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Ireland

**Sinn Féin Convention
Registers Growth**

Hong Kong

**Trotskyists Assess
China-Britain Agreement**

Reagan agrees to arms talks, wages war in Central America

By Doug Jenness

The Reagan administration and the Kremlin announced November 22 that U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko will meet to discuss scheduling talks on the whole range of questions concerning nuclear and outer-space weapons. The meeting is set for January 7 and 8 in Geneva, Switzerland.

President Reagan, like his Democratic opponent Walter Mondale, had called for resumption of arms talks during the recent election campaign. In September a meeting between the President and Gromyko opened a series of exchanges with Soviet officials that led to setting the date for the Gromyko-Shultz meeting.

In the face of massive international opposition to nuclear weapons, the U.S. government is attempting to present itself as a champion of peace by supporting discussions on arms limits. Yet at the very same moment, Washington is carrying out a gigantic arms buildup as part of its war in Central America.

Washington is pouring millions of dollars worth of modern jet fighters, combat helicopters, spy planes, and several thousand U.S. military personnel into the region to try to crush the Nicaraguan revolution and the popular liberation struggle in El Salvador. New U.S. air bases have been built in Honduras, and U.S. warships provocatively cruise the waters off Nicaragua's shores.

In September a shipment of 10 new Huey combat helicopters from the United States brought the total for El Salvador's air force to 34. U.S. officials say that 10 or 15 more of the helicopters, used to conduct terrifying attacks on rural villages, are to be shipped to the Duarte regime by the end of the year.

At the same time Washington and its NATO partners are mapping out plans to substantially beef up their conventional military forces in Europe. This will be a major point of discussion at a meeting of the defense ministers from NATO countries in December.

The Pentagon projects spending as much as \$100 billion during the next five years for fighter aircraft, more ammunition, and better equipment for U.S. forces in Europe. And Washington is pressing its European allies to boost their arms spending.

Arms programs go ahead

The projected arms talks are the first to be scheduled since late in 1983, when Washington began placing 572 nuclear-tipped cruise and Pershing 2 missiles in five West European countries from which they could hit Soviet targets in about 6 minutes. In response to this threat, Moscow withdrew from the discussions

with Washington on limiting medium-range and intercontinental arms. With 93 missiles now deployed, Washington has kept to its schedule. It plans to have the rest in place by 1988.

When Moscow pulled out of the arms talks, it said it would resume the broken-off discussions if Washington removed the new missiles. In the face of the Reagan administration's refusal to budge on this question, Soviet officials are stressing that the January meeting is not to prepare a resumption of earlier nuclear arms discussions but to begin "new talks."

The inclusion of outer-space arms in the proposed talks is at the request of the Soviet government, which last June called for a "mutual renunciation" of antisatellite systems and a moratorium on testing of all new space arms. The U.S. Congress responded to this proposal by appropriating \$2 billion for the coming year alone to build antisatellite weapons.

In a speech to the United Nations General Assembly September 25, President Reagan said that he might consider a moratorium on testing of space weapons once talks got under way. In announcing the January meeting, White House officials emphasized, however, that neither a moratorium on testing space arms nor a change in the deployment schedule of nuclear missiles in Europe is on the agenda now. These programs are going ahead at full steam.

Not road to peace

Previous nuclear arms talks and agreements have not proven productive from the standpoint of slowing down or reversing the nuclear arms buildup or in bringing peace.

The first agreement on nuclear weapons came in 1963 with the ban on atmospheric testing. This treaty between the U.S., British, and Soviet governments followed massive protests in North America, Britain, and Japan and served to significantly reduce hazardous radioactive fallout in the atmosphere.

However, this agreement neither curtailed nuclear testing, which has continued underground (the French imperialists, not a party to the agreement, still conduct atmospheric tests), nor slowed the further development and buildup of nuclear weapons.

Arms talks were resumed in 1969, and in May 1972 the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I) was signed in Moscow at a summit meeting between U.S. President Richard Nixon and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. At the time, tens of thousands of U.S. troops were in Vietnam and U.S. bombers were conducting daily attacks against Vietnamese villages.

SALT I was aimed primarily at placing

limits on defensive, antiballistic weapons. The reasoning was that if one side were to try to completely safeguard its cities with defensive weapons, it could be interpreted as preparation for a first strike. These accords also put a temporary ceiling on the number of offensive missile launchers that could be built.

The treaty allowed for a major expansion of offensive nuclear weapons, especially MIRVs (multiple-warhead missiles), which were not included in the agreement. The Pentagon, which had tested MIRVs for the first time in 1968, had a big jump on the USSR, which did not test its first MIRV until 1973. As has generally been the case with nuclear arms, Moscow was forced to develop and expand another new weapons system in order to defend itself from imperialist threats. Between 1972 and 1979 the number of nuclear warheads in the Pentagon's arsenal increased from 4,600 to 9,000. The Soviet stock of warheads went from 2,100 to 4,000.

Another round of arms talks culminated in a SALT II agreement which President Carter signed in June 1979. The U.S. Senate delayed ratification, however, and when Soviet troops went into Afghanistan at the end of that year, it was scuttled.

The SALT II pact was as much of a fraud as SALT I. It, in fact, would have permitted Washington to increase the number of nuclear missile launchers by 200. Carter, attempting to get the Senate to endorse it, admitted that "no operational United States forces will have to be reduced" under the provisions of SALT II.

Regardless of the outcome of the next round of arms talks, they will not affect the shooting war in Central America, the imperialist arms buildup in Western Europe, or the military encirclement of the USSR.

Abstract proposals by imperialist politicians for peace and disarmament cannot serve as an antiwar policy for working people. Working people must start with the fight against the specific imperialist war going on now. They must demand that Washington pull all of its military personnel, combat aircraft, and warships out of Central America and the Caribbean and halt its military aid to the Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries and the Salvadoran dictatorship. It is the U.S. government's intervention in Central America and the Caribbean that is responsible for the war there and for the threat of its escalation into a much wider conflict.

Within this framework working people should demand that the imperialist governments immediately halt production of nuclear arms, scrap their nuclear arsenals, and stop the testing of antisatellite weapons. □

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Diplomatic coup for Polisario

By Ernest Harsch

Nine years after the rebel forces in the Western Sahara took up arms to win their country's independence from Moroccan rule, the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) has been admitted to full membership in the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Stung by the seating of the SADR delegation at the OAU's 20th summit conference, which convened on November 12 in Ethiopia, the Moroccan government announced that very same day that it was resigning from the 50-member OAU, the first time any government has done so.

This marked a significant diplomatic turn-about for the Polisario Front, the group leading the Saharan liberation struggle.

Just three months earlier, King Hassan II of Morocco had signed a pact with Libya's Muammar el-Qaddafi, who had previously given assistance to Polisario. Hassan hoped to use the pact to politically isolate Polisario and win new backing for the Moroccan army's war in the Western Sahara, which it has occupied ever since the territory's Spanish colonial rulers pulled out in 1975.

And for several years Hassan had succeeded in blocking the SADR's admission as a full OAU member by threatening to split the African organization. In this, he had the backing of a significant minority of proimperialist African regimes, which pledged to walk out as well if the SADR were seated.

But Hassan's support within the OAU eroded, in part due to his government's own refusal to abide by various OAU resolutions on the Western Sahara. He stalled on holding an OAU- and United Nations-supervised referendum in the Western Sahara, and rejected an OAU proposal that he open direct negotiations with Polisario. "The Sahara is Moroccan and will remain Moroccan," the king insisted.

In face of such Moroccan intransigence, more African governments decided to officially recognize the Polisario's SADR. On the eve of the OAU summit, the government of Nigeria — the most populous country in Africa — announced its recognition of the SADR, and even stated that it would be willing to provide Polisario with military assistance.

When the Moroccan delegation walked out of the OAU summit over the SADR's admission, it found itself diplomatically isolated. The only other African government willing to follow suit was the U.S.-backed regime of Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaïre, which announced its temporary "suspension" from the OAU.

Meanwhile, in the Western Sahara itself, the Polisario fighters have again shown that they are a military force and can inflict serious blows against the much larger and better equipped Moroccan army (which has received massive U.S. and French military assistance).

On October 13, Polisario launched "Opera-

tion Greater Maghreb," its largest military offensive in a year. As part of the offensive, Polisario fighters breached the 400-mile "wall" of sand, forts, and minefields Hassan had built to restrict Polisario's movements; they then attacked the Moroccan army base at Zaag, inside Morocco's own borders. The Moroccan authorities admitted that there was "violent and intense fighting" and that dozens of Moroccan troops had been killed.

Polisario Political Bureau member Mohamed Ould Salek commented on this offensive: "It is a message the Saharan people

send to the king of Morocco, and those who, behind King Hassan II, want to perpetuate the aggression against our country. We want to show that despite the means put at the disposal of the king of Morocco by imperialist countries, by the United States, by France . . . despite the considerable size of the Moroccan Army . . . we are giving Hassan II two choices, two alternatives. The first is to make peace, the possibility we prefer. . . . Morocco has chosen the second alternative, that of war. Well, we shall force King Hassan II to pay a much higher price each time." □

—IN THIS ISSUE—

Closing news date: November 27, 1984

NICARAGUA	716	Slain FSLN leader honored
	716	FSLN congratulated on elections
	717	Nicaraguan election results
BRITAIN	718	Miners resist strikebreaking — by Clive Turnbull
	719	Young workers support miners — by Kipp Dawson
IRELAND	720	Sinn Féin convention marks growth
		— by Will Reissner
	721	Managing the media on Ireland — by Will Reissner
TURKEY	723	Four years since Gen. Evren's coup
		— by Steve Craine
CANADA	725	Quebec language law under attack
	727	Victory for abortion rights
BURKINA	728	Toilers mobilize for revolutionary change
		— by Ernest Harsch
PHILIPPINES	733	Political prisoner speaks out — by Deb Shnookal
BRAZIL	735	Unions map fight against dictatorship
		— by Ernest Harsch
CHILE	741	Mass arrests, state of siege — by Will Reissner
SOUTH AFRICA	744	Black workers in massive strike wave
		— by Ernest Harsch
DOCUMENTS	724	British socialists on Bishop government
	736	CUT: Political situation in Brazil
	738	CUT "Platform of Workers Struggles"
	739	Colombian PSR on "National Dialogue"
	742	Joint statement on Hong Kong accord

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Slain FSLN leader honored

Enrique Schmidt died in the 'front line of fire'

A top leader of the Nicaraguan revolution, Enrique Schmidt, fell in combat November 5 in a battle against a CIA-organized mercenary task force in El Corozo in the department of Boaco. The Nicaraguan Government of National Reconstruction declared a national day of mourning in honor of Schmidt, who was an assistant commander of the revolution and minister of telecommunications.

At the time of his death, Schmidt was serving with the Pablo Ubeda military unit of the Ministry of the Interior. In the battle in which Schmidt died, the Sandinistas wiped out the mercenary task force, killing 73 and wounding three.

Schmidt's funeral was attended by ministers and vice-ministers of the government and representatives of the mass organizations. The honor guard included the president-elect and vice-president-elect, Daniel Ortega and Sergio Ramírez; Rafael Córdoba Rivas; and Minister of Foreign Affairs Miguel D'Escoto. Also in attendance were Commanders of the Revolution Luís Carrión, Bayardo Arce, Humberto Ortega, Víctor Tirado, Tomás Borge, and Henry Ruíz.

The workers of TELCOR (the government telephone, telegraph, and postal service) held a memorial meeting for Schmidt. Cuban Vice-minister of Communications René Hernández, representing the Cuban government and its people, arrived in Nicaragua for the funeral. He brought condolences from the Cuban Communication Workers Union.

By order of Minister of the Interior Tomás Borge, Schmidt was posthumously awarded the Medal of Valor—Pedro Aráuz Palacios.

Prior to the funeral, Borge told the press that Schmidt had been killed by a bullet during combat while he was "in the front line of fire." A foreign journalist then asked, "Are the Sandinista commanders always in the front line of fire?" Borge responded, "Without any doubt."

Below is an article reprinted from the November 30 *Militant*, a socialist weekly published in New York. It was translated by the *Militant* from the November 7 Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) daily *Barricada*. The article is titled "Biographical sketch of a combatant."

* * *

Assistant Commander of the Revolution Enrique Schmidt Cuadra was born in Corinto in the province of Chinandega on May 11, 1949. He joined the FSLN in June 1970.

Between 1973 and 1975 he took advantage of his post as business manager of SIEMENS [a West German electronics company] to provide logistical support to the revolutionary struggle. In late 1975, under the direct respon-

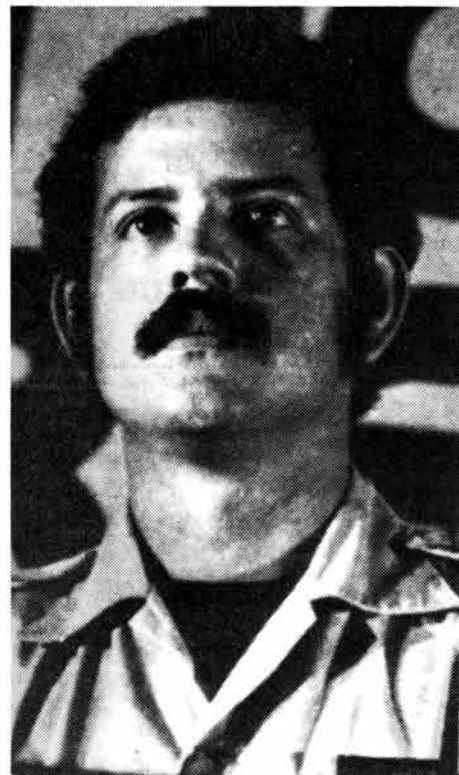
sibility of Commander of the Revolution Tomás Borge, he took part in the formation of the intelligence network that the Sandinista Front developed at that time.

It was during these years that he participated as an internationalist in the liberation struggle of the Palestinian people, along with Pedro Aráuz, René Tejada, Patricio Argüello, and Luís Enrique Romero, among others.

On Dec. 16, 1975, he was captured by Somoza's Office of National Security (OSN) and during his 15 days of interrogation he was mistreated and tortured by Somoza's thugs. Following that he was sentenced to 18 months in prison by a war council. He was released in April 1977.

Between 1977 and 1978 he was one of the central organizers of the Solidarity Committees formed in Europe, under whose pressure the West German government cancelled a \$15 million loan it had granted the Somoza government. The Spanish government then did the same thing regarding the sale and arming of aircraft for Somoza's National Guard. At the same time Schmidt also worked to secure direct financial aid to the FSLN in his capacity as its representative in Europe.

In May 1979 he returned to the country to participate in the final offensive against the dictatorship. Following the revolutionary victory he became one of the main organizers of the Ministry of the Interior, first in his capacity as secretary-general, and later as chief of the Sandinista Police in Managua, in which post he helped develop what is today the General Administration of Sandinista Police.



ENRIQUE SCHMIDT

In 1981 he was appointed minister of TELCOR, an institution that one year later was designated Vanguard of the State by the Government of National Reconstruction.

Assistant Commander Enrique Schmidt was president of the National Basketball Federation.

The University of Bremen in West Germany recently awarded him the title of doctor of economics.

On November 5 he fell in combat against a counterrevolutionary task force. The task force was completely wiped out. □

FSLN congratulated on elections

Messages from Soviet Union, El Salvador, Cuba

[In the November 4 elections in Nicaragua, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) won a sweeping victory. In addition to FSLN candidates winning a majority of seats to the National Assembly, Daniel Ortega and Sergio Ramírez were elected president and vice-president.

[The following are the texts of three messages of congratulations to Ortega: from the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR; from the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) of El Salvador; and from Cuban President Fidel Castro. They are taken from the November 15 issue of the FSLN daily *Barricada*, in the order that they appeared in the

newspaper. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Presidium of Supreme Soviet

Accept our warm greetings on having been elected president of the Republic of Nicaragua and our wishes for success in that high office.

The successful carrying out of the first truly free general elections in the history of Nicaragua, despite the tenacious opposition of the enemies of the Sandinista Revolution, is one more important democratic conquest of the Nicaraguan people.

The results of the elections reiterated in a convincing way that the broad masses of the people actively support the course of the Sandinista National Liberation Front and the Government of National Reconstruction toward the strengthening of National Unity and political and economic sovereignty, and toward a just political settlement of the problems of Central America.

The sympathy and solidarity of all those who are loyal to the ideals of peace and progress are on the side of the just cause of the Nicaraguan people, which valiantly defends its liberty and independence.

We are persuaded that the relations of peace and friendship between the USSR and Nicaragua will continue developing forward as well, for the good of the peoples of our countries and in the search for the consolidation of peace and international progress.

FMLN-FDR

Commander of the Revolution Daniel Ortega
Doctor Sergio Ramírez Mercado:

In the name of the Salvadoran people, receive a fraternal salute of congratulations for the significant electoral triumph of the Sandinista National Liberation Front in the elections held last November 4, which institutionalized and consolidated the process of the Sandinista People's Revolution.

The victory of the Nicaraguan people constitutes one more defeat of the enemies of our democratic and revolutionary struggles and a step forward in the defense of national sovereignty.

We are sure that you will know how — as you have so far — to represent with dignity and skill the interests of the Nicaraguan people.

Receive all our solidarity and a fraternal revolutionary embrace.

Leonel González

General Command of the FMLN

Guillermo Manuel Ungo

President, Executive Committee of the FDR

Fidel Castro

Commander of the Revolution Daniel Ortega
Saavedra, Coordinator of the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction of Nicaragua:

Dear Comrade:

In the name of our Party, our Government, and our People, I want to send you the warmest and most sincere congratulations on your election by the people of Nicaragua as president of that sister Republic.

For the first time throughout long years, the noble and heroic people of Sandino have had the opportunity to carry out an election in which it was possible for them to express their democratic will. The powerful backing that you and comrade Sergio Ramírez, representatives of the Sandinista National Liberation Front and Vanguard of the Nicaraguan Revolu-

tion, have received has constituted an unequivocal manifestation of the will of the Nicaraguan people.

With this, the people's confidence in the Sandinista Revolution, in the institutions that it has created, and in those who represent it has been confirmed.

The firm and enthusiastic presence of the workers, the peasants, the students — captured by photographic media and which the entire world has had the opportunity to see — constitutes an irrefutable proof of the strictly legal character of the process and the scrupulous honesty with which the Sandinista National Liberation Front has handled it. The admirable example set by the people of Nicaragua in carrying out these elections — in the midst of military aggression and economic and political pressures of all kinds that U.S. imperialism and its instruments carry out against the Sandinista Revolution — is outstanding.

In face of the efforts to disfigure Nicaraguan reality, the palpable proof gathered by more than a thousand observers of various political ideologies, parties, and organs of opinion, from the entire world, who have reflected the truth almost unanimously, should be enough to silence the imperialist spokespeople who are

determined to cover up or tarnish the undeniable reality. No election has ever had so many foreign reporters and international observers as witnesses of their integrity and seriousness.

Therefore we consider the November 4 elections a great victory of the Sandinista People's Revolution, both within and outside Nicaragua. In the Nicaraguan elections, 57 percent more of the registered voters took part than in those held November 6 in the United States, and the Sandinista candidates obtained a much higher percentage of the votes than did Reagan.

The overwhelming support that you and the Sandinista National Liberation Front have received should be a serious warning for those who are trying to reverse, through the use of military aggression, the process of economic and political structural transformations that Nicaragua is developing.

The support of the Nicaraguan masses will allow their genuine representatives to continue on the sure road of rebuilding the devastated nation and building a new Nicaragua.

We renew on this occasion of jubilation and victory the unflagging solidarity of the Cuban revolution, and, in congratulating you for the triumph, you are embraced warmly by

Fidel Castro Ruz

Nicaraguan election results

By José G. Pérez

MANAGUA — The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) won 67 percent of the vote in the presidential elections held here November 4.

In addition to this big victory, the FSLN will also have a strong majority in the National Constituent Assembly elected at the same time.

On the basis of official results for regions of Nicaragua accounting for about three-fourths of the voters, and on preliminary figures for the rest of the country, the FSLN daily *Barricada* published a detailed breakdown showing the FSLN had won 67 percent of the votes for Constituent Assembly and 61 of the 90 seats in that body.

Three capitalist parties won 26 seats: the Democratic Conservative Party (PCD), with 14 percent of the vote and 13 seats; the Independent Liberal Party (PLI), with 9.7 percent of the vote and eight seats; and the People's Social Christian Party (PPSC), with 5.7 percent of the vote and five seats.

The Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN), Communist Party of Nicaragua (PCN), and People's Action Movement-Marxist-Leninist (MAP-ML) each got one seat. Their votes ranged between 1.0 and 1.5 percent.

Nearly 80 percent of the eligible voters participated in the election, whose stated purpose was to institutionalize — that is, further strengthen, consolidate, and develop — the five-year-old Sandinista revolution.

In addition to proportional representation of

the various parties, Nicaraguan law provides for unsuccessful presidential candidates to also be seated as full members of the Constituent Assembly, provided they receive a minimum of about one percent of the vote. All six losers qualified.

This means that the assembly will have a total of 96 members, 90 elected by popular vote and the six defeated presidential candidates.

Daniel Ortega and Sergio Ramírez were elected president and vice-president of Nicaragua. Ortega has been one of the central leaders of the FSLN since well before the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship; he is now coordinator of the three-member Junta of Government of National Reconstruction. Ramírez, a prominent writer, has been a long-time member of the FSLN and has been a member of the governing junta since the victory of the revolution.

The president, vice-president, and National Constituent Assembly will be inaugurated on January 10, 1985, and will hold office for six years. □

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Thatcher mounts antistrike offensive

Miners resist intensified 3-week 'back-to-work' drive

By Clive Turnbull

SHEFFIELD — The coal miners' strike remains solid despite an intensive three-week-long "back-to-work" offensive by the Conservative government and the National Coal Board (NCB). Only 5 percent of strikers have returned to work according to the NCB's own figures, which the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and even some commentators in the big business media have challenged as inaccurate.

The Miner, the NUM's newspaper, reported in its November 21 edition: "The facts are that around 148,000 NUM members are on strike, some 78 percent of the total membership."

As NUM President Arthur Scargill explained, "While some miners have gone back to work, others have actually rejoined the strike. This is a pattern which has been repeated throughout the dispute, so there is no material change in the real situation."

Scargill also reported that when a number of workers went back to work in the Midlands area the first thing the manager did was to downgrade them. "They couldn't turn to their union," he pointed out. "They couldn't turn to their fellow workers for assistance, because they weren't there. And I think they realized, very, very quickly, that without the union they were very vulnerable."

In Yorkshire, scabs have stopped crossing picket lines and have rejoined the strike. At Grimethorpe, all seven who were strike breaking have come out again. The two scabs who were going in at Kilnhurst have stopped. At Goldthorpe and North Gawber there are now no scabs. At Dinnington, Silverwood, Thurcroft, Kiveton Park, Hatfield Main, and Corton Wood, former scabs have also rejoined the strike.

On November 25 the *Observer* challenged the NCB's claim that the strike was crumbling and noted, "The figures also show that the numbers of new strikers is rising to about 100 per week for the past two weeks."

With the deadline now past for the £1,400 [£1 = US\$1.20] tax-free bribe that was being offered to strikebreakers, the Conservative government and NCB have a new ploy. £175 is to be paid to every scab before Christmas. This money will come from the back pay due to every miner once the 1983-84 wage claim, which was pending when the strike began in March, is settled.

Organized strikebreaking

A major part in the strikebreaking operation is played by the National Working Miners' Committee, which organizes the activity of scabs throughout the country. It is funded and

staffed by individuals from employers' organizations and the Conservative Party.

Roland Taylor, a scab from Shirebrook, described in a report in the *Financial Times* how the organized strikebreakers have worked. "I've thought things through with management at my own pit. They suggested we use phones to call people up — they gave us lists and lent us vans. Shirebrook has been a well-oiled team." The same report noted that three miners were employed full time to do nothing but knock on people's doors, persuading them to break the strike.

Dave Millar, NUM branch secretary at Kellingly colliery, the biggest in Yorkshire with over 2,000 workers, described the impact of the back-to-work offensive. Against management's claim that 50 miners are scabbing, "our estimate is that only about 28 men, mainly clerical staff, are going in," he said. "And, what is more, the numbers reported for picket duty here have doubled since the scabs started back."

At Markham colliery, it was reported in the *Morning Star*, new scabs met in the pit canteen demanding to know what had become of all the other men management claimed had already returned to work.

The strikebreaking offensive has been accompanied by increased police activity in the mining villages. In Yorkshire, the building of barricades and resistance to police attacks has become an almost nightly occurrence.

Power cuts expected

There is growing pressure on the coal stocks in the power stations, which is starting to affect electricity supplies even before the cold weather arrives. *The Miner* reported: "The clearest cutback has been in an area of the south of England, covering one-seventh of the whole country and centered on St. Albans. On Monday night, November 5, a 3 percent cut in voltage was made for half an hour." This led to a "yellow alert," one stage before a "red alert," and widespread power cuts.

On November 7 British Steel's Llanwern plant was forced to shut down for an hour because of power shortages.

The target of the back-to-work drive was not just the miners. It also sought to demoralize and undermine solidarity from other sectors of the working class. This was being reinforced by the role of Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock, who recently refused to speak at a series of NUM rallies.

The NUM leadership has not fallen into the trap of responding to Kinnock's class collaboration by breaking with the Labour leadership. Arthur Scargill explained the union's re-

sponse in a television interview. "Let me make it perfectly clear that any Labour Party leader and any TUC [Trades Union Congress] leader who associates themselves in line with Labour Party or TUC policy alongside the miners' strike makes the best possible case for winning the next general elections.

"Because if they are supporting the miners' strike, they're supporting the fight against unemployment, they're supporting the fight against condemning our young people to a life of hopelessness and helplessness.

"I would have thought that any Labour Party leader, any TUC leader, indeed any trade union leader, would be pleased and privileged to support that view."

In a recent visit to Moscow to meet with Soviet leaders, Kinnock spoke to representatives of the All-USSR Council of Trade Unions. He presented a gloomy forecast for the miners' strike. "My view is that the labor movement lives to fight and win on other occasions."

The Soviet trade unionists showed a clearer understanding of the situation. A defeat for the miners would result in "a terrible domino effect on the bargaining strength of other groups of British workers," they said.

Support from Soviet, French unionists

Soviet trade unionists have donated more than \$1 million in food and clothing to the British miners.

In response to NCB and Conservative Party red-baiting about "Moscow gold," NUM Vice-president Michael McGahey commented, "We have always remembered the contribution the Soviet miners gave us in [the general strike of] 1926. This union is proud of our internationalism, and we welcome and are grateful for the donations coming from the Soviet trade unionists."

International solidarity is being stepped up as Christmas approaches. In France, the miners' section of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) is following up the 400 tons of food sent in October with a Christmas present for every child of a striking miner.

TUC representatives are to meet union leaders in Belgium, Holland, and West Germany to insure that coal stocks are not shipped into Britain.

The TUC has also announced that December 13 and 14 will be Miners Hardship Days, during which all 10 million workers affiliated to the TUC will be asked to hold collections for the miners.

An appeal signed by 200 people, including Labour Party leaders, academics, actresses, clergy, and football club managers, appeared

in the *Guardian* and *Daily Mirror* on November 27.

The money raised is to be forwarded to Women Against Pit Closures, the national organization of women's support groups in the mining areas.

The appeal stated: "The great majority of miners are still on strike. They and their families are desperately poor.

"They have the right to a good Christmas.

Young workers support miners

'It's our futures they're fighting for'

By Kipp Dawson

[The following is an abridged version of an article scheduled to appear in the December-January issue of the *Young Socialist*, a bimonthly newspaper published in New York.

[Kipp Dawson is a laid-off coal miner from Pennsylvania and a member of the United Mine Workers of America. She visited Britain's coalfields from mid-October to the first part of November.]

* * *

On March 12, 1984, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) went on strike against the British government's plan to shut down 20 mines and wipe out 20,000 coal mining jobs this year alone.

An NUM fact sheet puts it this way: "Why are miners on strike? To stop colliery closures and stop job losses on a massive scale.

"In 1979 there were 235,000 miners and 223 pits. Now there are 182,000 [miners] and 175 pits. In 1982-83, 20,000 jobs were lost from the mining industry.

"Over the next few years the Coal Board wants to axe more than 70,000 jobs and close 75 pits.

"By fighting for pits and jobs miners are fighting for a human future and against permanent mass unemployment. *We owe it to the young people. We owe it to future generations.*"

This strike has had a big impact on British politics and society.

The miners have faced brutal assaults by the Thatcher government in an effort to break the strike. These assaults have included cop attacks on picket lines and arrests of union members and leaders. They have faced harassment in the towns and villages where they live.

At the same time, over the course of the strike, the NUM has won active backing from other unions, women, youth, and Blacks. Young miners have taken the lead across Britain, on the picket lines and in the strike headquarters — and they have been among the victims of police violence.

I traveled recently to Britain. While there, I met a number of young miners and young socialists who are actively supporting the miners strike.

"This is an urgent appeal for a huge Christmas bonus for the striking miners and their families. A little money goes a long way.

"If all who want to do something to help the coal mining communities give some money to this fund, we can ensure for the communities a happy Christmas and a confident New Year. Please send us your donations now!"

Contributions should be sent to: Miners' Families Christmas Appeal, 14 Whittlesley St., London SE1 8SL, England. □

Nigel Bevan, who is 24 years old, began his job as a coal miner in South Wales seven years ago.

Nigel has been touring around to win support for the strike. From October 7 to 14, Nigel went to Holland with Hazel Jones from the local women's support group, to seek support for the NUM strike.

Steve Howells is coordinator of the Agecroft Strike Committee in Salford in the North Western area of Britain. He became a miner 12 years ago, when he was 15 years old.

Political consciousness grows

Thousands of young miners and miners' wives are finding their political consciousness growing as a result of their participation in this strike.

Nigel explains that, "at the beginning of the strike, I was not politically minded. But when you're on strike like this, questions start to be raised."

As Nigel became more involved in strike support work, he began to find answers for some of those questions. For him, the most important was "to learn that we are part of an international working class, an international movement."

His concern for the future recently led him to become an active socialist, a supporter of *Socialist Action*, a revolutionary socialist newspaper published in London, and an activist in the Young Socialists, British youth group of the Labour Party.

Steve had just shown a videotape called "The Patriot Game" to help those at the strike headquarters learn the truth about the freedom struggle in Northern Ireland.

"What we've done through the strike, and it's true of every strike center — there's a new awareness to things not just happening in Britain or in the coal industry, but to things happening all over the world. And not just Northern Ireland, but Nicaragua, El Salvador."

During the strike, and afterwards, Steve is committed to helping his brothers and sisters learn as much as they can about the world and how they can be part of changing it.

Two young socialists I met described more about the role of young miners in the strike and

the problems youth face in Britain today.

Kevin Barton, a young socialist from Sheffield, told me that the capitalists in Britain had not expected this response from the young miners.

"When the strike happened, the Tories (Conservatives) were talking about how these young miners now have got houses, and have got to pay for their houses, and have got kids, and thought that this younger generation of miners wouldn't be fighters. But that's been totally wrong."

Kay Bardsley, also a Sheffield young socialist, added, "Young people actually see that it's our futures they're fighting for. That's one of the things that came out right at the beginning of the strike."

Future for British youth?

On November 1, I talked with Bernadette Ryan and Valerie Evans in South Wales.

Bernadette, 19, is a docker's daughter. "Young people in Britain have it a lot worse than the working class generally; they get the worst deal, the worst pay, the worst positions. And this problem has escalated during the last few years," she said.

Valerie, 21, is a steelworker's daughter. She added, "Most young people here don't vote. Many are so cynical, very disillusioned." She stressed that while the miners' strike has inspired many young people in Britain, "It's still too isolated. I don't think the message is getting through as well as it should."

Both Valerie and Bernadette are members of the Labour Party. In the party, they met up with *Socialist Action* supporters, and recently became supporters of the socialist paper, too. They are working to bring to other British youth their newfound optimism in the future, their ideas on what kinds of changes are needed in this world.

"It's been really good for us as socialists during this strike," Bernadette said, "because you can talk about what's happening in the world today and people are really interested in it. When we say we want a different kind of government, a government that represents working-class people, we can turn and say, 'Look it does work. This is what's happening in Nicaragua. You've got a government that's representing the interests of working-class people.'"

Bernadette and Valerie both asked me to send their solidarity to young socialists in the United States. "I'd like to tell them to keep on fighting," Bernadette said, "because we are over here as well."

She urged young socialists in the United States to keep plugging away. "It is important to spread the message around as wide as possible, even if you just reach a couple of people here, a couple of people there; it's well worth it. If they go back and take the message around, you're laying some sort of groundwork. And that's important.

"Tell them they're not fighting alone." □

Sinn Féin convention marks growth

Links freedom struggle to economic, social issues

By Will Reissner

"Today we are a stronger and more vibrant party than we were last year or the year before," Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams told delegates to the organization's 80th national convention (*ard-fheis*, pronounced ard-esh), held in Dublin, November 3-4. "Next year we will be stronger again," Adams predicted. His keynote speech was published in the November 8 *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, Sinn Féin's weekly newspaper.

Sinn Féin is a revolutionary nationalist organization fighting to end British rule over Ireland's six northern counties and to reunify the entire island in a 32-county "democratic socialist republic." The organization has close ties with the outlawed Irish Republican Army.

Adams' optimistic assessment reflects Sinn Féin's progress in consolidating its base of support among the nationalists of the north, and in building a base in the formally independent South.

A key element in Sinn Féin's growing influence is its perspective of combining the struggle for a united Ireland with social and economic struggles.

"The relevance of an anti-imperialist political and economic programme to the jobs question and the worries of parents and young people, North and South, need to be spelt out," Adams argued. "We need to expound not only the patriotic reason for unity and independence, but the logical, social and economic reasons as well."

Economic crisis

Adams noted that official statistics admit that nearly 350,000 people, 20 percent of the work force, are jobless on both sides of the British-imposed border dividing Ireland.

"The real jobless figures, however, must be well over half a million when we include all those artificially trimmed from the official figures — whether married women who want to work, older workers, school leavers, short-term job trainees, and so on."

He blasted "the response of those who follow the monetarist economic gospel, North and South."

"Where there are few jobs, more factories are allowed to close. Where workers have jobs, their wages, in real terms, are reduced," Adams said.

"Where there is sub-standard housing or a total lack of housing, the house-building programmes are cut back. Where social welfare is already insufficient, it is restricted further and discretionary grants are withdrawn.

"Where classrooms are over-crowded and



An Phoblacht/Republican News

Gerry Adams addresses convention.

special educational needs exist, teachers are left on the dole and pupils are made to pay to travel to school."

The right-wing capitalist government in the south has issued a "Building on Reality" plan, which Adams noted "actually promises an increase in unemployment, cuts in public spending, redundancies in the public service," and other austerity measures.

"Those least able to afford it are going to be made to pay," Adams said. "Those with no responsibility for the recession in the capitalist economy are going to be forced to make all the sacrifices.

"Yet there will be no extra taxes on that tiny minority who own the vast majority of wealth. There will be no embargo on the profits which the multinationals are allowed to export."

Planned economy, socialism

Adams outlined Sinn Féin's alternative. "We advocate a planned economy which is not concerned with the maximising of profits for multinationals and private enterprise, but is concerned with maximising the benefits to the Irish people themselves."

The Sinn Féin president added: "We declare our concern to be people, not profits. We state our confidence in the ability of the Irish people, through the implementation of a radical socialist economic programme in a united Ireland, to solve their own problems and to end the years of joblessness and social misery."

Without debate, delegates passed a motion amending Sinn Féin's social and economic program, placing the organization in favor of bringing all industries under public control and in opposition to private ownership of productive property "where such ownership involves the exploitation of workers."

Motions were also passed condemning the Dublin government's 3 percent guideline on wage increases, which would mean a decline in real income for workers, and its recent cuts in food subsidies.

Another motion expressed support for the Irish trade union movement's demand for a 35-hour workweek with no cut in pay.

'Landlords need not apply'

The convention adopted a motion barring from membership in Sinn Féin all "landlords, who exploit their tenants, speculators and their respective agents."

Delegates recognized that the organization must pay more attention to the problems of exploited farmers. The convention decided to set up a committee to remedy Sinn Féin's lack of analysis of the current problems facing farmers and farm workers and to work out effective policies for Sinn Féin.

Speaking in favor of that motion, national committee member Jim McAllister pointed out that small farmers rarely seek Sinn Féin's advice on agricultural questions because "farmers don't believe we fully understand their

problems." The party must, he added, "take up agricultural issues when they arise" and "back up the small farmers in their fight with bureaucracy."

Focus on women's oppression

Discussion on the struggle against women's oppression took place during what was described as convention "prime time."

Women's Department head Rita O'Hare told delegates that the department — Sinn Féin's largest — had achieved a great deal in its four-year existence.

"There is a consciousness now in Sinn Féin," O'Hare said, "that the liberation of women is not just desirable but vitally necessary if true freedom is to be realised."

Delegates passed a new policy statement that says "Sinn Féin will fight to defend the rights that women have won so far in the field of equal pay and opportunities. We will fight to stop employers from using loopholes in the present legislation to eliminate these gains."

On contraception, the *ard-fheis* clarified Sinn Féin's support for the right to contraception, adopting a motion stating that "contraception should be free, safe and readily available to all through GPs [general practitioners] and family planning clinics."

Against right to choose

The question of abortion rights was debated at this convention, as it had been in 1983. According to Jane Plunkett, writing in the November 8 issue of *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, "the issues involved were not presented clearly, either by motions and amendments on the *clár* [agenda] or by speakers. After a confused and confusing debate . . . delegates rejected a motion supporting women's right to abortion 'under certain medical circumstances.'"

At its 1983 convention, Sinn Féin had eliminated the word "totally" from the statement in the party's platform, "we are totally opposed to abortion."

This year the statement was amended again to read, "we are opposed to abortion as a means of birth control."

The conference reaffirmed Sinn Féin's support for the right to divorce, which is illegal in the south of Ireland. It also committed the party to actively support a "yes" vote in any future referendum on divorce.

One motion proposed that any members of Sinn Féin who "indulge in physically abusing their partners, within marriage or personal relationships, should be dismissed from and ostracised by" the party. No discussion or vote was taken at this convention, but according to Plunkett it "remains an issue to be faced in the future."

Campaign against strip-searches

In Gerry Adams' speech to the convention, he stressed the need for the Irish republican movement to focus on the plight of women political prisoners.

"In a male-dominated society like ours and

even in a movement like ours the women are usually eclipsed by the men. So too in the prisons. In recent years, the plight of male prisoners has eclipsed the plight of women prisoners."

Adams called for a sustained campaign against the strip-searches that the British regularly carry out against republican prisoners in Armagh jail. "Strip-searching of the Armagh women is now almost two years old. During this time nothing of a security nature has been found and yet women, young and old, regardless of their physical condition, are probed and examined after being stripped naked by prison warders," Adams told the gathering.

"I listened recently to a former remand [pre-trial] prisoner recount how she was strip-searched over two hundred and fifty-nine times, how sanitary towels were removed as she was stripped naked while having her period, how another prisoner was stripped naked and probed while pregnant, and how, after she had given birth to a baby daughter, she and her child suffered the same humiliating treatment.

"These are the methods to which the British government stoops in order to subdue those it has imprisoned."

The gathering unanimously passed a motion stating "this *Ard-Fheis* reaffirms our support for the armed struggle being waged against the British forces of occupation in the six counties and expresses our solidarity and appreciation to the men and women engaged in the war."

In his keynote speech, Gerry Adams spoke

of the impact of the IRA's attempt to blow up the whole British cabinet by bombing a Brighton hotel.

"Regardless of what one thinks of that operation, and we can be assured that [Prime Minister] Margaret Thatcher got little sympathy from nationalist Ireland, or indeed from an increasingly disaffected working class in her own country, it is obviously totally hypocritical for British apologists to describe the Brighton bombing as an attack on democracy."

Adams stated: "All casualties and fatalities in Ireland or Britain as a result of the war are sad symptoms of our British problem and the Brighton bombing was an inevitable result of the British presence in this country."

Having himself been the victim of a March 1984 assassination attempt, Adams stated: "I have no doubt that the British government will attempt reprisal action in vengeance for the Brighton operation. As always, we in Sinn Féin, in the public leadership of the republican struggle, are the most likely victims of British assassination plans."

Sinn Féin's traditional refusal to take seats in the British, Northern Ireland, and Dublin parliaments when elected was overwhelmingly reaffirmed by convention delegates.

The convention decided to field as many candidates in next year's local elections in Northern Ireland "as the six-county election directorate think are feasible." Sinn Féin candidates do take seats on local councils, north and south, when elected. □

Managing the media on Ireland

British government views press as 'potent weapon'

By Will Reissner

"The British government goes to great lengths to control media coverage of the struggle in the North of Ireland," remarked Liz Curtis, author of *Ireland: The Propaganda War*,* during a November 5 interview with *Intercontinental Press*.

Curtis, a British journalist who is a co-founder of the Information on Ireland publishing group and a member of the Labour Committee on Ireland, was in the United States on a 12-day speaking tour.

"As far back as 1971," Curtis noted, "polls showed that 59 percent of the British population wanted British troops brought home from the North of Ireland."

As a result, she added, many government figures argued for censorship of news coverage, claiming that television had turned the American people against the Vietnam war.

"But instead of formal censorship of news from Ireland," Curtis explained, "a system of 'managerial censorship' was instituted." In fact, she added, "British internal censorship has become a model of how to censor without



LIZ CURTIS

giving the appearance of censorship. The system has been studied widely by 'anti-terrorism experts.'"

A 1969 British Army counterinsurgency manual explained that formal censorship "almost invariably rebounds on the government,"

*Pluto Press, London, 1984. £5.50.

Thatcher: Thumbs down on Forum report

Last May 2, after 11 months of deliberations, leaders from the Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, and Labour parties in the south of Ireland, and from the Social Democratic and Labour Party in the north signed a 42-page report from the New Ireland Forum.

The forum had been set up to undercut Sinn Féin's growing strength in Northern Ireland. The participating parties hoped to show that peaceful negotiations with London could open the road to an eventual British withdrawal from the north and to Ireland's reunification.

The report offered three alternative courses: establishment of a "unitary" state of all of Ireland; a federated state of north and south, with the north retaining considerable autonomy; or joint administration of

the north by London and Dublin.

But on November 19, at the conclusion of a meeting with Irish Prime Minister Garret FitzGerald, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher explicitly rejected each of the three alternatives.

"I have made it quite clear," Thatcher told reporters, "that a unified Ireland was one solution that is out. A second solution was a confederation of two states. That is out. A third solution was joint authority. That is out — that is a derogation of sovereignty."

FitzGerald, trying to put the best possible face on his public humiliation by the British prime minister, later told the press: "It is clear the prime minister has been coming to grips with what is a very complex and difficult problem."

and argued instead that "the press, properly handled, is potentially one of the government's strongest weapons."

One way coverage of Ireland is controlled, Curtis explained, is through the "reference upward system." All coverage of Northern Ireland must be cleared at the highest levels. At the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), the Northern Ireland controller must approve all documentaries, plays, and news coverage of Northern Ireland before they can be broadcast. A similar situation exists in the non-government television network.

No member of a banned organization, such as the Irish Republican Army or the Irish National Liberation Army, can be interviewed by the BBC without the prior approval of the BBC director-general, and no such permission has been granted since 1979.

BBC reporters even need prior permission to interview representatives of Sinn Féin, the legal party that supports the IRA's struggle.

"There are also general conventions that apply to coverage of the Irish struggle," Curtis noted. "BBC reporters must give a 'hostile interview' to 'representatives of terrorists,'" she stated.

In addition "there must be 'internal balance' in the coverage. If any 'supporter of terrorism' is interviewed, a representative of the government must also be interviewed."

Through the "internal balance" requirement, the government can effectively veto any interview of Sinn Féin representatives by refusing to supply a government spokesperson.

"As a result of all these restrictions, the British people have gotten a very fragmentary picture of the situation in the North of Ireland," Curtis explained. The coverage "fosters a sense that Ireland is beyond understanding, a crazy place, with British soldiers caught in the middle."

Curtis noted that "the reporting of the 1981 hunger strike was absolutely appalling. There was no coverage at all when the hunger strike

began, and it only picked up when Bobby Sands was elected to the British Parliament while on his fast.

"Even then, the media portrayed the hunger strike as a cynical IRA propaganda stunt designed to manipulate international opinion."

In addition, "to balance the coverage of the funerals of the 10 dead hunger strikers, the British media began reporting every funeral of members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and Ulster Defence Regiment," the main local repressive forces fighting the IRA.

But, remarked Curtis, "the British media's claim that the troubles in the North of Ireland are the work of a small gang of thugs, with no popular support, was exploded by the string of election victories by Bobby Sands and Sinn Féin's Owen Carron and Gerry Adams. Those victories," she noted, "busted British propaganda wide open."

Through the British Information Services (BIS), the government tried to counteract the international impact of the hunger strike. Two senior officers of the Northern Ireland Office were sent to the United States to present the British government's views to diplomats in Washington and New York.

Patrick Nixon, head of the BIS in New York, explained "we keep in very close touch with editorial writers and foreign editors of all the leading papers . . . and brief them on British policy."

The BIS in New York has a satellite link to the Central Office of Information in London, Curtis explained, and can feed live radio coverage, as happened many times during the hunger strike, to 6,000 radio stations in the United States. This enables British officials to put their views at the top of the U.S. news.

Although a majority in Britain want withdrawal of troops from the North of Ireland, Curtis feels that most people do not yet see Ireland as a "pressing issue." The British government, she stated, has embarked on a policy of

"Ulsterization" of both repression and information.

Local security forces in Northern Ireland now handle the bulk of repression, while the British Army maintains a relatively low profile. Similarly, "in Britain, Ireland is always near the bottom of the news."

A number of organizations in Britain are working to build support for British withdrawal and Ireland's reunification.

The Troops Out Movement, Curtis stated, has an important network of activists throughout Britain.

Groups based in Britain's Irish communities have become more active since the hunger strike. Many Irish residents of Britain were intimidated into silence by the 1974 Prevention of Terrorism Act, still in force, under which people can be deported to Ireland without any reason being given.

The Labour Committee on Ireland, Curtis explained, is an organization of Labour Party members who are pushing for the party to call for British withdrawal and for Ireland's reunification.

The committee publishes a newspaper and has local groups in a number of areas. It educates local Labour Party groups about the Irish freedom struggle, circulates model resolutions in constituency Labour Party groups, lobbies members of Parliament, and carries out general educational work.

In Curtis' view, there has been a change for the better in the Labour Party's position on Ireland. "The change began in 1979 and was accelerated by the 1981 hunger strike," she maintained.

"While the Labour Party was in power, torture of Irish prisoners had taken place. But Labour lost the 1979 election, and Labour in opposition is more radical than Labour in power."

At the 1979 Labour Party conference, Curtis explained, activists were successful for the first time in years in getting debate on Ireland onto the agenda.

At the 1981 conference, pressure from the Labour Committee on Ireland, as well as the impact of the hunger strike, "resulted in the passage of a rather watery resolution calling for a united Ireland," she stated. But the resolution continued to uphold the "Unionist veto," stating that no change in the status of Northern Ireland should take place without the agreement of the pro-British segment of the population.

"This year's Labour Party conference," said Curtis, "passed motions against use of plastic bullets and juryless courts in the North of Ireland, as well as a motion against strip searches of female Irish republican prisoners in Armagh jail."

"The next battle in the Labour Party," Curtis believes, "is one to end the 'Unionist veto.'" She noted that a number of important figures in the Labour Party, including left-wing leader Tony Benn, have been won over to that position. □

Four years since Gen. Evren's coup

Civil liberties, minority rights still repressed by military

By Steve Craine

Turkey is the third-largest recipient of military and economic aid from the U.S. government. Plans were announced in November for an additional investment of \$120 million to modernize and equip four air bases that will be available for use by the imperialist North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), of which Turkey is a member. Total U.S. aid to the Turkish regime is expected to be close to \$1 billion next year — 80 percent of it military aid.

In August, Elliott Abrams, assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs in the Reagan administration, called Turkey "the only country with an Islamic culture that can truly be called a democracy."

Yet, as he wrote, the third hunger strike by political prisoners in 1984 had just ended, bringing the total of deaths on strike this year to at least 21. Martial law was in effect in 54 of the country's 67 provinces. The government was stepping up its ongoing war against the Kurdish minority in eastern Turkey.

These facts underline that, far from being "democratic," Turkey has suffered under a repressive military dictatorship for the past four years.

Gen. Kenan Evren, now president of Turkey, came to power in a coup d'état on Sept. 12, 1980, the third such direct intervention in politics by the Turkish military since World War II. In January of that year, the civilian government had attempted to impose harsh austerity measures on the country. These were designed to curb inflation and improve Turkey's standing with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other imperialist bankers at the expense of the living standards of the Turkish people.

Like other semicolonial countries, Turkey suffers from imperialist exploitation and oppression. This is reflected in the exorbitant interest rates imperialist banks demand for loans and the gigantic debts Turkey has accumulated as a result.

Austerity plan

A key aspect of the austerity plan was to subordinate domestic consumption to boosting exports. Price controls on consumer goods were lifted, and moves were begun to reprivatize some nationalized industries.

The civilian government, however, had difficulty imposing these plans on the Turkish working class and some sectors of the Turkish bourgeoisie as well. Workers responded with a strike wave that resulted in six times more work days lost in 1980 than in any recent year.

The period leading up to the September

1980 coup was marked by a sharp rise in violent attacks on working-class and left organizations by armed right-wingers. In response to the worsening conditions, there were also numerous attacks on police and other government agencies by leftist groups.

Ending this political "violence" was the excuse used by top military leaders to take over. But since the coup, most of the repression has been directed against the working class and the Kurds. General Evren publicly cited the need to crush "separatism" — a reference to the Kurdish movement — as one reason for the military's action.

Immediately after the coup, the Revolutionary Workers Trade Union Federation (DISK) was banned. It had brought together all the militant unions in the country and was the only alternative to the government-sponsored union federation Turk-Is. DISK had represented nearly half Turkey's 2 million organized workers at the time it was banned.

The military junta outlawed all activities by DISK. Former DISK members were prevented from joining any other union, thus isolating militant workers from the rest of the working class. At the same time, Turkey's new rulers decreed a ceiling on wage increases that was less than half the prevailing inflation rate of 150 percent. Union contracts were to be written by the courts. Shackling the labor movement, one of the largest and best-organized in the Middle East, was a central objective of the 1980 coup.

The generals also moved against the political parties. All parties were dissolved, and individuals were not allowed to participate in politics unless they could prove themselves innocent of "subversive" intentions. In the first year of the junta, 200,000 people were detained. Hundreds were executed and many more remain in prison.

The coup had the immediate support of the U.S. government. In fact, NATO maneuvers were going on in Turkey at the time of the seizure of power. Turkey's location on the borders of the Soviet Union, Iran, Iraq, and Syria make it an especially critical link in imperialism's military encirclement of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and a bulwark against the Arab revolution. Since the fall of the shah in Iran in 1979, it has become even more important for Washington to maintain a pliant government in Ankara.

U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger visited Turkey in late 1981. He commented: "We admire the way in which the order and law have been restored in Turkey." The junta, he added, "lived up to our great expectations."

Since 1980 General Evren has moved to institutionalize the authority of the General Staff over Turkish politics. A referendum in 1982 established a new constitution. Evren became president, and a powerful presidential advisory council, composed of generals from the junta, was set up.

Institutionalization of coup

In 1983, parliamentary elections were engineered by the military. Of the 17 parties that tried to participate, 14 were banned. Although the party most clearly favored by the military was soundly defeated, the victorious Motherland Party posed no threat to their rule. The new Motherland Party prime minister, Turgut Ozal, is the man who, as special economics advisor, had led the January 1980 austerity drive and was later brought back to head the finance ministry by Evren after his coup.

The military regime promised that by enforcing political stability it would bring economic progress and reduce Turkey's debt to the imperialist banks. But this has not happened. To the contrary, repeated currency devaluations intended to make Turkish goods more attractive to foreign markets have lowered the Turkish lira to barely one-tenth its 1980 value in relation to the dollar. Total economic output grew only 2 percent from 1979 to 1983, far short of the projected 8 percent required to enable the government to begin to make a dent in its foreign debt of \$25 billion. As a result, the gross national product per capita declined from \$1,300 in 1980 to \$930 in 1983.

The right-wing labor federation Turk-Is has become more integrated into the state apparatus, with its leader taking a post in the cabinet. Workers are being forced to fight back against further erosion of their living standard despite strict state controls on trade union activity.

The struggle of the oppressed Kurdish people — who make up nearly one-quarter of the country's 45 million people — also continues to grow under the Evren regime. Recently there have been widespread attacks by Kurdish guerrillas on Turkish troops and military installations. In October the Turkish Army responded with a major campaign, dubbed Operation Sun, that included pressing 10 miles into Iraqi territory along a 75-mile front. The incursion had the blessing of the Iraqi regime, which is also waging war on Kurdish rebels within its borders.

Kurdish prisoners have played an important role in resisting the inhuman conditions they

and other political prisoners face in Turkish jails. The first of this year's three major hunger strikes was in the Diyarbakir prison in Kurdistan. It began when a prisoner was beaten to death in front of his cell in view of a number of other prisoners. Eleven hunger strikers died before the protest ended in mid-March.

When a delegation from the Council of Europe visited Diyarbakir prison in April, they were allowed interviews with only eight prisoners, and these were held in the presence of government officials. Nevertheless, three of the prisoners told them of being tortured — one reported daily torture for 17 months until July 1982.

In April the Turkish General Staff reported on an official government investigation of torture. The report concluded that "there is no evidence of systematic malpractice or torture in Turkish jails." But, as Jeri Laber, executive director of the Helsinki Watch Committee, noted in the July 13 *New York Times*, the same

report mentioned that 80 security personnel have been disciplined since 1978 for conducting torture.

A number of important political trials have been held in recent months, and many more political cases remain to be tried. In August, *Information Bulletin*, published by the Communist Party of Turkey, reported 533 trade unionists were being tried, with 76 of them facing the death penalty.

Fifty-six intellectuals were tried for drawing up a petition to General Evren criticizing human rights abuses and calling for abolition of capital punishment and for a general amnesty for political prisoners. The prosecution in this case demanded sentences of three months to a year simply for distributing leaflets with a "political content." On September 27, a martial-law court in Ankara sentenced 22 leftists to death and 45 to life imprisonment on the charge of killing Turkish police and four U.S. soldiers before the 1980 coup. □

DOCUMENTS

State and government in Grenada

British socialists present views on Bishop government

[The following article appeared in the October 26 issue of *Socialist Action*, a weekly newspaper published in London. The article introduced a speech by former Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop given in November 1981.]

* * *

In March 1979 the New Jewel Movement, led by Maurice Bishop, overthrew the dictatorship of Eric Gairy in Grenada. On 19 October 1983, Maurice Bishop was murdered on the orders of Bernard Coard, the Grenadian minister of finance and deputy prime minister. On 23 October 1983, American marines and army rangers invaded Grenada, installing a new puppet government.

The four and a half years that lay between these events saw a fundamental reshaping of politics in the Caribbean, and had a tremendous impact throughout the world.

That impact was not simply or primarily the bloodiness or cynicism of the final American intervention, or the catastrophe for the Grenadian revolution represented by the Bishop murder. Not even the fevered imagination of Ronald Reagan could credibly claim that an island of 110,000 people — the majority agricultural workers — was a threat to the military power of the United States. The impact lay in the superb policies pursued by the Bishop government, and the tremendous results they achieved.

In his speech reprinted here, Maurice Bishop called Grenada "a new socio-economic development model." More plainly put, it was a vast exercise in democratic socialism — one of the most important that has taken place in

the world.

For Bishop, socialist development had two *inextricably linked* features: economic and social development, and the democratisation of politics and of society.

In the economic and social field, the achievements of the Bishop government were enormous. Few states in history have more directly applied the truth that, for a revolution to count for anything, it must deeply touch the everyday lives of ordinary people. Unemployment was significantly reduced. A universal literacy programme was begun. Free health care was introduced. Education expanded. Agriculture diversified.

These were not side issues, not "purely economic" questions. They were the *core* of the social policies pursued by the Bishop government, which brought immense benefits to the Grenadian people.

The effect of the American invasion was immediate, open and brutal. Since then unemployment has more than tripled. The cooperative sector of the economy has been broken up. Grenadian agriculture is being reconverted to exports of individual specialised products for the United States and its allies, instead of serving the needs of the Grenadian people.

But the foundation of the Bishop government's policies weren't just economic and social, but *political*. Maurice Bishop conceived of, and practiced, a totally different concept of socialism to that seen in Eastern Europe — or developed by labourism in Britain, for that matter. It was a type not seen since the height of the Russian Revolution in 1917.

The Grenadian state did not substitute for

the self-organisation of its people — it was the basis for that self-organisation. The state was a *resource* for Grenadians to draw on and use to organise themselves. The self-organisation of producers, of trade unionists, of women, of young people was the core of Bishop's Grenadian state.

Because it had mass democratic support, the Grenadian state — as Maurice Bishop said — was one of the few in the world that dared to arm its people. The Cuban and Nicaraguan states are the others that are able to take that same "risk" with ease. The government had nothing to fear from the people of Grenada.

It was no accident that the first action of the new government, after the Bernard Coard grouping murdered Bishop, was to *disarm* the people.

There is, of course, a marxist name for the type of state that existed in Bishop's Grenada and which exists today in Nicaragua: the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. It reminds us that the crucial question for socialism is not how much of an economy is nationalised (in Grenada little was), but which class holds state power.

In Grenada that democracy of the workers and peasants over the rest of society constituted the dictatorship of the proletariat in its true sense — not a restriction of democracy but its enormous expansion.

It was this integration of democracy and socialist economic and social measures that made Grenada such an example of democratic socialism. That, together with the internationalism of the New Jewel Movement, was one of the reasons why Reagan could not tolerate a government such as Maurice Bishop's.

Questions of geography apart, the United States can far more easily coexist with a dictatorial regime, such as that of Jaruselski in Poland, than it can with a democratic and internationalist one such as Bishop's. After all, the United States *wants* to portray socialism as repression and tanks, not as health care, literacy and a vast extension of democracy.

More to the point, it is far easier to *overthrow* an East European style regime of the type Bernard Coard was seeking to install, than a democratic one of the Bishop type. America was able to intervene to overthrow the Coard government after it had murdered Bishop and started to attack the gains of the Grenadian people. The United States boycotted, but never dared attack, a democratic Grenada under Bishop.

Bishop was inspired and educated by the Cuban revolution. That was his government's strength. Understanding that socialism is about uniting in practice great historic goals and people's everyday lives is one of the greatest strengths of the Cuban leadership.

One of the lessons Castro has hammered home to his audience in Latin America and the Caribbean is that democracy, not to mention socialism, does not exist as long as capitalism holds state power.

But the Cuban party itself — particularly after the 1970s, when the Cuban state became more tied to Moscow economically — placed limitations on that democracy. Political differences in the Cuban Communist Party are never made known to the party ranks, much less argued out publicly.

In that sense, the Cuban Communist Party

models itself on the Communist Party of Stalin, not the Communist Party of Lenin. Had the differences within the New Jewel Movement been known, 99 per cent of Grenadians would have supported Bishop against Coard. But they didn't know, and this was a tragic and fatal weakness.

One year after Maurice Bishop's death, that

is not what we chiefly remember. In commemorating Bishop, above all we remember that he was the first black person ever to lead the working class to power, and one of the finest revolutionaries ever produced by the working class. One year on, the world has urgent need of two, three, many Maurice Bishops. □

Canada

Quebec language law under attack

Government, employers move against rights of French speakers

[The following article appeared in the October 8 issue of *Socialist Voice*, a fortnightly newspaper published in Montreal that reflects the views of the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL), Canadian section of the Fourth International. It is based on a report, given by Samantha Anderson, adopted by the Central Committee of the RWL in May.

[Since the report was given, further attacks on French-language rights have occurred. On July 26 the Canadian Supreme Court declared that key sections of Quebec's language law were in conflict with the new Canadian constitution adopted in 1982. In August the Quebec Court of Appeal struck down other provisions of the law that had required French proficiency tests of certain professionals such as doctors, nurses, and engineers.]

* * *

To be a French-speaking person in Canada, both inside Quebec and elsewhere, means being subjected to a profound oppression. To speak French, or even to have a French name, is like being Black in the United States. You are a second-class citizen. You have fewer rights. You suffer inferior living conditions. You are discriminated against, humiliated, and subjected to physical attacks.

The oppression of French-speaking people, on the basis of their language, is one of the main pillars upon which the Canadian imperialist state is built.

After defeating the French colonial power in 1760, the British conquerors faced the difficult task of subjugating the majority francophone population — a simple necessity if they were to exploit the markets and resources of the country and to turn the French-speaking population into a cheap labor force.

Britain used every possible method to accomplish this.

First was the use of violence. The Acadians, for example, were brutally deported. The *Patriotes*, who had rebelled against British domination, were crushed in 1837-38. In 1885 the Metis rebellions were smashed and their leader, Louis Riel, was hanged like a criminal.

The second method was forced assimilation.

After the 1839 Durham Report, which laid out how Britain should ensure its control in Canada, successive Canadian governments undertook a series of measures to contain the "French Canadians" within Quebec. Elsewhere they sought to assimilate them as rapidly as possible.

In Quebec itself, the objective was to reduce the French-speaking majority to the status of a powerless minority. Ottawa has very consciously used its control over immigration to this end.

In the three provinces where there were important francophone minorities — New Brunswick, Ontario, and Manitoba — the provincial governments made French schools illegal by establishing English as the sole language of instruction.

The overall goal was by and large achieved. Less than 100 years after the [British] conquest, francophones had fallen from 95 percent of the Canadian population to less than 30 percent, mostly concentrated in Quebec.

Finally, the Canadian bourgeoisie developed an intricate network of discrimination

against francophones. Federal government studies show that 20 years ago francophones in Canada and Quebec had lower salaries, were less educated, and died younger.

Outside Quebec francophones had no linguistic rights. And in Quebec the French language took second place to English, which predominated in every sector: at work, in public services, advertising, etc. The trend was for the vast majority of immigrants to learn English. Montreal was threatened with becoming a predominantly English-speaking city in one or two generations.

For all these reasons, the discrimination French-speaking people face on the basis of their language constitutes one of the main features of their national oppression.

Canadian imperialism has benefited enormously from this oppression. The super-exploitation of the Québécois has meant super-profits for the bosses. The working class has been deeply divided. For the ruling class, this oppression is an essential tool for maintaining their power and domination.

This whole oppressive and exploitative



structure was badly shaken by the big language battles waged during the 1960s and '70s. Spurred on by the changes that had taken place in Quebec during the Quiet Revolution at the beginning of the 1960s, the "White Niggers of America," as the Québécois were called, rose up in revolt against their situation and demanded their rightful place.

The movement took off in the middle '60s with the occupation of restaurants which offered menus in English only. Large stores in west-end Montreal, like Eaton's, and big companies like CN [Canadian National railway] and CP [Canadian Pacific railway] were denounced for their failure to provide services in French. In 1968 and 1969, the question of the language of instruction came to the fore around three important struggles: the struggle for a single French-language school system in St. Leonard, the fight to turn McGill into a French university, and the massive movement against Bill 63, which guaranteed parents the right to choose which language their children would be educated in.

The main demand which linked together all these struggles was the demand for a unilingual French Quebec.

At the end of the '60s and beginning of the '70s, workers and their unions entered the struggle to tackle the problem of the language of work. At a public meeting against Bill 63, Fernand Daoust, secretary general of the *Fédération des travailleurs du Québec* (FTQ — Quebec Federation of Labour) declared: "Québécois workers . . . know because it is their daily experience . . . that the language of those at the bottom of the scale, the language spoken by the majority of Québécois, is French. The language of unemployment and underemployment is French." The *Confédération des syndicats nationaux* (CSN — Confederation of National Trade Unions) picked up the same theme: "The language question is a union question: we are unemployed because we are not bilingual."

At the end of the 1970s workers at the General Motors plant in Ste-Thérèse went on strike for several months to renew their collective agreement. At the heart of their demands were the demands that negotiations be conducted in French, or that translations be provided; that the French version of the contract be given legal status; and that GM foremen speak French.

In 1971, the FTQ demanded that the Quebec government adopt legislation to force companies to make French the language of work in Quebec. In 1973 air traffic controllers and pilots in Quebec began a ten-year battle against the federal government for the right to work in French in Quebec. This became known as the struggle of the *Gens de l'Air*.

The impact and political weight of these struggles was considerable.

They involved thousands of people in demonstrations, strikes, and in discussions on how to win. It was a profound experience which contributed greatly to forging the independentist consciousness of the Quebec nation. As the



Socialist Voice

Montreal rally for French language rights, October 1971.

struggle deepened, it became more and more evident to a growing layer of militants that the only way to put an end to their discrimination was by breaking out of the federal prisionhouse.

More and more Québécois rejected the bilingual fraud that the federal government was seeking to impose. With this scheme Ottawa held out the promise of two cultures and two equal languages from coast to coast. To lend the project some credibility some concessions were made to francophones outside Quebec. But within Quebec the domination of English was to be ensured. The overall objective was to demobilize the growing nationalist movement in Quebec.

The big language battles of the 1960s and '70s coincided with a powerful wave of radicalization among the Quebec working class. With the Quiet Revolution, the rate of unionization rose considerably. A series of important hard-fought battles unfolded, which culminated in a spontaneous general strike around the struggle of the Common Front of Quebec's public sector unions in 1972, and in the fight for COLA [Cost-of-Living Adjustment] clauses in 1973-74.

Practically every labor struggle in this period took on an important national dimension. In combatting their exploitation by English companies such as Pratt and Whitney, Québécois workers also had to fight a political battle against the national oppression perpetuated by these companies. Their struggle led them necessarily into conflict with the federal government and its puppets in Quebec City. This overlapping of labor and national struggles forged a powerful labor movement in Quebec with a profound nationalist and independentist consciousness.

Law 101

Thousands of Québécois danced in the streets November 15, 1976, the night the Parti Québécois was elected. They saw in the PQ government a powerful tool for winning an independent Quebec.

The hopes and expectations aroused by the election of the PQ pressured that government into adopting Law 101 in 1977. This law went further than any previous language law in de-

fending the French language in Quebec.

Law 101 has a different starting point from that of the federal government's program of institutionalized bilingualism. Whereas Ottawa claims that it is the English language that is threatened in Quebec, Law 101 starts from the principle that it is the French language that needs to be both protected and promoted and that special measures must be taken to this end. It is a form of affirmative action for French and, as a result, for French-speaking people.

In its original version, Law 101 made French the sole language of legislation and of the courts. French became the sole language for public billboards. Children of all immigrants arriving in Quebec after 1976 were assigned to French schools. Companies employing more than 50 people had to take measures to increase the use of French as the language of work.

Law 101 had its limits. It did not establish the priority of French in all areas, such as small-scale enterprises, for example, and it accepted as legitimate a network of English services in Quebec. But despite these limitations, given the context within which the law was adopted, Law 101 represented a very important step forward in the fight against the oppression of Québécois and for a French Quebec.

The implementation of Law 101 and the social pressure generated by 15 years of struggle produced gains which, although partial, were nonetheless real. The wage gap between francophones and anglophones was narrowed. The use of French as the language of work was increased. The public face of Quebec was radically changed. And the historical tendency for children of immigrants to become anglicized through attending English schools began to be reversed.

Nonetheless, these gains have not eliminated the linguistic oppression of Québécois. This oppression has only been reduced.

Recent studies have shown that adult immigrants continue to learn English instead of French at the same rate as 20 years ago; that in certain sectors of Quebec's economy no progress has been made since 1971 in establishing French as the language of work; that the average income of anglophones is 20 percent

higher than that of francophones; that francophones still have a lower educational level; and that the life expectancy of the wealthy anglophones in Westmount is 12 years longer than that of poor francophones living in downtown Montreal. And the list goes on.

The imperialist offensive

But the modest gains brought about by Law 101 were more than the Canadian imperialists could accept. These gains called into question Ottawa's ability to continue its domination of Quebec. For this reason, Law 101 has, since its inception, been the target of a vicious racist campaign by sectors of the anglophone community in Quebec, by the federal government, and by large imperialist companies.

They have used the crudest economic blackmail, predicting the ruin of the Quebec economy. Companies like Sun Life and Cadbury moved to Ontario rather than use French.

Opponents of Law 101 have fought tooth and nail against every stage of the law's application. Pratt and Whitney, condemned by the union last fall, had refused outright to make French the language of work. Numerous English school boards have registered students that have no right to attend English schools. Alliance-Québec launched a major campaign to defend Allan Singer, who refused to use French in his store. Last year St. Mary's Hospital publicly refused to use French. And now a series of municipalities have refused to respect sections of the law which require them to function in French.

The anglophone community and the federal government have systematically challenged almost every section of the law in the courts.

Finally, the federal government launched its counteroffensive — and railroaded through the repatriation of the constitution. With its passage, Quebec lost its historic right to legislate on questions concerning the language of instruction. Following this, the Supreme Court of Canada declared in 1979 that those articles of Law 101 which established French as the sole language of legislation and of the courts violated the new Canadian constitution.

Today Law 101 stands riddled with holes. The anglophone community, egged on by the racist attitude of the federal government, is stepping up its campaign. The Conservatives and Liberals alike are whipping up racism not just amongst anglophones in Quebec, but in English Canada as well, as we've seen in Manitoba.

Confronted with imperialism's attacks, the PQ has retreated. Since the adoption of the constitution, the PQ no longer defends its own law. It is making more and more concessions to the English community and to the multinational corporations with regard to the use of English in Quebec. And instead of mobilizing Québécois to counter the attacks from Ottawa, the PQ has spearheaded an alliance with the Conservative party of Brian Mulroney, the same party that led the attack against French language rights in Manitoba last winter.

The blows dealt to the Quebec national struggle combined with the PQ's disastrous strategy have given rise to confusion among large sections of the nationalist and labor movement. The Common Front struggle last year graphically illustrated that there is only one force that can advance the national struggle and offer an alternative to the PQ's bank-

rupt policies — the labor movement and its mass organizations, the unions.

Despite its limitations and weaknesses, Law 101 still remains one of the main acquisitions of the important language and national struggles of the last 25 years in Quebec. It must be firmly and consistently defended. This is an immediate task before the labor movement. □

Victory for abortion rights

Jury acquits doctor who defied restrictive law

An important victory was scored for women and all working people on November 8 when a Toronto jury brought in a unanimous verdict of "not guilty" in the trial of Dr. Henry Morgentaler.

Morgentaler, along with his associates, Drs. Robert Scott and Leslie Smoling, were on trial in the Canadian province of Ontario's Supreme Court on charges of conspiracy to perform illegal abortions.

The charges, which carry a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, resulted from a police raid on the Toronto abortion clinic Morgentaler had set up in June 1983. He defied Canada's restrictive abortion law by opening the clinic, because there was no place for women to obtain safe abortions.

According to federal law, abortions are outlawed in Canada except under certain very restrictive conditions. Abortions may be performed only in hospitals that have been specially accredited to perform them.

To obtain approval for an abortion, a woman must prove that her health or life is endangered by the continuation of the pregnancy.

Enforcement and implementation of the federal law is up to the governments of Canada's 10 provinces.

At a posttrial news conference, Morgentaler said he would reopen the clinic within a month. He offered its use to the Ontario provincial government as a pilot project to train doctors to perform abortions. That way, he said, a network of clinics could be set up in Ontario.

The trial marks the fourth time Morgentaler has been acquitted by a jury for performing clinic abortions. In 1969 he opened his first clinic in Montreal, located in oppressed, French-speaking Quebec. Three times over the next seven years he was dragged into court. Each time Quebec juries said he should go free. Finally the Quebec provincial government threw out the charges.

Since that time, and in spite of the federal law, eight government-funded abortion clinics have operated in Quebec.

In 1983 Morgentaler took his challenge to the abortion law a step further by opening clinics in the provinces of Ontario and Manitoba.

Morris Manning, the doctors' lawyer, cen-



DR. HENRY MORGENTALER

tered his case on a defense of women's rights.

"Why should the country's politicians keep women enslaved" by such a law, Manning asked. "Think about it. If you haven't got reproductive freedom to decide whether to have a child or not, what have you got?"

Such a situation only exists "because of the continued desire to keep women subjugated," he told the news conference.

The government lawyer argued that anarchy would result if the doctors were permitted to go free. He said the jury could not even consider pronouncing a verdict on the law, but only on whether it had been broken or not.

The prosecution's strong desire for a conviction reflected the wishes of Canada's rulers. In response to this fourth acquittal in a decade, federal Justice Minister John Crosby said the Conservative government would not repeal the existing antiabortion law.

The jury verdict reflects the widespread support that exists for abortion rights in Canada. Majorities in the polls have repeatedly demonstrated that support. Bodies like the Ontario Federation of Labor and several of its component unions have discussed the issue and defended the Morgentaler clinic. □

Toilers mobilize for revolutionary change

Upsurge spurs mass organization, land reform, literacy drive

By Ernest Harsch

Lying at the edge of the Sahara Desert in West Africa, with an overwhelmingly rural society and virtually no major industry, with a staggering illiteracy rate and a high incidence of disease, Burkina is one of the poorest countries in the world.

Originally called Upper Volta by its former French colonial rulers, it has been a victim of imperialist domination for more than a century. That legacy has left a deep mark on Burkina's economic structure, society, and political life, and has kept the 7 million Burkinabè people in misery and squalor.

It is this legacy that the governing National Council of the Revolution (CNR) has vowed to eradicate. Having come to power on Aug. 4,

This is the second of two background articles on the revolutionary upsurge in Burkina. The first reviewed how the new government came to power, its foreign policy, and the formation of a mass-based militia to fight off imperialist aggression.

1983, on the crest of a massive revolutionary upheaval that overthrew the previous French-backed regime, the CNR has declared that Burkina needs a deep-going revolution to free it of continuing imperialist domination and to mobilize the population to carry through a radical transformation of society.

'A democratic and popular revolution'

In a major policy speech on Oct. 2, 1983, President Thomas Sankara, the chairman of the CNR, defined the process that began two months earlier in the following terms:

It is a democratic and popular revolution. Its primary tasks are the liquidation of imperialist domination and exploitation and the cleansing of the countryside of all social, economic, and cultural obstructions that keep it in a backward state. From this flows its democratic character.

Its popular character arises from the full participation of the Voltaic popular masses in this revolution and their resulting mobilization around democratic and revolutionary slogans that express their interests against those of the reactionary classes allied with imperialism. The popular character of the August revolution also lies in the fact that in place of the old state machinery, a new machinery is being constructed, one that will guarantee the democratic exercise of power by the people and for the people.

Earlier in the speech, Sankara outlined the CNR's view of which are the "reactionary classes." They include the bourgeoisie, in particular those sectors of it that have accumulated wealth through positions in the state ap-

paratus, by means of corruption; and the commercial bourgeoisie, which is directly linked with imperialist firms. The "middle bourgeoisie," according to Sankara, has some "grievances against imperialism, although it also fears the people — and this fear may lead it to make a bloc with imperialism."

Also among these opponents, Sankara said, are the reactionary forces in the countryside "that base their power on the traditional feudal-type structures of our society." (Among the Mossi people in particular, who are a slim majority of the population, tribal chiefdoms continue to wield some authority.)

The social forces supporting the revolutionary upheaval, Sankara continued, include the "working class, young and few in number, but which has proven in constant struggle against the employers that it is a genuinely revolutionary class. In the current revolution, it is a class that has everything to gain and nothing to lose."

The petty bourgeoisie, Sankara said, "often hesitates between the cause of the popular masses and that of imperialism." But most of it will "end up taking the side of the popular masses."

The peasantry, which comprises the vast bulk of the population, "is an integral part of the petty-bourgeois category," Sankara said. While a big majority of peasants are now tied to small-scale production because of the penetration of capitalist market relations into the countryside, "the peasantry has an interest in the revolution and, in terms of numbers, is its principal force."

Sankara's speech has been presented as the CNR's main statement of political orientation. Like other declarations by CNR members, it reflects the influence of the left-wing political ideas that had spread widely within the country in the years preceding the August 4 seizure of power.

The group of radical junior officers around Sankara has also collaborated closely with members of organized left groups, some of whose activists took part in the overthrow of the previous regime. Principal among these groups have been the Patriotic League for Development (Lipad) and the Union of Communist Struggle (ULC).

Left-wing parties

The Lipad was the most well-known left-wing organization in Upper Volta. Officially founded in the early 1970s, it had emerged out of the old African Independence Party (PAI), a regional party in the former French colonies of West Africa that had close ties with the French Communist Party and looked to Moscow for political inspiration. Some of the Lipad's leaders held various prominent positions before the advent of the CNR, including in governmental posts; Soumane Touré, the head of the Lipad's branch in Ouagadougou, the capital, was also the general secretary of the Voltaic Union Confederation (CSV), one of the larger union bodies, based primarily among public sector workers.

The ULC is a newer and smaller organization. It was formed in late 1982, in part by student leaders who had broken with a pro-Albanian group.

When the CNR named a predominantly civilian government shortly after the August 4 takeover, the Lipad and ULC accepted the CNR's offer to participate; they took 10 cabinet positions, with the Lipad holding the larger share.

The small Voltaic Revolutionary Communist Party (PCRv), which looks to Albania for political guidance, turned down the CNR's offer to join the government, arguing that "a true revolution can only come from the masses up, not the military down." The Voltaic Students Association of Ouagadougou, a university-based group, also opposes the CNR, characterizing it as a "fascist grouplet."

Political frictions among the parties supporting the CNR emerged in mid-1984, reflecting significant disunity among the left. The underlying political differences, however, have not been clearly expressed.

These frictions surfaced through mutual accusations among cabinet members belonging to different currents, among supporters of the parties in the mass, neighborhood-based Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs), and in the leadership of the unions, particularly involving the Lipad-dominated CSV.

After several months of conflict, the CNR took some administrative measures in August



1984, directed primarily against the Lipad. Some Lipad members were dismissed from their jobs with state companies and agencies. The government itself was dissolved, and a new one appointed the following month.

Lipad retained a position in the government, though the number of its ministers in the cabinet had been significantly reduced. The September 5 *Sidwaya*, the government daily, identified the other political currents in the new government as the ULC, the Communist Group, and the Association of Communist Officers (ROC), led by Sankara.

Following this reshuffle, several former Lipad cabinet ministers and other party figures (including CSV leader Soumane Touré) were briefly detained; most were soon released, and a few were reappointed to various posts.

Whatever else the cabinet reshuffle may have indicated, it clearly showed the limited authority of the predominantly civilian cabinet. The CNR, which is composed entirely of military figures, remains the dominant governing body.

Meanwhile, the CNR has encouraged the political parties to publicly debate their differences, with the aim of clarifying the disputes as a step toward unity of the left. And Capt. Blaise Compaoré, a close colleague of Sankara's, stressed that while the CNR members played a significant role, "The work that must be done at mass level cannot be accomplished without civilian revolutionary organisations."

Old regimes on trial

Shortly after taking power, the CNR acted quickly against those political formations that had supported the previous neocolonial regimes. The main bourgeois parties were banned. Some of their leaders fled the country, and others were detained.

To try these former officials, the government set up People's Revolutionary Tribunals (TPRs), bypassing the old court system. Each TPR was composed of three magistrates, three military officers, and 12 members elected by general assemblies of the mass-based CDRs.

This prompted a howl of outrage from the magistrates' association, which condemned the "interference" of the CDRs in the legal system. Sankara replied that the TPRs were a reflection of "the principle of the effective participation of the laboring and exploited classes in the administration and in the management of the affairs of the state."

All tribunal sessions were public, and their proceedings were broadcast live over the radio, with summaries translated into the various indigenous languages. Scores of former government officials, army officers, and businessmen were asked to account for stolen and misappropriated funds, mismanaged development projects, and ruinous economic policies.

During the trial of Col. Saye Zerbo, who headed a particularly repressive military regime from 1980 to 1982, the accusations focused on his antilabor policies, such as the outlawing of strikes and the arrests of unionists.



More than 90 percent of Burkina's people live on the land. Government pledges that new agrarian reform will bring them benefits.

Trade unionists were among the witnesses who testified against him. Zerbo was sentenced to 15 years in prison, one of the stiffer sentences meted out by a TPR.

In an interview summarized in the Sept. 3, 1984, London weekly *West Africa*, Attorney General and Minister of Justice Train Poda focused on the political role of the TPRs. Through them, he said, "the Burkinabè people had successfully put neo-colonialism on trial. . . . At the same time the TPR helped raise the consciousness of the people, making the TPR into a kind of popular school. . . . He said the progress of the revolution could be guaranteed only by those (the workers and peasants) whose interests it served."

According to Poda, up to that point a total of 126 people had been tried before the tribunals, of whom 94 were sentenced to prison terms and/or fines. The fines amounted to some \$16 million, of which \$6.5 million had already been collected in cash and seized property.

In addition to those who were fined and imprisoned, thousands of officials in the administration and civil service were sacked. The top officer corps of the army and police came in for a particularly severe purge. The Republican Guard was dissolved.

According to Sankara, "The very nature of our neo-colonial army is essentially that of a bourgeois army, a veritable rampart and principal support of reactionary power." Changing that, he said, required political education of the troops, the establishment of a mass-based militia, and the purging of corrupt and reactionary officers. "We cannot have potbellied colonels amidst a people dying from hunger," he said. "That is unacceptable."

These purges, as well as the other political and social measures initiated by the CNR, have prompted rightist resistance, including coup plots and sabotage actions. The im-

perialists have encouraged such opposition and have applied economic and political pressures of their own against the Burkinabè government.

Mobilizing the population

To combat this imperialist and domestic opposition — and to carry through its social programs — the new government has encouraged demonstrations, marches, rallies, and other forms of mass mobilization. It has urged the population to form mass organizations.

The largest of these are the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution. Sankara called on the population to set up the CDRs immediately after the August 1983 seizure of power. They soon spread from Ouagadougou to the rest of the country; by late September 1983, there were already estimated to be some 10,000 CDRs.

According to a report from Ouagadougou in the Oct. 24, 1983, *West Africa*, "The only current criteria for CDR membership are to be a resident of a neighbourhood (or village) and a 'revolutionary.' Clearly, most of the population have declared themselves revolutionaries, and long queues formed for signing up for CDR membership. . . ."

Each CDR is headed by a bureau, elected by general assemblies. In the larger cities, like Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulasso, the CDRs have chosen "municipal revolutionary councils." In the provinces, they have elected provincial assemblies.

More than nine months after Sankara's initial appeal, the CNR drafted and issued a constitution designed to systematize the CDRs' functioning. According to a Ouagadougou radio report summarizing the constitution, the CDRs "are the authentic grassroots organizations of the people in the exercise, control, defense, and consolidation of revolutionary power." The CDRs are defined as "organs" of the CNR, and their function is to implement the CNR's decisions. They are also to "mobilize, educate, and organize the people for all local and or national revolutionary tasks or actions in the economic, political, social, and security fields."

A month later, Capt. Blaise Compaoré gave his view of the relationship between the CDRs and the government, stating that "the grassroots level many criticisms and suggestions at us, but it is the top, the leadership, which decides and the grassroots have to submit."

The CDRs have served to mobilize the population to carry out varied tasks. One of the most important has been to strengthen the armed defense of the country against imperialist aggression and to help build up a community-based militia, which already has tens of thousands of members (see article in previous issue). CDRs have also been formed within the regular armed forces, spurring political activism among the ranks and serving as a check against any continuing resistance among sectors of the officer corps.

Besides organizing frequent demonstrations and other political events, the CDRs have reg-

ularly mobilized entire neighborhoods and villages to help repair and tar roads, to build schools and health clinics, and to collect funds and food for the relief of famine victims in the northern provinces. CDRs throughout the country have taken over the management of government distribution outlets, selling goods at controlled prices and bypassing traders who speculate in scarce commodities.

The CDRs also organize political education classes, often at night in members' homes. Participation in these sessions is primarily by young people. According to various news reports, these classes include discussions on imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, socialism, the Soviet Union, the role of trade unions, and the social classes in Burkina.

In several cases, CDRs have mobilized to oust unpopular officials. In late 1983, the mayor of Ouagadougou was removed at the insistence of the CDRs. In Arbolle, the same thing happened to an arrogant chief administrator. According to Pierre Ouédraogo, the national CDR secretary-general, the CDRs serve as watchdogs against abuses of office. "An organized and conscious base," he said, "is a check against the birth of a new politico-administrative bourgeoisie."

In the countryside in particular, the CDRs are playing a key role in reducing the authority that the tribal chiefs have traditionally wielded over the rural population. Many decisions that were previously made by the chiefs are now made by CDRs. According to the Ouagadougou weekly *Carrefour Africain*, the CDRs are transforming the villages into "revolutionary communes freed of the feudal empire."

But the influence of these tribal elements (as well as that of the bourgeois parties) has not been easy to overcome. Initially, in some areas chiefs, government officials, or other notables were even elected to leadership of CDRs. In Yatenga, a heavily populated region in the north, members of the now-banned Voltaic Democratic Union of former Prime Minister Gerard Kango Ouédraogo were particularly active within the CDRs. In an effort to reduce these influences, new CDR elections were held in early 1984.

Stirrings in the workplaces

Burkina's working class is quite small. Out of an economically active population of some 3 million, only 60,000 or so are wage earners. About 40 percent of them are concentrated in Ouagadougou.

Although the organized workers have often been saddled with class-collaborationist union leaderships, unionists nevertheless have a long tradition of struggle against the various neocolonial regimes.

As in other sectors, CDRs have been formed within the workplaces, both in state-run institutions and in private enterprises. They have often been more combative than the established unions.

In September 1983, workers at Voltélec, the state electricity company, ousted an unpopular

manager, whom they accused of mismanagement. The CNR backed their action, though it urged them and other workers to exercise some caution and not "overestimate the strength of the revolutionary forces."

Within a little more than half a year, the Voltélec workers were able to turn the company's deficit into a profit. The workers also mobilized to provide voluntary labor on Saturdays, making it possible to electrify four more towns. This inspired workers in other enterprises to follow their example.

In an interview in February 1984, Sankara noted that "in certain offices and industrial units, there have been demonstrations by workers against the potentates, the bosses. This was mobilized by the CDRs. They came to tell us their problems. Automatically we took decisions in favour of the workers. We dismissed some managers immediately and gave the management over to workers' hands. . . ."

In August 1984, the government announced new statutes for the management of state-run enterprises. Under them, workers' representatives (CDRs, unions, and employee delegates) would hold half the seats on administrative councils, while government appointees and representatives from the private sector would hold the other half.

Initially, the CNR tended to boost the CDRs and said little about the unions themselves. But in a speech on the first anniversary of the Aug. 4, 1983, takeover, before a crowd of tens of thousands in Ouagadougou, Sankara called the unions "the first organizations of the working classes, the spearhead of any correct revolution. . . . Unions will have an even more significant role."



THOMAS SANKARA

The upsurge of labor activism in the workplaces has led to conflicts with the more reactionary union leaderships, some of which have publicly attacked the CDRs. Sankara accused these union leaderships of being "directly or indirectly at the service of imperialism. . . . We don't intend to be gentle with them."

In March 1984, three leaders of the SNEAHV teachers union were arrested for carrying out "subversive activities." The union called a protest strike that was backed by supporters of the banned Voltaic Progressive Front (FPV), led by prominent political exile Joseph Ki-Zerbo, who has close ties with the French government. The CNR dismissed all those teachers who took part, about a quarter of the union membership. A new teachers union was subsequently set up, the Democratic National Union of Upper Voltan Teachers, which proclaimed its "revolutionary orientation."

Agrarian reform

In Burkina, more than 90 percent of the people live and work on the land. But the conditions they face are disastrous. The countryside has suffered not only from a decade of drought, but also from a century of imperialist exploitation. Under French colonial rule, cotton was imposed as the chief crop produced for export, and today some 30 percent of all peasants are involved in growing it. This has been to the detriment of traditional food crops such as millet, sorghum, and maize, further aggravating the country's chronic food shortages.

At the same time, the penetration of capitalist relations into the countryside has done little to improve living conditions or to advance farming methods: only 10 percent of the peasants use oxen; the rest must rely on hand tools. This poverty has pushed hundreds of thousands off the land, both toward the main cities and to neighboring countries in search of work.

The most immediate problem facing the new government has been the serious famine conditions in some districts of the north. Although the country is generally arid, rainfall over the past two years has been particularly scarce, producing a shortfall in 1983 of 117,000 tons of grain and a similar deficit this year. The CNR has appealed for international food relief and sought contributions from Burkinabè in other parts of the country. The CDRs have played a major role in distributing this food aid, in an effort to prevent speculators from diverting it and selling it at exorbitant prices.

But these are just stop-gap measures, and the CNR has projected some more long-term changes in agriculture.

One step has been to fight the backward social structure in the countryside. In early 1984, a law was passed abolishing the rights and privileges of the traditional chiefs, particularly the Mossi aristocracy, headed by the Moro Naba, the Mossi king, whose dynasty stretches back to the 11th century. The supply of free electricity to the Moro Naba had already been

cut off a few months earlier, and the new law ended all direct state payments to the chiefs. They also lost the right to tax villagers' agricultural produce or to demand that villagers provide them with unpaid labor.

Around the same time, the government began a redivision of land to achieve a more equitable distribution, relying to a large extent on the CDRs for implementation. In some areas this has met with resistance. In April 1984, Sankara authorized the use of all means, "including firearms," to crush "these class enemies . . . traditional occupants as well as land speculators." The government's aim, Sankara said the following month, was to "give land back to the people."

On Aug. 9, 1984, the government promulgated a law nationalizing all land and all mineral wealth beneath it. According to a Ouagadougou radio broadcast reporting on the law, it "puts an end to the former agrarian and land system of the Burkinabè which was governed by traditional and statutory administrative laws. . . . The ordinance will as of now permit the Burkinabè revolutionary state to exploit the land of the Burkinabè in order to end its food dependency and to exploit the wealth of its subsoil in accordance with its own interests and its own will."

The country's 10 provinces have been divided into 25 new ones. The stated aim of the division is in part to bring greater services to those living in rural areas. The Revolutionary Union of Banks was set up to provide financial assistance to agricultural and other economic projects in the provinces. The government has increased producer prices to farmers, and in October 1984 abolished the tax on peasant farming that had first been imposed under French colonial rule.

The CNR has encouraged peasants to pool their resources and carry out collective cultivation. "We will not impose the creation of cooperatives," Sankara said, "but obviously we support their spontaneous formation."

The largest single agricultural development project launched under the CNR is the construction of a dam and canal in the fertile Sourou Valley northwest of Ouagadougou. Thousands of volunteers have traveled there to help in the construction. When completed, it will help irrigate some 16,000 hectares of land. With the addition of another 13,000 hectares watered by rainfall, this vast project will be able to supply 15 percent of the country's cereal needs.

Economic plan

The government has also set a goal of increasing Burkina's level of industrialization.

Its existing industrial base is small, comprising a textile mill, an oil works, a bicycle factory, a sugar processing plant, a soap factory, and some other light industries. Most industries are controlled by state enterprises (of which there are 80) or by mixed enterprises, mostly in partnership with foreign capital.

The CNR has set an ambitious plan to develop more industries, particularly agriculture-re-



Members of a Committee for the Defense of the Revolution.

lated ones in the provinces. Some would be financed by the state or in conjunction with foreign concerns. A Revolutionary Economic and Social Council has been set up to encourage greater investment by local businessmen.

In October 1984, a People's Program for Development was launched, slating investments of \$330 million by December 1985. At that point, it is projected that a five-year economic plan will be ready.

The interim plan projects the building of the Komienga hydroelectric dam, which will provide one-fifth of the country's electricity needs; the opening of a new gold mine at Sebba (in which the government holds a majority share); the construction of a railway to Tambao, where significant manganese deposits are located; and other projects. Cuba has pledged to provide technical assistance for some of them.

The Burkinabè government may face some difficulties in obtaining loans and other financial assistance for these projects from the imperialist countries. Its initial development plan was launched in defiance of demands by an International Monetary Fund team that it refrain from ambitious investments, impose austerity policies, and concentrate on paying off Burkina's foreign debts (which stand at \$460 million).

It is also facing opposition from local businessmen and merchants, who have sought to shift their assets out of the country and have reduced their economic activity to a minimum.

Improving living conditions

Opening a mass meeting of CDR members in Koupéla in May 1984, one CDR leader declared, "For us, the revolution means eating one's fill, having access to water, having clothes to wear and someplace to live, getting education, and having the right to health care."

Despite the country's meager economic resources, some initial steps have already been taken by the Burkinabè authorities to provide

the population with such basic necessities.

Under previous regimes, health care was extremely limited and confined almost entirely to the two main cities, Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulasso. For a population of 7 million, there were just 141 doctors and surgeons, who charged prices that were far beyond the means of the average Burkinabè. Many basic medicines were lacking, and disease was rife. As a result, life expectancy was just 40 years.

The CNR launched a mass immunization program against yellow fever and measles, slating 3.5 million people for vaccination. Adopting an emphasis on primary health care, dozens of new health clinics were built in the countryside. The prices for most medical procedures have been reduced by 70 percent. Teams of Cuban medical experts have arrived, both to advise their Burkinabè counterparts and to provide direct care to the population.

Targeting Burkina's illiteracy rate of more than 92 percent, the CNR is preparing to launch a significant literacy drive. The goal is to teach 5.5 million Burkinabè how to read and write over the next decade. Since only a small section of the population speaks French — which is still used in government and administration — the campaign is to be conducted in the three main indigenous languages, Mooré, Jula, and Fulfuldé. Hundreds of volunteers have already been recruited to organize this campaign.

Another goal is to expand and improve the regular educational system. Previously, only one-fifth of all school-age children even began primary school, and of those who did, few finished or went on to receive higher education. New resources are being devoted to the schools. As in the literacy campaign, instruction will be in the three indigenous languages, with French taught as an additional subject.

The CDRs have played an important role, mobilizing volunteers to build some 750 classrooms around the country as of mid-1984. But this by itself has not overcome the problem:

two-thirds of those classrooms are empty for lack of money to buy supplies or pay teachers.

Social facilities in the urban centers have been expanded as well. In 1984, the country's first public transportation systems were inaugurated in Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulasso.

Many residents of Ouagadougou live in the large shantytowns that surround the city. Only a fifth of the capital's inhabitants own their own houses, and the rest must rent rooms, sometimes paying between 30 and 50 percent of their incomes in rent.

A national commission was set up, with CDR delegates on it, to review the housing situation. Urban land is being redistributed, and so far thousands of families have been allocated land on which to build houses. In April 1984, a new rent law lowered most rents, some by up to one-half. Houses illegally acquired by speculators have been confiscated. A state enterprise has been set up to construct new, cheap housing, and the government plans to establish a new bank to provide easy-term loans for housing construction.

'Women are men's equals'

Women, like other Burkinabè, suffer from imperialist oppression. But they also are burdened by sexual oppression, which has been particularly severe in Burkina. They have been subject to segregation in education, culture, and public life in general. In the countryside, women perform most manual labor. A man is twice as likely as a woman to be literate.

In September 1983, Sankara urged women, specifically, to join the CDRs, insisting that "woman *are* men's equals." Then in his major Oct. 2, 1983, policy speech, he said, "The basis of women's domination by men is found in the system of society's political and social life. In changing the social order that oppresses women, the revolution is creating the conditions for their genuine emancipation. . . . The revolution and women's liberation go together. And it is no act of charity or outburst of humanism to talk about the emancipation of women. It is a basic necessity for the triumph of the revolution."

Women have been named to prominent positions in the government and administration. There are now three women cabinet ministers and up to 10 women are to be appointed as provincial high commissioners.

A new family code is being drafted, one that aims to suppress forced marriages and child marriages, as well as the high dowry that the bride's family must pay in some parts of the country. Other laws still in the drafting stages will proclaim women's equality in employment, wages, and inheritance.

So far, the main vehicle for mobilizing women has been the CDRs. Thousands have become active in them, and each CDR bureau must have at least one elected female member.

On Oct. 9, 1983, the first of a series of women's demonstrations around the country was held in Ouagadougou. It was one of the largest that the capital had ever seen. According to the Nov. 7, 1983, *West Africa*:

Thousands upon thousands of women walked, shuffled, ran and even danced past, chanting and singing the myriad revolutionary songs and slogans that have appeared over the last two months. The noise was deafening. They were young and they were old; they were smart office ladies and they were poor old women wearing their best cloth for the occasion. Many carried signs and banners held high; many more had a baby strapped tightly to their back.

The march was led by the hundred or so female members of Ouagadougou's Committees for the Defence of the Revolution who are receiving a basic military training: all wore a plain olive green military uniform.

The revolutionary upheaval that began in Burkina in August 1983 is transforming political life in that country. For the first time on any significant scale, the working masses are being drawn into a concerted struggle to free their country from imperialist oppression and to introduce long-overdue social changes.

But the Burkinabè people face enormous difficulties in carrying this process forward.

The working class's small size and limited political experience, the absence of a unified working class vanguard party, the country's weak economic base, the social backwardness of the countryside — all pose major obstacles to any revolutionary undertaking. Above all, the people of Burkina confront the continued domination and active opposition of the major imperialist powers, particularly Paris and Washington.

A defeat for imperialism in Burkina would inspire the oppressed elsewhere to redouble their own struggles. That is why neither the imperialists nor their allies within Burkina and in neighboring countries will voluntarily concede one inch of ground. They will do whatever they can to obstruct and turn aside the struggles of the Burkinabè masses.

It is thus vital that the people of Burkina receive international support and solidarity. Working people everywhere have a stake in the outcome of their fight. □

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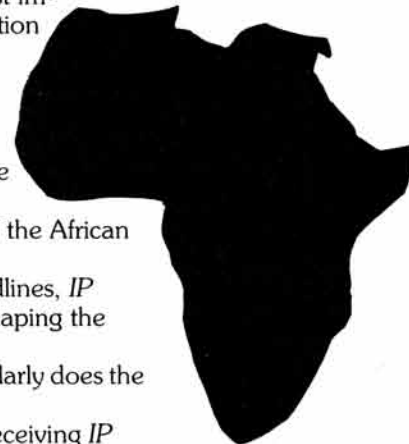
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Political prisoner speaks out

Satur Ocampo describes growing opposition to Marcos regime

By Deb Shnookal

Satur Ocampo is one of the longest-held political prisoners in the Philippines today. Before his arrest in January 1976 he was a well-known journalist, having worked as assistant business editor of the *Manila Times* before it was closed by President Ferdinand Marcos in 1972 when martial law was imposed.

Ocampo, who comes from a poor peasant family of 12 children in Central Luzon, has been charged, along with other alleged members of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CCP) such as Jose Maria Sison, with seeking to overthrow the government by force and importing arms. Most of those accused with him have already been released.

On August 31 Ocampo was allowed to speak in public for the first time in his eight and a half years' detention. Accompanied by military guards, he attended the Press Freedom Day functions at the National Press Club. Ocampo had been vice-president of the press club.

Arriving at the press club, Ocampo was greeted warmly by a crowd of fellow journalists, especially his father-in-law, Dean Armando Malay, a well-known human rights campaigner, and Mochtar Lubis, head of the Press Foundation for Asia.

Later, speaking informally among journalists, Ocampo said, "I don't regret anything I've done. Everything they've done to me only speaks about the system of government we have here."

That night Ocampo addressed a Testimonial to the Working Journalist, concluding his speech by saying: "A furious fight still lies ahead of us journalists, writers, and artists, whether imprisoned behind bars and fettered by repressive decrees or immured in the morass of 'self-regulation' and the stifling political atmosphere. We will prevail in this fight for as long as we remain one with the people in

struggle. After all, the people hold the nation's liberation in their hands. Today we struggle to make the media *for* the people; tomorrow the media will be *of* the people."

The following interview with Satur Ocampo was conducted under rather unusual circumstances. After attending a hearing of one of his seemingly endless trials at Fort Bonifacio, Ocampo was taken to the press club in a military police van with five armed military guards. I traveled with Ocampo in the van, and thanks to the snarled Manila traffic was able to obtain the following interview.

* * *

Question. What has been the impact of the August 1983 assassination of Benigno Aquino? Has the movement against Marcos become stronger in the last year?

Answer. Definitely yes. This is particularly true of the open, legal, democratic movement, although there has also been an intensification of the armed struggle in the countryside.

Before the assassination of Aquino, the street demonstrations were essentially made up of workers, students, and the more radical side of the opposition to Marcos. But in the wake of the Aquino assassination the so-called legal forces, including the representatives of business, more church people, and more of the dutiful, conservative elements of society, saw the truth — that if a man of Aquino's stature could be done away with in the way he was killed, then it could happen to anybody.

So it was something like a catalyst. The people sought some catharsis for their hatred, for their pent-up anger against the regime. This became worse as the economic crisis worsened, with the flight of some capital and nervousness in the business community. Then there

was also the repatriation of foreign exchange by people who had been investing here or who had been keeping their money in banks here.

Q. The Aquino assassination, of course, has only been one more incident in which the Marcos government has been implicated. There are so many cases of murders, disappearances, and so on. What did Aquino mean to the Filipino people?

A. At first when Aquino was killed, some people thought that he was just one of the victims of the military depredations. But in the course of the popular response of the people, of the protest and anger against the regime, Aquino's murder became an outstanding example that the regime or those responsible for these killings and "salvagings" [summary executions] would not respect even those in the elite of Filipino society.

Q. What would be your balance sheet of the May parliamentary elections? It has been suggested that Marcos used the elections to present a facade of democracy in order to improve his international image.

A. Even before the assassination, the regime was already in need of a political exercise that would improve its image internationally. The election of the regular parliament was one way Marcos tried to prove that there is a workable democracy in this country. Because of the demands of the opposition and of the people who are protesting the undemocratic way the government has been running affairs, Marcos was pressured into granting some electoral reforms.

With the aid of the National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL), the businessmen, and the Bishops' Conference, they were able to get some improvement in the rules by which the elections were conducted.

The militant monitoring by NAMFREL of the elections provided some credibility to the results of the elections, particularly in metropolitan Manila, where the KBL [New Society Movement] of Marcos was trounced.

Q. What was the significance of the boycott campaign?

A. The boycott campaign was the manifestation of the people, the broader opposition to Marcos, which did not consider the parliamentary elections as essentially responding to the need for change.

But as it turned out, the boycott movement had very little time. And while it was able to generate a lot of support, it was not able to



Deb Shnookal/IF

Satur Ocampo in police wagon.

counteract the great enthusiasm of the people to go to the polls and repudiate the Marcos government through the ballot.

This indicated that a lot of Filipinos still believe the electoral process may be a way out of this undemocratic government. But Marcos intransigently holds on to Amendment Six, which authorizes him to make decrees and override parliamentary decisions, including on questions of budget allocations. So it's becoming very apparent that the Batasan [parliament] voting might have been a useless exercise from the point of view of effectively eroding or doing away with the dictatorial authority of Marcos.

Of course, I grant that the Batasan can be a sounding board for the people's sentiments. But in terms of achieving significant changes in the government, there's very little chance through parliament.

Q. How do you think that change will come about?

A. The parliamentary struggle will be contributory, but the "parliament of the streets" and the pressure of the buildup of the armed struggle, I think, in combination will be the factors that will initiate changes in the political structure.

Q. What do you see as the main program of reforms needed in the Philippines today?

A. What the "parliament of the streets" has been calling for is the destruction of the dictatorship. But this is tied up completely with the economic strangulation of the Philippines by foreign interests.

The political and economic change must be achieved in tandem, although the key is the dismantling or removal of the Marcos dictatorship and its replacement with a government that would be representative of the various sectors of society. Some, like Jose Diokno and Lorenzo Tanada [opposition political figures], call this a coalition government. Basically I support this kind of transition government.

Q. How united are the anti-Marcos forces today?

A. Well, compared with the period before the assassination of Aquino they are more united. But there remain some cleavages within the ranks of the opposition, in particular arguments about how to achieve change, through violent or nonviolent means, although I think this could be ironed out through earnest dialogue among all the opposition forces.

Q. What are the options for the U.S. government in the Philippines?

A. From the statements of the U.S. State Department and the U.S. ambassador to the Philippines, they are still opting for a unification of what they call the "democratic opposition." When I talk about the democratic opposition, it is not the same as the terminology of the American embassy. They mean the tradi-

tional politicians. When we talk about the democratic opposition we mean the people's organizations.

In the case of the United States, they are trying to tie up all the traditional opposition groups and drive a wedge between the left and the traditional opposition. They know there is a basic influence of the left within the mass movement. Whether they will be able to build an opposition minus the left remains to be seen.

Q. How would you assess the support for the National Democratic Front (NDF) opposition bloc in which the New People's Army (NPA) and the CPP participate?

A. The NDF is better known internationally than it is here. Here the people identify more with the New People's Army, which is a component of the NDF. As an idea, the NDF is very acceptable, even to some sections of the middle forces.

The government accepts that there has been an expansion in both the number of fighters and the strength of armaments of the NPA, although it tries to play this down by saying that the situation is not as serious as 1972, which is not accurate.

Q. What is the effect of the militarization of the countryside by the army, the hamletting of peasant communities, and so on?

A. There are extensive military abuses, particularly "salvaging," hamletting, torture, etc. These activities are helping to politicize the people, driving them against the Marcos government. The only alternative open to them is the NPA, because it is the one most responsive to their basic problems and grievances. However much the government tries to counter the NPA, they will never be successful in their "civic action" programs and counterinsurgency campaigns.

Q. The NPA is said to organize its own local government administration in some areas. Would you describe these as similar to the liberated zones in El Salvador?

A. As far as the level of armed struggle in the Philippines is concerned, there has not been any claim yet of liberated zones. But they are classified as guerrilla zones, that is, guerrilla bases that are relatively advanced. These bases, when consolidated, would get to the level of liberated zones.

But even in the guerrilla zones there is already the infrastructure of a government in the villages, the *barangays* [village councils]. In some areas it is the government structure itself which is utilized; in others it is an alternative form.

As the area of the armed struggle by the NPA expands, the villages are consolidated into self-governing units with their own defense, health, education, and administration.

Q. Could you tell me something about your case?

A. In the "rebellion" case, it is my contention that I should not be accused because rebellion entails taking up arms against the government. The crime I am alleged to have committed was at a time when I was working as a journalist, that is in 1972. So I could not have been a participant in the armed struggle.

Q. You have been charged with organizing the import of arms from a "foreign power," presumably the People's Republic of China, in this rebellion case.

A. In the case of "subversion" and "rebellion," they want to prove that I am a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines and by implication share responsibility for the arms smuggling.

I deny both accusations, and it is up to the military prosecution to prove that I am a member of the Central Committee and that I am responsible or partially responsible for the bringing in of arms.

Q. Is it true that Jose Maria Sison has not denied that he is the chairman of the CPP?

A. He has a statement which he signed in which he says he was chairman of the CPP. In my case I have refused to sign such a statement, knowing it would be used against me in the trials.

Q. When I spoke to the military's prosecuting lawyers, I asked them about the use of torture to exact confessions. They denied this, of course. Could you explain your own case?

A. The documentation of my torture has been submitted to Amnesty International and has also been well-publicized by the Task Force Detainees. In 1978 an investigation was ordered after my complaints of torture. But nothing happened because there were no witnesses to corroborate my contentions. But of course there are never witnesses to torture. It's all on their side.

Q. What have been your conditions during your eight and a half years' imprisonment?

A. For the first nine months after my arrest, I was in solitary confinement. Then for five months in 1980 and 1981 I was put in solitary again because I was accused of leading a hunger strike of the detainees.

Q. Do you think the hunger strike tactic was effective?

A. Up to 1981 it was effective. The best hunger strike we had was in November–December 1980 when 133 of us went on strike. About 100 of these won their release.

But after that we haven't been able to win many concessions with hunger strikes. So last year we changed our tactics. Instead of the prisoners alone going on hunger strikes, the relatives and friends went on hunger strike outside. But even that did not move Marcos into releasing most of us. □

Union maps fight against dictatorship

CUT congress projects independent working-class action

By Ernest Harsch

On August 24, 25, and 26, the First National Congress of the United Workers Federation (CUT) was held in São Bernardo do Campo, a working-class suburb of São Paulo, Brazil.

The CUT was officially founded just a year earlier, in August 1983. But its roots are in the rise of working-class struggles in Brazil that began around 1978. Through massive strikes and other actions, the most combative sections of the working class fought against the repressive antilabor policies of the military dictatorship: restrictions on the right to strike, government control over the financing of the unions, and direct government interventions to oust class-struggle union leaderships. They demanded the right to organize and elect their own leaders, free of government interference.

Workers Party

Out of this fight, there also emerged a struggle for working-class *political* independence, for the formation of a party of the working people, independent of both the dictatorship and the bourgeois opposition parties. Luis Inácio da Silva ("Lula"), the president of the São Bernardo metalworkers union, was one of the first to call for such a party. In May 1980 the first congress of the new Workers Party (PT) was held.

Meanwhile, a movement for the formation of an independent, class-struggle union federation developed. In August 1981, some 5,000 union delegates met in Playa Grande in the first National Conference of the Working Class

(CONCLAT) to discuss a plan of struggle against the dictatorship's policies and the need to form a Brazil-wide confederation of trade unions.

Despite opposition from the trade-union bureaucracy, as well as various political forces, including the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB), those unions that maintained a perspective of class independence formed the CUT in August 1983.

By the time of its First National Congress, the CUT had a membership of more than 11.5 million workers. Representing 937 affiliated union bodies, 5,222 delegates and 38 union observers were seated at the congress. Nearly 1,600 delegates represented agricultural workers unions, a little more than 1,000 represented unions in basic industry, and the rest represented various service industries, civil servants associations, and professional bodies.

Delegates came from all 24 states and the federal district. The CUT's greatest membership (more than 3 million workers) is in the heavily industrialized state of São Paulo, followed by Rio de Janeiro and Rio Grande do Sul (with 1.5 million and 1 million members respectively).

'Direct Elections Now'

The central political discussion at the congress focused on the campaign for "*Diretas já*," — "Direct Elections Now." It was launched in January 1984, in response to the military regime's scheme to hand-pick Paulo Maluf to succeed President João Figueiredo.

This was to be done in January 1985 by an Electoral College dominated by the pro-military Democratic Social Party (PDS).

The campaign for direct elections, which was politically dominated by the bourgeois opposition parties, in particular the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), became one of mass proportions. CUT and PT leaders were able to play a role in these mobilizations. Over a period of several months, some 5 million people throughout the country took part in demonstrations for "Direct Elections Now."

By the time of the CUT congress, however, the campaign had collapsed. As the bourgeois opposition candidacy of Tancredo Neves gained significant support within the Electoral College, virtually all forces on the left, with the exception of the PT and CUT, concentrated their efforts on getting him selected as president.

Only the CUT and the PT maintained a perspective of working-class political independence in the fight against the military dictatorship. The CUT congress thus discussed ways to reactivate the campaign for direct elections, including the holding of a march on Brasília (which was later called for October 10, the first day of what also became a national campaign for a 40-hour workweek).

Other resolutions and discussion at the congress assessed the CUT's activities during the first year of its existence, outlined the federation's proposals for a radical agrarian reform, and modified the federation's organizational structure. A new leadership was elected, with Jair Meneguelli, a leader of the São Bernardo do Campo metalworkers union, as president.

Representatives of various Brazilian organizations attended as observers, including representatives of the Workers Party, the Brazilian Labor Party, the PCB, and the PMDB.

An international outlook

Union observers from abroad came from Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, West Germany, Italy, Spain, Israel, and Belgium, as well as from the World Federation of Trade Unions. Alfonso Mandragón Lacayo, a leader of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) of Nicaragua, received an ovation from the delegates. Farid Sawan, the Palestine Liberation Organization's representative in Brazil, also attended. In addition, greetings were received from unions in Cuba, Sweden, Vietnam, Romania, the Dominican Republic, Peru, France, Ecuador, Norway, and Iceland.

The congress approved a proposal, signed jointly by the CUT and the Inter-Union Work-



CUT convention.

ers Assembly (PIT) of Uruguay, calling for a meeting of Latin American unions to discuss the question of the foreign debt and the struggle against the imposition of International Monetary Fund austerity policies.

Other motions on international questions that were adopted included ones supporting the British miners' strike, expressing solidarity with the Nicaraguan people and opposing U.S. imperialist intervention in Central America, condemning the extradition from Brazil to Argentina of Montonero guerrilla leader Mário

Firminich, condemning apartheid and supporting the liberation struggle in Namibia, calling for the release of political prisoners in Poland, solidarizing with the struggle against the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, and condemning Zionism and supporting the Palestinians' right to self-determination.

Following the congress, CUT President Jair Meneguelli addressed a declaration to the federation's nearly 12 million members:

"In the first year of the CUT's existence, we confronted the bourgeois forces that tried to

suffocate this new-born baby. We confronted the government and its repression, which tried to block the advance toward a new kind of union. We confronted the resistance of a section of the union movement itself, a section that did not want to leave the comforts of a union structure controlled by the government. Finally, we confronted our own political, organizational, and financial difficulties.

"Yet, here is the result: Today, the CUT is a fact. It is a reality. It is a force that no one can any longer hold back." □

DOCUMENTS

CUT: Political situation in Brazil

Assessment of workers' struggles, direct elections campaign

[The following are two documents approved by the First National Congress of the United Workers Federation (CUT). The first is a resolution assessing the overall political situation in Brazil, in particular the campaign for "Direct Elections Now." The second is a "Platform of Workers' Struggles." They are taken from the *Jornal da CUT*. The translation and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

1. Brazilian capitalism has shown a strong ability to expand over an extended period of time, especially over the last 40 years. The economy grew at a rate of 7 percent a year, per capita income more than quadrupled, and the Brazilian gross national product is today among the 10 highest in the world.

However, all this accelerated growth did not assure the working class¹ improvements in its social conditions. Wages were continuously beaten down in relation to the impressive increase in labor productivity. The urban population increased by 16 times, but urban living conditions for the workers deteriorated, with many workers being forced to live on the outskirts of the large cities, areas marked by violence and by precarious conditions of sanitation, housing, transportation, health care, and education.

In the countryside, the concentration of land ownership increased, and an important section of the working people was transformed into farm laborers under very poor working and living conditions. Huge numbers of Brazilians were summarily kicked off the land and out of the countryside.

The country is now going through the most serious economic and social crisis in its recent history. The dramatic effects of the crisis are imposed upon the working class, which was

1. In this and other references to the "working class" and the "workers," the CUT uses the terms *classe trabalhadora* and *trabalhadores*, which connote all those who labor for a living, not just the wage-earning proletariat.

excluded from all previous material advancement and which finds itself faced with absolutely unbearable social conditions.

The economic policies of the country, administered by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the military regime, have provoked an unprecedented recession: just in the last 4 years industry suffered a 16 percent drop in production, while the foreign debt reached nearly \$100 billion, the inflation rate climbed to 230 percent a year, and speculation and corruption invaded all spheres of public and private life.

The attacks on wages during the last two years were the most severe of the entire 20 years of the military regime. Public funds for health care, education, housing, sanitation, and other essential public services are decreasing, while the nation's resources and immense portions of land are being turned over to big international capital in the form of massive projects.

The recessionary economic policies of the military regime and of the IMF, imposed by the imperialists, basically favor big international finance capital. These policies are tearing apart the entire productive structure of the country, and are leading to a deterioration of the Brazilian way of life, especially for working people.

In this crisis, unemployment has affected nearly 12 million workers, while the state has no social policy of aiding the unemployed and the unemployed have no right to unemployment benefits, as is the case in other countries. And this situation will not be turned around even if the economy begins to grow again. This is so because if the economy expands at the rate of 5 percent a year beginning in 1985, we will have 11 million unemployed in 1990 and only by 1993 would we have the same number of unemployed workers as we had in 1980.

Twenty years of the military regime and two years of submitting to the economic policies of the IMF have left the country in such a grave

social and economic crisis that the effects will certainly last for more than a decade. And the main effects of the crisis are being borne by the working class, which never before in Brazilian history has been subjected to such ruinous living and working conditions as it is today.

2. The crisis has eroded important bases of political and social support for the military regime and has intensified the process of political differentiation.

The maintenance of the military regime in the process of presidential succession is personified in the candidacy of Paulo Maluf, who represents the possible continuity of the military regime as it continues to decompose. His candidacy reflects the attempt by the most reactionary, corrupt, and repressive sectors of the regime to maintain control over state power. The various ruling factions have disputed the process of succession through corruption, the convention of the Democratic Social Party (PDS), and the buying of votes of those who might be part of the Electoral College. Institutionalized political temerity and the effort to exclude 60 million voters from the process of choosing a president could guarantee the conditions for Paulo Maluf's victory.

However, the differences within the ruling class are deepening, and the liberal conservative bourgeoisie is putting itself forward as an alternative power in the form of a proposal that announced the possible outlines of a new form of bourgeois domination of the country, one that would preserve the basic institutions created by the military regime.

The liberal conservative bourgeoisie achieved political hegemony in the major opposition party, the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), won the main state governments in the 1982 elections, and drew in an important sector of the party that served the regime, the PDS.

In the process of presidential succession, the liberal bourgeoisie presents itself as a political alternative with the candidacy of Tancredo

Neves, through a political combination [called the Democratic Alliance] of the PMDB and the Liberal Front, which is led by the large landowner Aureliano Chaves, vice-president of the military government, and José Sarney, one of the biggest land sharks in Maranhão and longtime president of the regime's party. The Liberal Front is composed of politicians and businessmen, bankers and large landowners, who have supported the regime over the past 20 years and are just now becoming late-blooming "liberals."

The economic plan of the liberal conservative bourgeoisie proclaims its intention to renegotiate the payment terms of the foreign debt, without breaking with the IMF. It seeks a small maneuvering space for an economic policy that, accompanied by a financial reform, would allow it to get a minimum foothold in the growing economy. On the political level, it hopes to have the presidential mandate for four years, calling for direct elections for the next president and the strengthening in 1986 of the constituent powers that the National Congress already has.

This proposal, on the economic level, does not attempt to confront the structural problems of Brazilian society, does not break with the control of the IMF and big finance capital over economic policies, and therefore is not only insufficient for sustaining a lasting economic recovery, as it proposed, but is also silent on the question of altering the serious social crisis and the terrible living conditions of the Brazilian working class.

On the political level, its intention is to channel all social discontent into an institutionalized discussion, controlled by the National Congress to be elected in 1986, with all the difficulties and limitations on political representation that the current congress has.

The liberal conservative bourgeoisie is already putting its plan into action, posing as an alternative power in the Electoral College that was put together by the regime and that was repudiated by the people throughout the whole campaign for "Direct Elections Now." This political alliance — which puts itself forward in this illegitimate Electoral College and which proposes a vague, meaningless, and timid governmental plan for these difficult times that the country is going through — does not even pay attention to the minimum demands of the Brazilian working class, starting with the demand for "Direct Elections Now."

After 20 years of the military regime, the country is mired in the international capitalist system and fettered within its confines.

A break from these conditions cannot take place through agreements among the elite, nor by carrying out the liberal conservative bourgeoisie's plan. The only alternative is the active and organized participation of the broad popular masses, through transforming the working class into an independent political entity.

3. In this crisis, despite innumerable difficulties and obstacles, the working class has

made great political advances. The campaign for "Direct Elections Now" was the most important democratic and popular protest the country has ever seen. Millions of Brazilians took to the streets demanding an end to the regime and all the oppression and exploitation that it represents.

The CUT, despite having participated in the national and state All-Party Committees [which organized the campaign], despite being present at all the most important events, did not act in a collective and decisive way in this campaign.

This process reveals a certain lack of understanding on the part of the CUT's political leadership of the historical importance of the fight for democracy and for an end to the military dictatorship, as necessary conditions for winning the basic demands of the working class of our country.

In the form of this campaign, neither the immediate nor the historic demands of the workers were present. Even in some of the rallies, the CUT did not intervene from the platform; among the crowds its activities were quite timid. Nevertheless, what is most important is that the campaign represented a major political step forward as well as an important experience of struggle for the CUT and for the entire Brazilian population.

The attacks on wages by the military regime and the IMF were disrupted and frustrated in a number of industries by important strike movements. The steelworkers launched "operation go-slow" in the ABC district.² They occupied and camped out at factories in São José dos Campos, São André, São Bernardo, and other areas. They won a big victory in Volta Redonda and carried out numerous struggles throughout the country.

Teachers and university employees waged a national and unified strike for more than two months, and first and second grade teachers went on strike and took to the streets in large demonstrations in São Paulo, Minas Gerais, and in several other states. Bank workers, mechanics, oil workers, and other categories of workers launched important struggles throughout Brazil; even street peddlers staged violent protests in Rio de Janeiro.

On a more serious level, however, is the political orientation of the CONCLAT³ which makes a priority of its political alliances with the liberal bourgeoisie and seeks to turn the working class into a mass that can be manipulated to support the aims of this sector of the ruling class.

The enthusiastic participation of CONCLAT, and the political tendencies that it comprises, in the Democratic Alliance of Tancredo and Sarney now makes any joint initiatives impractical. The divisive practices of this sector of the union movement, in the building

2. The industrial suburbs surrounding São Paulo.

3. The National Coordinating Committee of the Working Class, formed in November 1983 by Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) union officials and a layer of the union bureaucracy that until recently had close ties to the military dictatorship.

of the CUT itself and in the CONCLAT's sabotage of the most important struggles of the working class today, is most apparent in its betrayal of the campaign for "Direct Elections Now." The CUT will have to confront the CONCLAT's efforts to politically isolate it, which the CONCLAT seeks to impose through its class-collaborationist plan.

On the other hand, those who put themselves forward as representatives of the working class, but who really defend the interests of one of the sections of the ruling class, will in the near future have to pay the price for this type of political opportunism. Unemployment, hunger, and the struggles for land and better wages will continue, as sharply if not more sharply than before, while a section of the union movement applauds and supports agreements with the elite and conciliation with the ruling class, in which the most basic interests of the workers are not even considered.

Because of this, when this sector abandons the campaign for "Direct Elections Now," the continuity in the fight for democracy and for an end to the military regime today falls essentially on the CUT and on other sectors committed to the working class.

The CUT will continue its efforts to shape the working class into an independent political entity. Its only commitment is to follow a class-struggle perspective, in which the fight for the immediate and historic objectives of the workers requires independence and rules out subordinating the working class's interests to any of the ruling class's schemes.

We will continue to seek ways to move forward in a united fashion. This means not simply reaching agreements among the top leaderships and never betraying the aspirations of the workers as a class, but also searching for a solid path of unity, which will come about through concrete struggles that reflect the needs and the political aspirations of the working people of this country.

With the aim of guaranteeing this independence and defining a clear political perspective, we are proposing for discussion some political resolutions and basic points for a plan of struggle:

On national politics

1. The CUT reaffirms its commitment to "Direct Elections Now" as a way to end the military regime and to guarantee the Brazilian population the elementary right to vote.

2. The CUT rejects any agreement or negotiation that does not assure the Brazilian people the right to elect the country's new president.

3. The CUT rejects the Electoral College or any other mechanism for indirectly choosing the president of the republic, as well as all those who have betrayed the democratic and popular will expressed in the campaign for "Direct Elections Now" and who are prepared to capitulate to the regime by accepting the Electoral College as a way to elect the president.

4. The CUT will struggle for an end to the

military regime and against Paulo Maluf's candidacy, which reflects the regime's continuity. It will also firmly oppose the Democratic Alliance's plan and the Tancredo-Sarney candidacy, since they represent conciliation with the regime, maintenance of the IMF agreements, and political betrayal of the democratic aspirations and the most fundamental demands of the Brazilian people.

5. The CUT, reaffirming its commitment to "Direct Elections Now," resolves to propose immediate action, consisting of:

- A march on Brasília for "Direct Elections Now," within one month (for example, on September 26), that will demand that the National Congress vote on the Teodoro Mendes amendment.

- On this basis, we will struggle to reactivate the Pro-Direct Elections Committees, reuniting those forces interested in continuing the campaign.

- The march will be prepared in the states by the state and regional CUTs, which will organize activities such as days of struggle, rallies, marches, and leafleting.

- This process should eventually lead to a degree of centralization of the campaign, in which the means for furthering it can be discussed.

- A National Convention for Direct Elections Now should be held in Brasília, in the National Congress itself, to discuss continuing the struggle after the march.

- In preparation for the march, the CUT raises a Platform of Immediate Demands, associated with the call for "Direct Elections Now," which would allow a merging of the continuation of the struggle for direct elections with the notable presence of the CUT in the wage campaigns of the second half of the year.

This program calls for:

- Quarterly wage readjustments and the regaining of lost wages.

- Unemployment benefits.

- A radical agrarian reform, under the control of the working people.

- Repeal of Laws 2,100 (in the states) and 2,065 [which provide for wage cuts].

- A 40-hour workweek.

- Limitation of rents and house payments to 20 percent of wages.

- Repeal of the National Security Law.

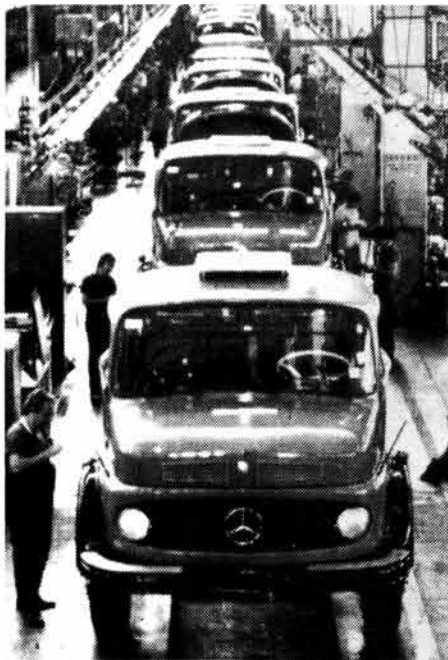
- A break with the IMF agreements.

- Punishment for the killers of trade unionists, for torturers, and for corrupt officials.

Based on the struggle for "Direct Elections Now" and on this Platform of Demands, we are thus preparing the conditions for a general strike against the military regime, an action that remains necessary.

6. The CUT must adopt all possible forms of struggle, such as assemblies, public protests, meetings, and street demonstrations, based on a plan of action, drawn up by the CUT leadership, that supports all initiatives that lead in that direction.

The activities of the CUT in the coming year will aim toward obstructing the meeting of the Electoral College, by working to make a gen-



Mercedes plant, Brazil. Economic growth has not helped workers.

eral strike feasible before the installation of the college.

A general strike will center on the demands for "Direct Elections Now" with broad liber-

ties, a boycott of the Electoral College, and an end to the military regime, as well as the workers' economic and political demands expressed in the CUT Platform.

Support for strikes in particular companies and trades is very important. The CUT must seek to raise them from a purely economic level to a political level, by disseminating its platform. This will be one of the most appropriate means for creating the conditions to bring about a general strike.

The calling of a general strike will depend fundamentally on the degree of mobilization of the workers and their readiness to struggle. It will depend as well on whether the general political conditions of the country favor an initiative of such a scope. Taking into account such factors, the CUT will strive to unify the trade union movement, among the ranks, around its platform of action.

The CUT will direct its proposals to the CONCLAT, but without subordinating its initiatives of struggle to the position that CONCLAT has come to adopt.

In addition, the CUT will act in conjunction with other representative bodies, opposition parties, and sections of parties with the aim of promoting common actions and the establishment of a front around the demands for "Direct Elections Now" with broad liberties, a boycott of the Electoral College, and an end to the military regime. It will also propose reactivation of the Pro-Direct Election Committees. □

'Platform of Workers Struggles'

In this First National Congress of the CUT, our proposal is that the Plan of Struggle that was already approved in 1983 be submitted to a vote and that some of these demands serve as the basis for a new plan of struggle. Some of the following points should be prominent in it:

- Break with the IMF; for nonpayment of the foreign debt.

- End the attacks on wages; for an immediate and full wage readjustment for all workers, which would replace the accumulated wages lost through the last governmental wage decrees (numbers 2,012, 2,045, 2,065, etc.), and the adoption of a sliding scale of wages for future wage adjustments.

- For a campaign to reduce the workday with no reduction in pay (the CUT's elected national leadership should organize a special commission to study the practical feasibility of this task).

- For trade union freedom and autonomy, the recognition of the right to strike, and a break with the state-controlled trade union structures; for the immediate repeal of Chapter V of the Labor Code.

- For an end to government intervention in the unions and amnesty for those union leaders who were removed from their positions.

- For immediate attention to the basic needs of working people, such as food, health care,

education, housing, transportation, clothing, recreation, sports, and cultural and leisure-time activities. The funds for this should come from taxing the profits of financial and banking interests and multinational corporations, and taxing the revenues of large landholdings and major rural development projects.

- For a new housing policy that will adequately serve the interests of working people, with house payments or rent not to exceed 20 percent of family income.

- Repeal the National Security Law and other repressive legislation.

- For freedom of political and party organization; for an end to restrictions on freedom of political and electoral propaganda; for the right of illiterates, soldiers, and noncommissioned officers to vote.

- Against the privatization of state enterprises, and for the requirement that any alteration in these enterprises be submitted to the workers for discussion and approval, through their representative bodies.

- Against any and all forms of discrimination against Blacks, women, and minorities.

- For the defense of the indigenous peoples and for the immediate demarcation of the boundaries of their lands.

- For recognition of the CUT as the highest body representing Brazilian workers. □

Colombian PSR on 'national dialogue'

Central Committee assesses current political situation

[In March and August 1984, truce agreements were signed between the Colombian armed forces and most of the country's left guerrilla organizations. Under the accords, armed activity is to be suspended for one year by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and indefinitely by the April 19 Movement (M-19), the People's Liberation Army (EPL), and a group called Workers Self-Defense (ADO).

[The agreement with the M-19, EPL, and ADO called for the convening of "a great national dialogue in which the various forces of the country will participate with full representation."

[For an overview of the truce and the provisions for "national dialogue" see "Guerrillas sign truce with regime," *Intercontinental Press*, Nov. 12, 1984, p. 669.

[That issue also contained a document outlining the M-19's view of the truce, and a statement by Socorro Ramírez, a leader of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR), Colombian section of the Fourth International, explaining why she accepted a post on the government-sponsored Advisory Commission on Peace.

[The following resolution — entitled, "The National Dialogue and the Present Politics" — was adopted unanimously by the Nov. 3–5, 1984, meeting of the Central Committee of the PSR. The footnotes and the translation from Spanish are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

The present moment is characterized by the following:

1. An accord for a truce and negotiations between the FARC, M-19, EPL, and ADO guerrilla organizations¹ and the government of President [Belisario] Betancur. These accords represent a democratic advance by the people and the guerrillas, and not some gracious concession from the ruling class, as their spokes-

1. The FARC arose in the mid-1960s out of various guerrilla columns led by the Colombian Communist Party during a civil war in the 1950s. It remains closely tied to the CP, a pro-Moscow organization.

The M-19 originated in 1974 through the fusion of former FARC guerrillas and a leftist current in the National People's Alliance (ANAPO), a party formed to back the 1970 presidential candidacy of populist ex-dictator Gen. Gustavo Rojas Pinilla. The M-19's stated goals are democracy and national liberation, and M-19 leaders state they are not Marxists.

The EPL is led by the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist), a group looking to the Albanian regime for political guidance.

persons insinuate in order to give them a demobilizing thrust.

In the context of these accords, the guerrillas and the working-class and people's forces and ourselves have gained greater political space for mobilizing and for presenting proposals and positions. A great discussion has taken place around the country regarding the scope of the accords and perspectives for them.

The political parties, the press, the radio, the television, the chambers of commerce, the unions, the church, and the armed forces have all given their opinion and have taken part in the controversy in one way or another.

The right wing — headed by the U.S. embassy, the military high command, leaders of the traditional parties, professional organizations in the capital, and the daily *El Tiempo* — has taken a hard-line position regarding the accords.

Various difficulties have surrounded the unfolding of the accords, such as militarization of the conversation zones and harassment of the EPL, FARC, and M-19 organizations.

The installation of the verification commission was delayed several months due to the armed forces' boycott.

The right wing's escalation reached its high point in September when President Betancur denounced the incitement to a coup d'état promoted by Liberal and Conservative politicians as well as big business figures, although he exonerated the military high command of any involvement.

In addition, the process of political disappearances and murders by the paramilitary forces continues to grow.

The combination of the proposals by the guerrilla organizations and the demands raised by the workers-people's movement and the left have given great currency to political, labor, urban, and agrarian reforms.

The Liberal and Conservative parties and the Betancur government, being unable to hold back the tide, are forced to acknowledge the need for reforms in the national situation. But the reformism of the government and the bipartisan parliament is *reformism without reforms*. They are promoting *petty reforms and secondary changes*, involving an application of cosmetics to the system.

This is the meaning of the government-sponsored constitutional, electoral, and agrarian reforms going through parliament. Even if some positive measures are adopted such as the popular election of mayors and the amnesty, this would not change the sense and meaning of this tendency.

The present conjuncture of Colombian and

international capitalism — within the context of the existing capitalist state and bipartisan regime and the present relationship of forces that is still unfavorable to the working-class and people's forces — means it is not feasible to expect profound and significant changes in the country's economic, social, and political life.

What is specifically required is to work to centralize the working-class and people's struggles and give them a mass character; to work to organize them politically, which would make it feasible to wrest important changes from the bourgeoisie and its parties and would put us in a position to carry out the decisive class battles.

In this sense we are only at the early stages of a new political situation that remains to be defined.

2. At the urging of imperialism, the different sectors of the bourgeoisie have put in motion a real social and economic counterreform against the working-class and people's movement.

The Betancur government accepted in advance the International Monetary Fund's recipe. With the present injurious agreements, it has committed itself to pay greater portions of the foreign debt.

Having already imposed taxes on labor, it seeks to increase those taxes. It is committed to the most gigantic issue of currency in the country's history, which will spur inflation. It has gone from a policy of "bit by bit" devaluation to devaluation "by leaps," as shown by what took place in 1983 and will take place in 1984.

It seeks a rigid wage freeze and a reduction in public expenditures in the social area of education and health, as well as increases in the cost of public services.

At the same time, it is opening the doors to foreign capital without any controls whatsoever (on the contrary, it is eliminating or putting aside the existing controls).

The context of Colombian capitalism is one of an economic recession that has already been going on for about four years and is projected to continue in the coming year. The economic policy, however, fosters a deepening of this downturn, which is probably the longest in Latin America.

Precisely because of its bourgeois character, the Betancur government's weak and deformed diplomatic resistance and difference of opinion with the policies of the United States and the international bodies, is incapable of holding back imperialist policy and ends up accepting it, despite the declaration of independence and autonomy.

Faced with the stunning explosion of the

budget deficit, faced with the bankruptcy of public finances, the government is imposing an "austerity policy" that throws thousands of families into poverty and open unemployment. With the changes being introduced through the bills of ministers Jonguito, Eder, and Salazar, they seek to carry through the economic policy of superexploitation.

Sectors of the trade-union and people's movement have been coming together in united mobilization — massively in the case of the Colombian Teachers Federation (FECODE) — and we are seeing a massive upsurge of agrarian and peasant struggles, of which the December 27 peasant march is part.

New civic shutdowns² are in the works.

The first months of 1985 will be months of labor agitation around negotiation of new labor contracts. The trade union movement, grouped around the Committee for a United Confederation (CPC), is on the verge of fundamental decisions about holding a convention of the United Confederation. There are some proposals for a general working-class work stoppage.

The acute social situation foreshadows significant social explosions, despite the government's political maneuvering. There is greater clarity on the need to confront the dictates of the International Monetary Fund and the policy of the present government.

Thousands of workers have had experience with this government's demagogic sleight-of-hand and conjuring tricks. The call for a moratorium on the foreign debt is becoming a national, people's, and mass slogan.

The starting point for all working-class and political resistance is fighting the IMF and Betancur's policy and breaking the state of siege. To fight to stem and defeat the bourgeois counterreform means to point the road forward, toward the working-class and people's solutions to the national crisis: moratorium on the foreign debt; nationalization of natural resources and the banking system; workers control of the bankrupt companies; labor, urban, and agrarian reform; taxes on the great foreign and national fortunes; a massive and urgent jobs plan.

3. The economic and social crisis is accompanied by a grave crisis of institutions and of the state. In 1974, the then-president López Michelsen pointed to the institutional crisis — in the judicial system, the territorial structure of departments and municipalities, and the representativeness of the traditional parties and of the Congress itself.

At that time he proposed a solution through a "small Constituent Assembly" with an oligarchic and reactionary stamp — even more reactionary than the present congress — and he put forward proposals for authoritarian-type reforms.

Our current, the current of revolutionary

2. A civic shutdown (*paro civico*) is a protest in which all normal activity in a region ceases for a period.



Guerrilla leaders Ivan Marino Ospina (M-19), Tirofijo (FARC), Alvaro Fayad (M-19), and Jacobo Arenas (FARC).

socialism, argued that the crisis of the institutions and state in Colombia was part and parcel of the structural crisis and of the crisis of the present economic, social, and political system.

And to the proposal for a "small Constituent Assembly," we counterposed the proposal for a *Democratic and People's Constituent Assembly* as the highest body of the democracy that would make it possible to reorganize the country from top to bottom. A Sovereign Constituent Assembly that would be capable of passing the urgent economic and social reforms and exercising Colombia's total sovereignty in the face of Yankee imperialism.

The proposal for the Democratic and People's Constituent Assembly presents an alternative on the political and state level, and it points up the need for workers, peasants, women, and young people to raise the central point of politics: power. *Power that must be exercised through a workers and farmers government.*

Since the beginning of this government, and in the face of the need to concretize the proposals for alternative policies to the present crisis, our party has put forward the proposal for a Democratic and People's Constituent Assembly.

Because of the political space that exists for agitation and propaganda around proposals for reforms, there are greater opportunities to publicize the proposal for the Democratic and People's Constituent Assembly.

The majority of the left currents today raise the same proposal, with differences in emphasis and perspective. Furthermore, it is clear that this programmatic slogan has a history in the political vanguard and is beginning to be taken up by mass organizations.

The propaganda for political, labor, urban, and agrarian reforms and the urgent need for us to oppose and defeat the plans of the IMF and the Betancur government come together in the

proposal for the People's Constituent Assembly.

At the present political moment, it becomes necessary to confront the "reformism without reforms" — the demagoguery of the government and the bipartisan parliament. We must specifically state, as we have, that we do not have one iota of confidence in this parliament or in the bipartisan system, with its farce of candidates who are again beginning their competition in the bazaar of promises.

4. Developing these proposals goes hand in hand with promoting the idea of building a strong socialist party of the conscious workers, women, young people, and peasants.

This party is a necessity to provide coherence, meaning, and leadership to the revolutionary and people's struggles. We have pointed out that the workers movement has gained in political maturity since the Sept. 14, 1977, civic shutdown,³ but the traditional non-partisanship has not been defeated.

We have pointed out that Colombia is an urban country and that the presence of new generations in the social and political struggle facilitates the organization and development of a strong Revolutionary Socialist Party.

Our organization, which already has a place in the history of the revolutionary struggles in Colombia, invites the working-class and other organizations to discuss and work for a powerful revolutionary mass party.

In this regard we have pointed out that there are two obstacles, among others, that have impeded the development of a revolutionary mass party. *They are guerrillaism and reformist*

3. The Sept. 14, 1977, civic shutdown was a 24-hour general strike called by the country's four union federations and its largest independent unions. Dozens of people were killed, hundreds injured, and thousands detained in attempts by police and the army to break up the protest.

class conciliation. In a combined way, these two political factors and concepts have blocked the consciousness of thousands of working-class and people's fighters.

In terms of organizational policy for revolutionaries and socialists, in the present historic-political period the alternative for Marxists and revolutionaries is not the formation of guerrilla organizations, as is shown by the accords between the guerrilla organizations and the government and the general democratic advance they signify.

And the political price being paid for the practice of kidnappings, extortion, and individual attacks shows that it was not a mistake or an incorrect policy to fight those methods and practices. We are pleased that the majority of the guerrilla organizations now publicly condemn such practices and methods.

5. In the present situation there is a call for the so-called *National Dialogue*. Various sub-commissions, the national commission, and regional commissions in six locations are in the process of being named. These commissions are made up of representatives of the government, the professional societies, the political parties, the guerrillas, and the unions. And despite their institutional or semi-institutional character, in that they will be named or decreed or sponsored by the government, they are the result of the negotiations with the guerrillas and, in a relative and limited way, are the product of the people's struggles. Simultaneously, regional committees for the National Dialogue and Democratic Opening have been created in cities like Barranquilla, Medellín, and Ibagué. We take part in those committees as an organized force.

The general idea of the National Dialogue is shared by the majority of the left forces, with differences in shading and assessment. The M-19, the principal promoter of the idea, defines it in this way: "The National Dialogue is proposed as a democratic instrument at the service of the nation, with which we can get beyond the limits of all the party and group emblems. It has been said and it is being demonstrated that there is room in the dialogue for everyone, with the sole exception of the organizations and people who represent and defend interests opposed to those of the nation as a whole. Fortunately, this involves the tiniest minority" (taken from *Correo M.P.* No. 10).

The Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) presents it as an instrument of the Democratic Opening. The Communist Party makes it analogous to its policy of Democratic Front, and the Camilista Movement⁴ promotes it as a basis for a people's policy.

The Betancur government has its own opinion about the National Dialogue. It sees the Dialogue as an institutionalization of the discussion in the commissions with a defined time span and recommendations to the government

4. The Camilista Movement is made up of followers of Camilo Torres, a Catholic priest who became a guerrilla fighter and was killed in battle in 1966.

and parliament.

So there is a *dispute over the idea proposed*. There is convergence on terms and mechanical points, but a difference over perspectives. For us in the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the National Dialogue involves two elements: first, the opportunity to raise our programmatic proposals and those of the general workers and people's movement inside and outside the commissions, in every type of meeting or forum, and second, an opportunity to promote the mobilization of the ranks of the people and workers in the cities and countryside *around their own legitimate demands*. We urge the masses to mobilize independently and in struggle against the system and the government that represents the system.

In this sense, we are against the Dialogue being a mere institutional mechanism or launching pad for class conciliation or for the embellishment of the system.

The biggest danger in the National Dialogue is that the government and the Liberal-Conservative bipartisan system could turn it into an instrument for *integration* into the state, in the name of "national unity" and of respect for the constitution, which points to the parliament as

the "arena for democracy."

The response to this real danger is not to stand aside, nor to point out that the Dialogue is superstructural because of its semi-institutional character, but rather to respond with the policy of combining the call for and encouragement of mobilizations with propaganda for the proposals of socialism.

Therefore, together with all the forces of the left, the workers, and the people, we must organize *broad forums that call for mobilization* and not simply forums that discuss and make revolutionary propaganda. Moreover, in conclusion, they will have to fight to convert them into platforms for exposure and into events that call for mobilization and set dates and means of struggle — for a demonstration of solidarity with a strike, for the civic shutdown for taking the land.

In each region we must be attentive to put forward or hear the slogans that may be mobilized around. *We, who have saluted the idea of the National Dialogue since the beginning, must participate with this perspective, which expresses our deep conviction that the liberation of the workers can only be the task of the workers themselves.* □

Mass arrests, state of siege in Chile

By Will Reissner

In an attempt to quell mass protests scheduled for November 27 and 28, Chile's military dictatorship has imposed a state of siege. It has repeatedly sent convoys of heavily armed troops and police, backed by helicopters, to carry out house-to-house searches and mass arrests in poor and working-class neighborhoods of the country's large cities.

Since the state of siege was declared on November 6, Chileans have been subject to a midnight-to-dawn curfew. Six opposition magazines were shut down. Newspapers are prohibited from reporting on the raids carried out by police and troops.

In scenes reminiscent of the bloody military coup that overthrew the government of President Salvador Allende in 1973, the military have used soccer stadiums as detention centers for the thousands of people seized in the mass sweeps.

Human-rights groups report that more than 500 people have been sent into internal exile in remote areas of the country.

The latest crackdown marks the first time the regime has used troops against protests since August 1983, when the military killed 27 people in two days of demonstrations.

The entire leadership and many rank-and-file activists of the Democratic People's Movement (MDP), a coalition organizing the November 27–28 protests, have gone underground.

Among those arrested was Fanny Pollarolo, a national director of the Democratic People's Movement. Pollarolo, who has been identified

in the bourgeois press as a member of the Communist Party, was seized after leaving the Catholic Church's human rights office in Santiago on November 21. Two days later she was banished to the village of Maullín.

Although still illegal, the CP has recently surfaced to play a public role in the protests against the dictatorship.

Military dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet hopes his use of an iron fist will break the growing strength of the movement against military rule. But Pinochet faces big obstacles, including a staggering three-year economic crisis.

One-quarter of the work force is unemployed or subsisting on public works jobs paying less than \$40 per month.

Copper sales account for half of Chile's export earnings. But with the international price for copper at an all-time low, the country's rulers have had to slash imports and cannot repay Chile's \$20 billion debt to foreign banks, the largest debt in Latin America in per capita terms.

As it became clear that Chile cannot make the \$2.3 billion interest payments to foreign banks that fall due in 1985, the International Monetary Fund has demanded that the military regime implement further austerity measures as a condition for future loans.

The IMF's policy is designed to further reduce the living standards of Chilean workers and farmers in order to insure that the imperialist banks receive their interest payments. □

Joint statement on Hong Kong accord

Hong Kong Trotskyists analyze China-Britain agreement

[On Sept. 26, 1984, the governments of China and Britain signed an agreement to restore Chinese sovereignty over the British colony of Hong Kong on July 1, 1997.

[As of that date, Hong Kong will become a Special Administrative Region of China, with a large measure of internal autonomy.

[In an annex to the agreement, the Chinese government stipulated "that after the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the socialist system and socialist policies shall not be practiced in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and that Hong Kong's previous capitalist system and life style shall remain unchanged for 50 years."

[British rule over Hong Kong dates back to the 1842 Treaty of Nanking, which ended the first of the infamous Opium Wars that Britain fought to force China's Qing dynasty to open the country to British opium sellers.

[A second piece of territory was taken by the British under the 1860 Convention of Peking, and the largest part was seized in 1898, when the Chinese government was forced to grant the British a 99-year lease on the area known as the New Territories.

[That lease expires on June 30, 1997. The government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) rejected British calls for an extension of the lease.

[Of Hong Kong's 5 million inhabitants, 98 percent are Chinese.

[The following "joint statement on the draft agreement between the PRC government and the UK (United Kingdom) government on the future of Hong Kong" was published by the Hong Kong Trotskyists. The statement was issued October 12 by the publications *October Review* and *Combat News Monthly* and by the Revolutionary Marxist League.

[The translation from the Chinese is by the statement's authors.]

* * *

1. The decision of the Chinese government to recover sovereignty over Hong Kong is of historically progressive significance. Over 140 years of British colonial rule is to be gone forever. Therefore, the recovery of sovereignty over Hong Kong by the Chinese government should be affirmed and supported by all the people of China (including the people of Hong Kong).

2. The Chinese people have always considered Hong Kong a part of Chinese territory; the three unequal treaties that Britain forced the Qing court to sign must be unconditionally abrogated; the British imperialists and their colonial regime must unconditionally withdraw from Hong Kong.

However, the Chinese government agreed

with the British imperialists to recover sovereignty over Hong Kong only beginning 1 July 1997. This is not only a recognition of the unequal treaty which leased the New Territories, but is also in practice recognition of the legality of British rule of Hong Kong based on the unequal treaties. This is a serious political mistake.

3. In fact, the British imperialists are not willing to return Hong Kong. In the Introduction of the White Paper published by the UK government, the UK government admitted that it had tried to persuade the Chinese government to allow its continued occupation of Hong Kong. When this attempt failed, the British, under the pretext of "maintain the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong" and through secret negotiations, sought to intervene in Hong Kong's internal affairs after the return of sovereignty.

The strategy of the British imperialists is to have the Chinese government state in detail in the Joint Declaration policies that can extend British influence and economic interests. The British imperialists further demand that the Chinese government sign "a legally binding international agreement" to commit itself to the British in the practice of the related policies.

4. The British government is obviously extorting the Chinese government with the condition of returning sovereignty over Hong Kong in order that Britain, after it is obliged to return sovereignty over Hong Kong, can have the legal basis for widely interfering in Hong Kong's internal affairs and maintaining certain economic privileges.

The British government at the same time threatens the Hong Kong people that "the alternative to acceptance of the present agreement is to have no agreement." It requires the Hong Kong people to accept the agreement "as a whole." The British imperialists are making use of the Hong Kong people's fear of CCP [Chinese Communist Party] bureaucratic rule to cheat the Hong Kong people to accept an international agreement that allows Britain to legally intervene in China's internal affairs.

5. On August 18, we sent a Memorandum to the State Council of the PRC via the Hong Kong New China News Agency, in which we urged the Chinese government to stand firmly on the principle of independence of sovereignty, and demanded that the Chinese government refuse to sign with the British imperialists any agreement that includes Hong Kong's internal affairs after the recovery of sovereignty.

In the Memorandum, we solemnly pointed out that the Chinese government should mobilize the strength of the Hong Kong masses and assist the Hong Kong people to convene

a generally elected, full powered Hong Kong General Assembly to end colonial rule and to practice democratic rule of Hong Kong by the Hong Kong people.

6. Now, the Chinese government puts in detail, in the Joint Declaration (in effect an international agreement) and the Annexes, its policies regarding Hong Kong after the recovery of sovereignty. The Chinese government further declares that it will enact a Basic Law of Hong Kong based on the related content in the Joint Declaration and the Annexes.

We consider that this not only violates the country's sovereignty but also deprives the Hong Kong people of the right to democratically decide Hong Kong's future social system and policies. Therefore, we solemnly state that:

A. China's policies towards Hong Kong after recovery of sovereignty over Hong Kong belong entirely to China's domestic affairs, and must not be intervened in by the British imperialists; the British imperialists must withdraw from Hong Kong unconditionally.

B. The Chinese people possess full autonomy from any intervention of foreign countries, and the full right at present and in the future to decide the domestic affairs of China.

On the question of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong people possess the democratic right to decide the policies in Hong Kong. The Chinese people absolutely reject the Chinese government's inclusion of its policies towards Hong Kong in an international agreement, which allows the British to intervene in China's domestic affairs.

7. Since the British imperialists have long been practising colonial rule in Hong Kong, British capitalists occupy monopoly positions in Hong Kong's important sectors such as the financial, monetary, air travel, electricity, communications, and public transport sectors, and dominate Hong Kong's economic lifelines.

Therefore, the Chinese government's agreement to guarantee that the prevailing social and economic systems in Hong Kong will remain unchanged for 63 years, and its enactment of various concrete policies to ensure that the "economic interests [of the United Kingdom and other countries] in Hong Kong will be given due regard," will help the economic privileges of the imperialist countries to persist.

As a result, although sovereignty over Hong Kong belongs to China, Hong Kong will, with the approval of the Chinese government, be open to the economic plunder of the imperialist countries. The latter can also make use of their economically superior status to influence the internal affairs of Hong Kong.

8. Under British colonial rule, the Hong Kong people have long been under oppression. The people's political freedoms are suppressed. They are deprived of basic democratic rights. The mother language and culture are discriminated against. The right to education for students is seriously restricted. Mass actions of workers, residents, and young students to defend their rights are frequently repressed.

Now, the Chinese government uses the pretext of "maintaining stability and prosperity" to flagrantly express support and "give its cooperation" to the illegal and repressive rule of the colonial regime.

We consider that the wrong policies of the Chinese government seriously violate the dignity and interests of the Chinese (including Hong Kong) people.

9. Under the protection of the British colonial regime, monopoly-capital corporations seize huge profits relying on the very low profit-tax system and the laissez-faire policies on foreign currency and finance. On the other hand, social welfare and public services are seriously insufficient; employment and livelihood of the labouring people are not safeguarded; the gap between the rich and the poor widens.

Therefore, the continuation of the capitalist system without change means in effect defense of the monopoly and exploitation by the established interests. For the labouring people who constitute the great majority of the population, the policy of the Chinese government to defend the capitalists will make it more difficult for them to get rid of the oppression and exploitation.

10. We consider that the aim of the Chinese government's recovery of sovereignty must be to assist the Hong Kong labouring people to obtain liberation. Therefore, the Chinese government, at the same time that it recovers sovereignty over Hong Kong, should assist the Hong Kong people in the convening of a generally elected Hong Kong General Assembly so that the Hong Kong people have the full right to decide on how to recover sovereignty and carry out various social changes.

In this way, the aid of the Chinese people and the mobilization of the Hong Kong masses will force British imperialists to unconditionally withdraw from Hong Kong. The Hong Kong people will, in this course, establish a democratic, self-rule people's government and decide Hong Kong's political, economic, and social systems, and the relationship with mainland China.

11. The Chinese government has refused to adopt the above correct policies; this is the result of the Chinese Communist Party's one-party dictatorship and bureaucratic rule. The bureaucratic rule has constituted a serious obstacle to China's socialist construction and to the liberation of the Hong Kong masses.

The CCP fears that mobilization of the Hong Kong people to recover sovereignty will very probably impel the Hong Kong people to go on the road demanding class liberation and democratic self-rule. The CCP fears further that the



Hong Kong. Sovereignty over British colony is scheduled to be returned to China July 1, 1997.

independent, autonomous mobilization of the Hong Kong masses will stimulate the struggle of the people in China to fight for socialist democracy and to get rid of the CCP's bureaucratic rule.

12. In order to alleviate the Hong Kong people's skepticism and fear of the CCP bureaucratic rule, the Chinese government is obliged to concede and "promise" limited self-rule for Hong Kong. From the Tien An Men Event* to the democracy movement in China to the recent CCP policies to carry out economic readjustment, and limited improvement of the people's livelihood, it has been shown that the strength of the masses cannot be slighted. The Hong Kong people should grasp the opportunity to mobilize and strive for democratic self-rule.

13. Political democratization of the whole country is an indispensable prerequisite for the unification of a nation. At present, the National People's Congress is not produced by general election. It is an instrument of rule by the privileged bureaucracy. It cannot represent the wishes and will of the Chinese people (including the Hong Kong people). Only through a democratically elected National People's

*Thousands of people gathered in Peking's Tien An Men Square on April 1, 1976, to commemorate the death of Prime Minister Chou En-lai. They were soon joined by other Peking residents with grievances against the government's policies, and for several days the crowds grew larger and larger.

On April 5, 1976, the government ordered police to remove wreaths and posters from the square. An angry crowd gathered, swelling to more than 100,000 at its height. Throughout the day, demonstrators battled police trying to clear the square. Thousands were assaulted and arrested.

Congress and through the practice of socialist democracy and legal system, with the people as master of the country, can the firm basis be laid for the unification of the nation.

Therefore, we appeal to the people of China (including Hong Kong) to:

A. Oppose all articles of the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Annexes that violate the principle of sovereignty and that breach the interests of the Chinese (including Hong Kong) people.

B. Demand that the Chinese government assist the Hong Kong people to convene a generally elected, full-powered General Assembly, recover sovereignty as soon as possible, and practise democratic self-rule of the Hong Kong people.

C. Compel the Chinese government to at once carry out radical democratic changes, abolish one-party dictatorship and bureaucratic privileges, practice socialist democracy and legal system, and return the government to the people.

We also appeal to the Hong Kong people to:

A. Organize and take the initiative to convene a generally elected and full-powered Hong Kong General Assembly, end colonial rule, and democratically elect a self-rule government.

B. Actively start the discussion on the drafting of the Basic Law, strive for the democratic enactment of the Basic Law by the Hong Kong people, and realize the democratic rule of Hong Kong by the Hong Kong people.

C. Be closely concerned with the political, economic and social developments in China, join forces with the people in the mainland, and struggle together for the practice of socialist democracy in China. □

Black workers in massive strike

Unions back labor action against apartheid

By Ernest Harsch

In the largest political strike in South African history, some one million Black workers walked off their jobs November 5 and 6 to protest the apartheid regime's racist policies and brutal repression. This strike — which paralyzed much of the heavily industrialized region around Johannesburg and Pretoria — dramatically reflected the growing weight and political activism of the Black union movement, in alliance with a wide array of student, community, and political organizations.

The strike has come in the midst of a massive and sustained mobilization against apartheid rule. Minister of Law and Order Louis Le Grange has admitted that this upsurge is more serious than the 1976 township rebellions.

Since August, all sectors of the oppressed Black majority have been drawn into active struggle against white minority rule. The overwhelming majority of Indians and Coloureds (those of mixed ancestry) boycotted elections to new, segregated parliamentary bodies recently set up by the regime in an effort to pit those communities against the 24 million Africans, who make up the bulk of the country's Black population.

Hundreds of thousands of Black students — African, Coloured, and Indian — have stayed away from their classrooms to protest the regime's parliamentary "reforms" and its racist education policies. Residents of the Black townships have risen up to protest high rents, taxes, and transportation fares. Workers have walked off their jobs frequently — including in the strategic gold mines — to demand higher wages and recognition for their unions.

Many of these protests have been initiated or backed by the United Democratic Front (UDF), a broad coalition of more than 600 anti-apartheid organizations with a membership of more than 2 million.

In addition, fighters of the outlawed African National Congress (ANC), the main liberation organization, have continued their armed actions against key economic targets, police stations, and government institutions, while other underground ANC activists have helped build the demonstrations, boycotts, and strikes.

The regime's basic response to this upsurge, as to previous ones, has been repression and more repression. Police have murdered at least 160 Blacks over the past two and a half months. Thousands have been arrested. Striking workers have been fired. Troops and police have been mobilized for massive sweeps in selected Black townships.

But this campaign of terror has failed to intimidate the Black population or break the momentum of the protests. Rather, it has prompted the various Black organizations and

communities to draw closer together, into a more unified struggle against the rule of the white capitalist class.

'How can we be silent?'

Several times previously, appeals were made for workers to go on strike to protest the regime's crackdown. On September 17, tens of thousands of Soweto workers heeded such a call issued by one of the UDF's affiliated groups, the Release Mandela Committee, which is campaigning for the freedom of imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela. On October 22, workers in KwaThema, in the East Rand, responded to a similar call.

Less than a week later, on October 27, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), another UDF affiliate and a key force in the Black student protests, issued a new strike appeal, this time for a general strike throughout the Transvaal region. This call won the backing of 37 organizations, including the UDF, the Federation of South African Women, various youth and community groups, and some of the largest predominantly Black unions: the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), and the South African Allied Workers Union, which between them account for a majority of the more than 500,000 members of independent Black unions.

For FOSATU in particular, support for this strike call marked a significant new move; its leadership had previously been reluctant to participate in actions around overtly political demands.

But as FOSATU President Chris Dlamini commented on the first day of the strike, "It is crystal clear to us that our members and other workers are being sucked dry by bloodthirsty industrialists and the government. How can we be silent when the children of our members are killed like animals in the streets of the townships? How can we be silent when our children tell us they cannot take the educational inferiority any longer? How can we be silent when we are forced to pay high rents for houses that are mere sleeping dungeons? How can we be silent when we are denied basic human rights in the land of our birth?"

Constituting themselves into the Transvaal Regional Stayaway Committee, the groups backing the strike issued 400,000 pamphlets explaining the strike's demands. They included:

- Withdrawal of the army and police from the Black townships.
- The release of all political prisoners and all those detained.
- An end to rent and bus fare hikes.
- Reinstatement of all dismissed workers.

- Scrapping of the upper age limit for school attendance.

- The resignation of all members of the Black community councils (set up by the regime).

- Abolition of the general sales tax.

The pamphlets declared, "Workers of the country unite, for you have nothing to lose but your chains."

Despite the fact that South Africa is in its deepest recession in decades, despite the employers' standard policy of firing or docking the pay of strikers, and despite the brutal police repression, hundreds of thousands of Black workers heeded the strike call.

Even according to the estimates of the government and employers, the strike was a stunning success. The Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce reported that at least half of the 2 million Black workers in the Johannesburg industrial region stayed home. The South African Press Association estimated that between 50 and 90 percent of the workers in the Witwatersrand and Vaal Triangle regions struck.

In addition, more than 250,000 Black students backed the strike by walking out of their classrooms.

The UDF was "overwhelmed by the success" of the strike, said Transvaal UDF Vice-president Frank Chikane. The ANC issued a statement hailing the strike and condemning "those Western governments" that back the regime.

Unionists detained

Against this massive show of Black working-class strength, the regime's answer was yet more repression. Some two dozen Blacks were killed by the police during the strike. The government-owned Sasol oil-from-coal conversion plant fired 90 percent of its Black work force, about 6,000 workers, for participating in the strike.

In the wake of the strike, police detained leaders of the UDF, members of the strike organizing committee, and leaders of the key unions taking part in the strike, including FOSATU President Chris Dlamini, CUSA General Secretary Piroshaw Camay, and Moses Mayekiso of the Metal and Allied Workers Union.

"Order shall be maintained," insisted Home Affairs Minister F.W. de Klerk. "South Africa cannot afford to allow its labor and economic spheres to become a battlefield."

But they are a battlefield, and will remain so. Several unions have called for a "black Christmas" — a consumer boycott — to protest the detentions. Residents of Grahamstown, in the Eastern Cape, staged a strike on November 9, and laid-off auto workers in that region have frequently joined demonstrating students.

Summing up the meaning of this massive conflict between South Africa's Black majority and the white minority government, UDF leader Frank Chikane emphasized, "The real issue is that the people are no longer willing to be governed by anyone but themselves." □