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Vol. 22, No. 18

October 1, 1984

USA \$1.25 UK 50p

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Miners rallying outside Trades Union Congress in Brighton.

International Solidarity With NUM

Vatican draws line against aiding revolution

By Doug Jenness

On September 3, the Vatican took another major step in its campaign against the Nicaraguan revolution and the revolutionary movements in El Salvador and other Latin American countries. The form of this political attack was a 36-page document prepared by the Catholic hierarchy's Sacred Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. Titled "Instructions on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation,'" it was published by order of Pope John Paul II.

The statement was made public the day before a delegation from Nicaragua's revolutionary government was to arrive in Rome to discuss the sharpening conflict between the Sandinista regime and the top church hierarchy.

The issues in this conflict include the pope's public call on four Nicaraguan priests to resign their posts in the revolutionary government and Archbishop of Managua Miguel Obando y Bravo's role in supporting CIA-backed counterrevolutionaries.

The top clergy's aid to the *contras* was exposed in June when Father Luis Amado Peña was caught red-handed participating in a terrorist underground network against the government. The following month, 10 foreign priests were expelled from the country for participating in an illegal march organized by Obando and the capitalist parties in support of the terrorist priest.

Although the Vatican's recent statement does not mention Nicaragua or El Salvador by name and much of the argumentation is presented in a theological framework, the intention is clear. It is designed to reinforce the pope's attack on the four priests in the Nicaraguan government and to bolster the stand of the archbishop of El Salvador, Arturo Rivera y Damas, who has ordered five priests to quit the revolutionary guerrilla organizations in that country.

It is a warning to all Catholic clergy and lay people not to get involved in the revolutionary struggles of working people or support "totalitarian and atheistic regimes" that have come to power by "violent and revolutionary means."

'Marxist deviations'

The focus of the Vatican's statement is the alleged "Marxist deviations" of some members of the Catholic clergy and a layer of Catholic church members who reduce the "gospel of salvation to an earthly gospel."

The declaration contends, "Impatience and a desire for results has led certain Christians, despairing of every other method, to turn to what they call 'Marxist analysis.'" This has led them "to accept a series of positions which are

incompatible with the Christian vision of humanity."

The Vatican's defenders of the "true faith" single out several aspects of Marxism as especially abhorrent:

- Marxists, they charge, contend that "only those who engage in the struggle can work out the analysis correctly. The only true consciousness, then, is the partisan consciousness."

- Marxists recognize "the proletarian class invested with its mission in history." The "liberation theologians," it is argued, make "a disastrous confusion between the poor of the Scripture and the proletariat of Marx. In this way they pervert the Christian meaning of the poor, and they transform the fight for the rights of the poor into a class fight within the ideological perspective of the class struggle."

- Marxists, they say, advocate "the overthrow by means of revolutionary violence of structures which generate violence." This does not lead to justice, as shown by the "totalitarian and atheistic regimes which came to power by violent and revolutionary means, precisely in the name of liberation of the people."

The meaning is clear. Recognizing that the class struggle exists and giving "partisan" support to the working class in that struggle is against church doctrine. Workers and peasants who take power through revolutionary action do not deserve support, only condemnation.

The Vatican also levels its artillery against the "people's churches."

In many Latin American countries, Catholic clergy and lay people have been organizing religious groupings in the poor urban *barrios* and villages outside the institutional framework of the Catholic church. These formations are often called "Christian base communities," and occasionally are referred to collectively as the "people's church." In Brazil, some 80,000 such communities are estimated to exist. The activities of these groups vary a great deal, but many are involved in political action. In Nicaragua formations of this type participated in the struggle to overthrow Somoza's capitalist regime and continue to support the revolutionary workers and farmers government.

The Vatican's declaration asserts that the proponents of "liberation theology" "mean by the Church of the People a church of the class, a church of the oppressed people whom it is necessary to 'conscientize' in the light of the organized struggle for freedom. For some, the people, thus understood, even become the objects of faith."

That the "Christian base communities" are generally organized outside the official church structures and therefore further away from the

pope's "divine rule" is especially a matter of concern to the Vatican. "All priests, religious and lay people," the statement instructs, who want to work for justice "will do so in communion with their bishop and with the church. . . ."

Imperialist press blesses pope

The Vatican's pronouncement was immediately hailed by the money changers in the imperialist citadels. The *Wall Street Journal*, in its usual pithy way, got right to the point in a September 5 editorial. "Having seen the consequences of liberation theology himself during his visit to Nicaragua," the editors wrote, "John Paul II clearly decided that it was long past time for the charade to stop."

From London, the September 4 issue of the *Daily Telegraph* gave its blessing. The pope, the editors wrote, has "issued a severe reproof to those who persist in employing strict Marxist analysis. . . . The Church rightfully calls upon the rich to show charity and justice in their dealings with the poor; but it cannot bless the elimination of the bourgeoisie. . . ."

The *Times* of London, while welcoming the Vatican's instructions, thinks that they are late. Marxist ideas "have power, and they are also espoused by other champions of the poor in Latin America outside the Church. Some transfer of ideas was almost bound to follow, all the more so as the Church had no rival sociological ideas of equivalent persuasive and analytical power. The Holy See has nevertheless left it too long to be able to halt these developments. It has woken up rather late to what is now being described as a serious threat to the integrity of the faith."

Marxism's appeal

The *Times*, in its own way, puts its finger on a key point — the attractiveness of Marxist ideas. Marxism's appeal has become increasingly great to a wide layer of working people in Latin America struggling against military dictatorship and abysmal social conditions.

As they learn that reforms of the existing capitalist system cannot resolve the immense social, economic, and political problems, they come to realize that a full social revolution is needed. They recognize what Marxists have explained for 140 years — that society is divided between exploited and exploiting classes and only revolutionary action by the exploited can bring social progress.

Particularly important in shaping the thinking of millions of political activists in Latin America have been the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions. The magnificent achievements of working people, and their Marxist leaders, in these two countries have helped stimulate interest in and support for Marxism. These revolutions have enhanced the authority of Marxism as the guide for working people to eliminate imperialist oppression and capitalist exploitation.

Gustavo Gutiérrez, a Catholic theologian from Peru and prominent proponent of "liberation theology," has written that in Latin Amer-

ica, "The Cuban revolution has played a catalytic role. With certain qualifications, this revolution serves as a dividing point for the recent political history of Latin America."

The advances of the working class, in spite of the pope's rejection of the class struggle as a "myth," are what explain the cleavage in the Catholic church in Latin America. Under this very real material pressure, some members of the Catholic clergy who, in their class origins and day-to-day life are closer to the toilers, have been getting involved to one degree or another in the revolutionary struggle.

A few join revolutionary organizations that are engaged in armed combat; some become active supporters of the revolutionary movement. Most are worried that the church will totally lose its influence over Catholic workers and peasants if adjustments are not made in church doctrine and institutions.

Reflects impact of class struggle

The emergence in the past 20 years of "liberation theology" reflects the impact of the class struggle on the thinking of a layer of the Catholic clergy. It does not represent a single coherent doctrine. For some, it is an attempt to reconcile their religious views with participation in the class struggle and with Marxism. For many it is an attempt to convince workers that they can be religious and revolutionary activists, even socialists, at the same time. However, it is not a revolutionary theory that can guide the class struggle or deserves workers' consideration.

The religious beliefs of the "liberation theologians" do not help shed light on class exploitation or on the road forward for working people. Rather it is through their class-struggle experiences that working people shake off the various forms of mystification, including religion, that are widespread under class society.

The Catholic hierarchy, however, cannot tolerate a situation where some members of the clergy join the revolutionary struggle to eliminate capitalism and adapt to aspects of Marxism. Catholic priests or lay people who justify revolution rather than reform and class struggle rather than class collaboration and, worst of all, actively participate in the revolutionary process, are not properly fulfilling the social function prescribed for them by the Vatican.

The Catholic hierarchy is a rock of support for the world imperialist system, and its doctrines and activities are geared to defending and preserving this system. That is the reactionary role the Vatican expects its priests to carry out throughout the world.

Since John Paul II was installed in 1978, he has been one of the most politically active popes, crisscrossing the globe to counter the growing popularity of revolutionary ideas and to bolster reactionary capitalist regimes. In March 1983, for example, he toured Central America and the Caribbean where he campaigned against revolutionary action, armed guerrilla struggles, and "collectivist" systems and supported the call for sham elections in El Salvador.

His visit to Nicaragua brought out the largest mobilization of the revolution's opponents to date. He used this opportunity to publicly attack the Sandinista government and the Catholic priests serving in it.

As *New York Times* reporter Walter Goodman aptly put it in a recent article, "The effort

to compete with Marxist regimes for the allegiance of the poor has been a mark of John Paul's tenure."

And this is one competition that the Catholic hierarchy cannot win any more than the imperialist masters it serves can forever maintain their domination. □

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Intercontinental Press specializes in political analysis and interpretation of events of particular interest to the labor, socialist, colonial independence, Black, and women's liberation movements.

Signed articles represent the views of the authors, which may not necessarily coincide with those of Intercontinental Press. Insofar as it reflects editorial opinion, unsigned material stands on the program of the Fourth International.

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INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS (ISSN 0162-5594) is published every other Monday except the first in January and the third and fourth in August for \$30 per year by Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

To Subscribe: For one-year subscriptions in the U.S. or Canada send US\$30.00. Subscription correspondence should be addressed to: Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Telephone: (212) 929-6933.

For airmail subscriptions to Britain, Ireland, and continental Europe send US\$40.00 for one year; US\$20.00 for six months. Write for subscription rates to all other countries.

For air-speeded subscriptions to Australia: Write to New International Publications, P.O. Box 37, Leichhardt, N.S.W. 2040. In New Zealand: Write to Socialist Books, P.O. Box 8852, Auckland.

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

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

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

Tories win big in elections

NDP resists sweep, makes gains in Ontario

[The following editorial appeared in the September 10 issue of *Socialist Voice*, a fortnightly newspaper published in Montreal that reflects the views of the Revolutionary Workers League, Canadian section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

At the start of the election campaign Brian Mulroney — now the newly elected Conservative Prime Minister — swore that if he won office “tens upon tens of thousands of jobs [would be] created just as quickly as a new government can be sworn in.”

Hundreds of thousands of workers and unemployed were prepared to believe he would deliver on that promise. It was this hope, combined with mounting opposition to the Liberal government's disastrous policies, that in large part explains the Conservative's sweeping victory in the September 4 federal elections. The Tories won 50 percent of the vote and an overwhelming 211 out of 282 seats in the House of Commons.

(This compared to an unprecedented drop in Liberal support to 28 percent and only 40 seats. The New Democratic Party's 19 percent — 30 seats — was far more than any pre-election predictions, and only marginally less than in the 1980 election.)

But Mulroney's fine-sounding promises are a fake and a fraud.

While both [former Prime Minister John] Turner and Mulroney were elected leaders of their respective parties by advocating a sharp shift to the right, both quickly found they could not openly proclaim such right-wing policies and hope to win the election.

So it was that the *Financial Post* cynically explained that both politicians only said whatever was necessary “to get their party . . . elected. If this means avoiding the issues and concentrating on image, so be it. After all, to implement policy you must be in office first.”

Implement what policy?

The country's major financial newspaper laid out the Tories' real program. It quoted M.E. Nesmith, a B.C. [British Columbia] banker: “The fact that Canada has ‘lived beyond its means’ for decades is the single most pressing issue facing the incoming government.” This problem can only be solved through providing substantially “fewer government services in critical areas” such as health, education, and welfare. At the same time “substantial tax increases” will be needed to cover increased expenditures for the military and for government handouts to business.

Not only will this mean a “lowering of living standards” for working people, Nesmith ad-

mits. It will require a massive assault against unions and democratic rights to break the inevitable popular resistance.

Combined with their assault at home, the Canadian ruling class must also continue to work together with the U.S. and other imperialist powers to crush revolutionary struggles abroad that threaten their international profit system. That, too, is a vital part of the Tories' plans.

They've already called for Canada to play a larger military and political role in helping maintain “the balance of terror,” as Sinclair Stevens, Tory foreign policy spokesperson, bluntly puts it. Above all, he's insisted, that means more open support for the U.S. war in Central America against Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Beneath the glib rhetoric and false promises, a single incident cut through the tissue of lies and revealed what the elections were really all about. On September 2 Mulroney was confronted by a demonstration of angry steelworkers near Labrador City. Many were among the 1,200 miners laid off by the Iron Ore Company of Canada when the Tory leader was its president.

Shouting “Jobs! Jobs!” the workers carried a homemade sign which read, “Brian supports the shareholders not the workers.” (Mulroney and his fellow directors had skimmed \$225 million [\$1.00 Canadian = US\$0.76] out of their mine in Schefferville, Quebec, in the two years before declaring it bankrupt in 1982.)

A furious Mulroney tried to shout the workers down, accusing them of being “malcontents” who had no gratitude for the “generosity” he had supposedly shown them as he laid them off.

“We got screwed” and workers across the country “will get screwed twice as bad” if Mulroney becomes prime minister, countered union president Cal Luedder.

In order to fight against the antilabor politics of both Mulroney and Turner, large numbers of workers in English Canada turned to the NDP in the elections. That support, the fact that the NDP withstood the Tory tide and even won new support in several English-Canadian industrial areas were all a reflection of a deepening class polarization.

While many former NDP voters switched to the Conservatives, thousands of others decided to vote NDP for the first time.

That was also true in Quebec, although to a lesser extent. There many workers told *Socialist Voice* they were voting NDP, despite their strong disagreement with its leadership's opposition to Quebec's national rights, because “it's a union party.”

For the past year English-Canadian workers have been bombarded by a massive ruling-class propaganda campaign aimed at convincing them to abandon the NDP and place their trust in “refurbished” Liberal and Tory parties “committed to change.”

The bosses' political offensive also sought to persuade the working class that such change could be brought about at the ballot box rather than through struggle.

But it's all been a cynical con game. The truth is that the election changes nothing. Not only will the Mulroney government continue on the same anti-working-class and anti-Québécois road as the Liberals — it will deepen it.

It will take powerful mass actions by labor and its allies to beat back the capitalist offensive. And a political battle to install a government that acts in our interests.

But that was not the strategy advanced by the NDP or union leaderships. NDP Leader Ed Broadbent insisted that the NDP was not presenting itself as a governmental alternative to the bosses' parties. It merely hoped to elect a sufficient number of MPs to “keep the old-line parties honest” — as if that were possible. Nor did he advance a program to unite workers and farmers in English Canada and Quebec in a common fight for government.

Broadbent didn't even make a serious effort to campaign in Quebec. Instead he insisted he was in complete agreement with the anti-Quebec policies of the Liberals and Tories while remaining silent on the fight for francophone rights in English Canada.

The procapitalist policies of both the NDP and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) were expressed in a full-page ad they ran in the magazine *Canadian Labour*. The banner headline said: “It's time big business went to work for ordinary Canadians.”

Just what work big business is carrying out could be seen through the *escalating attacks* “ordinary Canadians” faced right during the elections. Three provincial governments — all supporters of Mulroney — sharply stepped up their antilabor attacks. The B.C. government outlawed strikes by B.C.'s construction workers on the Expo 86 site; the Ontario Tories declared a Toronto transit strike illegal; and the Parti Québécois froze Quebec construction workers' wages.

In the face of such attacks, both the CLC and federal NDP leaderships remained silent. No component put forward any serious proposals for resistance. To complete the picture, CLC President Dennis McDermott even hailed the Tory victory as a chance for a new era of progress and cooperation between labor and government.

If anything the policies of Quebec's labor leaders are even more openly counterposed to the fight for working-class political power.

While the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN) refused to call for a vote for the NDP, the Québec Federation of Labour's (FTQ) last-minute support was purely token.

In fact both leaderships echoed the Parti Québécois and strongly hinted that workers should vote Tory to defeat the Liberals. They too applauded Mulroney's victory.

Nonetheless, thousands of Quebec workers voted NDP, refusing to go along with this open capitulation to one of the two major parties of Canadian imperialism. The NDP won 9 percent of the Quebec vote and more than that in key industrial ridings [electoral districts] where, in many cases, it ran union candidates.

Labor now needs a serious discussion on the long-term strategy needed by working people in both English Canada and Quebec to defeat

big-business rule and fight for political power. That discussion has barely begun.

Meanwhile, however, bosses and the provincial governments are pushing ahead with their attacks. And workers should expect and prepare for the worst from the Mulroney government.

First and foremost working people need to stand up and fight off these attacks. Because ultimately it's the fighting response of the workers movement and its allies that will determine how far the assault will go. The outcome of these grand battles was not settled at all with the September 4 vote. □

see such a government in action on his recent trip to Nicaragua. "To fight for a workers and farmers government, working people here need to build their own party, a party like the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. That's the kind of party the RWL is building — a revolutionary party based on and fighting for the interests of the workers and their allies."

In English Canada, the RWL supports and builds the NDP as a mass labor party, while fighting within it for a genuine class-struggle program and strategy.

In contrast to English Canada, the NDP's links with the labor movement in Quebec are very weak. There the RWL supports the formation of a militant, fighting labor party based on the Quebec unions. Such a party would help unite the diverse struggles underway, and most importantly, allow working people to develop a common political perspective in the fight for a workers' and farmers government.

During the election campaign, Dugré reported, "we've found there are small but important layers of militants in Quebec who are discussing this need to organize on the political level."

"In the absence of a labor party today in Quebec, a significant layer of Québécois workers has decided to vote for the NDP this time around," Dugré reported. The RWL also decided to call for an NDP vote in Quebec in all but the two ridings where the RWL is running. Such a vote is positive precisely because the NDP is a labor-based party.

"This motion on the part of Quebec workers shows that a small but important number of them are looking for a political road to fight against the federal government. It indicates their desire to ally with workers in English Canada. This is key because it's those workers who have the greatest interest in fighting with we Québécois against the bosses and their federal government."

Those Quebec workers who do vote for the NDP in these elections are in fact rejecting the disastrous policy promoted by the Parti Québécois — that they back the Conservatives.

The Montreal rally also heard a taped message from Jean-Claude Boucher, one of seven farmers then on a hunger strike. Joseph Leonard and Joseph Jean Philippe, leaders of the Montreal Black Taxi Drivers Collective, described their fight against racism, and Larry Johnston, RWL candidate in Ontario's Lincoln riding, spoke on women's fight for abortion rights.

Jean-Guy Berubé spoke on behalf of the Student Education and Research Center, a group of militants in the National Students Association of Quebec. He explained that they were calling on students and young people to vote for the RWL.

The final speaker was SWP vice-presidential candidate Andrea González. González is a Puerto Rican who lives in the U.S. Puerto Rico is a Spanish-speaking colony of the U.S.

González began her remarks in French. "It's difficult for me [to speak French]," she said,

Rallies wind up RWL campaign

Socialists explain need for class-struggle program

By Gary Kettner

[The following article appeared in the September 10 issue of *Socialist Voice*, a fortnightly newspaper published in Montreal that reflects the views of the Revolutionary Workers League, Canadian section of the Fourth International.]

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Campaign rallies in Montreal, Vancouver, and Toronto were the highlight of the final, busy weeks of the Revolutionary Workers League federal election campaign. The five RWL candidates and their supporters campaigned at plant gates and on picket lines, explaining the socialist program and selling *Socialist Voice* and *Lutte ouvrière*.

In late August, the RWL candidates were joined by Mel Mason and Andrea González, presidential and vice-presidential candidates of the Socialist Workers Party, the U.S. sister party of the RWL.

The tours by González and Mason to B.C. [British Columbia], Ontario, and Quebec were a continuation of the socialist campaign on both sides of the border to overcome artificial divisions and promote unity between workers in different countries.

That internationalist solidarity was a theme of the Vancouver campaign rally held August 18. Mel Mason told the 75 people present that "U.S. and Canadian workers must support each other because we have the same enemy — the rich."

He recalled the impact of Québécois nationalist Pierre Vallières' book *White Niggers of America* on members of the Black Panther Party in the late 1960s. Mason, a former Black Panther himself, emphasized his support for the struggle of the Québécois which, he said, "is central to Canadian politics just like the Black struggle is central to U.S. politics."

Katy LeRougetel, RWL candidate in Blainville-Deux-Montagnes, outside Montreal, spent five days in Vancouver, campaigning with Mason and Bill Burgess, the RWL candi-

date who challenged John Turner in Vancouver-Quadra. LeRougetel explained the need for working people in English Canada and Quebec to unite and fight for a government of the NDP and the Quebec labor movement in Ottawa.

A lasting alliance between workers in both nations is indispensable to the struggle to get rid of Canadian capitalism, LeRougetel explained. And, she stressed, this alliance can only be built if English-Canadian workers support Quebec's fight for national liberation.

Michel Dugré, RWL candidate in the Montreal riding [electoral district] of Bourassa, developed the same themes in an August 25 speech in Montreal. Dugré, a garment worker, spoke to more than 50 people at a rally that also marked the opening of the RWL's new Montreal offices.

"The federal elections are like a puppet show," he began. "Everybody's watching the puppets. But it's the people holding the strings that are running the show. The people with the real power in this country aren't Mulroney and Turner: they are called Charles Bronfman, Conrad Black, and Paul Desmarais. It's the heads of the giant banks and corporations that have the power. They run the country. Turner and Mulroney are just their well-paid employees."

Dugré explained that there is no real difference between the two capitalist parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives. "Either a Turner or a Mulroney government will apply and deepen the same antiworker, anti-Québécois, prowar policies that Trudeau started."

"The ruling class says that politics means voting every four years. But those who hold the real power were never elected." The elections, Dugré argued, "will change nothing. The big question remains: how can we get a new type of government that works in our interests, not for the wealthy but for those who create the wealth — workers and farmers?"

Dugré explained that he had had a chance to

"but important. As a Puerto Rican I know that the language question is not secondary." Describing the failure of Washington's efforts to impose the use of English in Puerto Rico since its conquest in 1898, González expressed confidence that the Québécois will prevail over Ottawa's attacks on the French language.

A week earlier, on August 18, González was in Toronto, where she spoke to about 50 people at a rally for Larry Johnston and Bonnie Geddes, RWL candidate in York Center. González described how the recent Olympic games have been used to whip up U.S. chauvinism and patriotism in order to prepare U.S. working people for a further escalation of the war in Central America.

Geddes slammed the Canadian government's complicity with the U.S.-led war drive. "Turner and Mulroney would have us believe that Canada is a peace-loving country. But the real story is very different. Canada plays soft cop to the U.S. hard cop; but it's still a cop."

The advance of the revolution in Central America threatens Canadian imperialist interests which are concentrated in the region. "Noranda Mines has operations in Guatemala. Their mines in Nicaragua have been nationalized." Alcan, where Geddes works, has investments in Jamaica, Guyana, and South Africa.

"In Canada and Quebec," Geddes told the rally, "our class is more and more determined to fight back to defend our unions and our living standards. There is a growing awareness that we have the same enemy as the people of Central America. That makes us allies. Even more, having the same enemy makes us one and the same."

Building solidarity with workers in struggle — whether abroad or here at home — was central to the RWL's campaign. High on the list was support to Britain's embattled coal miners.

During the campaign the RWL candidates actively built support for a series of other battles. Picket lines of Retail and Wholesale unionists on a 14-month strike in Vancouver, of Canada Packers' workers, and of locked-out Vancouver bus drivers were amongst the many the socialists visited.

In contrast to the flowing verbal support of most other candidates, the RWL championed the *actual struggles* women are waging today — especially for abortion rights and affirmative action.

In Montreal the RWL built support for struggling farmers, Blacks fighting racism, youth against unemployment, and the vanguard workers at Marine Industries in Sorel, Quebec.

"It's struggles like these that must continue after these elections," commented Larry Johnston. He urged all those who agreed with the ideas advanced by the RWL campaign not to sit back, but to take the step that really counts — to join with the RWL and its youth committees in the year-long struggle for a socialist future. □

Britain

TUC supports miners

Strike spurs big shakeup in labor movement

By Celia Pugh

LONDON — The British coal miners have been on strike for six bitter months. Six thousand have been arrested, 3,000 injured, two lie seriously ill in intensive care, and five have died. The Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher and the National Coal Board (NCB) have tried every trick in the book to smash the miners union, the NUM. They have attempted to divide miner against miner and isolate the NUM from essential labor movement solidarity. So far they have failed miserably.

This was hit home when the Trades Union Congress, which organizes Britain's 10 million trade unionists, voted 20-to-1 to give "total support" to the miners. As the approach of winter brings power cuts closer and the economy groans under the impact of the strike, the NCB is under pressure to concede the miners' demands. But the Thatcher government desperately needs to smash the NUM if it is to remain on its course. This is the background to the latest round of secret talks between the NUM and the NCB, which opened on September 10 and broke down four days later.

The issue at the talks

The NCB has already been forced to make major concessions to the miners including a pledge of no compulsory lay-offs and the reprieve of the five mines named as the first stage of an NCB plan to eliminate 20 pits and 20,000 jobs.

But the previous round of talks collapsed in July when the NCB insisted that pits should be closed on economic grounds, when no further mineable reserves can be "beneficially developed."

In August, NUM president Arthur Scargill explained why the union consistently rejects this approach. "We don't want a balance sheet mentality," it's about people not profit, he said in a televised debate with NCB Chairman Ian MacGregor. The union has maintained its demands since the beginning of the strike in March:

- Withdraw the pit closure program announced by the NCB on March 6.
- Keep open the five pits currently under closure threat.
- Reach an agreement regarding the exhaustion of coal mines based on the "Plan for Coal."

The "Plan for Coal" was a 10-year plan drawn up by the NCB under the Labour Government in 1974. It envisaged an expansion of the coal industry and a secure future for miners. The plan was extended by the Labour government in its 1977 document, "Coal for the

Future."

The NUM knows that the coal board is preparing to implement Tory plans to rationalize and privatize public sector industries and destroy strong unions like the NUM. Under the banner of profitability, the NCB plans to get rid of half of Britain's pits and throw 40 percent of miners' jobs on the scrap heap in the next 10 years. Whole coal districts, particularly in militant areas like Wales, Scotland, and Kent, will be wiped off the map as output is concentrated in a limited number of "super-pits" where new computerized systems squeeze more profit out of fewer workers.

The miners know this plan does not benefit them, but only the property-owners and speculators. They are determined to challenge these bosses' rules by insisting on the right to veto pit closures — only accepting closure where coal reserves are exhausted or geological flaws exist. Increased subsidy and investment could ensure new coal seams are opened to replace the ones closed, and a shorter work week would utilize new technology to share work, not bring unemployment.

'Back to work' movement fails

In a multi-million dollar police operation, the government has tried to smash miners' pickets and offer protection to scabs. A "back to work" movement has been promoted by cutting miners' welfare benefits, sending letters from the NCB to every miner's home, promising increased handouts for those who return to work, and sparing no expense to escort scabs through the picket lines. Like the earlier efforts to force a national ballot on the unions, these measures have failed.

The NCB claims 60,000 people are working in the industry. But this includes foremen and supervisors. The highest estimate places NUM strike-breakers at 40,000, which means 80 percent of NUM members are still on strike.

On September 3, the day of the TUC congress, the media announced that scabs countrywide would coordinate a major return to work. This was a monumental flop. The NCB claimed 290 returned to work in the strike strongholds of Wales, Scotland, Kent, and Yorkshire. But this amounted to only 34 of the 55,000 strikers in Yorkshire, less than 2 percent of Scottish strikers, and none in Wales. In Kent, 22 scabs crossed picket lines, but only one of these was a coal producer; the others were winding engineers, a gardener, and timber movers.

With each new assault on the union, the ruling class has paid a price. Young miners and women in the mining communities are becom-

ing more committed participants. They are learning through bitter experience whose class interests are defended by the police and the courts. They are gaining confidence as leaders on the picket lines, in the communities, and as they tour the labor movement appealing for support and explaining their case.

And it is not just Tory politicians who are worried about this. Labour Party Leader Neil Kinnock clearly feels threatened too. In his speech to the TUC congress he condemned "the violence of miners on the picket lines." To the disgust of miners who have experienced the police brutality, he accused miners of providing the government "with the opportunity they have long sought to introduce politically motivated changes in the method of British policing." Without reference to the police attacks on miners, Kinnock attacked miners' mass pickets.

Solidarity grows

The government has also failed to isolate the miners from the broad labor movement. Rail workers have stopped almost all coal, oil, and iron ore movement by rail. Countrywide, regular collections and labor rallies have sustained support for the miners and their communities. Aware of this, the government is trying to avoid moves that escalate the solidarity action.

The funds of the South Wales NUM were seized by the courts when the union refused to comply with a High Court injunction. Another injunction was issued in March to stop Yorkshire flying pickets from traveling out of their county. This has never been implemented. This situation led the *Economist* to refer to the Tory laws, designed to stop such trade union activities, as "inert laws," another casualty of the miners' strike.

The Tories have also tried to avoid national strike action by other workers. Thatcher has already intervened to buy off rail workers with an increased pay offer and has given the Rail Board the go ahead for a temporary retreat on job cuts. They hope to forestall planned job actions by London transport workers and members of the rail unions.

But things have not gone as Thatcher hoped. Seventy percent of registered union dockers went on strike at the end of August to defend job security. Through the 1967 Dock Labour Scheme, dockers are registered with their port and are guaranteed work. In solidarity with the miners, the majority of dockers are refusing to cross miners' picket lines or move scab coal, oil, or iron ore.

TUC right isolated

The decisions of the TUC congress confirmed that there is a source of solidarity still to be tapped by the NUM. To the miners' picket chant "here we go, we will win, we will win," the TUC congress on September 3 voted "total support" for the following:

- The NUM's objective of saving pits.
- A concerted campaign to raise money to alleviate hardship in the coalfields and to maintain the union financially.

- Efforts to make the strike more effective by not moving coal or coke, or oil substituted for coal or coke, across NUM picket lines, not using such material taken across NUM picket lines and not using oil which is substituted for coal.

The full significance of this TUC congress is seen if we look back a year to last year's congress. This was the congress the media described as "moderation on the march" — the congress where the TUC leaders became "new realists." General Secretary Len Murray explained that the labor movement was not confident to fight and that the Tory government had just been elected for five years. Therefore, he argued, the labor movement should be prepared to engage the Tory government "through reasoned discussion." "They [the electorate] have voted. We have to respect that. We cannot talk as if the trade union movement was an alternative government," he said. The trade unions had to be "pragmatic, realist, and relevant."

In this vein, the 1983 congress voted against "industrial action for party political reasons." Civil service union leader Alastair Graham, motivating the new realist economic strategy, got loud applause when he attacked miners leader Arthur Scargill. Graham said, "Every time Arthur Scargill comes out saying he is going to get his members out on political action — and some of us are waiting to see him get them out on decent industrial action — this trade union movement falls lower in public esteem and popularity."

The press crowed at the rough treatment dished out to Scargill during the conference, including jeers and taunts as he spoke to delegates. The newspaper pundits remarked that Graham "has had his standing enhanced by seeing his new realism carried so comfortably."

What a difference a year makes! At the 1984 congress, delegates witnessed the early retirement of Len Murray as general secretary — "packing his bags before he was kicked out," as the *Financial Times* bluntly put it. In the 1984 elections for General Council, Graham was replaced by his own union with a member of the Communist Party. Scargill was cheered by the conference and received two standing ovations.

So what happened to the new realism of these moderates?

The class struggle intervened and upset their scheme. Within two months after the 1983 conference, the "new realists" were confronted with the Tories' all-out campaign to smash the unions. Thatcher was taking little notice of the General Council's "reasoned discussion" as the police waded in to smash pickets defending the print unions at the *Messenger* group of newspapers in Warrington. The courts sequestered the funds of the National Graphical Association (NGA) for carrying out industrial actions against this antiunion employer.

This was followed by the banning of unions at the government spy center, GCHQ, at Chel-

tenham. Thousands of trade unionists took to the streets to defend these unions. Then the miners began an overtime ban in October 1983 for a pay raise and against pit closures. When the NUM strike began in March 1984 these activists found the confidence and lead they needed to move ahead.

NUM sets terms for TUC

The miners union had learned the lessons of these TUC sell-outs. Scargill and the NUM leaders were determined to keep control of their own dispute. They by-passed the TUC General Council to secure solidarity from the transport, rail, and seafarers unions. As the TUC congress approached, the NUM leadership prepared to appeal to the delegates. Many of the delegates wanted to turn the lessons of the printers' defeat into a challenge to the union misleaders. They saw solidarity with the miners as their opportunity.

The General Council was forced to acknowledge the pressure for solidarity with the miners. The new realism of the previous congress was in shreds. It was replaced by another realism, summed up by Scargill. "Our strike," he said, "has meant the dawning of a new realism in our movement — the realism of knowing that the way to defend and advance the people we represent is not by going cap in hand to those who would dismember us. The answer lies in recognizing and using our collective strength when necessary."

Thatcher has shown little interest in the "reason and pragmatism" of the 1983 congress. Open class war is her game, and the labor movement has to decide which side it is on. Some have chosen open scabbing like steel union leader Bill Sirs and John Lyons, general secretary of the Engineers' and Managers' Association. With Frank Chapple and Eric Hammond, his successor as general secretary of the electricians union, they have chosen to throw their lot with the "work harder, strike less" rule of the ruling class.

They have refused to respect picket lines, and they told the congress that they do not intend to change their minds.

Sadly, this misleadership has its impact in the ranks. Like the Nottingham miners, whose high production pits and higher pay give them a false sense of security, steelworkers and power station workers have been conned by Sirs, Hammond, and Lyons into thinking that job security rests on keeping out of trouble with the boss, and that means scabbing on the miners' strike.

These divisions exist in the dockers' strike too. In a blow to the strike, dockers at Grimsby and Immingham, which handle iron ore for the steel industry, have decided to return to work. A supporter of the strike at Grimsby explained, "The work force on the docks has been split for a long time between the terminal workers and the general dock laborers. The terminal workers take home about £300 to £400 a week, whereas the rest can earn as little as £60. We've got two classes of dockers at Grimsby and Immingham. Although they were directly

concerned, the terminal workers didn't ever want to support last month's strike."

Other trade union leaders like Len Murray and Gavin Laird, of the engineers union, have tried to sit on the fence as advocates of consensus and negotiations. But with the class lines drawn, they either have to join the open scabs, bend to the pressure of the miners, or get out of the way — which is exactly what Murray has done with his retirement.

Before the TUC congress met, the press speculated that it would divide over support for the miners, with the right wing gaining support for a strident attack on the NUM. In fact, the open scabs of the right were completely isolated. Prior to the congress, steel union leader Bill Sirs had voted against the General Council's statement and against the NUM resolution on fighting pit closures and defying the Tory antiunion laws. But the steel union delegation at the congress abstained on the General Council statement and voted for the NUM resolution. Sirs was instructed by the delegation not to speak in the debate.

By 2-to-1 the congress also voted to disassociate itself from the TUC General Council's decision not to back the printers' strike in autumn 1983. "It is not enough," the resolution stated, "to say that support will only come for actions within the law."

This confrontation course with the Tory antiunion laws was weakened, however, by a vote to delete a clause that would have made automatic support for any trade unionist fined or imprisoned.

Implement the TUC's solidarity vote

The decisions of the TUC have given a tremendous boost to the striking miners. The real impact of congress statements can only be judged when they are tested in action. Last year's advocates of the new realism see the congress statements as a way of frightening the government into a speeded negotiated settlement. They hope that they will not have to deliver the promised solidarity. But the determination of the Tory government to ride out the strike until the miners are defeated means they will not be let off that easily.

These leaders will be exposed and isolated if they break with the solidarity framework of the TUC decisions. The continued determination of the miners and the mood of solidarity expressed by TUC delegates will give confidence to those in the ranks of the unions who want to fight for the TUC solidarity statement to be implemented, even if that means confronting the leaders of the TUC.

The General Council statement does contain a significant qualification that could be used to undermine its basic solidarity aim. It states that "the practical implementation of these points will need detailed discussions with the General Council and agreement with unions that would be directly concerned." Scabs like Hammond of the electricians union and Lyons of the Engineers' and Managers' Association have already declared that they will not give the required agreement for stopping the use of coal.

Solidarity actions by steel and power work-

ers are not ruled out despite the stance of the leaders of their unions. These leaders are under pressure to have discussions with the NUM on how to implement the TUC's statement, and NUM President Scargill has reported that power workers in six stations are already taking action to stop using scab coal.

The Labour Party holds its congress in the first week of October. This gives the labor movement a chance to call its leaders to order, demanding that Labour Leader Kinnock and Deputy Leader Roy Hattersley stop sniping at the miners and support the miners' action, which is the most effective challenge to the Tory government and its policies.

In his speech to the TUC, Kinnock commented, "Everyone in the trade union movement had repeatedly demonstrated the belief that trade unionism was for changing conditions and general elections were for changing governments in this country."

The miners' strike that forced the downfall of the Tory government in 1974 demonstrated quite the opposite, whatever Kinnock's belief and attempts to impose them on the miners.

Scargill has talked of the need for a Labour government as loyal to our class as Thatcher is to hers. This should be the concern of every delegate at the Labour Party conference. Successive Labour governments have failed to deliver promised job security and expansion in the mining industry. The miners' strike action can be used to force a change.

Power cuts before Christmas

In the war of attrition with the Tories, the strikers are having a serious impact on the economy — aided by the dock strike, which by its third week was affecting half of Britain's trade. The NUM estimates that the miners'

strike has cost £4 billion. Stockbrokers Simon and Coates also dispute government claims that the strike is costing only £20 million a week, estimating the weekly cost of the strike at £70 million.

The government claims enough coal stocks at power stations to prevent power cuts this winter. They claim that scab coal from Nottingham and a shift from coal to oil and nuclear fuel will see them through. But all the evidence shows that at the latest by the end of November power cuts will be forced by the drop in coal stocks.

Using the government's own figures for coal stocks and consumption, many independent research bodies have calculated that, even with the Nottingham scab coal, coal stocks will reach a critical level sometime between the end of October and the end of November. A cold winter could bring this earlier.

If the miners secure sufficient concessions from the coal board, other workers would be emboldened to take industrial action to defend jobs and conditions. It would show that the Tories can be taken on and beaten. But all the signs are that the government will not allow such an outcome, preferring a war of attrition to isolate and demoralize the NUM to total defeat.

With the dockers' strike, the miners' action is beginning to shake the economy and the hoped for sell-out by the TUC is by no means guaranteed. As Thatcher is forced to up the stakes — with increased use of police, the courts, and even troops — the determination will increase for firm solidarity from other groups of workers on the firing line. In these conditions the future of the Tory government could be put in question even before the five-year election round. □

Solidarity for NUM

Striking miners receive international aid

Workers around the world have been following with keen interest the confrontation between British coal miners and the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher. They recognize that a defeat for the miners would be a severe blow to workers in other countries and, conversely, that a victory would offer significant inspiration for their struggles.

Solidarity statements and financial aid for the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) have arrived from unions and workers organizations in many countries. NUM members have been able to tour outside Britain helping explain the importance of this strike not only for the class struggle in Britain but for working people everywhere.

Below we are reprinting solidarity statements and reports on tours and fund-raising efforts in the United States, Nicaragua, Belgium, and New Zealand.

In addition, in recent weeks fund appeals and major coverage of the coal strike have appeared in a number of papers published by European sections of the Fourth International.

The West German biweekly *Was Tun* ("What Is to Be Done"), published by the International Marxist Group (GIM), included a four-page supplement in its August 30 issue. It called the miners' strike the most important struggle in Western Europe and featured an appeal for financial contributions to be sent in care of the paper. The supplement also carried an interview with Dennis Pennington, an NUM member who had visited West Germany in May to speak about the strike.

Workers in Denmark are also raising money for the strikers (see *IP*, September 17). A progress report on these efforts was printed in the August 23–29 issue of *Klassekampen* ("Class Struggle"), put out by the Socialist Workers

Party of Denmark. That issue included an eight-page special insert on the miners' strike, with first-hand coverage by *Klassekampen* correspondent Finn Jensen. Jensen, a leader of the National Fund Campaign for the miners and a worker at B&W Diesel in Copenhagen, recently visited mining towns in Britain. The insert featured an interview he obtained with NUM General Secretary Peter Heathfield.

Internationalen ("The International"), published in Stockholm by the Socialist Party, carried in its August 30 issue a two-page spread from Nottinghamshire on police attacks on the miners and reported the collection of more than 300,000 kroner [Kr. 1 = US\$0.12] for the strikers. It also printed a translation of the *Klassekampen* interview with Heathfield.

Socialists in Switzerland published an appeal in the August 25 issue of *La Brèche* ("The Breach"), and the front-page editorial printed below from the Belgian paper *La Gauche* also appeared in the Socialist Workers Party's Flemish-language paper, *Rood* ("Red").

United States

[The following is part of a summary of action taken by the International Executive Board of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). It is taken from the August issue of the *UMWA Journal*. The same issue of the *Journal* also printed an interview with John Moyle, the president of a local of the NUM.]

* * *

The UMWA is acting to support its brothers on strike in the British coalfields.

At its July 23-24 meeting, the International Executive Board (IEB) unanimously approved a resolution of support for striking members of Britain's National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), who have been off the job since March 12.

The NUM is on strike to stop the National Coal Board, the government agency which runs the country's coal mining industry, from eliminating as many as 100,000 coal mining jobs in the next eight years.

Among other things, the Board's resolution calls for sending:

- A \$25,000 donation to the NUM, which will be used to support miners' families.
- A fact-finding commission, which will report back to the IEB on the actual situation in the British coalfields.

"The British miners are faced with nothing less than a union-busting situation," said President Richard Trumka.

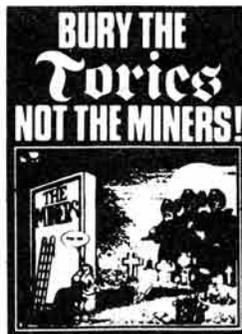
"If the National Union of Mineworkers is destroyed, the damage that would inflict upon the UMWA and other free trade unions across the United States and across the world would be incalculable.

"The British mineworkers supported us during our strike in 1978, and, as fellow unionists and fellow miners, it's only right that we respond in kind."

The Board's action followed a report on the strike by John Moyle, a rank-and-file miner

Støt de britiske kulminearbejdere

- de har brug for det!



Giv en timeløn om ugen

Landsindsamlingen til de britiske kulminearbejdere



Poster of Danish National Fund Campaign for the British Coal Miners urges, "Give an hour's wage once a week."

from Britain, who was sent to the United States by his membership to gather support for the NUM.

"We are in a very critical time," Moyle told the Board.

"Two miners have been murdered on the picket line, thousands injured and over 4,000 arrested.

"The government is also arresting people who are collecting food for miners and their families, and they have set up roadblocks to stop miners from travelling from one area to another.

"But we are winning this strike," Moyle went on, describing the support which NUM members have received from:

- British railway workers, who refuse to move any coal by rail.
- British dockworkers, who have eliminated 95 percent of all coal imports.
- Seamen on British ships, who refuse to bring any coal into the country.
- Unions in other countries, including Australia, France, Germany and the United States, which have sent financial aid and messages of solidarity.

"It may seem like a little thing, but you've all been on strike, so you know how important messages of support can be," said Moyle.

"And we have a mammoth task feeding the families of the 150,000 miners."

(UMWA members, local unions and districts who want to send resolutions of support or contributions to the NUM can mail them to: National Union of Mineworkers, St. James House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S12EX, England.)

Nicaragua

[The autumn issue of *Nicaragua Today*, the magazine of Britain's Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, published a statement from Nicaraguan gold miners in solidarity with striking British coal miners.

[The message from the El Limón gold miners union in the department of León, which is affiliated to the Sandinista Workers Confederation, was translated by the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign and sent to the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).]

"In the past the NUM has been very generous in its solidarity with the mineworkers of Nicaragua, and the mineworkers of El Limón welcomed the opportunity to return this support," reported *Nicaragua Today*. Printed below is the text of the message.]

* * *

Dear Comrades,

A revolutionary Sandinista greeting from the mineworkers of Nicaragua.

Through this letter we, the miners of Nicaragua, would like to assure you of our solidarity with the struggle you are waging in your country to win trade union democracy, to sustain your struggle without your rights being suppressed. Brothers, we would like to tell you not to lose heart. Right and reason will win through when there is the will power as strong as yours.

We know you are confronting reactionary consciousness and right-wingers led by the Iron woman Margaret Thatcher, but your struggle is just and being just will win, as the reactionary structures of capitalism are swept away by the uncontrollable forces of revolutionary and progressive ideas of the organized and conscious working class, guided by the best sons of the proletariat. Forward brother British miners, your brother miners in Nicaragua support your just struggle. A struggle which will be long, cruel and full of sacrifices, but we say to all, "The struggle continues, victory is certain." "Free country or death."

Enoc Castellion
Union of Mineworkers
El Limón Mine

New Zealand

[The following appeared as an editorial in the August 24 issue of *Socialist Action*, a fortnightly newspaper published in Auckland that reflects the views of the Socialist Action League, New Zealand section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

Some important first steps in solidarity with the British miners have been made by a number of New Zealand unions recently.

The Seamen's Union has been leading the way — the August issue of its paper, *Seamen's Journal*, has a banner headline "Solidarity with the miners" and five pages devoted to explaining the issues in the strike.

A front-page article by union president Dave

Morgan, who has just returned from a trip to Britain, explains the stakes in the miners' strike:

"The UK miners are into a fundamental fight for survival," Morgan writes. "Their fight is no different from that faced by many workers internationally, but in the UK they are up against the 'market forces,' monetarist policies of the Thatcher government.

"The issue is the same as that which the NZ Seamen's Union raises with its daily pickets on the NZ Meat Producers Board in Wellington and on the Head Office of the Columbus Lines in Auckland: the fight for jobs.

"In this issue of the *Seamen's Journal* we publish first-hand reports and photos of the miners' five-month-long strike. These graphically depict the use of the state forces against the miners.

"The Thatcher government has no illusions about the importance of the strike and its political need to smash it. We should be thankful that the British miners clearly recognise that too.

"Union members will recognise that the forces lined up against the miners — the government, army, police, courts, employers, the press and scabs — are the same as those against watersiders and seamen in the 1951 waterfront lockout.

"They face similar laws to the vicious legislation used against us then; laws which in many cases are still on the statute books."

Both the Seamen's Union and the Engineers Union have sent \$5,000 to the miners. The *Seamen's Journal* also reports a telegram received from union members on the ship *Toki Arrow* pledging \$600 and "full support to the British miners in their mighty effort to protect jobs and resist union-bashing by the Thatcher government. Trust [the] union, and other vessels follow suit."

The Auckland Trades Council voted unanimously on August 16 to send a message of solidarity to the miners. This is to be delivered by John Findlay, president of the New Zealand Boilermakers Federation.

The trades councils in Auckland and Wellington are also circulating a tape-recording of a speech made by Malcolm Pitt, president of the Kent branch of the miners' union, during a tour of Australia in June to win support for the strike.

The *Seamen's Journal* reprints comments by Pitt to the Australian Seamen's Union published in the July issue of the *Australian Seamen's Journal*, where he outlined the widespread international solidarity.

"We have received messages of support from mining and other unions from around the world, been visited by delegations of Japanese, French and American miners, Canadian and New Zealand seamen and many others," Pitt said.

"We are especially grateful to the Australian trade union movement, especially the miners, dockers and seamen, who have an embargo on the movement of coal to the UK."

The miners are a key section of the British

working class. They have been on strike since March 12, fighting against the plans of the Thatcher government and the state-run National Coal Board to throw tens of thousands of miners out of their jobs, and deal their union a crushing blow.

Big business worldwide, and the governments that represent it, are carrying out an offensive to make working people bear the burden of the capitalist economic crisis. This gives the miners' strike a very real international importance.

Handing out a defeat to the miners is the key to the capitalists carrying through this anti-labour offensive in Britain. And such a defeat would strengthen the political hand of capitalists around the world, giving them added encouragement to do the same thing in their own countries.

On the other hand, a victory for the miners would also have an impact around the world. Workers can identify with the miners' fight for jobs and their battles with anti-union laws and the police. We can draw inspiration from their determination and militant stand.

The miners are confident of victory, but the outcome is by no means decided yet. Every bit of solidarity, both in Britain and abroad, can help tip the balance their way.

A letter in the *Seamen's Journal* helps to explain why this is so. Written by two Labour Party activists involved in a miners' families support group in Durham in the north-east of England, it says:

"It isn't only the amounts of cash needed, it is the knowledge we need to have that other labour movements are thinking about us and determined to help us stop the Tories starving the miners back to work. You've no idea what that does for our morale."

Workers in New Zealand need to rally behind the embattled miners' union in Britain. As Dave Morgan puts it in the *Seamen's Journal*: "A supreme effort is required. This is probably the most important fight of the decade and every possible assistance is needed.

"SUPPORT THE BRITISH MINERS IN EVERY WAY YOU CAN."

Belgium

[The following article appeared on the front page of the August 24 issue of *La Gauche* ("The Left"), French-language newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party (POS), Belgian section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

The strike of British miners receives a great deal of spontaneous sympathy; everyone in our country who collects money to support the miners has been able to see this. The miners' struggle goes right to the heart of the workers of the world. On strike since March 12, the 140,000 strikers and their families are living without strike benefits. They do so voluntarily, because they don't want to drain the coffers of their union.

They are fighting for jobs against the most

reactionary government in Western Europe, which is in the vanguard of the employers' offensive against jobs. And they still have several months of battle ahead of them.

But the miners' strike does not simply arouse sympathy; it also awakens interest because it concretely poses basic questions of working-class strategy today in the developed capitalist countries.

First of all there are the demands of the miners' union, the NUM. The NUM rejects Thatcher's plan for restructuring the mines, a plan that would eliminate half the jobs and lead to the privatization of the most profitable mines.

Secondly, the NUM has set as its objective total victory. This means that it rules out any concessions that would compromise that victory, and it is not afraid to consciously violate the anti-strike laws. This also means that the NUM places its confidence solely in direct action: general strike, mass pickets, flying pickets, mass demonstrations, all of which are democratically organized. The NUM also relies on the autonomous struggle of the miners' wives and fights to develop real solidarity.

Because, in the final analysis, the victory of the miners implies: the support of the whole trade-union movement and the adoption of the miners' demands by the Labour Party, the biggest British working-class party. Its unifying objective is to overturn the Thatcher government and replace it with "a Labour government that would apply a truly socialist policy" (as is stated in an international appeal by the NUM).

The struggle of the British miners is an example for all workers fighting against the capitalist crisis: direct action for immediate demands, no confidence in the employers' government; demand that the big parties of the working class assume their governmental responsibilities solely within the framework of a workers government that applies the working-class demands.

The NUM's appeal for international solidarity must therefore receive an immediate response in the organized workers movement. What are the [Belgian] unions and the Socialist Party waiting for? They are best placed to launch a massive and united solidarity campaign.

The POS is not waiting: it is launching a campaign of political solidarity. We are collecting money and sending it to one of the NUM strongholds, Bold Branch in Northwest England, with which we have fraternal contacts. We will organize a tour featuring representatives of this union to popularize the strike, its methods, its aims. We are putting out a poster and leaflet. But we remain in favor of a big united action by the parties and unions of the workers movement, because this, for obvious reasons of effectiveness, is what the NUM miners would like.

Victory to the miners!
Thatcher out, Labour in!

Changes in the freedom struggle

Interview with a leader of People's Democracy

[At the U.S. Socialist Workers Party convention in Ohio in August, *Intercontinental Press* was able to interview Jesse McDonnell, a National Committee member of the People's Democracy organization who lives in Dublin. People's Democracy is the Irish section of the Fourth International. The interview was conducted on Aug. 9, 1984.]

* * *

Question. What is the present state of the movement to end British rule in the six counties of Northern Ireland and reunify the whole island in a 32-county independent republic?

Answer. There has been a reawakening and renewal of the Irish Republican tradition in recent years, sparked by three developments: the 1981 campaign to support the H-Block hunger strikers; changing attitudes within Sinn Féin, the largest of the nationalist organizations; and the worsening economic situation.

Historically, new upsurges in the Irish freedom struggle have often been sparked by struggles in support of political prisoners. The 1981 hunger strike in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh prison in Northern Ireland was a watershed for the nationalist movement in the recent period.

Despite the tragedy of the death of 10 young prisoners, despite the fact that the hunger strikers were not able to win an outright victory in their confrontation with the British government, the nationalist movement emerged from the H-Block campaign with a new strength and a determination to continue the struggle until the British are forced to leave Ireland.

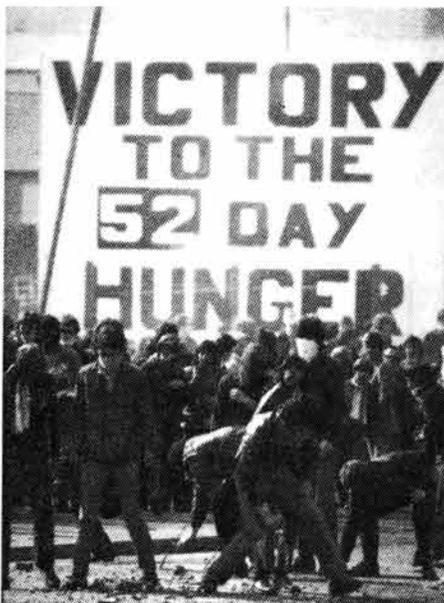
Activists in the struggle against British imperialism learned a number of lessons and gained valuable experience from the fact that masses of people turned out in support of the hunger strikers.

The hunger strike affected people throughout Ireland — in the south as well as the British-ruled north. There were huge demonstrations and work stoppages. Virtually every small town in the country saw some kind of activity in support of the prisoners.

It was the first time since the British massacre of 13 civil rights marchers in Derry in January 1972 that the struggle against imperialism reached deep into all parts of Ireland. And this time the involvement was on a more sustained basis than in 1972.

Q. Did the H-Block campaign bring new layers of the population into the struggle?

A. Yes. In the south it reached far beyond the normal nationalist political milieu. In the north the campaign brought out many people



1981 hunger strike was watershed.

who had not been active since the civil rights movement of the early 1970s.

Q. What impact did the hunger strike campaign have within Sinn Féin?

A. The H-Block campaign deepened a process that had already been taking place within Sinn Féin. It gave concrete life to a debate over the relationship between organized mass action and armed struggle.

There is a long Irish revolutionary tradition of pure and simple militarism, a feeling that military action alone will drive the British imperialists out of Ireland.

I believe that the H-Block campaign helped the new, young leadership in Sinn Féin convince the ranks of the need to place military struggle into a broader overall political framework.

Some rank-and-file members of Sinn Féin had initially been suspicious of attempts to build a united-front defense of the prisoners. They worried about outside forces using "our" prisoners. But as the H-Block campaign unfolded, they were inspired by the breadth and depth of support that was organized for the hunger strikers and saw the need to develop and tap that sympathy.

As part of this process, Sinn Féin began to use election campaigns to consolidate and demonstrate support for the nationalist struggle during the hunger strike.

This was seen in the election of hunger striker Bobby Sands and then Sands' campaign

manager Owen Carron to the British Parliament, and the election of two hunger strikers to the Irish Dail (parliament).

Since the end of the hunger strike this process has continued. We have seen the election of five Sinn Féin candidates to the Northern Ireland Assembly, the election of Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams to the British Parliament from West Belfast, the election of two Sinn Féin members to the Belfast City Council, as well as participation in the European Economic Community parliament elections in June of this year.

In the EEC elections, People's Democracy supported the Sinn Féin candidates because Sinn Féin was the only party running on an all-Ireland basis in opposition to the EEC as a capitalist and imperialist formation. PD members took part in Sinn Féin election work, doing door-to-door canvassing, putting up posters, and the like.

The EEC election campaign was very important from the standpoint of building the kind of force needed to unite the country. For many young people in Sinn Féin in the south, this was the first time they went door-to-door talking to people about politics and trying to link the struggle against imperialism to people's daily lives.

Sinn Féin's election campaign focused heavily on working-class areas and struggles. In the middle of the election, Sinn Féin's Dublin candidate, John Noonan, was arrested for his part in supporting the sit-in of workers at the Ranks flour mill.

The election results were very encouraging in the south, although the number of votes for Sinn Féin was still far lower than in the British-ruled north.

Sinn Féin faced severe obstacles in its campaign in the south. One was the fact that the organization had not recently had much experience in fighting elections there. Just as important is the fact that under Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act Sinn Féin representatives are not allowed to appear on the state-run television and radio networks so it is difficult to counteract the continuous slanders against Sinn Féin that appear in the media.

Q. How much of an organizational presence does Sinn Féin have?

A. In the north, Sinn Féin exists in most of the cities and even small towns. They have offices and community advice centers, staffed by full-time volunteers, dealing with people's problems regarding housing, welfare payments, water and sewage, and the like.

In the south their organizational presence is

still spotty. But they are opening offices in a number of towns and are trying to project more of a public face.

In Dublin they have groups in most of the major working-class areas.

The new, Northern-based leadership of the organization sees building Sinn Féin's presence in the south as a big priority.

Q. How would you characterize the new leadership in Sinn Féin?

A. I think that Sinn Féin is a revolutionary nationalist organization with a leadership that is evaluating the methods and traditions of the Irish revolutionary movement and the ongoing experience of the struggle against British imperialism. There is an awareness within Sinn Féin that the struggle in Ireland is part of an international struggle against imperialism and that the experiences of the other national liberation struggles have relevance to Ireland.

It is a leadership that is seriously looking for answers to crucial questions of the Irish revolution and that is trying to bring the whole organization along in the changes that are taking place.

Q. Do most people in the south see the struggle against British rule in the north as relevant to their own lives?

A. Some people see the struggle in the north as very important. Others, while supporting the goal of a reunified Ireland and an end to British rule in the north, don't see the direct connection between the struggle against imperialism and the day-to-day struggles of workers or farmers.

But the massive outpouring of sentiment in the south around the H-Block campaign reflected the deep opposition to British rule that has always existed within the Irish working class and rural population.

Another reflection of this sentiment is the level of support for the Fianna Fail party, one of the two major bourgeois parties. Fianna Fail has always clothed itself in more nationalist and radical-sounding rhetoric than Fine Gael, and that is why it continues to attract the votes of so many workers and farmers.

With the growing economic crisis, and the large number of foreign-owned companies that are shutting down or laying off workers, the struggle against imperialist domination of Irish society is becoming more obviously relevant to the Irish working class.

Interestingly, Sinn Féin's best showing in the EEC elections in the south came from urban workers and from the most deprived rural areas.

Q. What is the economic situation at present?

A. Ireland has an underdeveloped economy that is dominated — both north and south — by British imperialism. As a result of imperialist domination, the Irish economy never developed in an organic way out of Ireland's own needs and resources.

Beginning in the 1950s, industrialization took place based on foreign investment in Ireland. This industrialization has been heavily labor intensive rather than capital intensive. As a result, with the worldwide capitalist economic crisis that began in the mid-1970s, many foreign-owned companies that had set up facilities to use cheap Irish labor to produce for export markets simply closed up shop.

The Irish economy is in bad shape. Ireland has one of the largest per capita foreign debts in the world, and the international banks are insisting on measures that squeeze the country to pay off the foreign loans.

The government is slashing spending and piling taxes onto the working class in order to bring down the budget deficit.

In 1979 there were huge demonstrations throughout the country against the government's policies. More than 100,000 people took part in a march in Dublin alone. And there were smaller-scale demonstrations in 1980.

Since then there has been a downturn in large-scale actions because workers, who went out on these demonstrations and lost a half-day's pay, saw that nothing was really accomplished.

But there has been a willingness to fight on the local level. Workers have responded to factory shutdowns with real militant action. Two recent examples are the struggle of workers at the British-owned Ranks flour mill and at the Clondalkin paper mill.

Ranks decided to close its Irish milling operation and supply the Irish market with flour imported from its mills in Britain.

The Ranks workers responded with a sit-in that went on for about 15 months. Initially their goal was better redundancy pay, severance pay you call it in the United States.

Because of their occupation of the flour mill, the Ranks workers were jailed. The working class in Dublin responded to the jailing with big protests: half-day work stoppages, pickets outside the prison nightly, building workers marching off construction sites and blocking streets during rush hour.

The Dublin Council of Trade Unions called a demonstration in support of the jailed Ranks workers. But on the morning of the scheduled demonstration, the authorities virtually kicked the Ranks workers out of jail to try to defuse the situation.

Workers saw this as a big victory for solidarity.

At the Clondalkin paper mill, with 400 workers, the workers engaged in a sit-in for almost two years, even going on a hunger strike at one point, and eventually won some minor concessions.

Q. How do people support themselves during such long sit-ins and occupations?

A. Partly through collections. But the number sitting in at any time was quite small as many workers left to seek new jobs.

The struggles at Ranks and Clondalkin are indicative of a mood of struggle. But the union leadership is totally craven and provides no

leadership or direction for these struggles.

Q. Does any political grouping dominate the Irish labor movement?

A. The leadership is largely made up of individual bureaucrats who tend to be connected in an individual capacity to the Labour Party. The Labour Party in Ireland does not have the same organic connection to the union movement as its counterpart in Britain despite the fact that the major industrial unions are affiliated to the Labour Party.

For several years the Labour Party has been junior partner in a coalition government with the Fine Gael party. Because the union bureaucrats support the Labour Party, they tend to be very quiet about the attacks the coalition government is carrying out against the workers.

In addition, an organization called the Workers Party plays a significant role within the labor movement. They have a number of union posts and have made big inroads into the Labour Party's vote, particularly now that the Labour Party is in the coalition government.

In addition, the Workers Party has two representatives in the Irish parliament, and they use these representatives very effectively from a propagandist standpoint. They get up and express solidarity with the British coal miners, with the people of El Salvador and Nicaragua. But they are not so good on questions of Irish working-class politics such as the Ranks struggle because they tend to go along with the union leadership in order to preserve their own union posts.

The Workers Party grew out of the 1970 split in Sinn Féin that gave rise to the "Official" Sinn Féin and the "Provisional" Sinn Féin.

The "Officials" became increasingly hostile to the armed struggle against British imperialism in Northern Ireland and began putting forward a stages theory of the Irish revolution. They argued that the key struggle in the north is for democratic rights, leading to a unification of the Loyalist and nationalist working class. Only after that unity is achieved, they argue, can the struggle to reunify the country be contemplated.

Since then they have lost any significant base of support in the north. But they were able to build a certain base in the south through activity around "bread-and-butter" issues.

In 1977 they changed their name to "Sinn Féin-The Workers Party." Then several years ago they dropped any reference to Sinn Féin, although interestingly they again called themselves "Sinn Féin-The Workers Party" in some working-class areas of Dublin during the EEC elections this year.

Today they are rabidly hostile toward the Republican Movement, calling it things like "Sinn Fascist."

In my view, the Workers Party has evolved into a hardened Stalinist organization. I don't think there is any hope that they can be moved from their stages theory of the Irish revolution. In some ways they have more recognition from the international Stalinist movement than the

Irish Communist Party has.

I should add that the Workers Party has a very hostile view toward the rural population, describing it as a brake on the development of Irish society. One of their leading members said at a recent trade union seminar on unemployment that the rural population must be handled "with the carrot or very liberal use of the stick."

Q. Do you think Sinn Féin can make significant electoral inroads into the support for the Workers Party and Labour Party in the south as long as Sinn Féin refuses to take seats in the Irish parliament?

A. Sinn Féin is opposed on principle to taking seats in the parliaments of the south, Britain, and the north because it views all these bodies as products of the partition of Ireland.

The nationalist population of the north sees little value in taking seats in the British Parliament or Loyalist-dominated Northern Ireland Assembly.

But the situation is different in the south. The Irish Dail was indeed imposed by the British ruling class on Ireland. But today the vast majority of the population accepts it as a legitimate institution.

They vote in the elections and expect their elected representatives to do something for them in the Dail. If you refuse on principle to take your seat, you run into a difficult position because of the population's electoralist illusions.

I think there is an ongoing debate in Sinn Féin on the question of abstentionism, as it is called. But the debate is complicated by the fact that historically — going back to the 1920s — it has been true that most of those who left Sinn Féin over the question of participation in the Dail have also ended up abandoning the struggle for national liberation.

In the minds of many republicans, the questions of abstentionism and revolutionary struggle have become totally intertwined.

Q. What kind of activities does People's Democracy carry out, and what role does it see for itself?

A. People's Democracy is a product of the upsurge in the anti-imperialist struggle in our country since the late 1960s.

The present organization is the result of the merger of two groups.

One was the Revolutionary Marxist Group, which later became the Movement for a Socialist Republic. This group traced its roots to the work of the Irish section of the Fourth International in the Labour Party Young Socialists in our country. They waged a struggle there stressing the importance of the anti-imperialist struggle for the working class in Ireland.

In 1978-79 the Movement for a Socialist Republic merged with a group called People's Democracy and the new organization kept that name.

People's Democracy had begun as a group

of students who played a leading role in the civil rights movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s in the north. Over the course of the years it had gone through a number of changes as it tried to come to grips with the question of how to build a leadership for the national struggle.

It evolved toward Marxism and carried out joint work with the Irish section of the Fourth International, leading eventually to the fusion I mentioned.

We see the anti-imperialist struggle as central to the Irish revolution, and we try to bring that struggle into all the areas we work in — the women's rights movement, the anti-Reagan demonstrations, the trade-union movement.

In our work in all these areas we seek to work with other people who are Republican and anti-imperialist.

One focus of our activity in the union movement has been defense of Phil Flynn, a vice-president of Sinn Féin who was subjected to a tremendous witchhunt in the media.

Flynn had been acting general secretary of the Local Government and Public Services Union, the biggest public sector union.

The Labour Party ministers ran a vicious media campaign against Flynn, saying they would not meet with him in any delegations. And the media portrayed this campaign as a rejection of Flynn by the ranks of the union.

This turned out to be totally false as Flynn was later overwhelmingly elected general secretary at the union's annual conference. And on July 5 he was elected to the Executive Council of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, again in the face of government statements that they would not meet with him, even on official business.

Since then they have largely kept silent in hopes that the whole issue will go away.

Q. Two members of People's Democracy were elected to the Belfast City Council. What have they been able to do there?

A. Fergus O'Hare and John McNulty were elected to the Belfast City Council during the hunger strike. Two members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party were also elected at that time.

Prior to the election, we had argued that the H-Block Committee should put up candidates as a way of building the struggle of the prisoners. We were unable, however, to convince the committee to run a slate, so we ran our own candidates on a platform of support for the hunger strikers.

In winning his seat, Fergus O'Hare defeated Gerry Fitt. Fitt, a well-known leader of the middle-class nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party, had infuriated the nationalist population by his refusal to support the hunger strikers. The defeat of Gerry Fitt showed people very graphically that electoral action could be used to galvanize the struggle.

Since that time, Sinn Féin has run for the city council and also has two seats now. We and Sinn Féin often work together to use those

seats to counter Loyalist discrimination against the nationalist population.

But there is a limit to what can be accomplished because of the Loyalist majority on the council. We and Sinn Féin are discriminated against in committee assignments and the like. In fact, the Belfast City Council recently voted down a motion by McNulty and Sinn Féin's Alex Maskey to give all councillors "equal democratic rights in the council."

The difficulties in working in that body can be seen in the comments of Loyalist council members like George Seawright, who has used terms like the "vermin scum in West Belfast" in describing the nationalist population, and recently created an uproar by stating that "all Catholics should be incinerated."

Q. Could you say something about the level of repression in the north?

A. British imperialism responded to the upsurge in the nationalist struggle in two ways: politically and through out-and-out repression.

Politically, the British government — as well as the government and the bourgeois parties in the south of Ireland — has tried to bolster the Social Democratic and Labour Party as a "moderate" alternative to Sinn Féin's growing influence.

In terms of repression, the British have instituted a "shoot-to-kill" policy against known activists in the republican movement and are railroading hundreds of activists to jail through show trials featuring paid perjurers.

These show trials, sometimes called "supergrass trials," are actually a second edition of the internment policy that the British instituted in 1971 and maintained until 1975. Through internment without trial, the British jailed nearly 2,000 people without charges or trials.

The supergrass trials achieve a similar purpose. Through blackmail or bribery, the British get someone to make sworn statements implicating various people in illegal actions. Those people are then arrested and sentenced to prison solely on the uncorroborated testimony of the informer.

Initially the trials were a big problem for the nationalist community because they spread suspicion and some demoralization at the specter of members of the nationalist community helping to railroad nationalists into prison.

But as the trials started unfolding and people saw that the informers were not a general phenomenon and that the nationalist population as a whole continued to resist, they took heart.

At this point the trials are seen as a problem similar to internment — they send many people to prison but do not seriously demoralize the nationalist community.

Q. How much of an obstacle to Sinn Féin does the Social Democratic and Labour Party represent in the north?

A. As with the other Irish bourgeois nationalist parties, the SDLP is in a real crisis

because of the lack of any progress toward ending British rule in the north.

In an attempt to overcome that crisis, the SDLP and the main bourgeois parties in the south came together in the New Ireland Forum.

The New Ireland Forum was supposed to show that the bourgeois parties had a new constructive approach that would resolve the crisis of Ireland's partition.

But politically the forum was a dead duck from day one, and it was a real disaster when its final report saw the light of day.

The SDLP was built as a party by the middle class elements in the civil rights struggle. For many years the SDLP was the only nationalist party that contested elections in the north, so a number of their leaders, like John Hume, developed a certain political authority over time.

There are deep divisions within the SDLP leadership. People like Seamus Mallon want to take a stronger stand against imperialism, while others like John Hume are becoming more craven.

The SDLP does not have a real mass base in the form of an apparatus of activists who go out and work for the party. But it does have the support of the bourgeois parties in the south, the Catholic hierarchy, and the press, which are doing everything they can to bolster the

SDLP and give it some credibility.

Q. The Catholic Church hierarchy has, as you said, come out strongly against Sinn Féin. How much impact does that have?

A. The church hierarchy is waging a very concerted campaign against the national struggle in Ireland today, from the pulpits and in the press. They hope to weaken the movement that came out of the H-Block campaign and Sinn Féin's credibility.

Historically the Irish people have accepted the Catholic Church's teachings on moral questions. But the church has less influence on the question of the right to struggle against British domination.

Sinn Féin's leaders are quite aware of the need to take on the Catholic hierarchy in the political arena and they are increasingly confident in doing so. They are in a good position to take on the hierarchy because the nationalist community is in an upsurge.

Q. How do you assess the September 1983 victory of the church-backed referendum adding an antiabortion amendment to the Irish constitution?

A. The victory of the Catholic Church hierarchy and the ruling class on the amend-

ment was, I think, a Pyrrhic victory. Abortion had already been illegal and there was no big movement to reverse the ban.

Although the amendment passed — with only 52 percent of the electorate turning out to vote — the women's movement in Ireland emerged in a much stronger position because the whole question of women's oppression began to be discussed and debated in a much more intensive way.

An example of the strengthening of the women's movement was seen in the Dublin conference of 600 women in May to discuss "Women in Post-Amendment Ireland." The conference discussed contraception, the anti-abortion amendment, the national question, and discrimination against women on the job.

It was the biggest conference of women in quite a number of years. People's Democracy played an important role in helping to organize it.

I should also say that Sinn Féin's position on the amendment came under considerable fire within the organization. Their position was that since they do not accept the Irish constitution they would take no position on amendments to it.

Since then they have changed their policy and decided to judge future amendments on their specific merits for the Irish people. □

DOCUMENTS

Step toward overcoming PLO disputes

Document signed by five Palestinian groups

[The document we are printing below is being presented by its signers as an important step toward overcoming the internal disputes that have affected the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) since early 1983. It was drawn up in late June as the culmination of a series of meetings in the Algerian and South Yemeni capitals, Algiers and Aden, among representatives of Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), and the Palestinian Communist Party (PCP).¹

[The PFLP, DFLP, PLF, and PCP constituted themselves earlier this year as the "Democratic Alliance." This bloc has held talks not only with the leadership of Fatah, the largest of the PLO's member organizations, but also with another bloc that calls itself the "Alliance

for National Salvation." The latter includes the minority faction of Fatah led by Abu Musa; the Syrian-controlled group Saiqa; the PFLP-General Command, which has close ties to the Libyan government; and the Popular Struggle Front.

[The organizations grouped in the Alliance for National Salvation include forces that engaged in criminal armed attacks on loyal PLO units and on Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon in 1983, actions that had the support and complicity of the Syrian and Libyan regimes. This bloc has refused to take part in any accord aimed at settling the PLO's internal disputes unless PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat is removed from all his posts. This demand has been rejected both by Fatah and by the groups making up the Democratic Alliance.

[For further information on the discussions inside the PLO and the Syrian- and Libyan-backed attacks on it, see the selection of documents published in the March 5, 1984, issue of *Intercontinental Press* (p. 106) and the article "PLO facing big challenges" in the March 19 issue of *IP* (p. 138).

[We have taken the text of this document from the July 13 issue of *FBIS Daily Report*, published by the Foreign Broadcast Informa-

tion Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The FBIS's English version was translated from the Amman, Jordan, Arabic-language newspaper *Sawt ash-Sha'b*. The footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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Under the patronage of the Algerian National Liberation Front and the Yemeni Socialist Party, leading delegations representing the Fatah Movement and the Democratic Alliance factions — the PFLP, the DFLP, the Palestinian Communist Party, and the PLF — met in Aden and Algiers and approved the political and organizational agreement indicated in this document as a basis for a comprehensive national dialogue.

The Political Document

I. The Occupied Territory

Extending full support to our people in the occupied territories in their struggle against the Israeli occupation, the Israeli repressive and terrorist measures, and the aggravating Israeli practices to seize land, build settlements, and dislodge the inhabitants preparatory to annexing the occupied areas.

Protecting the unity of the national ranks

1. The Palestinian Communist Party was founded in late 1981. It arose out of the Palestinian Communist Organization in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a formation set up in the 1970s at the initiative of the Jordanian CP, from which the majority of the PCP's members originated. The PCP supports the PLO and recognizes it as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, but it has not been formally recognized as a member organization of the PLO.

and stands and preventing the external problems and pressures from reflecting on our people in the occupied territories. Reviving the Palestinian national front in the occupied areas on the basis of the 16th PNC session resolutions,² and giving this front the powers to lead the political and popular struggle against the Israeli occupation. Maintaining commitment to safeguard and bolster the steadfastness and struggle of our people and their national forces in the occupied areas in accordance with the directives of the national front regarding the distribution of the steadfastness funds. Working seriously to unify the popular institutions, such as trade unions and so forth, and to firmly encounter all attempts to split and disrupt them.

Confronting the suspect attempts to undermine the PLO as the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative and to contain our people. Confronting the practices aimed at dealing a blow to the national institutions in the occupied territories as well as the measures being practiced to encircle our people and force them to accept the capitulatory schemes. Emphasizing the unity of all the progressive, democratic, and national Palestinian forces in the 1948 occupied territory, and providing them with all forms of support within the framework of our people's national unity. Escalating armed struggle and popular struggle against the Zionist occupation for the sake of liberating our occupied territory and wrenching our national rights to repatriation, self-determination, and establishment of an independent Palestinian state under the PLO, the Palestinian people's sole and legitimate representative.

II. The Cairo Visit³ and Palestinian-Egyptian Relations

1. Confirming that the visit represented a violation of the PNC resolutions, confronting the adverse effects of this visit, considering the PLO as not bound by any results or political commitments resulting from this visit, and demanding accountability for this visit within the framework of the legitimate PLO institutions.

2. Continuing the PLO's commitment to the Baghdad summit resolutions,⁴ especially those concerning the relations with the Egyptian regime and boycotting Camp David, and immediately suspending all political contacts with the Egyptian regime. Asserting the reso-

2. The 16th session of the Palestine National Council, which serves as the PLO's parliament-in-exile, was held in Algiers Feb. 14-22, 1983. For the resolutions of the 16th PNC session, see *Intercontinental Press*, March 14, 1983, p. 150.

3. PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat traveled to Cairo, Egypt, in December 1983 and met there with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

4. A March 1979 meeting of the Arab League in Baghdad, Iraq, responded to the signing of a peace treaty between the Egyptian and Israeli governments by suspending Egypt's membership in the Arab League, transferring the league's headquarters out of Cairo, and calling on all member states to break diplomatic relations with the Egyptian regime.

lutions that were adopted by the 16th session of the PNC concerning the relations with the Egyptian nationalist forces and determining the relations with the Egyptian regime on the basis of its renunciation of the Camp David policy.

III. Jordan

1. Establishing relations between the PLO [and Jordan] on the basis of the PNC resolutions, especially those that were adopted at the 16th session.

2. Rejecting any solution to the Palestine question on the basis of the Reagan plan,⁵ territorial compromise, the Zionist Labor Party plan that is referred to as the "Jordanian option," or any other plan that detracts from our people's inalienable rights, including their right to the return, self-determination, and the establishment of the independent state under the leadership of the PLO, their sole, legitimate representative.

IV. Last Year's Bloody Incidents in the Palestinian Arena

The conferees discussed with a sense of national responsibility the serious bloody incidents witnessed by the Palestinian arena last year and the results and effects of these incidents on the unity and position of Palestinian struggle as well as on the reputation of the PLO, and affirmed the following:

1. Taking up arms to forcibly impose solutions to disputes within the ranks of the revolution conflicts with the PNC resolutions, which assert the principles of democratic dialogue, and harms the course and unity of the Palestinian revolution.

2. Rejecting all attempts to split the PLO, divide its ranks, or fake alternate leaderships for it, and confirming adherence to the unity of the PLO and the legitimacy of its institutions.

3. This question shall be discussed at the next PNC session in accordance with the aforementioned bases.

V. Palestinian-Syrian relations

1. Building the relations between the PLO and Syria in accordance with the following national and pan-Arab bases:

A. Joint action in the struggle against the Israeli enemy and imperialist and Zionist plans in order to liberate the occupied Arab territories and to secure the Palestinian Arab people's rights to the return, self-determination, and the establishment of the independent Palestinian state under the leadership of the PLO, their sole, legitimate representative.

B. The rejection of U.S. plans, headed by the Camp David accords, the autonomy plan, the Reagan plan, and others, which aim to detract from the Palestinian people's right to the return, self-determination, and the establishment of the independent state or to undermine

5. Under the Mideast "peace plan" put forward by U.S. President Reagan in September 1982, the Palestinian people are to be denied self-determination and the Jordanian regime is to represent Palestinians in any future peace negotiations.

the PLO's role as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people by authorizing others to speak on its behalf or share representation with it.

C. Abidance by the Arab summit resolutions concerning the bases for solving the Palestinian question and the Arab-Zionist conflict in a manner that guarantees the Palestinian people's national rights to the return, self-determination, and the establishment of the Palestinian state as well as the pan-Arab aspirations of the Arab nation.

D. Abidance by the Baghdad summit resolutions concerning the relations with the Egyptian regime and boycotting Camp David.

E. Mutual respect for the principles of independence, equality, and noninterference in internal affairs.

F. The adoption of measures that will strengthen mutual confidence and enable the Palestinian revolution, Syria, and the Lebanese nationalist forces to undertake their common struggle role in confronting the Zionist and imperialist enemy and to solve all outstanding problems that prevent such a role.

2. Considering the Soviet-Syrian statement⁶ which emphasizes that PLO unity should be established on national, progressive principles hostile to imperialism and the urgent need to solve all disputes within the Palestinian revolution as one of the major bases for overcoming the crisis within the Palestinian revolution and the PLO and correcting the PLO's relationship with Syria.

VI. Lebanon

1. Strengthening the Lebanese nationalist-Palestinian-Syrian alliance, developing relations with the Lebanese nationalist, progressive forces, and backing these forces' struggle against Zionist occupation, U.S. influence, and the Phalangist hegemony plan in order to ensure Lebanon's independence, unity, Arabism, and democratic development.

2. Regulating the relationship with the Lebanese nationalist forces in order to ensure the security of our masses and camps in Lebanon; to preserve our people's civil and social rights, including their national right to engage in political organization and action, to carry arms, and to join the revolution ranks; and to

6. This statement was issued on March 13, 1984, after meetings in Damascus between Syrian President Hafez al-Assad and Soviet Deputy Premier Geidar Aliyev. It included the following paragraph:

"The Soviet Union and Syria are convinced of the need to preserve the unity of the Palestinian resistance movement and to overcome as soon as possible differences in the PLO—the only lawful representative of the Arab people of Palestine—on a progressive patriotic and anti-imperialist basis. The sides believe that the achievement of the national aspirations of the Palestinians is impossible without respect for the decisions of the National Council of Palestine aimed at countering the Israeli aggression and the Camp David policy of separate deals, including the 'Reagan Plan', and without the close cooperation of the PLO with Syria, all the other progressive Arab countries and the patriotic forces of the Arab world" (*Soviet News*, March 14, 1984).

guarantee the PLO's rights and institutions in Lebanon.

3. Taking joint action with the Lebanese nationalist forces to continuously escalate armed struggle against the Zionist occupation forces.

4. The abrogation of the 17 May agreement⁷ is a major victory for the Lebanese people's struggle and a support for the struggle of our people and the other Arab peoples against the Camp David line and U.S. imperialist plans in the region. The abrogation is considered an important milestone on the path of the continuous national resistance against Israeli presence in Lebanon and for the unconditional removal of this presence.

5. Taking joint action with all the Palestinian national forces in order to reorganize our camps so as to spare them of conflicts and to protect their unity through popular committees and mass organizations, and to reactivate all PLO institutions in Lebanon.

VII. An Important Point

Affirming the PNC resolutions, especially those that were adopted at the 16th session, concerning the rejection of the Camp David line, confronting the Reagan and autonomy plans, the strengthening of relations with the Arab liberation movement forces as well as the friendly forces, headed by the USSR, and the abidance by the bases for the solution of the Palestine question as set forth in the resolutions of the PNC session in Algiers.

The Organizational Document

1. Expansion of the PNC's Bureau.
2. Recognition of the Palestinian Communist Party as a group to be represented in the council. Its representatives will be determined in subsequent consultations.
3. Amendment of the PLO's basic law so as to include all the powers that will be agreed upon.

The Central Council:

1. The council shall be elected directly from within the PNC in accordance with the internal bylaws that will specify the bases of its formation.
2. The council shall have the powers to make decisions.
3. The council shall have the powers to supervise the Executive Committee's implementation of the PNC decisions, and shall also have the right to freeze membership in the Executive Committee, provided that this does not affect more than one-third of the committee members.
4. The council shall form active, permanent working committees from among the PNC members on factional bases.⁸

7. The May 17, 1983, agreement between the Israeli and Lebanese governments legitimized continued Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. It was abrogated by Lebanese President Amin Gemayel in March of this year.

8. "On factional bases" — that is, on a basis aimed



Refugees in camp in Jordan.

5. The council shall draw up its own internal bylaws which will be part of the basic law.

The Executive Committee:

1. All of the national factions and forces recognized by the PNC shall participate in the Executive Committee's membership.
2. The Executive Committee shall elect deputies for the Executive Committee's chairman. Their jurisdictions and duties shall be defined by the Executive Committee's bylaws.
3. A general secretariat comprising a collective action leadership responsible for the daily decisions regarding all organizational, political, financial, and military issues that may arise in the period between any two Executive Committee meetings shall be formed. The number of the secretariat's members shall not exceed one-third of the number of Executive Committee members.

4. The Executive Committee shall form subcommittees from its members to supervise political and occupied homeland affairs, including the policy of bolstering steadfastness and Lebanon.

5. The PNC shall draw up the internal bylaw that organizes the Executive Committee's work. This bylaw shall become part of the basic law.

The Popular Unions:⁹

1. Preserving the unity of the popular unions, activating their role vis-à-vis the relationship with our masses, and abiding by the factional action within their ranks.
2. Reuniting the popular unions according to their internal bylaws and regulations.

The PLO Departments and Institutions:

at fostering equal participation by the PLO's various member organizations.

9. A reference to the various PLO-affiliated mass organizations, such as the General Union of Palestinian Women, the General Union of Palestinian Trade Unions, and so on.

1. The organization of the PLO departments, offices, and institutions shall be reconsidered on factional bases that take efficiency into consideration.

2. The Executive Committee shall form a special committee to study the conditions of the departments, offices, and institutions in order to develop their effectiveness and good performance in accordance with the abovementioned paragraph "1." It shall present its recommendations to the Executive Committee.

The Comprehensive National Dialogue:

The sides participating in the Algiers and Aden meeting call for a comprehensive national dialogue to bolster and guarantee the PLO's unity and to activate its legitimate institutions. The sides participating in the meeting believe that holding an immediate meeting for the Executive Committee, the general secretaries of the revolution factions, and the PNC presidency is the proper framework for this national dialogue. During this meeting, the participants shall present the political and organizational agreement reached. They will also welcome any other ideas or suggestions aimed at reaching a final agreement that safeguards the PLO's unity and national line and that prepares for the PNC's 17th session.

The participating sides emphasized the PNC should be convened on 15 September 1984 at the latest. The body in charge of the comprehensive national dialogue shall fix the date of the next PNC session and announce it within the proposed period. If it is impossible for this body to reach agreement on the date of the PNC session, the five parties shall meet to implement the agreement. □

Five more countries recognize Kampuchea

Following an African tour by Kampuchea's foreign minister Hun Sen, five more countries have established diplomatic relations with the Phnom Penh government. The five are Benin, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Guinea-Bissau, and Sierra Leone.

This development is expected to increase the vote at this year's United Nations General Assembly session in favor of turning over Kampuchea's United Nations seat to the present government, which was established in 1979 following the ouster of the murderous Pol Pot regime. Since that time, Pol Pot's representatives have continued to hold the UN seat.

In last year's vote at the UN, Sierra Leone was the only country among the five to vote to seat the present Kampuchean government. The other four abstained.

The remnants of Pol Pot's counterrevolutionary forces continue to mount raids against Kampuchea from bases in Thailand. Since July, however, Pol Pot's troops have been focusing more of their attention on launching attacks on rival rightist guerrilla forces also operating out of Thailand.

The FSLN's 'Plan of Struggle'

Sandinista platform for Nicaragua's November 4 elections

[The following is the text of the "Plan of Struggle of the FSLN," which is being massively distributed in Nicaragua as the platform of the Sandinista National Liberation Front in the elections for president, vice-president, and a constituent assembly to be held on November 4. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

I. The power of the people

The Sandinista Front commits itself to strengthen the power of the people and to keep weapons in the hands of the people in order to uphold and defend that power.

The Sandinista Front will guarantee that the inexhaustible source of revolutionary power will always be the trade unions of the workers and agricultural laborers; the neighborhood, women's, and youth organizations; and the unions of small- and medium-sized agricultural proprietors, journalists, professionals and technicians, intellectuals and artists, and religious workers.

II. Defense of the homeland

Weapons will remain in the hands of the people and we will go on strengthening our Armed Forces so long as imperialism goes on pressing its policy of destroying the power that belongs to the people. Its aim is to force us back into the past of submission and surrender, and that would mean wresting away all our gains, wresting away our sovereignty and independence.

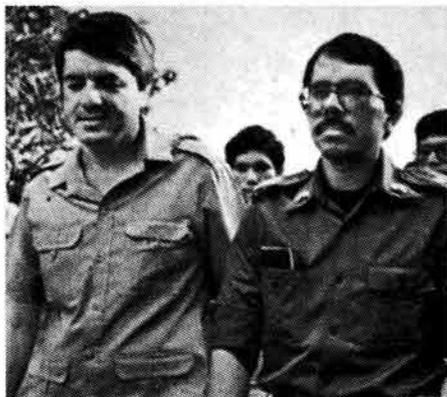
The Sandinista Front commits itself to go on defending the country's sovereignty, on the basis of continuing to arm and organize the entire people.

The Sandinista Front will remain at the head of the people until the final victory over those who are attacking our homeland. Sandinista militants will continue to offer the best example of participation in combat.

We will go on encouraging and instilling in our Armed Forces the spirit of unshakeable patriotism in the fight against the aggressor, as well as the most absolute respect for working people.

The Sandinista Front likewise commits itself to go on developing the policy, initiated by the revolutionary government, of assisting combatants in order to ensure jobs and social benefits for them and their families.

Attention to health care for the combatants will be increased, and full social security benefits will be extended to them. Also, combatants from the towns and cities will be given priority in the distribution of housing lots and construction materials.



FSLN candidates Sergio Ramirez and Daniel Ortega.

Land reform programs will also be extended to benefit the peasant fighters.

III. Security and tranquility for Nicaraguans

The Sandinista Front commits itself to go on furthering the professional and technical capacities of the Ministry of the Interior; developing its organizational abilities in order to guarantee the country's internal stability, crime prevention, security, respect, and tranquility for all Nicaraguans; and proceeding with all due energy against foreign aggressors and lawbreakers.

The Sandinista Front also commits itself to continue supporting the development of revolutionary night-watch duty and the police volunteers, as exemplary forms of popular participation.

IV. The struggle for peace

The Sandinista Front commits itself to go on developing a worthy and nonaligned international policy that corresponds above all to the interests of Nicaragua and Nicaraguans, without thereby infringing on the rights of other peoples.

We will go on exercising our sovereign and irrenounceable right to maintain relations with all the countries of the world and to lend support and solidarity to the cause of oppressed peoples against any form of subjugation.

We will go on struggling for world peace by fighting the hegemonistic and warlike policies that the U.S. administration seeks to impose on humanity even at risk to the survival of the human race.

We will continue to seek peace in Central America, without infringing our own sovereignty and fundamental rights as a free and independent country. We will go on seeking by all means to end the unjust and immoral aggression Nicaragua suffers at the hands of

the government of the United States.

V. Human rights and public liberties

The Sandinista Front commits itself to incorporate into the new Constitution that will be voted upon by the National Assembly this integral set of rights and freedoms that the Sandinista Revolution has brought into force through the daily exercise of democracy and public liberties in Nicaragua. For the Sandinista Front these rights took on a new dimension with the revolutionary victory:

The right to a job.

The right to land.

The right to organize and mobilize.

The right to housing and a building lot.

Workers' access to the communications media.

The right to education, culture, and sports.

The right to equal opportunities.

The right to criticize, engage in dialogue, and raise demands.

The right to health care.

The rights of women.

The rights of children, youth, and the aged.

In sum, the overall right to human life.

These are rights and freedoms that will be assured to all Nicaraguans. Only constant progress in transformations brought by the revolution will be able to make this fully possible, insofar as we advance in health care, housing, education, and social well-being; and to the extent that there is more and more political consciousness among the great working masses of the nation.

The Sandinista Front commits itself to go on encouraging a new communications policy in Nicaragua, guaranteeing democratic use of the media and the right of the great majority to express themselves freely. Likewise, new ethics in the field of information will be consolidated, according to the principles of respect for the truth and human dignity that the Sandinista Revolution promotes.

VI. The new economy

The Sandinista Front commits itself to deepen the social and economic revolution that has already been launched, by consolidating our model of independent economic development.

This model will continue to be in tune with the necessity of transforming the social reality of the country. It will have to contribute to meeting the basic needs of the people, diversifying economic cooperation and export markets, and furthering our process of technological assimilation in an orderly fashion.

At the same time, we set ourselves the aim of regulating the participation in our country's development of foreign capital from other states and from private companies so that, in

cooperation with our revolutionary state, projects may be developed to make possible the transformation of our raw materials and the development of our resources and wealth without infringing on our sovereignty.

This commitment also calls for ensuring the just and equitable distribution of wealth, and for continuing to fight injustice and social and economic inequality.

Within the mixed-economy framework — which offers room both for the functioning of the enterprises of the People's Property Sector and for those in the hands of private owners that correspond to the interests of national development — the instruments of governmental economic direction of centralized planning will continue to be strengthened.

Planning leads toward more rational use of all the country's resources, in order to direct them toward the goals of overall transformation of the society and overcoming the model of dependency to which we were subordinated.

The Sandinista Front commits itself to go on making use of material and financial resources, including foreign ones, in order to increase our capacity to produce foods and basic goods.

To further this policy, we will continue guaranteeing credit and bank financing as well as capital resources to all Nicaraguans who wish to produce patriotically and efficiently.

We will not spare any expenses or economic efforts to guarantee the defense of our homeland, the material necessities of the Armed Forces, and the provisioning of the fighters on the firing line.

We will go on fostering public spending aimed at defending the prices of basic consumer goods. We will do likewise in the health, education, housing, and services programs, above all in those regions that have been most affected by foreign aggression.

We commit ourselves to ensure the comple-

tion of those investment projects that are of strategic importance to the country's development. These will result in increased food production; in the processing of our agricultural, mineral, and forest resources; in the generation of electric power; and in transport systems and road and highway construction of use for production and defense.

In the same way, we will struggle to ensure the creation of poles of economic development in the various regions of the country, in such a way as to generate productive activities and create better local job opportunities for workers without forcing them to move into the capital.

We will be energetic in combating failures, deficiencies, vices, weaknesses, and bureaucratism in the state institutions.

The Sandinista Front commits itself to go on exercising its legitimate right to obtain economic and financial aid from all countries in the world that solidarize with our revolution and that offer us such cooperation without political conditions.

In dealing with the problem of the foreign debt, we have stated that Nicaragua will remain responsible for its financial commitments, without endangering our economic development and independence. We also uphold the necessity of bringing together the debtor countries in order to confront in a rational and coherent fashion the club that the creditors have organized.

We will also adopt a foreign investments law, with regulations capable of attracting to our country the capital resources necessary for our development while at the same time guaranteeing our interests as a sovereign country.

VII. The peasants and land reform

The Sandinista Revolution's policy in the countryside consists of giving land free of

charge to the peasants who want to work it and in helping them to organize themselves so as to gain better access to bank credit and technical assistance.

This also means guaranteeing the property of the small- and medium-sized rural producers who were already landowners before the victory, and providing them with support in terms of credit and technical aid.

This policy also applies to agricultural producers who work efficiently and produce good yields, whatever the size of their property holding.

The Sandinista Front commits itself to go on developing the Agrarian Reform as one of the axes of economic transformation.

The Sandinista Front commits itself to continue promoting the distribution to the peasants of property titles to the land, and to make sure bank credit and technical aid reaches them in an effective way.

The Sandinista Front commits itself to continue encouraging and extending the organization of cooperatives in the countryside.

We will also go on supporting the small- and medium-sized agricultural proprietors, as well as all the farmers and ranchers in general who produce with dedication, efficiency, and patriotism.

We will go on struggling to keep the roads in good condition and to open more; to improve the systems of transport, storage, and warehousing; and to ensure that just and stable prices are paid to producers.

The Sandinista Front likewise commits itself to go on guaranteeing access to bank credit for all producers without discrimination, and to provide them with technical assistance, fertilizers, vaccines, seed, and spare parts, taking into account the supply problems brought on by the aggression we are suffering.

VIII. Wages and the supply of goods

In order to deal with the problem of the supply of goods, the Sandinista Front commits itself to guarantee to the population access to the principal basic products needed for subsistence, at stable fixed prices, distributed through uniform and secure channels. The list of goods will be broadened to include other consumer products to the extent that the imperialist aggression diminishes and we achieve greater levels of production and organization.

The Sandinista Front commits itself to fight for the stability and control of prices of basic consumer goods without exception, in order to safeguard them from speculation and hoarding.

The rights of all those shopkeepers, market vendors, and small merchants who work honestly to strengthen the distribution channels will be protected.

We also commit ourselves to guarantee the supply of goods to all the fighters on the battle fronts and to provide basic goods to the population of all those zones that are directly affected by the war against the invaders.

We commit ourselves to go on developing supply networks in the countryside, installing

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Ellen Kratka/IFP

Celebration of fifth anniversary of the revolution. "The FSLN is the party of working people."

people's stores and rural supply centers little by little. At these outlets it will also be possible to obtain machetes, boots, files, and other products needed by the peasantry that the country is in a position to provide.

The Sandinista Front commits itself to go on applying a rational policy to maintain the stability of prices for basic products and to energetically enforce the laws against speculation and hoarding.

In the same way, the Sandinista Front commits itself to go on developing a just and rational policy with regard to wages, according to the principle of equal wages for equal work, as has been initiated with the application of the National System for the Organization of Work and Wages. Moral and material incentives in production and productivity also form part of this policy.

This policy will lead us to periodically adjust wages in relation to the controlled prices of basic goods, and to give priority to the wages of workers in strategic areas of production and services, in both the countryside and the cities.

IX. Workers, trade unions, and jobs

The Revolution promotes trade-union organizations so that the workers can participate in the management and organization of production and supervise compliance with the labor laws, respect for the norms of safety and hygiene, and food and housing conditions in rural sectors.

In the factories, plants, and workplaces, commissaries, cafeterias, and medical services have been established. Contracts provide for many other guarantees and benefits.

The Revolution promotes ongoing technical training of workers. It supports the innovators who help to overcome difficulties in the importation of machinery and spare parts while at the same time creating the basis of a national technology in the midst of limitations.

The Sandinista Front has promoted the unity of the working class and will go on doing so, in a constant struggle against divisionism, opportunism, low productivity, indiscipline, and

work inefficiency.

All these are vices that the agents of imperialism and capitalism try to preserve among the most backward sectors of the working class. It will be necessary to combat them energetically.

The Sandinista Front, as the historic vanguard of the Nicaraguan proletariat, reaffirms its confidence in the workers and commits itself to guarantee their true leading role in the revolution and to go on consolidating the organization of the working class, both in the cities and in the countryside. It will likewise promote participation by the working class in the management of enterprises; its ongoing technical education; and its contributions to the country's technological development.

We also commit ourselves to overhaul the labor laws and exercise special vigilance over compliance with them in all the country's workplaces.

X. Handicrafts and small-scale industry

The Sandinista Front commits itself to support the artisans and small-scale industrialists, encouraging them to organize in cooperatives to guarantee access to bank credit at appropriate interest rates and periods of repayment, as well as to provide supplies and raw materials. The distribution centers that already exist for this purpose will be expanded.

Within the limits imposed by the scarcity of foreign currency, efforts will be made to guarantee the basic supplies that are required. Export programs for handicraft products will be promoted.

XI. Professionals and technicians

The Sandinista Front commits itself to go on encouraging the organization of the country's professionals and technicians and to establish a more coherent policy aimed at improving their levels of scientific knowledge, developing their political consciousness, and fostering their dedication to serving the interests of the people.

We likewise commit ourselves to broaden

the professionals' opportunities for education and updating their technical knowledge, and to encourage their involvement in scientific research and in contributing to the technological development of the country.

We will also continue going forward in the task of establishing uniform wage scales and just payment norms for various professional and technical activities.

XII. The revolutionary state

It is urgent to eliminate the legacy of the past in the administration of justice and to move forward with concrete measures for greater efficiency and less bureaucratism in the administration of the state.

The FSLN will deepen the popular and anti-imperialist character of the Nicaraguan state.

The Sandinista Front commits itself to strengthen the role of the comptroller-general of the republic, so that this institution can become the faithful guardian of the conduct of public servants and see to it that the people's funds are scrupulously invested.

It also commits itself to punish in an exemplary fashion all those servants of the state who commit abuses of any kind.

In the same way, we will proceed energetically in the struggle against bureaucratism, with the aim of creating greater levels of efficiency in the government.

The Sandinista Front commits itself to move forward in reordering the system of administration of justice, in professionalizing the judiciary, and in elaborating special policies so that the administration of justice can more and more correspond to the interests of the people.

XIII. The Atlantic Coast

The Sandinista Front commits itself to continue upholding the territorial integrity of Nicaragua, more and more incorporating the Atlantic Coast into the country. We will continue the process of integration and transformation that has already begun; go on creating new poles of economic development in forestry, mining, and fishing; and develop ports, agriculture in permanent settlements, communications media, and highways.

The Sandinista Front commits itself as well to go on respecting the culture and religious beliefs of *criollos* [English-speaking Blacks], Miskitus, Sumos, and Ramas, who are all part of the Nicaraguan nationality; to preserve and encourage the preservation of their languages, cultural traditions, and customs, incorporating these into the cultural heritage of the nation; and to go on defending their right to be educated in their mother tongue as well as in Spanish, the national language.

The Sandinista Front commits itself to defend the rights that the ethnic minorities enjoy as Nicaraguans to exploit the land and benefit from it, both from the lands they already possess and from those the Revolution provides them through the Agrarian Reform.

The Sandinista Front likewise commits itself to go on working to create better living and working conditions for the mine workers, who

in the past epitomized the most merciless exploitation by the foreign corporations. The same goes for the forestry workers and fishermen.

We will go on defending the ethnic minorities' right of organization and their participation in running the government.

XIV. Health, welfare, and social security

The Sandinista Front commits itself to go on struggling to consolidate the Uniform Health-Care System and to improve the quality of services provided to patients in the hospitals. To go on bringing health-care services to rural areas, especially to those that are under counter-revolutionary military attack, as well as to ensure the supply of medicines, whatever the limitations imposed by the war of aggression.

We will go on making efforts to provide preferential attention to invalids, through various programs of protection and welfare.

We will go on struggling to improve the quality of care and to provide fraternal and humanitarian treatment of patients.

We commit ourselves to go on eradicating infantile ailments, to continue to struggle against childhood malnutrition, to go on fighting infant mortality, and to put priority on attention to mothers during and after pregnancy as well as care to the newborn.

We commit ourselves to support and strengthen the popular health campaigns, so that the organized people may develop and consolidate their participation in caring for their own health and in developing preventive medicine.

Likewise, we will go on training more and more doctors, nurses, and health technicians, with a new consciousness of service to the people.

The Sandinista Front will continue broadening social security in the countryside, along with programs to care for the aged and disabled and to protect minors against all forms of abandonment, cruelty, and exploitation. And it commits itself to go on fighting against prostitution, drug addiction, and alcoholism, and to develop rehabilitation programs in those fields.

XV. Education, culture, and sports

The Sandinista Front commits itself to consolidate the development of a new, democratic form of education in Nicaragua, one that trains young people in a rounded way and links their preparation for labor to the needs of transforming the country and contributing to its greatness.

We will continue making efforts to reduce the illiteracy rate still further and press the battle to achieve basic people's education at the fourth-grade level for all Nicaraguans of school age. Technical education for workers will continue to be developed.

We will put together a uniform system of education, from pre-school learning up to diversified university training, corresponding to the realities and needs of the country.

We will train teachers and professors in a

massive way at all levels. We will continue building classrooms and schools, within the limits imposed on us by the war of aggression.

We will go on defending and advancing toward the right to free education throughout the country, putting an end to the expensive education still offered by certain private schools.

We will work toward the transformation of curricula and the preparation of our own textbooks and other learning materials. We will likewise work to improve the country's capacity to generate scientific and technical knowledge, through teaching and research.

We will train new, well-rounded human individuals, through new forms of scientific and humanitarian education.

Aware that there are still children without teachers and schools, we will go on extending education to the masses, taking care at the same time to improve its quality.

We will go on encouraging the participation of the people in cultural activity, in order to ensure the development of a rich and diverse culture representative of our nationality.

In the same way, we commit ourselves to go on transforming television, radio, and other communications media of the Revolution into media that are truly educational and informative.

The Sandinista Front commits itself to support the process of democratizing sport and bringing it to the masses in a noncommercial way, through the participation of the organized people, youth in particular.

Taking into account the limited resources we have, we will go on promoting sports, broadening such activities and encouraging their growth. Baseball in particular will be promoted without prejudice toward other sporting activities.

XVI. Intellectuals and artists

The Sandinista Revolution has enjoyed the overwhelming support of journalists, who are working today to communicate revolutionary

truth on the basis of new opportunities and new forms of expression.

Likewise, writers, musicians, performers, film makers, plastic artists, all cultural workers are giving a new creative and popular dimension to the development of art in this country.

The Sandinista Front commits itself to go on supporting the development of a new, critical journalism, constructive and incorruptible, and to foster the organization of journalists so as to make possible their professional and intellectual development.

The Sandinista Front likewise commits itself to go on guaranteeing the freedom of cultural creation, supporting writers, artists, and other cultural workers so they can go on developing all their creative potential and circulating their works among our people. We will help them to strengthen their associations, unions, institutions, editorial houses, schools, workshops, and centers of artistic education.

XVII. Housing, basic services, and recreation

Workers brigades have brought roads, water, electric power, and telecommunications to the most remote areas of Nicaragua, opening up contact among regions that previously were isolated. Television and radio have been brought to the northern part of the country and to the Atlantic Coast.

Despite the adverse conditions imposed by the war of aggression and the serious economic limitations, the revolution has launched a program for building popular recreation centers, guaranteeing the people's right to healthy entertainment.

Recreation in decent conditions has ceased to be the privilege of a minority in Nicaragua. We will continue with this effort to broaden tourist and recreational facilities for the people, to the extent that the situation of aggression allows it. Preference in recreational programs will be given to combatants and their



Jane Harris IP

Miskitu children in front of their classroom.

children and family members.

The Sandinista Front commits itself to go on fighting to assure Nicaraguans the right to dignified housing. We will continue handing out lots and building materials, above all in rural regions affected by the war. And we will go on guaranteeing that housing land will not be the object of speculation or commercial activity.

We will go on bringing electricity, drinking water, and communications facilities to the entire country, above all to the peasant communities and rural workplaces.

XVIII. Transportation

New transportation networks have been set up in rural areas that had remained cut off in the past. The creation of transport cooperatives has been encouraged.

We have made efforts to rationalize the system of urban transportation in Managua and other cities, expanding the number of routes according to the needs of workers, and establishing night-time service. Hundreds of new buses have been imported, but difficulties persist in maintenance and the supply of spare parts, as well as in the organization of service.

Land transport to the Atlantic Coast has been opened for the first time through the Matagalpa-Waslala-Siuna Highway. The Río Blanco-Siuna Highway is also under construction.

A new railroad linking the port of Corinto with the cities of Chinandega, León, and Managua is being built in order to restore the train service interrupted by the floods of 1982. Work has begun to make El Bluff into the first deepwater port on the Atlantic Coast.

The Sandinista Front commits itself to go on advancing in the improvement of urban, inter-urban, and rural transportation networks, making special efforts to connect rural communities.

We will go forward in building the port of El Bluff and the Río Blanco-Siuna Highway. We will go on building and maintaining the roads in the productive zones, and we will make efforts to improve transport across Lake Nicaragua and on the rivers of the Atlantic Coast.

XIX. Children

In order to protect the lives of children — the greatest treasure of our homeland — the Sandinista Revolution has carried out health programs and vaccination campaigns and has set up diarrhea treatment centers.

Children's parks, preschool and child-development centers, and classrooms have multiplied in the countryside and in previously neglected neighborhoods. Recreation centers have been opened, and there will be more in the future.

We will go on carrying out programs to benefit all Nicaraguan children, with special attention to the offspring of our heroes and martyrs and above all to those orphaned by the imperialist war.

There is still a long road ahead of us before children can fully enjoy all the protective measures and rights that the Sandinista Revolu-

tion seeks to guarantee. There are still many children who work instead of going to school — children who peddle newspapers, children without shoes, children who beg.

In this regard, the Sandinista Front commits itself to work without rest to ensure good health and healthy development for our children, to broaden their educational and recreational opportunities, and to guarantee them happiness and security in order that they can truly be the ones dearest to the Revolution's heart.

XX. Youth

The Sandinista Front commits itself to go on encouraging the organization of youth in the UNEN [National Union of Nicaraguan Students] and the FES [Secondary Students Federation], supporting them as well in the development of their varied tasks of political and patriotic education.

We also commit ourselves to offer the youth better and more varied opportunities for professional and technical education by means of perfecting the country's educational system, providing opportunities to study abroad in friendly countries, and linking education more and more to labor and defense.

In the same way, the Sandinista Front commits itself to make efforts to guarantee to young people the same opportunities in jobs as in education, and to encourage their participation in defense, culture, and sports, as well as expanding recreation and entertainment facilities for young people.

XXI. Women

The family laws adopted by the revolutionary government are aimed at protecting women as mothers and providing them the dignity due them within the family.

The Revolution has created equality of opportunity for all Nicaraguans, regardless of sex, and has restored the dignity of women. But social problems persist, and these pose obstacles to full participation by women in the Revolution.

The Sandinista Front will make greater efforts to overcome these social problems in order that women can achieve full participation. And it will struggle in a more systematic way to eliminate prostitution.

The Sandinista Front will go on defending the nuclear family and the integrity of the home. To make it possible for the family laws adopted by the Revolution to be fully complied with, education guidelines aimed at fostering greater understanding of this set of problems will be developed.

The Sandinista Front commits itself to go on encouraging women's participation in society, opening job and educational opportunities in order to place them on an equal footing with men.

XXII. Religion and the revolution

The Sandinista Front will go on guaranteeing the freedom of Nicaraguans to profess a religious faith. No one can be discriminated

against for publicly professing or publicizing their religious beliefs. Those who profess no religious faith have the same rights.

The Sandinista Front, which has the deepest respect for all the religious celebrations and traditions of our people, will go on making efforts to uphold the true content of such celebrations, attacking the manifestations of corruption and vice that affected these in the past.

The Sandinista Front also considers that religious celebrations must not be utilized for political or commercial ends.

The Sandinista Front will go on defending a secular state that, like any modern state representative of the entire people, must not adopt any religion in particular.

The Sandinista Front will guarantee the right of individuals, churches, and private associations to organize for religious purposes.

The Sandinista Front commits itself to stimulate and encourage participation by Christians in the tasks of the Revolution, upholding the strictest respect for freedom of worship and the free functioning of the different churches in Nicaragua.

XXIII. Remembering 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 the 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 this 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!

Behind the Libya-Morocco 'union'

A blow to Saharan independence struggle

By Ernest Harsch

Following a month of secret negotiations, King Hassan II of Morocco and Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi of Libya signed a treaty in Oujda, Morocco, on August 13 establishing a political "union" of the two countries. It provides for a mutual defense pact and a rotating presidency.

The signing of the document, known as the "Treaty of Arab-African Union," came as a surprise, not only to the peoples of Libya and Morocco, but throughout the region and the world. A more unlikely partnership could hardly have been imagined:

The Moroccan government, headed by a despotic monarch, is one of imperialism's closest allies in North Africa. It receives large amounts of U.S. economic and military assistance and has granted Washington military landing and transit facilities.

The Libyan government, which emerged out of a military coup in 1969 that overthrew a monarchy, has adopted a radical nationalist stance and has been in repeated conflict with imperialism. Qaddafi has faced numerous U.S. efforts to oust him.

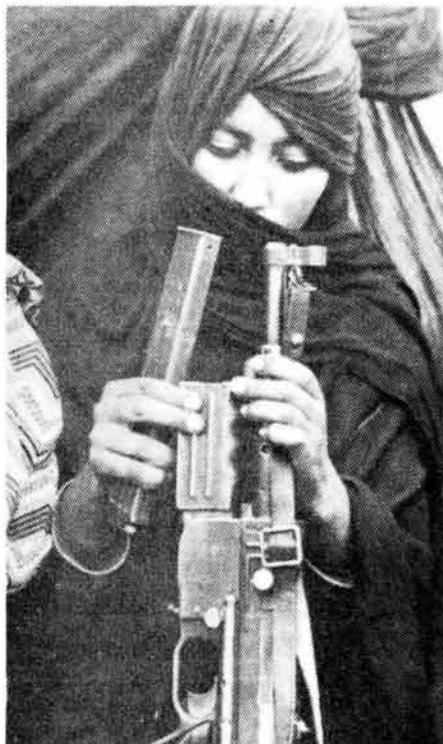
These differences are not mentioned in the treaty. The motivation for "union" is phrased in abstract terms about the need for unity against "the policy of violence and aggression carried out by Zionists." It refers to the agreement between Libya and Morocco as "a starting point for the setting up of larger structures with the aim to serve the unity of Arab and Muslim peoples."

At least on King Hassan's part, this motivation is highly dubious. Of all the Arab heads of state, he has been one of the most accommodating to the Zionist regime in Israel. Moroccan troops have never directly fought Israeli forces. Hassan helped arrange the first secret meetings between the Israelis and Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat that preceded Sadat's visit to Israel in 1977. And as recently as May 1984, he invited 11 members of Israel's Knesset to Morocco, a move that prompted widespread criticism in the Arab world.

Polisario betrayed

The real reason for Hassan's signing of the treaty lies closer to home: Western Sahara.

A former Spanish colony, Western Sahara was invaded by Moroccan troops in 1975 as the colonial authorities were pulling out. Hassan claimed that the territory belonged to Morocco, although the Saharan people overwhelmingly favored establishing their own independent state. Led by the Polisario Front, they have been waging a bitter war for inde-



A Saharan freedom fighter.

pendence from Morocco ever since, confronting some 200,000 Moroccan troops backed up by massive amounts of U.S. military equipment and, reportedly, Israeli advice on counterinsurgency methods.

In this struggle, Polisario has benefited from material assistance from several governments. Foremost among them is the Algerian regime, which permits Saharan refugee camps to be based in Algeria and which provides Polisario fighters with considerable military aid and training. Over the years, the Libyan government also gave Polisario significant military and political assistance.

With the signing of the treaty, however, Hassan has succeeded in getting Qaddafi to abandon his government's support for the Saharan liberation struggle.

The treaty itself only hints at this. Article 11 refers to the commitment of both sides to respect each other's "sovereignty" — by inference including Hassan's territorial claims to Western Sahara — and to not "interfere within the other country's internal affairs."

In a speech in Libya on September 1 marking the 15th anniversary of the coup that brought him to power, Qaddafi, in a demagogic fashion, urged Polisario to stop fighting

the Moroccan army. "We are awaiting the day when the brave Polisario forces will join the courageous Moroccan Army, the Algerian, Libyan and Tunisian popular armed forces, to march towards Palestine and Jerusalem . . ." Qaddafi bombastically declared. He thus implied that any continuation of Polisario's struggle for independence would obstruct steps toward Arab unity against the Israeli state.

In an August 22 statement, Polisario's Executive Committee indirectly replied to such accusations. It emphasized that "the Polisario Front is a liberation front with a unionist course and that it is impossible to outmaneuver it. It was the front that stood up to the oppression and injustice being imposed on the Saharan people, the African continent, and the Arab nation."

It is the Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara, the Executive Committee affirmed, that constitutes the "major obstacle" to efforts to unite the Maghreb (the region of North Africa that comprises Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Western Sahara).

Even before Qaddafi's formal rapprochement with Hassan, his government's material support for Polisario had been reduced to a trickle, a process that began with an initial meeting between the two heads of state in June 1983.

Polisario has not been the only victim of this turnaround. According to a report in the August 27 Paris fortnightly *Afrique-Asie*, Qaddafi has also promised the Moroccan and Saudi Arabian regimes that training camps in Libya for political dissidents from those two countries would likewise be shut down.

A boost for Hassan

Polisario's loss of one of its most influential backers marks a significant political gain for Hassan. It comes at a crucial time for the Moroccan monarchy, which has been facing mounting political, economic, and military difficulties.

In January, Morocco's deteriorating economic situation sparked massive uprisings in a number of cities. Scores were killed when Moroccan security forces moved in to crush the revolt.

This economic crisis has been exacerbated by the costs of the war in Western Sahara, which consumes 40 percent of the government budget.

In Western Sahara itself, Hassan has been unable to militarily crush the Polisario fighters. Despite extensive imperialist aid and the construction of a massive defensive "wall" designed to keep the guerrillas out of the most

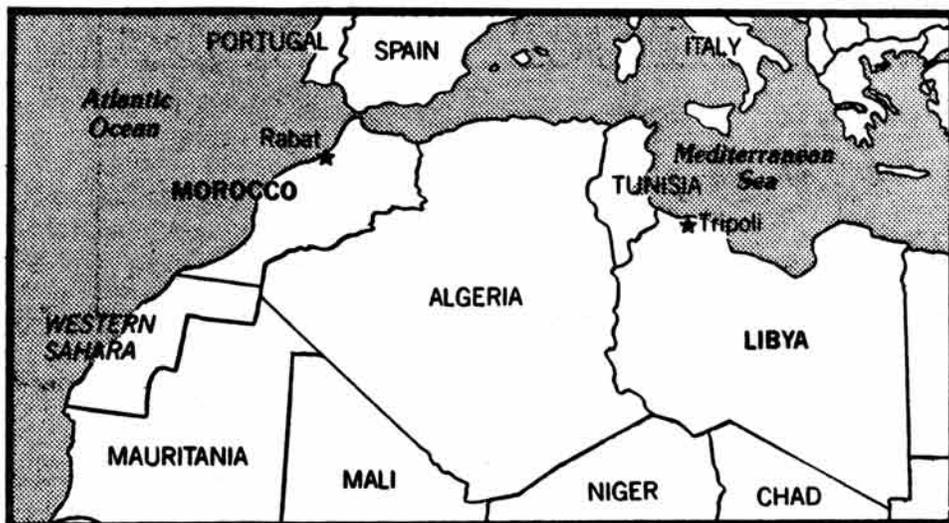
strategic regions of Western Sahara, Polisario has been able to strike at the Moroccan army and inflict serious losses on it. Polisario operates over most of the territory. It has breached Hassan's wall on numerous occasions. And it has built up its fighting forces to more than 20,000 full-time troops armed with increasingly sophisticated weapons, including tanks, heavy artillery, and anti-aircraft guns.

At the same time, the Saharan independence struggle has won wide international support. Polisario's Saharan Arab Democratic Republic has now been recognized by 57 governments around the world, including more than half of the members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which has admitted the republic into its ranks.

One significant recent addition to Polisario's roster of supporters has been the government of neighboring Mauritania. In 1975, Mauritanian troops participated in the invasion of Western Sahara. But the strains of the war eventually led to the overthrow of the government in power at the time and to Mauritania's withdrawal from the war. In February of this year, the Mauritanian authorities announced their formal recognition of the Saharan republic. Hassan then warned Mauritania that it would face "unfavorable consequences" if Polisario fighters began operating from Mauritanian territory.

In response to these difficulties, Hassan took the initiative of proposing the "union" with Libya. By doing so, he hopes to drive a breach into the growing support for the Saharan struggle and to use Qaddafi's political standing in Africa and the Middle East to ease the criticisms of the Moroccan army's ongoing war.

Qaddafi's decision to end his support for Polisario comes in the context of an unremitting imperialist drive to isolate and overthrow



his government.

This has involved frequent U.S. military threats and provocations, such as the shooting down of two Libyan jets over the Gulf of Sidra in 1981 and the sending of AWACS surveillance planes to neighboring Egypt. In July, four U.S. Navy jets again violated Libyan air space by flying over the Gulf of Sidra.

In May, Libyan forces crushed another coup attempt, similar to several others that had been previously organized by the U.S. or French intelligence agencies.

In a direct provocation against Libya, several thousand French troops remain stationed in Chad, to Libya's south, to prop up a pro-imperialist regime that was installed with the help of the CIA. Since some Libyan troops are in northern Chad, in support of the forces of deposed former President Goukouni Oueddei, there is a danger of direct confrontation with the French troops.

In 1982, Washington, acting through King Hassan and other proimperialist figures in Africa, successfully blocked the convening of an annual summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity scheduled to be held in Libya, a move that also prevented Qaddafi from becoming the chairman of the OAU. Among the issues that the pro-U.S. forces seized on was Qaddafi's backing for Polisario and the Chadian rebels, and a bid, then supported by Qaddafi, to have a Saharan delegation formally seated at the meeting.

In recent years, U.S. economic sanctions against Libya, combined with a drop in the world market price for oil, have reduced Libya's oil revenues by more than half, greatly disrupting the country's economic development plans.

By now agreeing to drop support for Polisario, Qaddafi evidently hopes to win some respite from this U.S.-orchestrated campaign.

According to several news reports, one immediate concession he has gotten from Hassan is a pledge that Moroccan troops will not be sent to help out the French forces in Chad, a move that had been under consideration.

But whatever extra breathing room Qaddafi may gain — if any — it is at the cost of weakening the struggle of the Saharan people against an imperialist-backed dictatorship. That, in turn, weakens Libya's own efforts to defy imperialism's dictates.

In the same way, the blows inflicted against the Palestinian liberation movement have harmed the overall struggle of the Arab peoples against imperialist domination and exploitation. While the main responsibility for that falls on the Israeli regime, both the Libyan and Syrian governments have contributed to a weakening of the Palestine Liberation Organization through their direct material support and encouragement to factions that took up arms in Lebanon in 1983 against the central PLO leadership. This interference in the internal affairs of the PLO is aimed at politically subordinating the PLO to Libyan and Syrian foreign

3 Moroccan hunger strikers die

Since mid-August, three Moroccan political prisoners have died from hunger strikes conducted to protest their conditions in prison.

They are among 35 young prisoners who launched the strike on July 4 in three prisons in southern Morocco. Most had been arrested in January, on charges of participating in the urban rebellions that swept the country in the wake of food price increases. Their main demands are for the right to have family visits, to receive medical care, to continue their studies, and to have access to newspapers and books.

The official Moroccan press has maintained a total silence on the hunger strike, and the government of King Hassan has refused to concede any of their demands. Despite the declining health of the hunger strikers, they have not given up their protest action.

The three who have died are Abdelhalim

Meskini, Moulay Douraidi, and Moustapha Belhewari.

Thousands of people turned out for the funeral of 19-year-old Moulay Douraidi in Marrakesh on August 29. Douraidi, a university student, had been arrested in January on charges of belonging to Ilal Amam (Forward), a group that describes itself as Marxist-Leninist. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison and was subjected to torture for refusing to name other members of the group.

According to relatives, the physical condition of 28 of the other hunger strikers is "alarming." Seventeen are in a hospital in Marrakesh and 11 in a hospital in Safi. Some are now in comas.

A committee in support of the hunger strikers has been established by a number of prominent individuals in France and has organized protests against the Moroccan monarchy's treatment of the prisoners.

policy objectives.

Such actions do nothing to strengthen the fight against imperialism or advance Arab unity. It is only on the basis of unconditional support for struggles like those of the Saharans and Palestinians that the foundations can be built for genuine unity among the oppressed and exploited.

Washington initially reacted to the signing of the treaty with a public show of surprise and with continued hostility toward the Qaddafi government. It expressed concern that some of the U.S. weapons sent to Morocco might end up in Libya, and that the new alliance could undercut Washington's efforts to politically isolate Qaddafi. Gen. Vernon Walters was sent to Hassan's palace to hear a more detailed explanation of the treaty's significance. Hassan in turn sent a top aide, Reda Guedira, to Washington to provide assurances.

According to a report in the September 6

New York Times, "American officials said that they had been told by Mr. Guedira and other Moroccans that King Hassan can handle Colonel Qaddafi, and might, in fact, be able to moderate his actions. They have also assured the United States that the treaty with Libya would not jeopardize Morocco's ties with the United States."

An editorial in the September 12 *Washington Post* pointed to the overall value of the treaty for the imperialists: "The new union cuts across the American effort to isolate Col. Qaddafi but serves the Western interest in moving the grinding Sahara dispute toward political resolution."

But for the imperialists, Qaddafi's abandonment of Polisario is not enough for them to give up their active opposition.

In response to Qaddafi's 15th anniversary speech, in which he declared support for the Nicaraguan revolution and pledged to provide

Nicaragua with further Libyan assistance, the White House issued a sharply worded statement. And just the day before, the U.S. government declared that Libyan diplomats at the United Nations would not be allowed to travel outside New York City without special permission.

An editorial in the September 8 *London Economist*, a leading voice of British imperialism, concluded, "Neither the Libyan regime's words nor its deeds support any hopes that placating it now would not encourage it to do yet worse."

And French Defense Minister Charles Hernu affirmed that French troops in Chad "would stay where they are for now."

Clearly, the imperialists do not place much confidence in Hassan's efforts to "moderate" the Libyan government's overall stance. If more sweeping concessions are not forthcoming, its overthrow remains on their agenda. □

SELECTIONS FROM THE LEFT

[The following selections are devoted to assessments of the U.S. 1984 presidential election campaign.]

DAILY WORLD

*Newspaper of the Communist Party, U.S.A.
Published in New York.*

A front-page editorial entitled "Defeat Reagan!" in the special Labor Day edition (August 30) reviewed the antilabor policies of the Reagan administration. It concluded:

"The Communist candidates . . . fully support labor's struggle to dump Reagan and make a 180 degree turn away from unemployment, inflation, racism and war, and move toward a government whose policy is the establishment of full employment, social, political and economic equality for all and an end to the arms race.

"We urge support for their campaign, but whether or not you are prepared to vote for Hall and Davis [the CP candidates], you must register now and vote on November 6 *against Reagan and Reaganism*. Victory is essential and victory is possible!"

In the same issue, CP presidential candidate and general secretary, Gus Hall, called "riding our country and the world of Reagan and the Reaganites" the "greatest challenge of our times."

Hall's article emphasized the role of labor's "new structure and politics of independence" in mobilizing "the components of the all people's front" against Reagan.

"Where the forces are divided, progressive forces can play a positive, mediating role," Hall stated, "by suggesting that this is a moment to temporarily put aside disagreements and unite behind the common goal of defeating

Reagan.

"After the victory over Reaganism, everyone can sit down in a much better atmosphere and with a new balance of forces to discuss the problems and seek solutions. All forces must be convinced to pull together for this greatest challenge of all elections — the defeat of a totally anti-people, war-mongering president."

Hall cautioned against "any action that helps to re-elect Reagan," warning that "we must not confuse the masses of voters who have every intention of voting against Reagan, with the few who are expressing doubts about the benefits of voting. All evidence, history, struggle, and plain confidence in people's inherent common sense points to an unprecedented outpouring of anti-Reagan votes."

Concluding with the role of the Communist campaign, Hall wrote, "Of course, Angela Davis, my vice-presidential running mate, and I encourage voters to cast a vote with the biggest clout — for the Communist Party candidates. But we also say, the bottom line is a vote against Reagan."

FRONTLINE

A biweekly newspaper published in Oakland, California.

"In our view," wrote the editors in a special supplement to the August 20 issue, "the working class has a crucial stake not just in using the 1984 election as a vehicle for having its class interests placed before the masses, but in the actual outcome of the balloting. As a result, left and progressive forces cannot afford the moralistic indulgence of abstentionism or the sectarian indulgence of independent 'pro-

test' candidacies — no matter how justified and righteous our anger at the craven alternative to Reagan that the Democratic Party has provided in the person of Walter Mondale."

The supplement, entitled "1984: it's not just another election," focused on two goals for the left in the election: the ouster of Reagan and "building the Rainbow Coalition, a goal which requires of the left that it work within and help push forward the Jesse Jackson-led insurgency within the Democratic Party."

The article observed that "it is no minor matter for the future of U.S. working class politics for the communists to advocate the election of one bourgeois candidate over another." But, it explained, "the working class must be trained to approach each political event in its particularity — figuring out concretely how both its immediate as well as its long term class interests are best served."

Mondale's differences with Reagan "reflect a perspective and a set of policy preferences within the bourgeoisie which are measurably at odds with the Reagan program. *And since, at the present time, the bourgeoisie deems it necessary to rule by way of 'democratically' determined popular mandate, it is politically possible for the masses to intervene in this debate and affect its outcome.*"

One of the differences cited by the *Frontline* editors was on the likelihood of expanded U.S. war in Central America. "A Reagan victory would make it more difficult for the highly unstable congressional opposition to continue to refuse funding to the Nicaraguan 'contras,'" they wrote, while "a Mondale presently pledged to 'stop the illegal war in Nicaragua' in his first 100 days in office is not as likely to invade that country in the first flush of enthusiasm after the election or to be as precipitous as we can expect Reagan to be in sending U.S. troops into El Salvador."

Domestically, Reagan's policies "represent a qualitative escalation in the preparations for fascism," the article stated. "The fact that in the context of the 1984 election, the objective defense of bourgeois democracy against the inroads of fascism proceeds under the leadership of the liberal wing of the bourgeoisie is quite sobering," it added.

DEMOCRATIC LEFT

Published six times a year in New York City by the Democratic Socialists of America.

The July-August issue carried a "Presidential Support Statement," adopted by a poll of the DSA National Executive Committee in July.

"We call upon all Americans to support and vote for the Mondale-Ferraro ticket in the 1984 election," it began. "That ticket is the only serious alternative to four more years of Ronald Reagan. . . ."

"Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro are not, of course, socialists. They do have the potential to create a liberal and humane administration infinitely superior to Ronald Reagan's on every count. That is why we vigorously back, and will work for, their election, knowing still that we will organize as a left pressure on them five minutes after the victory.

"In particular, we are enthusiastic about the nomination of a woman as a major party candidate for an office one heartbeat away from the presidency. That fact itself has lifted this campaign above politics as usual."

The statement concluded: "We are Americans and democratic socialists and Democrats. We pledge all of our energy — and all of our vision — in a campaign which must bring together all of our fellow citizens of decency and good will to defeat the most reactionary administration of the twentieth century."

MONTHLY REVIEW

A radical journal published in New York and edited by Paul Sweezy and Harry Magdoff.

The February "Review of the month" was devoted to "The left and the 1984 elections." In it, the editors wrote that Reagan's ignorance, incompetence and cruelty "is enough to define the overriding issue in the 1984 elections. Ronald Reagan must go."

"What we have is in every respect the most reactionary, right-wing government in the country's history," they stated, "and in many ways it is doing the things that in other countries and at other times are done by fascist governments."

"The 1984 elections present the United States with an opportunity to start [the] return journey from the Reaganite functional equivalent of fascism to normal bourgeois democracy. . . . If from a left perspective all this is obvious, so also is the logical conclusion to which it points: the most effective anti-Reagan vote is a vote for the Democratic candidate whoever it may be."

The *Monthly Review* editors described "the central objective" in supporting candidates as "establish[ing] a meaningful left presence on the U.S. political scene."

"There are politicians who side with the people's struggles and those who side with the people's enemies," they said. "It is not always easy, or even possible, to tell the difference . . . but the principle is clear that the left has the responsibility to identify and support politicians who are on the side of the people. . . . We back candidates who sincerely reject U.S. interventionist policies abroad and the huge military budget at home; who favor social security, low-cost housing, better medical care, safety in the workplace, consumer protection, etc.; and we oppose those on the other side."

Guardian

A radical newsweekly, published in New York.

"More than anything else," a front-page editorial in the August 8 issue began, "the 1984 presidential election will be a referendum on the Reagan administration's policies of building up for war and assaulting working class and poor people in the U.S."

"It is crucial that Reagan be removed from office this November to prevent consolidation of power by the right. This includes voting against him — and for his Democratic Party opponent, Walter Mondale. But much more important for the left is militant organizing against the policies Reagan stands for."

"This stand on voting," the *Guardian* editors continued, "represents a change from previous *Guardian* positions, but we believe the Reagan administration embodies a number of extremely reactionary forces which, if unchecked, will alter the course of U.S. politics for years to come."

The editorial, entitled "Reagan must go," went on to assert, "We have no illusions about the Democratic Party. It is a capitalist party. . . . But seeing the need to loosen the grip of the right wing on the reins of government is not the same thing as embracing the Democratic Party and its program. A defeat of the reactionaries in November can offer an important breathing space to the left and progressive forces in the U.S. and, perhaps more importantly, to liberation movements and anti-imperialist countries around the world."

After reviewing the record of the Reagan administration's "assault . . . on social and political gains won over the last 50 years," the editorial proposed three options for the left in

the 1984 election. The first, not voting, it dismissed as "relatively meaningless."

The second option discussed was voting for a third party candidate. "In a number of areas, the Citizens Party and other independent leftist candidates will be running in city or statewide campaigns. Some of them will have real chances of winning and all of them offer opportunities to articulate opposition to the wave of reaction in the U.S. and to propose elements of a socialist program."

The *Guardian* stated that "breaking the hold of the two major parties . . . is an essential goal of the left," but added that voting for one of the third parties on the national level "is a less realistic way of building independent political action at this time."

In dealing with the third option — voting for the Democratic Party candidates, the *Guardian* reasserted "as a general principle our position against the 'lesser evil' argument. . . . In the particular conjuncture of forces in 1984, however, this principle is outweighed by the need to remove Reaganism from power."

In assessing the prospects of a Mondale presidency, the *Guardian* predicted, "the worst the Democrats are likely to do is continue what the Republicans are doing. The best that could happen is that the strangulation of the Nicaraguan revolution might ease up somewhat, some pressure might be put on the fascist South African government, some human rights demands [might] be made on the Salvadoran government and the assault on labor unions, women and minorities at home might be eased."

THE MILITANT

A revolutionary socialist newsweekly, published in New York.

In the September 7 issue, Geoff Mirelowitz responded to the *Guardian's* call for a vote to Democratic Party candidate Walter Mondale. His article focused on the "editorial's chief argument" that a vote for Mondale "is an effective means to slow the U.S. war in Central America."

Mirelowitz called the *Guardian's* view wishful thinking. "Organizing to win workers to solidarize with the Central American revolutions and oppose the U.S. war there is a vital responsibility of all socialists today," he wrote. "A vote for Mondale, however, will not slow the war drive nor gain breathing room for Nicaraguan and Salvadoran working people fighting U.S. intervention."

"It does nothing to help advance the process of building a mass working-class antiwar movement. It is an obstacle to educating working people to rely on their own independent action to fight the war. The *Guardian*, however, has no confidence in independent working-class political action. It looks to a capitalist politician for relief instead. . . ."

"The *Guardian* is not wrong to point to the

danger of a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua or El Salvador," Mirelowitz continued. "A sharp escalation of the U.S. war is sure to come — but it does not hinge on a Reagan victory in November. . . ."

"It is not 'Reaganism' that is out to stop the Central American revolution, it is imperialism. Reagan is simply the current 'commander-in-chief' of U.S. foreign policy. Mondale is campaigning to take over both the title and the job that comes with it. . . ."

"The *Guardian* acknowledges that this may be the case — but it outlines a political course based on the hope that it is not. A similar error was made by many on the U.S. left in 1964."

Mirelowitz recalled that in that election

Democratic incumbent Lyndon Johnson campaigned as the peace candidate against Barry Goldwater, who "represented the extreme right-wing in U.S. politics as the *Guardian* says of Reagan." After winning the election, Mirelowitz pointed out, "Johnson quickly tossed aside his vote-getting promises, and within weeks of his inauguration, ordered a major escalation of the U.S. war in Vietnam. And he took this course without regard for whether it jeopardized his chances in the 1968 presidential race (as it turned out it did)."

The article described the role of candidates of the Socialist Workers Party in educating about the war and its causes. "Unlike the editors of the *Guardian*, SWP candidates do

not tell working people that voting on election day can stop, or slow, the U.S. war."

Instead, "they point to the necessary task of building a mass working-class party that can fight to overturn the imperialist warmakers once and for all."

"The *Guardian* editorial denigrates this modest example of independent working-class political action as 'symbolic' but 'unrealistic.'"

"But what is really unrealistic in advancing the fight against war is urging a course based on the hope that the Democratic Party is not as completely committed to imperialist foreign policy as the Republicans, and on the idea that elections actually decide how that policy is implemented."

FEATURES

Evidence shows KAL 007 was spying

Pentagon used South Korean jet to probe Soviet defenses

By Will Reissner

As the Soviet Union was preparing to test-launch its new SS-X-25 intercontinental ballistic missile on the night of August 31, 1983, a strange blip appeared on Soviet radar screens.

Korean Air Lines Flight 007, on the final leg of its New York to Seoul run and more than 200 miles west of its reported position, had entered Soviet air space.

As KAL 007 approached the Kamchatka Peninsula, it made a sudden course modification that took it over the missile target area and near the Soviet Union's Petropavlovsk naval base, home port to one-half of the USSR's strategic missile submarines.

The South Korean airliner proceeded across the Kamchatka Peninsula, flew over the Sea of Okhotsk, and, as it neared the Soviet Union's Sakhalin Island, made a second course change that brought it over a Soviet air base.

But while crossing Sakhalin Island, the South Korean jetliner was shot down by a Soviet SU-15 fighter. All 269 people aboard Flight 007 were killed when the plane crashed into the Sea of Japan.

"A horrifying act of violence," charged President Ronald Reagan.

KAL 007 was on a spy mission for the Pentagon, responded Soviet authorities.

One year later, there is mounting evidence that the Soviet charge was correct. The most exhaustive studies appeared in the August 18-25 issue of the U.S. magazine *The Nation*, and in the British publication *Defence Attaché* (No. 3, 1984), a magazine widely read in the British Ministry of Defence.

The *Defence Attaché* study, written under the pseudonym P.Q. Mann, minutely examines the movements on August 31 of the U.S. space shuttle Challenger, a U.S. Ferret-D electronic spy satellite, an Air Force RC-135 reconnaissance plane, and KAL Flight 007.

Mann concludes that all were ideally placed for a coordinated intelligence-gathering effort.

KAL 007's role, according to Mann, was to "turn on" Soviet air defense systems so that the ensuing radar and radio communications could be recorded and analyzed by the U.S. Ferret-D spy satellite and the space shuttle Challenger.

The Pentagon has previously used intruding military planes in conjunction with spy satellites to "turn on" Soviet air defenses and record them. But military intruders have been shot down too quickly to allow the satellites to gather much data.

Duncan Campbell writes in the *New Statesman* that at least 27 U.S. aircraft have been shot down or forced to land while on electronic or photographic reconnaissance missions. At least 139 U.S. servicemen have been killed in these incidents.

Bait and switch

Mann argues that U.S. intelligence agencies knew from past experience that "they could not achieve their aims with a military aircraft. Equally, they would not achieve their aims with a manifestly civilian aircraft" because the Soviets would not turn on "all manner of military radar and electronics" for a civilian plane.

The solution, Mann writes, was provided by a joint operation of the South Korean airliner and a U.S. Air Force RC-135 reconnaissance plane operating in the vicinity.

The RC-135 had already revealed itself to Soviet radar as a military plane. As the South Korean airliner entered the area, the RC-135 passed close to the Korean plane, then flew alongside it for 9 to 10 minutes thereby merging their radar images into one, just before Flight 007 turned toward Soviet Kamchatka.

"It was a dummy-selling tactic," Mann writes, "creating the possibility that a military aircraft was flying in to cross the border of the

Soviet Union." That would turn on all the air defense systems for the Ferret-D satellite and the space shuttle to record.

"Subsequent identification as a civilian aircraft would offer protection against an otherwise imminent attack," he adds. And as Soviet military officials tried to decide what to do about the civilian intruder, U.S. intelligence agencies would gather data not only about Soviet radar, but about the entire Soviet command and communications networks in the Soviet Far East and the communications links between that region and Moscow.

KAL 007 delays take-off

To record that information, the Ferret-D satellite made three passes over the area during the flight of KAL 007. The first overpass came before the Korean airliner's intrusion, to record the Soviet defense system at its normal level.

The second satellite overpass "was accurate to the minute as the airliner made its first Soviet landfall" over Kamchatka, "creating an 'alert' situation in which the intensity of electronic emissions was approximately doubled." The third satellite overpass, Mann continues, "was equally accurately timed as the airliner made its second landfall" over Sakhalin Island.

The space shuttle Challenger, in the meantime, flew over the area for the first time just as the KAL plane and the RC-135 began their parallel flight. Its second overpass came as the South Korean jet was leaving Kamchatka, and the third overpass came at a time when the KAL airliner would have cleared Soviet airspace had it survived.

In order for KAL Flight 007 to coordinate its movements so precisely with the Ferret-D satellite's sweeps over the Soviet Far East, the South Korean plane had to delay its take-off from Anchorage, Alaska, 40 minutes past its

scheduled departure.

This delay has never been convincingly explained by the airline or by U.S. authorities.

Navigation error?

The Reagan administration has consistently denied any connection with KAL Flight 007. According to Richard Burt of the State Department, the "South Korean airliner strayed off course and inadvertently violated Soviet airspace" (*New York Times*, August 31, 1984).

Burt added: "We did not know that the airliner had deviated from its course or that it had been shot down until several hours after the tragedy."

The first claim, that KAL 007 accidentally strayed off course, strains credulity to the breaking point.

Let's leave aside the fact that the airliner delayed its departure for 40 minutes, thereby putting it in perfect synchronism with the Ferret-D satellite's overpasses.

Let's leave aside the still unexplained fact that the pilot added 9,800 pounds of fuel at Anchorage, which was not needed for the flight as scheduled.

What would it mean if the pilots had made an initial error in programming their starting point in the plane's navigation system, as is now claimed?

David Pearson explains in *The Nation*: "If that happened, it means two experienced pilots sat in their cockpit for five hours, facing the autopilot selector switch directly in front of them at eye level, yet failed to see that it was set improperly."

He adds: "It means they did not use a single I.N.S. unit to display the cross-track/track error position of the aircraft, a standard operating procedure. It means they failed to use their two airborne radar systems in mapping mode, although this is recommended I.C.A.O. procedure and a standard practice for pilots on the North Pacific routes."

Pearson continues: "It means they misread instruments that gave their direction to the Visual Omni Range directional beacon at Bethel [Alaska], as well as the digital readouts on their distance measuring equipment. For a pilot with 10,627 flight hours and a co-pilot with 8,917 flight hours, such a series of errors is extremely improbable."

The theory that the automatic navigation system was set wrong also cannot explain why the aircraft made *two* course changes, the first bringing it over the missile target range and the Petropavlovsk submarine base on Kamchatka, and the second bringing it over an air base on Sakhalin Island.

'Pilots knew where they were'

Pearson endorses the conclusion of retired Canadian Maj. Gen. Richard Rohmer, who noted of the KAL pilots, "Yes, they knew exactly where they were from the time they left Anchorage through the false way point checks that they transmitted past Kamchatka and over Sakhalin Island to their destruction."

It is worth recalling that this is not the first

Unanswered questions

One year after KAL 007 was shot down, many key questions have never been answered.

- Who died on KAL 007? In *Defence Attaché*, P.Q. Mann points out that even if the airline cannot *immediately* identify every passenger, "after a major loss the reaction of relatives, employers, colleagues and friends would normally be expected to complete the record and not, as has been the case here, to leave *tens of names* in obscurity" (emphasis added).

- Why was Flight 007 delayed 40 minutes at Anchorage, and why did the pilot take on an unneeded 9,800 pounds of additional fuel?

- Why did KAL 007 not deviate significantly from its scheduled course until after it was out of range of civilian air-traffic controllers?

- Why didn't military radar stations along the way report KAL 007's deviation to Anchorage air-traffic control center?

- Why did the KAL 007 pilot falsify his position and fuel reports along the way?

- Why did KAL Flight 015 file reports for KAL 007 when 007's radio was functioning normally?

- Why haven't the Japanese authorities made public all the relevant information they gathered that night? Why, for example, did they publish only the pilots' side of Soviet ground-to-air communications?

time that "navigation errors" have placed a South Korean airliner over key Soviet military installations.

On April 20, 1978, KAL Flight 902 from Paris to Seoul flew more than 1,000 miles off course over the Soviet Union, flying over sensitive Soviet military installations for two hours. That plane took evasive action when ordered to land by Soviet interceptors and was shot down near Murmansk, where it made a forced landing on a frozen lake. Two of its 110 passengers died.

Did Washington know 007's location?

What of the State Department's Richard Burt's claim: "We did not know that the airliner had deviated from its course or that it had been shot down until several hours after the tragedy"?

In his *Nation* article Pearson convincingly shows that the U.S. Air Force, the National Security Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, the North American Aerospace Command, and the National Military Command Center in the Pentagon *all had to know* that Flight 007 was off course long before it was shot down. Moreover, Pearson demonstrates that these agencies *had both the time and the means* to contact 007 so it could correct its course long before it entered Soviet air space.

Even assuming that the KAL airliner had made an innocent navigational error, the U.S. failure to notice it would "mean that the most serious failure in the history of the U.S. early warning and communications, command, control and intelligence (C³I) systems occurred that night," Pearson notes.

He adds: "However, a much more likely and frightening possibility is that a conscious policy decision was made by the U.S. government — at what level is not clear — to risk the lives of 269 innocent people on the assumptions that an extraordinary opportunity for gleaning intelligence information should not be missed and that the Soviets would not dare shoot down a civilian airliner."

Washington had to know where KAL 007 was.

- When Flight 007 passed the military radar station at Cape Newenham, Alaska, it was already 65 miles off course. Under a 1982 agreement between the Department of Defense and the Federal Aviation Administration, military installations are supposed to inform the FAA if airliners are off course.

- When KAL Flight 007 and the Air Force RC-135 flew side by side for more than nine minutes, *one-half hour* before the South Korean airliner entered Soviet airspace, the airliner was already more than 200 statute miles off course! Pearson notes "it is certain that the RC-135 was both aware of the location and flight direction of K.A.L. 007."

- The U.S. listening post on Shemya Island in the Aleutians is a key component of the U.S. early warning system. It has radar that can spot a baseball-sized object 2,000 miles in space. In addition, the U.S.S. *Observation Island* was also operating in the North Pacific at that time. Pearson points out that for either or both "not to have detected an anomaly such as K.A.L. 007's flight deviation would have been a scandal and a failure of a high order."

- Also monitoring the area that evening — the evening a new Soviet missile was to be tested — were 11 U.S. listening posts in Japan, including the U.S. Air Force's 6920th Electronic Security Group at Misawa Air Base in northern Honshu Island, which is the largest U.S. signal intelligence facility outside the continental United States.

- Twenty-eight Japanese listening posts were also monitoring the area. Pearson points out that "the Japanese military is supposed to inform civil air-traffic controllers of any deviations it may observe in commercial flights," and has done so in the past.

- U.S. listening stations in South Korea and the People's Republic of China were also focusing on the area through which KAL 007 was flying that night.

Flying onto center stage

As one Pentagon officer boasted, "nothing flies from, over or near Sakhalin that we don't monitor." The same is true of Kamchatka and the Sea of Okhotsk that separates the two. Even if no Soviet missile test had been sched-

uled, KAL 007 could not have gone undetected.

But a missile test was scheduled. Pearson points out that this means "all electronic eyes and ears were directed toward the exact place where K.A.L. 007 first intruded in Soviet territory, at precisely the time it was closest to the RC-135."

"Far from slipping by unnoticed," Pearson adds, "K.A.L. 007 had flown onto center stage."

But even if every one of these U.S. electronic eyes and ears had somehow not noticed the stray KAL airliner, "they certainly had to be alerted by the scrambling of the Soviet interceptors over Kamchatka. When that happened," writes Pearson, "radar screens must have been ablaze with the converging images of the four Soviet fighters, the RC-135 and K.A.L. 007 near the [Soviet] Commander Islands. In addition, several Soviet reconnaissance aircraft were reportedly flying in the area at the time," and the Soviets claim other U.S. reconnaissance planes were also in the vicinity.

"If such unusual activity went unnoticed, one of the most serious failures imaginable of the U.S. early warning system occurred that night." It would have required independent failures of separate systems operated by the Navy, Army, Air Force, National Security Agency, CIA, and the Japanese military, which Pearson argues "is hardly credible."

Soviet radar jammed?

Right after the Soviet SU-15 shot down KAL 007, Washington charged that the Soviets must have known it was a civilian airliner.

Later, after the dust had settled, U.S. intelligence analysts admitted that they had found no indication that the Soviets ever realized they were not tracking the U.S. Air Force RC-135

Japanese families reject official version

At a Tokyo news conference on August 31, the first anniversary of the downing of Korean Air Lines Flight 007, representatives of the families of Japanese citizens who died on the South Korean airliner announced the formation of a committee to investigate why the flight went so far off course.

Families of 26 of the 28 Japanese victims are filing a lawsuit in Tokyo charging that the KAL jet deliberately violated Soviet airspace.

The families issued a statement charging that Flight 007 may have been part of "an elaborately pre-schemed plot on the part of a government agent of a certain country." A representative of the families indicated that that country was the United States.

Shozo Takemoto stated "we ask the United States to disclose every [piece of] information it has in its hands."

Last May, the Japanese families sent a letter to President Reagan saying that they do not believe Washington's claim that it was not involved in Flight 007's having gone so far off course.

The mood among the family members, reported Clyde Haberman in the September 2 *New York Times*, reflects an "almost total disbelief in official versions of what happened a year ago."

that had been in the area.

"The difficulties with Soviet radar detection and communications systems over Kamchatka

and Sakhalin suggest that widespread electronic interference, also known as jamming or spoofing, may have been directed at the Soviet defense forces," Pearson states.

Soviet radar had difficulty locating and tracking the intruder. When interceptors were sent up over Kamchatka, they never came within 20 miles of the South Korean plane.

Local Soviet commanders could not communicate with each other or with their civilian and military commanders in Moscow.

Radar-guided SA-2 surface-to-air missile batteries near the Soviet submarine base at Petropavlovsk were ordered to fire on the intruder but could not obtain a solid radar lock on the target.

Soviet radar facilities on Kamchatka were unable to inform their counterparts on Sakhalin Island of the intruder, meaning that valuable time was lost before anyone realized it was the same plane making a second intrusion on Soviet territory.

When Soviet interceptors scrambled on Sakhalin Island during the second intrusion, they could not find the plane for 23 minutes and did not see it on their radar for another six minutes after that. In fact, KAL 007 was almost out of Soviet air space when it was finally downed.

All these problems, Pearson notes, may explain the Soviets' reluctance to release their own radar data or transcripts of conversations between ground stations and pilots.

"If electronic countermeasures were used" by the U.S. military to jam Soviet radar and communications, "the disquieting implication is that K.A.L. 007's intrusion into Soviet airspace, far from being accidental, was well orchestrated," David Pearson points out.

Pearson adds that knowledge of these jamming measures "might also explain why K.A.L. 007's pilot was willing to fly the perilous route over Soviet territory." □

SELECTIONS FROM THE LEFT

COMBATE

"Combat," weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), section of the Fourth International in Spain. Published in Madrid.

The special summer issue, dated July 10, contained an editorial entitled "Toward the Seventh Congress of the LCR," which stressed that "in the four years since the Sixth Congress there have been many changes in the situation that demand our attention."

It pointed to the February 1981 attempted military coup, the election victory of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) in 1982, and changes in the international situation.

"In our attempts to develop the perspective of a Party of Revolutionaries that we adopted

at the last Congress, we have entered into closer relations with other vanguard currents," the editorial stated.

This has posed a number of major problems: "little receptivity toward our fundamental strategic orientations; realization that our political baggage had to be developed in order to provide answers to many questions that the vanguard raised; the weak attractive force of our perspective of building a Revolutionary Party and, more concretely, to do so with the LCR."

The editorial presented the view that "the central ideas of the Socialist Revolution and of the Revolutionary Party suffer from a crisis of credibility among the vanguard." In addition, "there is also a crisis of credibility concerning the tool that we are building — the LCR — which has continued losing ground since the last congress."

The congress, explained the editorial, must squarely face the question: "What are the func-

tion and tasks of the LCR today?"

This question must be approached by dealing with "three fundamental aspects."

The first is an analysis of the situation internationally and in Spain in the 1980s. This must examine the "interrelation between the economic crisis, the ecological crisis, and the threat of war." It must also analyze the changes in the workers movement in the 1970s, the role of various social movements, and changes in the configuration of the left.

This can lead to an understanding of "the reasons for the crisis of the revolutionary parties that arose in the heat of May 1968, among them our own."

Second, the editorial stated, the congress must reexamine the "central content of our alternative of Socialist Revolution." On many points that remain valid, "we must bring the argumentation up to date." However, "there are others that we cannot raise as certainties, but

rather only as hypotheses," as well as "some that we must revise and many that we have no answer to."

The third focus, according to the editorial, is "to define the function and tasks of the LCR in the present period." The LCR must explain "the type of party it is necessary to fight for in the 1980s," as well as the LCR's view that that party should include "all currents that fight in practice for the revolution."

The LCR must very concretely analyze "the political conditions in which we want to build this perspective," and on the basis of that must work out the tasks that the LCR must carry out by itself as well as "the unity policy that must be pushed in the various movements, on a central level, and in relation to other organizations."

Direct Action

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

The August 15 and August 22 issues contained a speech by Australian SWP national secretary Jim Percy on the upcoming federal elections.

Percy stated that the Australian Labor Party's control of the federal government and four state governments "reflects widespread ruling-class acceptance, even approval of Labor in government."

"Around the world . . . we see labor parties being drawn in to manage capitalism during its social and economic crisis," he added.

Percy argued that "they have become, in some cases, the main parties of capitalist rule. In a country like Sweden this has been the case for a very long time."

The formation of the Australian Labor Party in the early twentieth century, he stated, was "an important step by the working class towards independent political action." But "it was only a partial step forward. Right from the start the Labor Party was a reformist party."

The existence of a strong Labor Party has been "an obstacle to further development of working-class political consciousness" in Percy's view. "Because the Labor Party exists, because it dominates the political arena, . . . because it has so much support from the trade unions and the union leadership, it is very hard for any mass socialist formation to emerge."

But "revolutionary socialist organisations haven't always had a tactical approach that would enable them to take advantage of developments arising from contradictions between the Labor Party's working-class base and its pro-capitalist program."

He argued "the socialist movement has

made a lot of mistakes in regard to its tactical orientation to the Labor Party."

In stressing that workers should fight to transform the Labor Party into "a party that really represents workers' interests," it is easy to "forget that you want to get the ALP out of the road so that you can have a genuine socialist party in this country."

"To break from the Labor Party . . . even with the confusion about where to go next, can represent a step forward in political consciousness," Percy said.

In the past, in approaching people who have concluded that the Labor Party does not represent their interests, "we've dogmatically over-emphasised that a vote for Labor equals a vote for working-class rule.

"When, for instance, Black candidates would decide to run, or when there were suggestions that there should be good ecology candidates we'd say, 'No! Even if on that particular issue you have a better program than the Labor Party, you don't have a working-class base. . . . You are a petty-bourgeois single-issue movement. We can't vote for you. It's better to vote for the Labor Party. . . . It represents a step forward for working-class political consciousness.'"

But Percy explained his present view that these breaks represented "a big step forward."

He added: "our schema meant that we could not relate to those breaks, except by saying: 'Go back. You're going the wrong way.'"

Percy's talk pointed to several reasons why there has not been more ferment inside the Labor Party despite the leadership's anti-working-class policies in office.

"The main feature is the increasing hold of the bureaucracy on the Labor Party," which greatly increased during the 1950s boom. This meant that "when people began to radicalise around issues such as the Vietnam War, women's liberation, ecology, it happened outside the Labor Party."

He argued that "the other reason . . . [is the] weakness of our own forces — the weakness of the revolutionary forces presenting an alternative outside the ALP."

But "recent times have seen the development of radical forces outside labor parties — particularly in Germany. The Green Party got 8 percent of the vote in the recent European elections." The Green Party is now spreading into the working class "from its original base among students, and ecology, peace, and feminist activists," he reported.

This "is a much more advanced development than anything in this country," Percy maintained. But "a similar base for such a development exists here. That is shown by the Jim Cairns project, the Wilderness Society, the Nuclear Disarmament Party — there are rumored to be four or five more on the launching pad."

Of the Nuclear Disarmament Party, Percy stated, "we don't even know very much about

the people who formed it. But its demands are very straightforward: end uranium mining, close all foreign military bases and ban all nuclear weapons from Australian territory.

"Those demands are very progressive," he asserted. "Workers voting for those demands would deal this right-wing pro-imperialist Labor government a real blow."

In the past, said Percy, the SWP would have urged them to fight inside the Labor Party. "I think that was a mistake, it was sectarian."

In the future, besides running its own candidates, the Australian SWP will "also be looking around for candidates who are taking a progressive, maybe single-issue stance." The SWP may unite with them in joint campaigns, form non-aggression pacts, or simply call on others to vote for them.

"In some cases it may be better to try for a united left campaign, a united peace campaign or something like that. This sort of stance could be useful in prompting people moving to the left of Labor to look at our party as an alternative."

This stance, he maintained, "improves our chances of winning a hearing among people disillusioned with the Labor Party. Perhaps what we're planning won't bear fruit in the next federal election, it might take until the one after.

"By then things will certainly be clearer. We'll know more about the Nuclear Disarmament Party and the other would-be Greens."

Percy concluded: "Our approach to these elections is designed to put us in touch with forces moving to the left of the Labor Party. It doesn't matter whether they're leaving the Labor Party, or never joined it.

"We want to be allied with them, working together as they try to come up with solutions to the social crisis of capitalism. We want to be on the spot when some or all of them draw the conclusion that they need to fight for socialism.

"We will not allow ourselves to be cut off from this process by clinging to childish, ultra-left schemas that we've had in the past." □

Argentine protests

Some 2,000 Argentine protesters, angered over U.S. support for the British armed forces during the Malvinas War, forced a U.S. warship to leave Puerto Madryn September 10.

The demonstrators gathered at the dock shouting "Yankees go home!" and "Murderers!" and blocked trucks carrying provisions to the destroyer *Thorn*.

The *Thorn* was one of five U.S. Navy ships taking part in joint maneuvers with South American naval forces.

During the Malvinas War, the Reagan administration provided supplies, intelligence, and facilities to the British armada fighting Argentina. □

Terror regime gets electoral facade

Washington offers congratulations, increased military aid

By Fred Murphy

Elections for an 88-member National Constituent Assembly were held in Guatemala on July 1. The current dictator, Gen. Oscar Mejía Víctores, spelled out the next day the main reason the voting was held: "The steps taken by my government toward the democratization of the country are a guarantee for maintaining good relations with the U.S. and open the possibility that Guatemala will receive U.S. aid."

The Reagan administration was genuinely pleased with the election, which White House spokesman Larry Speakes termed "fair, open, and well-ordered." Special U.S. Ambassador Harry Shlaudeman was dispatched to Guatemala City on July 5 "in order to congratulate the government and the people" for the successful vote.

Washington now hopes the election has provided Guatemala's bloody generals with a thick enough coat of whitewash to make the open restoration of military aid politically feasible. Such aid has been formally suspended since 1977, when a Guatemalan regime rejected it because of State Department objections to human-rights abuses. In recent years, the Pentagon has instead helped the military rulers obtain weaponry and advisers from Israel, Taiwan, Chile, and Argentina. Some U.S. aid was no doubt funneled through these governments as well.

Restoring open U.S. military aid now will not only boost the Guatemalan army's counterinsurgency effort at home but will also help Washington cajole the generals into taking a bigger role in its mounting war against revolutionary forces throughout Central America.

Even before the elections were staged, the U.S. House of Representatives had approved Reagan's request for \$85 million in aid to Guatemala for the coming fiscal year. This includes more than \$10 million in direct military aid; much of the rest can be used to purchase weapons. To justify final passage of this measure, Congress can now point to the moves toward "democracy" in Guatemala.

Powerless assembly

The electoral process that opened July 1 is to culminate in presidential elections in 1985. Several bourgeois parties are already currying Washington's favor in hope of playing a similar role in Guatemala to that played by President Napoleón Duarte and the Christian Democrats in El Salvador: providing the civilian facade for continued military terror against the workers and peasants.

The biggest share of valid votes in the Constituent Assembly elections (16 percent) went to the Guatemalan Christian Democracy

(DCG). Second place, with 13 percent, went to a new party headed by publishing magnate Jorge Carpio Nicolle. His National Center Union (UCN) is invariably described in news reports as "centrist" or "moderate."

Within days of the voting, DCG and UCN leaders offered public assurances to the military that they had no intention of pressing for land-reform measures or for bringing corrupt or brutal officials to trial. "It would be a mistake to dig up the past, since this would cause many problems," said DCG General Secretary Alfonso Cabrera.

In contrast to earlier elections in Guatemala, the July voting was marked by a far lower rate of abstention and by far fewer charges that the military had rigged the results. Fraud to ensure victory to the army's hand-picked candidates had been a notorious feature in most previous elections. But such fraud was not as vital this time since the Constituent Assembly will have no governmental power and since all the parties presenting candidates were obliged to accept the military's ground rules.

General Mejía Víctores left no room for doubt on this score when he addressed the nation in a June 21 broadcast. The assembly's powers would be strictly limited to writing a new constitution and related laws, he declared: "The army will intervene if the assembly decides to elect a new president." If any deputies should fail to heed the army's instructions, Mejía added a few days later, "we will put them in line, and there are many ways of doing so. One might be to dissolve the assembly, but there are also other ways. . . ."

Some reports have indicated that a new constitution has already been largely drafted by army-hired lawyers, and that the assembly's role will be limited to rubber-stamping it.

As for the "high voter turnout" emphasized in press coverage of the elections, this must be seen in the context of the reign of terror imposed on Guatemala by the current regime and its predecessors. During the month leading up to the vote, 90 persons were killed by government security forces, 66 kidnapped, and 103 wounded. A harsh voter-registration law compelled participation on pain of job loss, fines, and jail sentences. Police and army roadblocks went up on streets and highways on election day to verify that everyone had voted.

Even so, more than a million Guatemalans of voting age failed to cast ballots. Of those who did, the largest proportion (19 percent) cast blank ballots or deliberately defaced ones. The extent of this protest vote was acknowledged in a July 3 editorial in the Guatemala City daily *Prensa Libre*: "These were people who waited patiently in long lines, after having

traveled from their homes in order to vote, with the sole aim of invalidating their ballot and repudiating the electoral event."

Still, the fact that the regime could compel hundreds of thousands more Guatemalans to vote this time than in any other election in the past 25 years points up the blows the military rulers have managed to deal to the workers and peasants since 1980. The revolutionary movement in Guatemala has suffered sharp setbacks and has been placed on the defensive.

Terror against Indians

The organizations that now make up the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG)¹ had spent the decade of the 1970s patiently organizing among the workers and peasants. They gained particularly wide support among Guatemala's racially oppressed Indian peasant majority, which is concentrated in the northwestern and central highlands. (Indians make up 54 percent or more of Guatemala's population of 7.7 million.)

By 1980, the revolutionaries had a broad mass base and were leading struggles in both the cities and countryside, including the unprecedented and militant 1980 strike by 50,000 agricultural laborers on the cotton and sugar plantations of the southern coast. Guerrilla fighters, majority Indian, were challenging the army for control over wide areas of the highlands.

To regain the upper hand, the military under then-President Romeo Lucas García embarked on a devastating counterinsurgency drive that continues to this day. The aim was and remains to destroy the URNG's mass base and terrorize the population into submission. The principal target has been the highland villages of the Indians.

The army's terror campaign was summarized as follows in a May 1983 report by the U.S. human-rights organization Americas Watch:²

The principal tactics of this strategy are bombing, shelling, selective killings, and massacres in sus-

1. The URNG is made up of the following organizations: Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP), Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA), Rebel Armed Forces (FAR), and Guatemalan Labor Party—Leadership Nucleus (PGT). For excerpts from the URNG's 1982 founding statement, see *Intercontinental Press*, March 8, 1982, p. 184.

2. Americas Watch, "Creating a Desolation and Calling it Peace: May 1983 Supplement to the Report on Human Rights in Guatemala," pp. 9–10.

Besides this supplement, Americas Watch has produced two other highly detailed reports on human-rights abuses in Guatemala: "No Neutrals Al-

pected "subversive" villages, combined with a scorched earth policy of crop-burning, confiscation of harvests and slaughter of livestock, calculated not only to deny the guerrillas food but also to force peasants to near starvation. Unless they reach the relative safety of Mexico, civilian survivors of these army operations face a choice between surrendering and seeking the protection of the army or of living in hiding, on the edge of starvation. The army provides food to those who surrender in "strategic hamlets," and in areas that the army "pacifies" through these tactics, all males over 17 (in some cases, over 15) are required to join "civil defense" patrols. Those who refuse to join are regarded as "subversives" and may be killed.

Dozens of villages have simply been erased from the map in this way. Huge sections of pine forest have been burnt to the ground to prevent the Indians from finding shelter after fleeing the army's onslaught. Tens of thousands have managed to reach Mexico, while thousands more, determined to remain on their native soil, continue to wander homeless in the remote wilderness areas near the Mexican border.

'Civil Patrols'

Those Indian men who fail to flee and are fortunate enough to escape summary execution by the army are forced to join the so-called Civil Patrols. According to Americas Watch, the patrols entail "the conscription of all males, from older boys to old men, into an endless rotating system of compulsory policing and vigilante service, unpaid and unavoidable." Only about one in 100 patrol members — those few the army can trust — are actually given weapons. The rest must carry machetes, clubs, or even wooden toy guns. Americas Watch gives the following description of the patrols' function:

Patrols are required to cover the streets, roads, and hillsides day and night, registering all comings and goings of the population. In heavily patrolled areas and strategic places such as main roads, the patrols must record the names of all arrivals, where they are going, the reason for their movements, and where they have come from. In addition to this intensive surveillance over the boundaries of their communities, they are required to report to the local military authorities on any suspicious people walking about at night, the language they speak, and what they are saying.³

The army strives to coerce or bribe a core within each local patrol unit to serve as a real paramilitary death squad. These are the ones who are given weapons, which are often used against other patrol members suspected of being guerrilla sympathizers. At times, an entire patrol unit is marched off to a neighboring village to commit a massacre. Those who refuse to take part face execution themselves.

Just before the July 1 elections, patrol units

lowed," published in November 1982, and "A Nation of Prisoners," published in January 1984. They are available from Americas Watch, 36 W. 44th St., New York, NY 10036.

3. Americas Watch, "A Nation of Prisoners," pp. 71-74.



were assembled and told by army officers that they had to vote and make sure all other villagers voted as well. Anyone casting a blank or defaced ballot, the army said, would face death. Not surprisingly, the election turnout was highest in those areas where the counterinsurgency campaign has been most intense.

The Civil Patrols are the centerpiece of the military's strategy for controlling the peasant population; they have been organized on a truly massive scale. Most reports put their membership at between 700,000 and 900,000 — 10 percent or more of Guatemala's population.

'Model villages'

Large numbers of those who initially fled when the army came to destroy their villages later found themselves obliged by hunger and homelessness to turn themselves in to the military. Rather than being allowed to return to their homes and rebuild their communities, most of these refugees are forced into displaced-persons camps for "re-education" and then transferred to what the regime terms "model villages." The latter bear strong resemblance to the so-called strategic hamlets the U.S. army herded Vietnamese peasants into in the 1960s. Guatemalan officers are also reported to have visited South Africa and Namibia to study the apartheid regime's methods of cutting off Namibian villagers from the armed fighters of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO).

The January 14 issue of the U.S. weekly *Nation* reported on a visit to one re-education camp, a barbed-wire enclosure adjacent to an army base in Cobán in Alta Verapaz Province. The camp's director told writer Nancy Peckenhart that the guerrillas had duped the Indians into believing in the "promised land." Through constant lectures and movies about the evils of communism, the government was now "wind-

ing the cassette back and rerecording it," he said.

For the duration of the Indians' stay in such camps, Americas Watch has concluded, they "must live within a structure they have not chosen, without access to the type of work to which they are accustomed, unpaid for the labor they are required to perform, while their children are 'castilianized' [forced to learn and speak Spanish] and their lands, to which they may not return, lie untended."⁴

Conditions hardly improve when the camp inmates are transferred to the so-called model villages. "Military control over these villages is very strict," said a leader of the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP) from El Quiché Province. "They have guards on duty day and night, patrolling the surrounding area so that no one can leave. The population is obliged to work in exchange for food in order to survive, and has been organized into civil patrols."⁵

Guerrillas not crushed

Guatemala's military rulers claim their counterinsurgency program has been an unqualified success. "There is no threat remaining," General Mejía asserted just after the elections. "Subversion has ended. Without any help from anyone, we have gotten rid of the guerrillas."

This is not true. While the army's prolonged and systematic terror has taken a heavy toll and shifted the relationship of forces sharply against the workers and peasants, it has not put an end to the revolutionary war or destroyed the armed organizations that make up the URNG.

When full-scale terror was unleashed in the

4. Americas Watch, "A Nation of Prisoners," pp. 122-23.

5. Interview in the EGP's magazine *Informador Guerrillero*, No. 29, Nov. 7, 1983.

countryside, the URNG's units were largely able to retreat with their forces intact. They have since managed to organize new battle fronts and reactivate old ones. Not a week goes by without the army reporting casualties in combat against "subversives" in one or another part of the country. Communiqués issued by URNG member organizations continually offer details of ambushes of army patrols, the downing of helicopters, and other blows to the regime's forces.

Much of the fighting is taking place in the northwestern provinces of El Quiché, Huehuetenango, and San Marcos. These were key strongholds of the EGP and the Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA) in 1980 and are now zones where the model village-civil patrol system is concentrated.

In the far northern province of El Petén, the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) have opened a new front and report ongoing combat with the regime's troops. ORPA has stepped up armed activity and propaganda work in the southwestern foothills and coastal plain, reaching agricultural laborers in the provinces of Quezaltenango, Sololá, and Suchitepéquez. In April, ORPA units managed to evade tight security in the capital itself and launch a damaging mortar attack on the Army Computer Center and Honor Guard headquarters.

The army launched one of its biggest recent counterinsurgency offensives in San Marcos Province in late July, mobilizing some 8,000 troops and 1,000 Civil Patrol members with air force and artillery support. A mid-August ORPA communiqué declared the offensive a failure and said the army had suffered 122 casualties in seven engagements with the guerrillas.

Seeking ways to resist

Given the regime's militarization of the countryside, the URNG fighters could only be maintaining their high level of activity with the clandestine support of the rural population. Even with the constant surveillance the army has imposed through the Civil Patrol system, it has not succeeded in annihilating the organizations built by the revolutionaries in the 1970s.

The strongest of these, the Peasant Unity Committee (CUC), has oriented its activists to join the Civil Patrols and live in the model villages in order to maintain contact with the peasant masses and find ways to organize clandestinely.

The EGP leader quoted earlier pointed out that the regime's terror is having some consequences that go counter to the rulers' interests, one of which is "the unequivocal and unanimous identification of the army as the enemy." Because the terror is directed above all at the Indian communities, he added, it generates "the combining of class hatred with the struggle against ethnic-cultural oppression. Even the displaced communities are maintaining their culture, their [social] structures, and their religion; the ethnic groups have not lost their identity but rather have reinforced it further in order to defend themselves and confront the

enemy's brutal offensives."

In Guatemala City, the capital and main urban center (population 1.3 million), there has been a modest resurgence of popular struggles in recent months. This is despite the reactivation of paramilitary death squads by the Mejía Victores regime. (The previous ruler, Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt, had curtailed urban murders and kidnappings while redoubling rural terror.)

Coca-Cola struggle

In the forefront of renewed trade-union activism have been the 400 workers who since mid-February have been occupying the Coca-Cola bottling plant in the capital. The Coca-Cola workers union, STEGAC,⁶ seized the plant in order to block a management scheme to fake bankruptcy and dismiss the entire work force. An agreement was signed in May between the union and the plant's U.S. parent company, Coca-Cola International, whereby the latter would seek new owners who would guarantee jobs and trade-union rights. The workers have decided to proceed with the occupation until this accord is carried out.

STEGAC has long played a vanguard role in the Guatemalan labor movement. In the late 1970s, solidarity generated by the STEGAC's militant struggles against repression and for trade-union rights led to the formation of the National Committee of Trade-Union Unity (CNUS) and the Democratic Front Against Repression (FDCR). The subsequent crackdown in mid-1980 forced these organizations underground or into exile. Now, however, some of the same forces have publicly reconstituted themselves as the National Coordinating Committee for Trade-Union Unity (CONUS). They have been helping to build solidarity with the Coca-Cola occupation and with other labor struggles waged by bank workers, teachers, dock workers, and others in recent months.

Widespread layoffs and the influx of thousands of persons displaced from the land by the army's rural terror have combined to create an explosive situation among Guatemala's workers and urban poor. Nearly half the work force is unemployed. In face of an acute housing shortage, poor families have seized vacant plots on the outskirts of the capital in order to erect makeshift homes from tin scraps, plastic, and cardboard. Seven such actions in 10 days in March involved some 1,400 families. The poor have also been commandeering bread and milk trucks passing through their neighborhoods. Lacking water, one group of families even phoned in a false fire alarm and forcibly emptied the firetruck when it arrived on the scene.

Thousands protest repression

Relatives of the victims of General Mejía's death squads have also begun to organize. On June 29 the Mutual Support Group for the Return of Disappeared Family Members an-

6. Union of Workers of the Guatemalan Bottling Company and Allied Trades.

nounced its existence at a Guatemala City news conference. University students and professors and sectors of the Catholic Church have likewise become more vocal in opposing repression in recent months and have helped the relatives in their protests.

On June 1, thousands of people took part in a mass at the capital's main cathedral sponsored by Archbishop Próspero Penados del Barrio. The stated purpose was to pray for the thousands of dead, kidnapped, and disappeared. "We do not want a peace of the cemeteries, or a peace of the missing," Penados said during the mass.

Between June 8 and 24, some 1,500 persons took part in a "peasant march for peace" that proceeded from the town of Tiquisate in the southwest to Esquipulas in the east, a distance of nearly 500 kilometers. Meetings were held in towns along the way. Organized by a priest whose father was a death-squad victim, the procession called for "an end to the current climate of violence and injustice."

A similar march was organized in the capital on August 3 by Archbishop Penados. It involved some 3,000 relatives of repression victims.

The regime's response to these actions has been to once again deny any responsibility for the death squads. At the same time, it has taken steps to intensify surveillance and repression in the cities. The following report was carried in the July 31 news bulletin of the Guatemala Information and Analysis Service (SIAG), operated by exiled journalists in Mexico:

Col. Héctor Bol de la Cruz, director-general of the National Police, has announced the sectorization plan that the government's security forces will put in operation immediately in order to exercise greater control and vigilance over common delinquency and political violence. The plan . . . is to involve the duly coordinated assignment of eight policemen for every four blocks of the city. Over a six-month period, these officers will conduct a census of every house, seeking to learn how many persons live in them (women, men, and children), what work they do, what visitors they receive, times they enter and leave, data on the vehicles they own, family relations, etc. The control measures are to be reinforced with the organization of residents into something similar to the Civil Self-Defense Patrols that function in the rural areas. . . .

It remains to be seen whether this totalitarian scheme can be imposed without evoking sharp resistance by the urban masses. Three years of scorched-earth terror were required in order to mount the Civil Patrol system in the countryside, and even now the military's hold there is by no means secure.

Time and again, the Guatemalan workers and peasants have shown that they can survive their rulers' terror and retake the offensive in the fight for democratic rights and social justice. The generals rightly fear that their bloody measures could call forth a fresh wave of mass struggles. This is why they are seeking stepped-up military aid from Washington, and why U.S. imperialism is hastening to meet their requests. □