question, that we consider this left unity can effectively put itself at the head of that process. We do not hide this — we proclaim it, fully aware of what it means to take on that responsibility inside the revolutionary movement.

The Socialist Bloc is a historical synthesis. Here there are people who come out of the fighting generation of 1946; who took part in the anti-Trujillo resistance of 1959; from the 1963 guerrilla movement; from the April [1965] patriotic war; from the resistance to Balaguer; people who accompanied Caamaño.⁹ There are people who come out of the workers movement, the peasant movement; and there are religious people who radicalized. Nonetheless, we are fully aware of our limitations, and we have never fostered any other notion than the idea that only the unity of the revolutionaries can form the vanguard. Such unity allows us to work in a single direction toward definite, shared objectives.

The left, viewed in that way, has sufficient resources in the workers movement, the peas-

9. Col. Francisco Caamaño was a leader of the April 1965 revolution and was killed in early 1973 while leading a small guerrilla force in the mountains of the Dominican Republic.

ant movement, among the intellectuals, among women, in international work, in research. Viewed in that way, in a tendency toward unity, the left has sufficient resources to constitute a revolutionary leadership that can lead this people in a deepgoing struggle for political power.

We understand this to be possible because of the confidence we have in the unity so far achieved and because of the tendency toward deepening this unity. The fusion process does not end with this congress; fusion is going to continue. We will have to fuse further with these forces that make up the Dominican Left Front and with others that are not in the front.

Another April is coming

Comrades, it seldom happens that a revolution is announced, but I believe that it is fitting for the congress of the Socialist Bloc to announce the Dominican revolution. We believe that the revolution is possible and should be announced.

I said at a rally in Salcedo when unveiling a portrait of the person I consider the spiritual mother of Dominican revolutionaries, Minerva Mirabal,¹⁰ that another April will surely come, with arms. Another April will come with revolutionary unity and with a program. Another April, not by surprise but an expected one. Thus I think that when we speak of April we should no longer talk about a commemoration but rather of a road, because that is what April is — the road to the Dominican revolution.

To conclude, I want to tell you that the April road is going to be traversed by the Dominican left to the final victory, without halting the march from this time on, because we are heading in a united way toward that victory.

This congress, which we said is an event that is on the eve, will perhaps be remembered for this — for our having dared to announce what a group of revolutionary men and women share: *Another April is on the way.* □

10. Minerva Mirabal was a leading organizer of the clandestine June 14 Movement during the Trujillo dictatorship. She and her two sisters were killed by the government.

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