

# INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

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## Vietnamese-Kampuchean Offensive Pounds Rightist Guerrilla Forces



Kampuchean government troops rest on way to Thai border area.



### Fidel Castro Speaks on U.S.-Cuban Migration Agreement

#### *New Caledonia*

**Mitterrand Sends in  
More Colonial Troops**

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**Attacks on Maori Migrant  
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# Kampuchea hits rightist bands

By Will Reissner

Kampuchea — formerly known as Cambodia — celebrated the sixth anniversary of its liberation from the murderous Pol Pot regime on January 7. While festivities were taking place, Kampuchean and Vietnamese troops were hammering counterrevolutionary military bases in remote areas straddling Kampuchea's border with Thailand.

The bases are operated by three counterrevolutionary groups, which are financed and armed by the proimperialist Thai regime, the Stalinist leadership of the Chinese workers state, and Washington.

The largest of the counterrevolutionary military groups is headed by Pol Pot, who ruled Kampuchea from 1975 until 1979. Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge regime was overthrown in 1979 by Vietnamese troops and Kampuchean insurgents.

Vietnamese troops had entered Kampuchea following an invasion of southern Vietnam by Pol Pot's army in December 1978. That invasion had been encouraged by Peking and was coordinated with Chinese military pressure on Vietnam's northern border (culminating in an invasion by hundreds of thousands of Chinese troops in February 1979).

The Peking bureaucrats hoped that by bleeding Vietnam from south and north they would prove their worthiness as an ally to Washington. Washington has never forgiven the Vietnamese people for their victory over U.S. imperialism in 1975 and continues to try to isolate and "bleed" the country.

Pol Pot's invasion, however, was short-lived. Within weeks, Vietnamese troops had driven the Khmer Rouge forces back across the border and then pursued them into Kampuchea itself. There the Vietnamese linked up with Kampuchean insurgents, led by the present Kampuchean head of state Heng Samrin, and drove Pol Pot's forces all the way to the Thai border, where they were given sanctuary by Thai authorities and allowed to establish new military bases along the border.

## Kampuchea devastated by Pol Pot

While Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge ruled Kampuchea between 1975 and 1979, several million Kampucheans perished as victims of executions, starvation, and disease.

By the time of liberation, Kampuchea was an exhausted, devastated country. The Khmer Rouge had physically emptied Kampuchea's cities. They had destroyed much of the country's infrastructure and dismantled most of its industries.

Pol Pot's regime had singled out teachers, doctors, and technicians as special targets for execution, leaving Kampuchea with few educational or medical facilities intact.

Since 1979, however, Kampuchea has made

remarkable progress in reviving the basic fabric of society.

In the field of education, for example, starting almost from scratch, the Kampuchean government has restored the educational system to the point where 90 percent of school-age children now attend classes. An ambitious program of adult education has brought literacy to 685,000 of the 1 million adults who could not read or write in 1979.

With substantial material aid from Vietnam, the Soviet Union, and Eastern European countries, Kampuchea is rebuilding its economy as well.

It is precisely to hamper this revival that the counterrevolutionary troops of the Khmer Rouge, as well as followers of former Kampuchean Prime Minister Son Sann and former Prince Norodom Sihanouk, have been armed and financed by Peking, the proimperialist governments of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Washington.

## Shotgun wedding

Pol Pot's forces are by far the largest and best-armed of the three counterrevolutionary groups.

But because the murderous record of Pol Pot's rule is so widely known internationally, Washington and its ASEAN allies arranged a shotgun wedding between the Khmer Rouge and the smaller forces headed by Son Sann and Prince Sihanouk in order to disguise the leading role Pol Pot continues to play in fighting the Kampuchean government.

To give the Kampuchean counterrevolutionaries a more palatable image, Pol Pot, Son Sann, and Prince Sihanouk were brought together in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in June 1982 to form the self-styled "Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea."

This coalition, however, has been anything but cordial, and armed battles have broken out among its three components.

The three leaders in this coalition have been sharply divided for decades. Son Sann had been prime minister of Kampuchea in 1967, when he was exiled by then head-of-state Prince Sihanouk. Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge murdered Son Sann's wife and several other relatives.

Sihanouk himself was held under house arrest while the Khmer Rouge ran Kampuchea, and lost three sons to Pol Pot's murder machine. The former prince once admitted that if the "coalition government" ever actually gained power, the Khmer Rouge "would liquidate me."

What brought these three disparate forces together under one umbrella was the arm-twisting by their respective financial backers.

The formation of the "coalition government" proved useful in the public relations

field. Reports in the capitalist press repeatedly portray Son Sann as the real leader and the "democratic" hope for Kampuchea.

The presence of Son Sann and Sihanouk alongside the Khmer Rouge also makes it easier for governments to justify their United Nations votes to keep Kampuchea's seat in Pol Pot's hands.

But on the battlefield, these groups have maintained their separate forces and have scored far fewer successes.

## Vietnamese shield

The counterrevolutionaries have been unable to prevent the consolidation of the Heng Samrin government because Vietnamese troops have provided a shield behind which Kampuchean society could begin its recovery and the Kampuchean government could begin building its own armed forces to deal with the counterrevolutionaries.

As the strength of the Kampuchean armed forces has grown, there have been three annual withdrawals of contingents of the Vietnamese troops. The Vietnamese government has repeatedly pledged to withdraw all its troops from Kampuchea if foreign aid to Pol Pot's forces is ended.

## Dry-season offensive

With the onset of this year's November-to-May dry season in Kampuchea, Kampuchean and Vietnamese troops began large-scale military operations against guerrilla bases controlled by Pol Pot and Son Sann. Since the operations began, on November 18, virtually all of Son Sann's troops have been driven back into their sanctuaries in Thailand as their bases on the Kampuchean side of the border were overrun.

The feeble resistance by the Son Sann forces — despite the infusion of supplies and artillery support from the Thai army — has dealt a heavy blow to Son Sann's pretensions as a credible rival to Pol Pot within the rightist coalition. One Western official at the Thai-Kampuchean border described the rout of Son Sann's troops from their headquarters at Ampil as "a debacle" (*Washington Post*, Jan. 9, 1985).

Although the capture of the Son Sann camps has received the most attention in the imperialist press, the heaviest fighting during the current dry-season campaign has taken place around bases controlled by Pol Pot's forces.

Since late December, Kampuchean and Vietnamese troops have overrun five Khmer Rouge camps, putting nearly 1,000 of Pol Pot's troops out of commission, a Vietnamese diplomat told *Intercontinental Press*.

As of mid-January, neither of the two bases controlled by Sihanouk's forces has been attacked, reflecting the Kampuchean government's view that Sihanouk's troops are of little military significance.

With Son Sann's forces now in total disarray in Thailand, it is likely that Kampuchean and Vietnamese troops will mount further attacks on Pol Pot's bases before the dry season ends

in May.

According to Vietnam's ambassador to the United Nations, Hoang Bich Son, one striking difference between this year's dry-season offensive and previous ones has been the major role Kampuchean government troops have played in the fighting. Kampuchean infantry, artillery, and armored units have spearheaded the attacks on the counterrevolutionary camps, Ambassador Son reports.

In addition, Kampuchean units are carrying out effective political and propaganda campaigns directed at the rightist forces. These campaigns have resulted in cases of battalion-sized counterrevolutionary units disintegrating or surrendering without a fight.

#### Chinese pressure on Vietnam

In hopes of taking military pressure off the besieged rightist camps along the Thai-Kampuchean border, the Chinese authorities have concentrated 28 infantry divisions and more than 1,000 aircraft near China's border with Vietnam.

On January 15, division-sized units of the Chinese army began attacking Vietnamese positions from three hills inside Vietnam that had been captured by Chinese forces in April 1984. The infantry attacks have been supported by 50,000 rounds of artillery fire into Vietnam.

The fighting along the Sino-Vietnamese border has been intense. Vietnamese officials estimate that 2,000 Chinese troops were put out of action in the first three days of the fighting.

Chinese officials also rejected a Vietnamese proposal for a January 16-February 26 cease fire along the border during the Tet lunar new year festival.

The three countries of Indochina — Kampuchea, Vietnam, and Laos — waged a common fight against French colonialism in the 1950s, and against U.S. imperialism in the 1960s and 1970s. Today all three are jointly menaced by the proimperialist regime in Bangkok as well as by Washington and Peking.

Since June 1984, Thai troops have occupied three villages in Laos along its border with Thailand. The Thai occupiers forcibly moved residents of the villages into Thailand and fortified positions in the area.

Khenethong Nouanethasing of Laos' mission to the United Nations told *Intercontinental Press* that the Thai armed forces regularly shell Laotian positions from hills around the three villages.

#### Indochinese foreign ministers meet

A January 17-18 meeting of the foreign ministers of Kampuchea, Laos, and Vietnam reiterated the three Indochinese countries' call for peaceful settlement of tensions along the Thai-Kampuchean, Thai-Laotian, and Sino-Vietnamese borders.

The conference outlined a five-point plan to ease tensions between Thailand and Kampuchea. That plan would involve:

- A paired withdrawal of Vietnamese

troops from Kampuchea and elimination of Pol Pot's forces;

- Respect for the Kampuchean people's right to self-determination;
- Free elections in Kampuchea with the presence of foreign observers;
- An agreement by all countries in the region not to let their territory be used as a sanctuary by hostile forces operating against any other country;
- International supervision and guarantees of any agreement worked out.

The foreign ministers also pointed to the Indochinese countries' "time-honored friendship

with the Chinese people."

They stressed that a "relationship of friendship and cooperation between Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea on the one hand and the People's Republic of China on the other, would constitute a factor of extreme importance for peace and stability in Southeast Asia."

The conference also called on the Thai government to withdraw its troops from the three occupied Laotian villages, to return Lao civilians who were forced into Thailand, and to pay damages for the losses inflicted on the Lao population by the Thai army. □

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# Mitterrand sends more troops

## U.S. backs French rule, fears 'another Grenada'

By Will Reissner

French President François Mitterrand announced on January 20 that he was ordering more French troops to the nickel-rich Pacific island of New Caledonia, where the indigenous Kanak people are pressing for independence from France. The additional troops will join more than 6,000 French security forces already on that island of 140,000 inhabitants.

The independence movement is led by the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS), a coalition of 10 proindependence groups, which established a "provisional government of Kanaky" on Dec. 1, 1984.

"France intends to maintain its role and strategic presence in this part of the world," Mitterrand stated in a speech on French television. He added, "I have asked the prime minister . . . to take all necessary measures to this end, particularly regarding installations for the strengthening of the military base in Nouméa," the capital of the colony.

While deliberately avoiding the word "independence," Mitterrand also endorsed a plan developed by his special envoy to New Caledonia, Edgard Pisani, for a referendum to be held in New Caledonia in July on nominal independence for the island "in association with France." Under Pisani's plan, the French government would retain control over New Caledonia's currency, foreign and military policy, police, and broadcasting system.

The Pisani plan would also guarantee the property of the 50,000 French settlers on the island, which is 750 miles east of Australia and some 12,000 miles from France.

Mitterrand also announced in the January 20 speech that he would call a special session of the National Assembly in Paris to extend the state of emergency invoked by Pisani on January 12.

The television address was made upon Mitterrand's return from a surprise 12-hour visit to the island, after a 25-hour flight from Paris. While in New Caledonia, Mitterrand was met by demonstrations of French residents opposing any change in the island's present colonial status.

Reagan administration officials have indicated that Washington strongly hopes for a continued French presence in New Caledonia. In a January 10 interview with a Paris radio station, U.S. ambassador to France Evan Galbraith argued that New Caledonia could become "another Grenada," and expressed the hope that any solution would "maintain the status quo with the presence of France."

U.S. national security adviser Robert McFarlane said in Paris that France plays "a very positive role in Pacific affairs." McFarlane added, "the U.S. respects that and is con-

fident that France will continue to play a positive role in ways that only France can determine."

Since Nov. 18, 1984, when the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front mounted a successful Kanak boycott of elections to the island's local assembly, 14 Kanak activists have been murdered by supporters of continued French rule. Among those killed were two brothers of FLNKS leader Jean-Marie Tjibaou, and Eloi Machoro, minister of security in the FLNKS's provisional government of Kanaky.

New Caledonia was seized by the French in 1853. During the 19th century there were a number of uprisings by the Kanak natives of the island as French settlers grabbed most of the land on the fertile west coast, driving out the Kanak inhabitants.

Until the end of World War II, the Kanaks were obliged by French law to live only on reservations.

Today most Kanaks live on reservations or in traditional villages on the island's east coast, where they survive through subsistence agriculture or fishing.

The mountainous interior of the country is the site of huge French-owned nickel mines. New Caledonia is one of the largest nickel producers in the world, and nickel accounts for 92 percent of New Caledonia's total exports.

As a result of a French policy of fostering French settlement on the island the Kanak population is now slightly less than half the is-



Kanak leader Jean-Marie Tjibaou.

land's total.

About 35 percent of the population is French, with most of the 50,000 French residents living in the city of Nouméa.

There are also about 16,000 natives of other French colonial possessions, such as the Pacific colonies of Tahiti and Wallis and Futuna, and the Indian Ocean colony of Réunion. Some 10,000 Indochinese, mostly Vietnamese, make up the remainder of the population. The Indochinese were brought to New Caledonia when their homelands were still under French colonial rule.

Kanak proindependence forces had placed great hopes in Mitterrand's 1981 election as president of France. Mitterrand's Socialist Party had been on record in favor of New Caledonia's independence, and Mitterrand himself had spoken favorably about that prospect before coming to power.

But once in power, the SP government backtracked, insisting that all the settlers, many of whom are in New Caledonia on a short-term basis, be given a voice in the island's future status.

Under pressure from the success of the November 18 Kanak election boycott, Pisani called for the right to vote on New Caledonia's independence "in association with France" to be limited to those who have resided in New Caledonia for at least three years.

The FLNKS, however, demands that only those with at least one parent born in New Caledonia be allowed to vote on the island's future status.

FLNKS leader Jean-Marie Tjibaou has denounced the French government for calling for Kanak participation in negotiations while simultaneously carrying out "a policy of repression exclusively against the Kanak people." Tjibaou also bitterly pointed to the French government's refusal to disarm "the reactionary colonialist population" despite massacres of Kanak activists. □

### New Zealand socialists greet Kanak struggle

[Susanna Onei, a leader of the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) of New Caledonia, addressed the December convention of the Socialist Action League, New Zealand section of the Fourth International. After her talk, the convention sent the following greetings to the FLNKS.]

\* \* \*

Delegates of the 9th New Zealand Socialist Action League conference send greetings to the FLNKS and give fraternal solidarity to the struggle for an independent Kanaky.

We pledge support in the fight against French and New Zealand imperialist domination of the Pacific.

French troops out of New Caledonia!  
Vive Kanaky Libre!

# SWP message to Kanak people

'Your struggle extends the revolutionary process'

[The following message to the Provisional Government of the Republic of Kanaky was unanimously adopted by the January 12-15 convention of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. It was introduced by SWP 1984 presidential candidate Mel Mason, who had recently returned from a trip to Australia and New Zealand where he met with representatives of the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS).]

\* \* \*

Provisional Government  
Republic of Kanaky

Comrades:

Delegates to the U.S. Socialist Workers Party's convention denounce the coldblooded murder of comrade Eloi Machoro by the French police. This murder, along with the murder of other Kanak activists, shows that the same brutal force French imperialism used to repress the peoples of Algeria and Vietnam is now being used to repress the Kanak people. We call for the immediate withdrawal of French occupation forces and join you in demanding the complete and immediate indepen-

dence of Kanaky.

We solidarize with your courageous struggle to end 130 years of French imperialist domination of your country. Your struggle is an example and inspiration for all the oppressed and toiling masses throughout the world.

As the reaction of the French imperialists to your just demand for independence becomes more and more bloody, we are reminded of Vietnam and Algeria and the brutal rule of French imperialism over these peoples. We are reminded also of the resounding victory scored by the workers and peasants of Vietnam in 1954 and in Algeria in 1962 when they booted out the French imperialist beast.

Following the French defeat in Vietnam, the U.S. imperialists moved in to fill the breach. Likewise, in Kanaky today, the U.S. government stands behind the French rulers in their drive to maintain their domination. As thousands of French troops are deployed to occupy your country, the U.S. government is deepening its war to overturn Nicaragua's revolutionary government and to smash the revolutionary struggle in El Salvador. The U.S. ruling class no more wants to lose Puerto Rico

— its direct colony in the Caribbean — or give up the Marshall Islands, Guam, its other colonies in the South Pacific, or its domination of Central America than the French imperialists want to lose Kanaky, Guadaloupe, or Martinique. Your struggle thus threatens U.S. imperialism in that a victory in Kanaky would serve as an example and inspiration to the peoples of Puerto Rico and the Philippines — not to mention the impact it would have on the toilers fighting against the U.S. war in Central America.

We pledge to support your struggle and to utilize all our resources to build solidarity with that struggle among U.S. workers and farmers and all supporters of democratic rights and national independence. Blacks, especially, will be inspired by your fight for independence.

As we work to build solidarity with your struggle, we draw strength and inspiration from it. Your struggle helps the battle of working people in this country against our exploitation and oppression. U.S. working people face a great challenge and responsibility: dealing the final death blow to world imperialism. Your struggle extends this revolutionary process and helps bring closer the day when the oppressed peoples of the world wipe imperialist domination from the face of the earth forever!

Long live the FLNKS!  
Victory to the Kanak people!  
Long live the Republic of Kanaky!

## The course of the Kanak struggle

*French LCR polemicizes with critics of FLNKS*

By Claude Gabriel  
and Vincent Kermel

[The following article is reprinted from the Jan. 3-9, 1984, issue of *Rouge*, weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

Solidarity toward the Kanak people's struggle seems to pose problems for some organizations and figures that traditionally take a stance of militant anticolonialism. That is the case with lawyer Denis Langlois, the comrades from Lutte Ouvrière (LO), and from the newspaper *Le Monde Libertaire*.

For example, what LO sees in New Caledonia is a struggle "placed under the leadership of Kanak notables." Without buttressing its argument with a detailed analysis of the structure of Kanak society, LO feels that the FLNKS's objectives are "to open the way for the development of the Kanak bourgeoisie," and that this is confirmed by recent events.

Finally, LO feels that the FLNKS would never concern itself with what LO feels are the common interests between the Kanaks and the "poor Caldoches" [French settlers], which shows that the FLNKS is not a proletarian current.

For its part, *Le Monde Libertaire* wrote on December 6: "It would appear that the FLNKS expresses the desire to impose a veritable dic-

tatorship over everything not inspired by Marxism, and in that way tries to impose its own conception of the liberation struggle." The paper also criticizes the LCR for its support to "a movement that displays so much intolerance and so clearly makes calls to racial hatred."

All these different positions start from a common false theoretical basis. They are in fact based on the supposition that the general interests of the workers present in New Caledonia transcend the question of Kanak national oppression. This debate is as old as the workers movement, and historically has never decided in favor of those who reproached the oppressed for their nationalism.

A colonial social formation, and that is what it is, does not divide the population into simple, well-defined social classes. What intrudes is the oppression of a people and a nation. The national liberation struggle in Algeria amply showed that the national question can, for a whole historic period, play the driving role in the anticolonial mobilization. This is an objective fact, independent of the character of the leadership of the specific nationalist move-



ment.

The mobilization begins around national demands, starting from the level of consciousness of the oppressed, before it can express more precise social objectives.

You therefore cannot claim to want to radicalize the class struggles in a colonial situation while ignoring the importance of a people's national sentiment. The question of the character of the political leadership of the nationalist movement obviously comes into play around assuring the further development and growth of the struggle.

But the analyses made by LO, Denis Langlois, or *Le Monde Libertaire* are marked by an incorrect focus regarding the FLNKS as well as a more fundamental lack of understanding of the Kanak national question.

### **1. FLNKS is a Kanak organization open to non-Kanak**

The majority of those anticolonialists who worry about the FLNKS's supposedly "racist" or "totalitarian" positions do so without having much understanding of the content of the FLNKS's positions, actions, or even composition.

The founding congress of the FLNKS reiterated the call to non-Kanak to join their fight.

White pro-independence militants are subjected to threats, to being shunned on the job, and even to acts of violence.

The local rightists do not hesitate to hound those they consider "traitors to their race." Pierre Declercq, the white secretary-general of the Union Calédonienne was murdered in 1981. In protest demonstrations, banners bore the inscription "Pierre, first white martyr of Kanak and socialist independence."

There are some non-Kanak in the leadership of the organizations that make up the FLNKS and in its political bureau. One of them, the leader of the Caledonian Socialist Party (PSC), Norbert Caffa, told Agence-France Presse last month: "There are about 1,500 of us whites who support and vote for the independentists. But only about 50 are active, because people are afraid of being found out."

The creation in 1982 of the Federation of Kanak and Exploited Workers Unions (USTKE) was the result of a long debate in the other union, the Federation of Workers and Employees Unions of New Caledonia (USOENC), around the Kanak demand for independence. The term "exploited" in the USTKE's name is explicitly aimed at all those workers who are ready to simultaneously fight for their class interests and for the demand for self-determination of the oppressed people. Half the leadership of the USTKE, moreover, is non-Kanak, and a good number of those who joined in the last period were workers originally from [the French Pacific colony of] Wallis and Futuna.

### **2. Self-determination of the oppressed people means the right to Kanak independence**

The Kanak independence forces have al-

ways appealed to progressive whites to take part in their fight. The genesis of the demand for Kanak and socialist independence is the product of a radicalization in recent years, partly due to the weak response to the Kanak people's call among the ranks of the non-Kanak and especially the "small whites."

If you today view the demand for Kanak independence as a racist slogan, you fall into the trap set by the colonial right and the government, who speak of "multi-racial" or "pluri-ethnic" independence, in an attempt to disguise a neocolonial solution in which the dominant white community would preserve the greater part of its interests.

Colonial domination did not turn New Caledonia into a "pluri-ethnic" society in which the mixture of communities has overshadowed the colonial question. The Kanak people exist as a national entity: politically they have not been reduced to the scale of just one ethnic group among others in their own territory.

The anticolonial struggle therefore blends in with the battle for the reestablishment of all the legitimate rights of the Kanak people: political rights, but also the right to land, to work, to housing, to health care. Progressive Europeans over there must thus join with the FLNKS in accepting the slogan of Kanak independence.

From the beginning the FLNKS has explained the free choice of Kanak citizenship for those who want to remain in the country after independence. They will have the choice between Kanak citizenship, or the status of immigrant worker if they wish to keep French citizenship.

### **3. The white working-class has special interests**

A non-Kanak working class exists because the colonial administration has done everything to hold back the proletarianization of the Kanaks. Certain Europeans and Wallisians have responded positively to the pro-independence appeals. The USTKE defends these workers, even when they are not for independence. In addition, on several occasions this union has made initiatives for unity in action with the USOENC, which has a non-Kanak majority and is mainly based in the nickel industry and the ports. But we are in a colonial situation.

It is one thing to carry out general propaganda in favor of the non-Kanak workers joining the struggle for Kanak independence. The FLNKS, and before it the Independence Front, has done so on numerous occasions. But it is a dangerous error to believe that a large segment of these layers are going to respond to that appeal.

The FLNKS cannot base its policy on such an illusory expectation. The European wage workers are not simply "exploited" layers in New Caledonia, as they would be in France. Because of their racial affiliation and their privileges, they form a sort of "aristocracy of labor" and are fully conscious of belonging to a

dominant colonial bloc.

The end of the colonial system would mean the end of the inequalities the Kanaks suffer. This in turn would mean the end of the privileges of the whites, including the "small whites." Indeed, in the event of independence the "small farmers" would have a harder time turning to something else than the big European capitalists. But this in no way changes the fact that the future of the Kanaks rests in a radical land reform that gives them the right to recover lands stolen from them.

To defend the right to private ownership of the land by the "small whites" would mean sending back the Kanaks to their tiny reservations, denying any content to the demand for self-determination of the oppressed people, and supporting the present form of colonial and capitalist domination of the land.

By contrast, recognizing the right to self-determination of the oppressed Kanak people is the only way to open the way to a truly democratic solution to the problems of the land, work, or health in New Caledonia.

### **4. The FLNKS is now the national organization of the Kanak people**

Last July the FLNKS decided to leave the colonial institutions and to mobilize the Kanak masses in the field. This does not make the FLNKS a revolutionary communist leadership, which no one claims it is. But it explains how the FLNKS could respond to the needs of the mobilization and the expectations of the Kanak population.

Lifting the roadblocks did not stem simply from tactical needs in the negotiations, but also from a need to take the time to prepare to move to a new stage of the mobilization, and to do so without precipitating an overly premature confrontation with the local reactionaries and the colonial repressive forces.

By the way, as background, it is necessary to understand that there is no Kanak bourgeoisie, nor even a well-off Kanak petty-bourgeoisie. In addition, the use of the term "notables" shows the embarrassment of some people who have some inkling of the complex social reality before them, but do not want to upset their prepackaged schemas.

Thus far, whatever differentiations might exist among the Kanak people have not led to the crystallization of definitive social strata. And you cannot base your present analysis of the FLNKS and its leadership solely on the vague premonitions of someone sitting in a Paris office regarding the future development of certain FLNKS members.

Whatever the differences in income among the Kanaks, or the weight of certain conceptions forged through the activities of the churches or participation in colonial institutions, the present leadership of the FLNKS is a pragmatic nationalist leadership. But it is anchored in an exceptionally powerful Kanak national sentiment that is directly related to the customs inherited from the historic traditions of the Kanak people. This, moreover, is what lays the basis for the FLNKS's hegemony. □

# Rail workers resist government attacks

*Fight for solidarity with striking miners strengthens unions*

**By Doreen Wepler**

LONDON — As the miners enter the tenth month of their titanic battle, the strike shows no signs of decisive cracks. Yet the solidarity from other groups of workers has still not reached the level necessary to give the miners victory.

This is not because rank-and-file support for the strike is absent. Broad layers of workers appreciate that their own future at the hands of the bosses and the Tory government is bound up with the outcome of the miners' strike.

This is particularly true of rail workers. More than any other group of workers, it has been rail workers — especially those employed at pit-head depots that transport coal to the power stations — who have been in the front line of solidarity action with the miners.

Most depots and local union meetings take regular collections for the miners. Last year's days of action in support of the miners, called by the regional Trades Union Congresses, shut down British Rail (BR) in each region. There is widespread sympathy for the miners' struggle and considerable anger about BR management's victimization of rail workers supporting the miners.

The fortunes of coal miners and rail workers are closely linked. If the Tory government succeeds in imposing its mine closure plans, thousands of rail workers whose livelihoods depend on the coal industry will be thrown on the dole queues [unemployment lines]. A full 80 percent of all coal is transported by rail, comprising 60 percent of the total freight carried on Britain's railroads.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the miners' strike today dominates the concerns of the two major rail unions — the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen. However, rail workers are also responding to the massive attacks under way against their own jobs, working conditions, and union organizations.

Any one of these issues could provoke rail workers into action. A combined struggle of rail workers and miners would tip the scales decisively for the miners. From the outset, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her transport minister, Nicholas Ridley, recognized the political stakes involved and instructed the British Rail Board (BRB) to avoid at all costs any united action between miners and rail workers.

Desperate to avoid any large-scale rail struggle, at the 1984 pay talks the BRB dropped its previous insistence that the pay settlement must be linked to five productivity exercises. A massive increase in productivity is central to

the impending restructuring of the rail industry in the interests of the bosses.

However, despite this favorable situation for the rail workers, the union leaders accepted a measly 5 percent pay increase — hardly more than the rate of inflation. Many angry activists asked at union meetings up and down the country, "Why aren't our leaders out to reverse cuts in the industry, now that we are in the strongest negotiating position ever with the miners out on strike?"

## One-day job actions

The pressure is so great from the rank and file that the Federation (the body uniting the two major rail unions) has been forced to call a series of one-day stoppages since the miners' strike started. The end result is that during this time large numbers of rail workers have been involved in industrial action — both in defense of their own jobs and conditions and in support of the miners.

But because of the policies of the union leaders, this has been one grade (job category) at a time or on a local or regional basis.

For instance, on August 10 rail workers employed at the workshops at British Rail Engineering Ltd. (BREL), which manufactures the trains, protested against the decimation of jobs in their grade. Since 1982 more than 5,000 jobs have gone from the 30,000-strong work force. In August British Rail announced a further 10,000 jobs were at immediate risk through plans that are ultimately designed to put the workshops into the hands of private owners. On the day of the 24-hour strike, thousands of shop workers poured into Derby, a Midlands town built around the railworks, and were joined by striking miners with banners that dotted the demonstration as it marched through the town. It is evident that every action taken by rail workers will rapidly link up with the miners' strike.

More recently, unilateral decisions by BR management to cut jobs and reduce safety levels in the signaling and telegraph grade of the work force sparked off some anger, and yet another grade-wide campaign of noncooperation was called to begin on November 12. This action was averted only when management was forced to partially retreat.

Partial step-downs have also occurred as a result of a series of recent local strikes taken to defend jobs by preventing cuts in services. For instance, in November, southern region rail workers scored some success in staying management's hand in its plan to slash commuter services. In December, Welsh rail workers won a temporary reprieve against drastic cuts in the Cardiff Valley Lines.

Finally, at a national level, preparations for industry-wide action started at the end of the summer when union leaders called for a 24-hour strike on September 10. Joint local strike committees of both major unions were elected throughout the country, picket rosters were drawn up, and union literature was distributed. The issue was job loss. British Rail management suddenly announced that yet another 18,000 jobs would be slashed in the next five years, and this figure did not include 10,000 workshop jobs at risk.

These cuts would bring the number of British Rail employees down to 137,317 by 1990. And this in an industry where jobs have already disappeared on a massive scale. In 1950, some 497,000 staff were employed; by 1981 the number had fallen to 166,000.

In the face of the threat of widespread action, management threw down a few more sops. This time they promised little more than the slowing down of the closure program and cuts in staffing levels, yet it was enough for the top officials to call off the September 10 strike at the eleventh hour.

So as we enter 1985, all the issues remain. The BRB is using every opening it can take to push ahead with its plans to slash the work force and increase the productivity of the remaining workers. The rank and file are still prepared to fight back.

The Rail Federation has just submitted a claim for a 30 percent pay raise, a cut in the workweek from 39 to 35 hours, and an extra week's holiday in the 1985 negotiations.

Under the NUR's previous leadership of ex-General Secretary Sidney Weighell, the BRB's plans were implemented with ease. In 1981 and 1982, a total of 27,000 jobs disappeared.

The election of the new leadership, headed by Jimmy Knapp, reflected the determination of the rank and file to fight this massacre. But the accumulated divisions fostered by Weighell were not overcome with the rise of the left wing of the bureaucracy. Furthermore, much of the Weighell machinery still controls important parts of the apparatus.

Knapp is seen by most workers as a welcome change from the company-unionism of Weighell, but he is still very much on trial. So, for instance, while rail workers have generally welcomed his efforts in establishing the Federation and breaking down the historical animosity between the craft union of the drivers and the NUR, there is growing concern among union activists about his record to date. He is attempting to balance between old divisions that exist in the industry, with the end result that any developing unity that had real power is

being diffused.

This is especially serious in light of the dire situation facing rail workers. For instance, low pay continues to plague the industry. Britain's rail workers are the lowest paid rail workers in Europe. Today, depending on their grade, rail workers find themselves 30 to 40 percent worse off than they were in 1975.

In an industry employing a large number of Asian and West Indian workers, thousands of rail workers live below the government poverty line and receive Family Income Supplements — a social security payment to prop up wages of low-paid workers.

Long hours are put in on the railways by workers trying to tackle the decline in the real value of their wages. Running the industry on overtime suits management. It is less expensive than employing new workers, and it divides and weakens workers who are vying against each other for the additional needed hours. In 1979 railway staff overtime averaged 14.5 hours per week, compared with the national average of 6 hours.

Low wages and long hours make British rail workers more productive than their counterparts in 12 other European countries. Management can truthfully claim that it runs the most cost-effective railway system in Europe. However, this has been achieved on the backs of the workers. Far from aiming to run the rail industry as an efficient, safe service in the interest of working people, the Tory government and management are out to increase profit margins and share out the dividends with Britain's wealthy few.

This is what is behind the most wide-scale privatization in the industry since it was nationalized in 1947. It is part of a more general drive by Britain's rulers to increase their rate of profit, which has been badly damaged by the economic recession, at the expense of the working class. The goal is to roll back the frontiers of public ownership, which workers see as a gain, and share in the profits of concerns previously closed to private firms.

By taking profit-making sectors away from the industry and promoting a balance-sheet approach to it, they helped put more pressure on the remaining workers to increase their productivity and make the books balance, even though the large profit figures have now disappeared from the income columns. Furthermore, they hope to weaken union organization on the job by splitting up the work force between different employers.

The damage to date has been severe, and there is still more to come. The 1980 Transport Act put the National Freight Corporation into private hands. Then British Transport Hotels, Sealink, Hovercraft, and some BR property were sold off with the 1981 Transport Act. In every case working conditions have declined. The British Rail Board recently awarded the contract to build a new nitrate train to a private firm instead of to BREL, for the first time since nationalization. This is part of the preparation to sell off BREL as a whole.

Private contractors are being used for every-



Coalville rail workers' leader Roy Butlin addressing a support meeting.

thing from track maintenance to station cleaning to on-train patron services. Entire money-making lines are being earmarked for privatization, such as the London to Gatwick Airport line.

#### Report proposes more cuts

These measures were carefully prepared by the publication of the Serpell Report at the end of 1983. This report, drawn up by a committee headed by Sir David Serpell, a former civil servant in the ministry of transport, is the product of a government inquiry into the dire financial straits of the rail industry. Although neither the government nor the BRB has officially endorsed its drastic proposals, they are being implemented through the back door and, where management can get away with it, being presented to workers as a fait accompli.

Serpell proposes in his report that up to 80 percent of Britain's railways be shut down, including all major freight-carrying lines around Manchester, Nottingham, South Wales, and Scotland. As the miners' strike has revealed, if it was implemented, this plan would sever links between rail workers, power station workers, and miners by transferring the transport of coal to the road haulage industry.

The political character of this proposal is evident. Serpell considers expense, danger on the road, and the irrationality of paying for 200 lorry [truck] movements for each trainload of coal or ore to be a necessary price to pay to weaken the trade union movement.

In addition to the privatization of BREL, Serpell also calls for a massive reduction in safety standards, including reducing the regional maintenance depots from 1,150 to a mere 200.

As the rail unions often point out, in 1982-83 the government was more than willing to fork out an average of £13.50 per household per week on arms expenditures, yet it can find no more than £15 per person *per year* to work the railways. A military budget of £14 billion that year compared with £4.3 billion spent on the entire British transport system.

Today BR management is introducing the proposals in the Serpell report in a piecemeal way. This is part of the preparations to tackle the rail unions head on. The miners' strike has slowed down the British Rail Board's plans, but they are proceeding. The principle of the eight-hour working day already has been lost with the introduction of flexible rostering. Now the board wants to bring in driver-only operations next. This particular productivity exercise will leave drivers on their own on the train, to cope with everything from mechanical problems and passenger needs to mishaps of all kinds — including derailments, fires, and so on. The entire grade of guard [brakeman] is at stake, threatening 12,000 jobs in the most militant grade in the NUR.

So far national industrial action where rail workers would be out with the miners has been avoided. But the miners' strike has had a deep impact on the rail industry. Rail workers' confidence to fight back against attacks on them has increased as a result of the miners' strike. And official industrial action against local attacks occurs regularly.

#### Example of Coalville

Furthermore, as the example of rail workers in Coalville, Leicestershire, demonstrates, they are also prepared to take action in support of the miners.

The 100 rail workers in Coalville are in the heart of scab country. Yet they have refused to shift the mountain of stockpiled scab coal which now dominates their town. Ray Butlin, one of the rank-and-file leaders at the depot, told *Intercontinental Press* about the pressure his members were under when they decided to refuse to shift coal last April.

"All of us recognized that if we voted to back the union we were putting ourselves on the line with respect to our neighbors, friends, and families. I say this because only 30 of the 2,500 miners in our area are on strike. Our town is built on the mining industry. Most people are connected to it in one way or another. So support for the union had a price.

"We have been struggling to make ends meet, while big wage packets from these high productivity pits come into every other house in the street. We found ourselves unwelcome in the local working men's clubs, which are controlled by working miners. This extends to Coalville's social club that is owned by the Labour Party, because the party is not unnaturally led by miners in our town, and they are all scabs. Even the pubs became known either as scab pubs or strikers' pubs from very early on in the dispute."

What the rail workers probably did not know at that time was how far management



would go in trying to pressure them to spurn their principles.

In the past 10 months, they have withstood:

- Blatant bribes from their superiors offering the more vulnerable workers jobs and conditions that are theirs by right if they shifted coal.

- A closure threat in September that the local manager said would go ahead if the men did not start to shift coal "first thing Monday morning."

- Transport police raids on the homes of seven rail workers the same night that families first heard about the closure threat. The raids resulted in criminal charges of theft against three rail workers. One charge sheet listed a few cloths and hand cleaner as the stolen property. The three were immediately sacked by British Rail, but active campaigning has since forced management to reinstate one, and the two others are still appealing.

- Two of the remaining four rail workers whose homes were raided were put on serious disciplinary charges by the BRB in December.

Rank-and-file leaders at the depot responded to each attack with appropriate action. When the first rail workers were sent home for refusing to work the coal trains, they called the entire depot out on strike. National union officials made clear that if the strike continued the men would not get national backing for their action. The depot returned to work, and rail workers on the coal trains were sent home individually.

The rank-and-file leaders decided that the best way to defend their members against victimization and harassment was to take their case to the labor movement, especially to other rail workers. Working closely with the "dirty thirty," as Leicestershire's striking miners are warmly called, Coalville leaders sought out public platforms, press conferences, financial support, and solidarity from other trade unionists. Today few major miners' support meetings are held where Coalville speakers are not on the platform.

The Coalville rail workers have consistently demanded that national union leaders organize support for them, but they have not waited for the official seal of approval before acting. When the union fell short of what Coalville felt was needed, on November 5 the depot organized a solidarity rally attracting over 100 rail workers from different parts of the country. This inspiring meeting showed Coalville rail workers that they were not on their own.

As support for the rally grew, the national executive of the NUR agreed to send a platform speaker. Rail workers welcomed his greetings on behalf of the federation of both major rail unions, but he also faced endless questioning from members who felt that the union was not doing enough for Coalville. Men from nearby depots demanded the national leadership call for national strike action to stop management's campaign of dirty tricks. As one freight guard put it, "You always say the men are not ready to act. Well, we're saying today that it is down to you. You set the

date, and we'll support the call."

The situation at Coalville is duplicated many times over in other coal depots. However, unlike Coalville, rail depots in other divided coalfields are themselves bitterly split down the middle. These divisions have allowed management to run roughshod over established working practices and conditions.

During the week before Christmas, the situation at Coalville changed dramatically. For the first time in 38 weeks, a coal train ran through the middle of the town on its way to a nearby power station. The arrival of large numbers of police had heralded this move.

A trainload a day would only keep the power station running for about two hours. But as Butlin explained, "The fact that a single coal train moved at all was important. It was a huge morale and propaganda victory for management."

#### Scabs' union

Rail managers are using every opportunity to weaken union organization. Unfortunately they already have an opening in the industry through the existence of the Federation of Professional Railway Staff (FPRS). This is a 1,500-strong breakaway union set up by the scabs during the 1982 wave of strikes against productivity plans, which shut down Britain's railways for a total of 51 days.

The founding platform of the FPRS states its opposition in principle to strikes. It has attracted a conservative layer of workers who think they can save the industry from government attacks if they unite with management. They fail to see that their interests as workers are fundamentally opposed to the common interests shared by the Tory government and the industrialists who sit on the British Rail Board.

The FPRS is not recognized by management. The closed shop agreement gives negotiating rights to only three rail unions, including the white-collar union, the Transport and Salaried Staff Association. Now this could all change. The 1982 Tory antiunion laws stipulate that from January 1985 the closed

shop agreement will no longer have legal status unless a full 80 percent of the work force endorse it through a secret ballot. This ballot has not yet been held at BR.

The FPRS has applied for negotiating rights in the 1985 pay round. It has the law on its side, and it will not be shy to use the courts. Today the FPRS is not a serious force in the industry. But it will in no way be ignored by the British Rail Board. To the contrary, the board will use the FPRS as a welcome weapon to put pressure on the bureaucracy of the major unions in the industry.

Another serious development has been recent newspaper reports outlining plans by supposedly "ordinary" rail workers to use the courts to prevent the rail unions from channeling resources to aid the miners. The miners have documented how right-wing employers' organizations are behind the so-called "ordinary" miners who are trying to destroy their union through the courts.

The FPRS is already a tool of such organizations. Just before Christmas the FPRS leafleted the homes of Coalville rail workers urging them to shift coal. This convinced the NUR members there that someone other than the 1,500 ordinary rail workers are involved. Who, for instance, supplied the FPRS with home addresses of 100 rail workers?

The use of the courts against the rail unions will be one further element of the assault that is under way at every level against workers in the rail industry. Britain's bosses know that to increase productivity to the degree they require, they must take on and defeat the rail unions in open combat. Today their aim is to weaken the unions as much as possible in preparation for these battles. And above all, they know they must bend over backwards to avoid a rail strike while the miners are out.

But if widespread industrial action by rail workers does break out, this will be no thanks to the "left-wing" union leaderships. Instead it will be a testimony to the power of the miners' strike and to militants like those at Coalville who are prepared to act on their firm class principles. □

## Rail strike hits victimization

*'We won't move coal'*

By Antonia Gorton

LONDON — In a move to stop the victimization of rail workers who are refusing to move coal in line with their unions' policy, some 5,000 came out on official strike on January 17 at 11 selected depots in the center of the scab mining areas. They were joined in unofficial action by rail workers at two mainline passenger depots in London — Waterloo and St. Pancras.

Television screens showed the stationary freight trains, empty signal boxes, and joint picket lines of rail workers and miners.

In response, the British Rail Board has

threatened to sue the unions under the Conservative government's new antiunion legislation for revenue lost by the day's action.

In Hackney, East London, 1,200 people at a rally in support of the miners gave a standing ovation to Roy Butlin, leader of the Coalville rail workers, who have refused to move coal since April. His final words to the rally were: "They can slander us, sequester us, injunct us, screw us from every angle possible, even commit us to a lunatic asylum, but we won't move coal until the miners win."

In South Yorkshire, the rail workers' action was almost 100 percent solid. According to

Tommy Doyle, a local rail leader, both Sheffield passenger depot and Tinsley freight depot were completely shut down.

Leicester passenger depot, which was not called out, almost came to a halt because no trains came through from Nottingham, Derby, and Sheffield. Leicestershire striking miners, who are a small minority of the miners in that area, set up a picket line of 60 people at midnight. They persuaded a few rail workers not to go in and got a commitment from others not to move trains into Nottingham and Derby.

At Coalville itself, strike leader Mick Richmond said, "Through the 24 hours, morale on the picket line was brilliant." On the line were local union members joined by rail

delegations from Bestcote and Satley and miners from Nottinghamshire and South Wales.

Roy Butlin feels heartened by the support shown throughout the industry, not just from those who took action but those who sent messages from depots all around the country.

"The most significant thing for me," he said, "was Waterloo, which joined in despite no official call. Management will have to think very hard about this, as will our union executive, some of whom were reluctant to call any form of industrial action. Morale has gone up 1,000 percent among my men, and among the striking miners in the minority areas. But unless all our demands are met at Coalville, this isn't the final word."

"To a certain extent, what happens next is up to management. Will they continue their campaign of harassment?"

"We can't sit back though. The situation is still that the National Coal Board and the British Rail Board [BRB] have to move that coal. To do this they've got to use trains, not lorries."

"Therefore," Butlin went on, "the Rail Federation has to be prepared to call more action, national action, which is the ultimate response we can make. Of course if the BRB goes through with its threat to sue the unions for loss of revenue during the strike, this will up the stakes. The rail unions must respond vigorously to the use of the courts on this question." □

## Australia

# SWP hosts U.S. 'Guardian' writer

## *Refuses to disavow speech backing Democratic Party*

By Doug Jenness

SYDNEY — On January 4 John Trinkl, editorial board member of the *Guardian*, a newsweekly published in New York City, spoke here to a meeting of 220 on "Four More Years of Reagan — U.S. Politics Today."

Trinkl was invited to Australia by the Socialist Workers Party, the Australian section of the Fourth International. His public talk was a major feature of the SWP's week-long convention. Trinkl also attended the convention as an invited guest. Other guests included representatives of the Communist Party of Australia, the Socialist Party of Australia, the Italian Communist Party (composed of Italians living in Australia), and the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist).

Throughout the hall where the *Guardian* writer spoke, banners were displayed with quotes from Yassir Arafat, Fidel Castro, V.I. Lenin, Ho Chi Minh, and Jesse Jackson. Among the banners was one with the reactionary call for "Self-Determination for Croatia."

### 'Scent of facism'

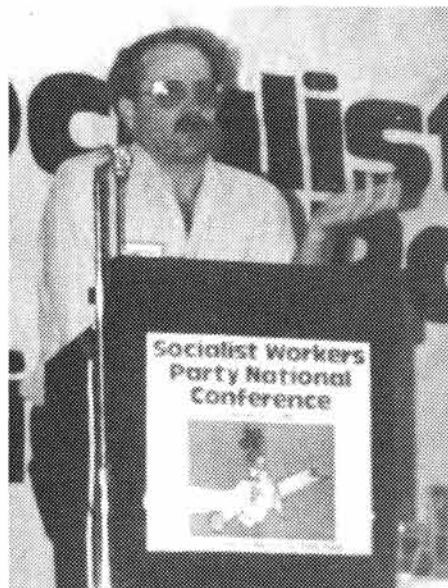
At the SWP-sponsored meeting, Trinkl presented the same line the *Guardian* hammered away at during the last months of the presidential campaign in the United States.

Trinkl told the Sydney meeting that Ronald Reagan "is the most reactionary person to ever hold the U.S. presidency." By way of a quotation from a U.S. political figure, Trinkl stated that one could "smell the scent of facism in the air."

He said there had been a big debate on the left in the United States around the question of whether or not the election of Democratic Party candidate Walter Mondale would make a difference. Trinkl said he still held the view that while it would not have made a qualitative difference, a Mondale-Ferraro victory "would

have mitigated U.S. aggression" in Central America. "It would have offered a little more breathing room," he asserted. He pointed out that most of the U.S. left had "urged a vote for Mondale with no illusions."

Trinkl went on to declare that Jesse Jackson's "Rainbow Coalition" was "probably the most important development in the 1984 elections." Jackson, he argued, had for years been a "civil rights activist with no impact on U.S. politics." By entering the Democratic Party presidential race he became "a catalyst" stimulating many Blacks into political activity for the first time. Jackson "progressively represented the aspirations of Blacks," Trinkl declared.



John Steele/Socialist Voice  
John Trinkl speaking at Sydney meeting.

He said that it was not clear what would happen to the Rainbow Coalition now that the elections are over. "Most Rainbow activists are working inside and outside the Democratic Party," he said, "and as the Democratic Party continues to move more and more to the right," a new set of problems will be posed.

### 'Headed to Armageddon'

Trinkl also devoted a major part of his talk to nuclear disarmament and peace activity in the United States. Here the general tone of his comments was expressed by his recounting a recent conversation with a lobbyist in Washington, D.C., who declared that the world is "headed to Armageddon."

While noting the importance of mass action, Trinkl also praised the lobbying of legislators in Congress as one of the forms of peace activity that has "its place."

He stressed the importance of the fight against U.S. aggression in Central America and described some of the activities and organizations involved in this struggle.

When Trinkl completed his talk, a question period of about 45 minutes followed. During this time no one from the Australian SWP took the floor to disassociate themselves or their organization from Trinkl's pro-Democratic Party positions.

In fact, only two people at all did.

The first was Mel Mason who, along with Andrea González, ran on the U.S. Socialist Workers Party's presidential ticket against the Republican and Democratic candidates. Mason had arrived in Australia from New Zealand, where he had toured several cities and talked to hundreds of workers. While in New Zealand, Mason had an opportunity to meet central leaders in the struggle for Pacific Islander and Maori rights. He also had discussions with Susanna Onei, a leader of the Kanak

Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) and of the Kanaky women's rights movement in New Caledonia.

Mason had earlier asked the organizers of the meeting in Sydney if he could appear on the platform with Trinkl. He had pointed out that an exchange of views would serve to sharply contrast the U.S. SWP's perspective for independent working-class political action with the pro-Democratic Party stance of Trinkl and the *Guardian*. It would stimulate a lively and educational discussion, he said. Mason's proposal was turned down. The SWP also rejected inviting Mason to observe its convention.

#### Mel Mason takes issue

Mason prefaced his question to Trinkl by explaining who he was and by briefly describing the approach of the SWP's 1984 election campaign in the United States. He explained that he and González had called for a break from capitalist politics and from both parties of U.S. imperialism and for the formation of an independent labor party based on the trade unions. A strategy to advance the fight for independent working-class political action, he pointed out, was the only road to a revolutionary overturn of the capitalist rulers and the formation of a workers and farmers government.

Mason also noted that he was a leader of the National Black Independent Political Party and explained its importance to the fight for Black rights and the struggle for independent working-class political action. He stated that he did not think the Jesse Jackson Democratic Party election campaign was progressive or represented a step forward for Blacks. Rather it was an obstacle to breaking from capitalist politics.

After less than two minutes, the chairperson cut Mason off. (As the discussion progressed, she relaxed and allowed more time to other questioners.)

Before sitting down, Mason was able to ask Trinkl what he thought the road forward was for working people in the United States.

Trinkl attacked Mason's position of "keeping revolutionary politics separate from the Democratic Party" as "pure abstentionism." The *Guardian* writer declared that he "believes in independent political action." However, he failed to link this to a perspective of the working class breaking from capitalist politics. Instead, he said, "some work has to go on in the Democratic Party." He cited Jackson's campaign "which has politicized people in a way no left group has." Later in the question period he stated that some "Black Democrats like [Congressmen Ronald] Dellums and [George] Crockett played a progressive role."

The only other person to take issue with Trinkl's support to "liberal" capitalist politicians was Nita Keig, a former leader of the Australian SWP who remains an active supporter of the Fourth International.

Mason was invited by supporters of the Fourth International to address a meeting January 6 held here in Sydney. He spoke on "U.S. Politics after Reagan's Re-Election." □

## DOCUMENTS

# North Star Network conference

## U.S. group to back Democratic Party candidates

By John Trinkl

[The following article on the founding conference of the North Star Network appeared under the headline, "North Star sets its course," in the January 23 issue of the U.S. radical weekly *Guardian*.]

\* \* \*

In the 1970s many experienced activists had high hopes of building a new Marxist-Leninist party.

By the 1980s most of these efforts had resulted in irrelevant sects or failed attempts to build viable new socialist organizations. Successes were few, disappointments many. As a result, activists lowered their aims; some dropped out of politics altogether.

Organizations such as the Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party (SWP), and Democratic Socialists of America continued and in some cases grew, but the receding wave of radicalism that had begun in the 1960s affected younger activists across a large part of the political spectrum: independent Marxists, Trotskyists, and "Maoists" alike.

An effort to help reverse this trend was taken in San Francisco Dec. 8-9, at the founding conference of the North Star Network. Some 100 activists met to define the network's politics and plan its activity. The new network brings together the Bay Area Socialist Organizing Committee (BASOC) and the old North Star Network, the core of which was made up of ex-members of the SWP. BASOC was one of the few surviving local groups of the "trend," a collection of "antirevisionist, antidogmatist" groups that sought in the late 1970s to build a new Marxist-Leninist party while avoiding the errors of reformism and sectarianism.

"This is not a period of party building, and this position has important implications for the work we do and how we organize ourselves to do it," said Steve Hiatt, formerly of BASOC, in the opening political report. "A party would be the crystallization of a coherent political trend or movement — yet no such movement exists."

Believing that any move now by socialists to set up a highly disciplined organization would only result in weak links to mass struggles and the creation of another sect, North Star sets more modest aims. A proposal passed at the conference stated, "We are only at the stage of trying through practical and theoretical work in the living movements of today to help move towards a more effective socialist movement."

The agreed-on functions of North Star include coordinating exchanges of information around areas of common work; discussing of left strategy; providing a framework for a

dialog among left tendencies and for presenting socialist ideas to the public; and helping consolidate "the nonsectarian and nonreformist left." Hiatt said the network would seek left unity by trying to work with all the forces "in the broad space between traditional Marxism-Leninism and social democracy."

The structure of the organizations — a loose network — is deliberate and is seen as appropriate to current conditions. The network will not impose discipline, but instead coordinate the work of supporters who agree with its goals. BASOC has changed its name to Bay Star and will function as a local affiliate of North Star.

One of the central tasks of the network will be work in the Central America solidarity and non-intervention movement. A panel on this work included activists involved in CISPES [Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador] in San Francisco and Chicago CISPES, the Nicaraguan Information Center in Berkeley, the Antonio Maceo Brigade, and Salt Lake City's solidarity committee.

Wilson Riles, Jr., a Black city council member and candidate for mayor of Oakland, gave a report on the meaning and potential of the Rainbow Coalition.\* A panel of trade union activists discussed what can be accomplished in the unions today and how to promote Central America support work in the labor movement.

The conference voted to support CISPES and the Nicaraguan and Guatemalan networks, to support anti-apartheid actions, and to back Rainbow candidates in local elections. A proposal by Peter Camejo that the network launch a new magazine was approved pending further discussion.

Nancy Mackler, a member of the United Mine Workers in West Virginia, described the feeling of many who attended the conference: "There is a feeling of vitality in the tiny nuclei of existing organizations, and part of our job as a network is to provide a framework to draw these groups closer together."

For information on the North Star Network write P.O. Box 9887, Berkeley, Calif. 94709. □

\* Wilson Riles, Jr., is a leader of the Democratic Party. In addition to sitting on the Oakland City Council and campaigning for mayor, he served as the Northern California coordinator of Jesse Jackson's "Rainbow Coalition" campaign for the Democratic Party presidential nomination. — IP

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*Intercontinental Press.*

# Agricultural producers and the revolution

Interview with UNAG President Daniel Núñez

[The National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG) has been central to the efforts of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) to strengthen the alliance between Nicaragua's workers and peasants. It represents not only small and medium farmers and livestock raisers, but all those agricultural producers who oppose U.S. aggression and are willing to maintain and develop production in the framework of the revolution.

[The following is an interview with UNAG President Daniel Núñez, obtained in Managua on Oct. 9, 1984, by *Intercontinental Press* correspondents Ellen Kratka and José G. Pérez. Major excerpts from an October 5 news conference addressed by Núñez appeared in the January 21 issue of *Intercontinental Press*.

[Daniel Núñez is a veteran cadre of the FSLN. He first became active politically in Catholic Church groups, joining the FSLN in 1972. At that time, he was a large rancher, with 3,000 acres on which he raised about 1,000 head of cattle a year.

[Núñez was imprisoned by the Somoza dictatorship in 1974 and his farm was confiscated. He was freed from prison in December 1974, together with other FSLN activists (including Daniel Ortega), in exchange for Somozaist hostages seized by Sandinista commandos. He then carried out international assignments for the FSLN, returning to Nicaragua to fight in the final insurrection that toppled the dictatorship on July 19, 1979.

[Following the victory of the revolution, the new government offered to return Núñez his ranch, but he declined the offer.

[Instead, Núñez became head of the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Reform (MIDINRA) in the mountainous departments of Jinotega and Matagalpa in north-central Nicaragua, one of the zones most affected by the U.S.-sponsored Somozaist bands. He remained in that position until shortly before he was elected president of the UNAG in July 1984. He also headed one of the regional slates of FSLN candidates for the Constituent Assembly in the November 4 elections, in which he was elected to the assembly.

[The interview was conducted in Spanish and has been edited and translated by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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*Question.* When you speak of the large producers, what type of people are you referring to?

*Answer.* Well, the large producers in Nicaragua run their farms from afar. They are people who live in the cities. They have man-



José G. Pérez/IP

Participants in UNAG's Oct. 21, 1984, National Assembly of Producers in Managua.

agers on the farms, but they only go on weekends or every two weeks; they do not have a direct working participation. They are always fundamentally within the politics of the COSEP.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time that they are producers, they are also merchants. There are some who own land who are also doctors or lawyers. The large producers represent 10 percent of the producers of this country.

We also have the small and medium producers — those who do maintain a direct relationship with and live in the countryside. There they grow up, there they die. Among them are members of the cooperatives.

Among the large producers there are the patriotic producers, whose positions are different from those of other large producers. Though they are large producers, they have maintained a direct relationship with the land, and their dynamic of work in the countryside makes them rich peasants. That is to say, they have not become declassed, separated from production, by moving to the cities. This is a very important sector that exists especially in the fifth, sixth, and first regions.<sup>2</sup>

*Q.* The difference between the patriotic producer and the — how would you say . . .

*A.* We could characterize them as the non-patriotic producers affiliated with COSEP.

*Q.* . . . is not just a political attitude, then, but also a connection to the countryside?

*A.* Yes, the truth is that these COSEP producers are the ones who were outside the country, who traveled outside the country and who received a different education, while the other large producers that I am telling you about are the ones who live in the countryside. There are some patriotic producers who might have a house in the city of Matagalpa but live more on the farm than in Matagalpa. An example is Samuel Amador,<sup>3</sup> a rice grower who has his house in his production center.

*Q.* That is to say, the farms could be of the same scale of production; the connections with the countryside are what differentiate them?

*A.* It's the attitudes, because the form of life creates the attitude. These people who live in Managua had more access to culture, to soci-

1. COSEP — The Supreme Council of Private Enterprise — is the main organization of the Nicaraguan capitalist class. It includes the Union of Agricultural Producers of Nicaragua (UPANIC), which in turn groups together associations of ranchers (FAGANIC), coffee growers (CAFENIC), and others.

2. Nicaragua is divided into six regions and three

special zones for political and administrative purposes. Regions I, V, and VI are all in the interior of the country.

3. Samuel Amador is Nicaragua's largest rice producer and also has substantial other holdings. Although not a member of the Sandinista Front, he was a candidate on the FSLN slate for Constituent Assembly, winning a seat from Region VI.

ety, to the clubs, to all the comforts or deformations that that life carries with it.

It was this political sector here in Managua that always managed and dominated the provinces. They were the ones who dictated policy, who ran and directed the producers.

But with the triumph of the revolution, with the birth of the UNAG, the UNAG began to have an impact through different policies. Those sectors completely lost the power they had in the countryside.

*Q. What organizations did the large producers have?*

A. UPANIC, CAFENIC, FAGANIC, are the organizations of rice growers, cotton growers, coffee growers, and ranchers.

*Q. And who dominated those organizations?*

A. The U.S. embassy put them together. Here the policies of the Inter-American Development Bank and the U.S. embassy shaped all those consortiums so that they would respond to a common interest. And it even joined them in a matrimonial triad — the Somoza family, the Liberals, and the Conservatives (or, to put it another way, the state); capital; and the church. And what was the purpose of this matrimonial triad? To run the social and economic policies of the country.

*Q. Did those organizations also dominate the medium peasants at one stage?*

A. Yes, they did. How did they dominate them? Through the banks. They had the Bank of America and the Nicaraguan Bank, which were among the consortiums of the Conservatives.<sup>4</sup> They had control of exports. For example, in Matagalpa they had a large number of commercial houses that hoarded coffee so they could export it themselves. Then they had political, social, and economic power. They shared the power with Somoza.

*Q. When the revolution came, how did this change?*

A. The revolution nationalized their banks, taking away one of the links in the chain of their tricks and their power. The revolution now controls the exports of this country, which are coffee, beef, cotton, and sugar, the principal agricultural exports. Now with the birth of the revolutionary state, they are left without all those businesses they had.

Thus, in practice, the revolution has now taken away their power.

*Q. In the concrete case of the rich peasant, the patriotic large producer, one of the things*

4. The Conservative Party has traditionally been one of the two main capitalist parties of Nicaragua, having an especially strong base in rural areas. The present-day Democratic Conservative Party, which placed a distant second after the FSLN in the November 4 elections, represents the major remaining faction of this party.

*we noted in the course of the period leading up to the national assembly of the UNAG that the emphasis you placed on the idea that those sectors should also be in the UNAG. They should also be included in the plans of the revolution, and not automatically identified with reaction.*

A. Of course, the UNAG, I would say, is a broad organization. It is what its name implies, the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers. And who should be in the UNAG? Those who were ashamed of Somozaism. Those who were not involved in theft, or contraband, gambling, or prostitution. The noncorrupt elements, because we need to build a prestigious organization. Here we want neither opportunists nor lazy people. Nor do we want people who want us to go to them to solve their problems, but rather those who want to confront the problems together with us.

Therefore, we say: Good, the UNAG has room for those sectors. It even has room for those who are capable of saying, I was wrong and now I see that the revolution is good for everyone. But we cannot bring in those who are for the aggression, those who are for the intervention, those who support the policies of destabilization, because we cannot join god with the devil.

*Q. Does this campaign to involve the patriotic large producer represent a change in the UNAG's position?*

A. We had already been working on these policies, because the revolution was not made to disperse, but rather to gather together those who will forge a new society. So we have to make room for all men of good will who are ready to march together in this process.

Before, these policies had not been as open as now. Nevertheless, in the National Assembly we widened what had been up to then a small opening. Why? To be able to make the revolution.

We aspire to unite all the producers of this country. We even hope that one day those in the COSEP will realize that they were wrong and that there is time to correct their errors.

*Q. Was there some change with respect to the rich peasants that led to this new emphasis on their role in the UNAG?*

A. Of course. Above all, we got rid of some confusion that had existed. For example we used to speak only of small and medium producers. But we start from the fact that we want neither small nor medium producers; we want large producers, because the more we produce the more wealth the country will have. The revolution was not made to bring degradation, but rather social wealth, to all the sectors.

So what used to happen? If we had a policy of small and medium producers, it meant putting production in the wrong framework.

Our problem is underdevelopment of production and productivity. We have the capacity to put a million more people to work on the land in Nicaragua. We have some valleys here that, if taken together, would be the equivalent

of the San Joaquín Valley in California. Yet, not even 10 percent of the best lands for agriculture are technically exploited.

What does a dictatorship give you? Backwardness. It fetters development. And that's what Somoza did here; he fettered development in order to be able to maintain his power.

*Q. Do the rich peasants employ labor?*

A. Yes, year round. There are rich peasants who employ up to 500 workers at the time of the coffee or cotton harvest. And all year round, apart from the harvest, I would say, up to some 200.

*Q. And people like that can be in the UNAG?*

A. Yes, why not? If he is a patriotic man he is in the UNAG. Just like there are priests here in the revolution, such as [Foreign Minister Miguel] D'Escoto and Ernesto and Fernando Cardenal [ministers of culture and of education]. This revolution is making contributions to the world on this. The framework should not be philosophical questions, but rather the conduct of men. No matter whether they are atheists, Marxists, or Christians, the important thing is their attitude toward life. Because the important thing is not whether one believes or does not believe, but what one does.

*Q. Doesn't this situation lead to frictions between the patriotic large producers who are in UNAG and the small peasants you have organized, who also may work for the large producers?*

A. No. In Nicaragua, the rural wage-worker and the peasant who works his own land are practically two completely separate things. With the turning over of 2 million manzanas [1 manzana = 1.73 acres] of land to the peasantry, anyone who wants land to work has it. Thus the semi-proletarian peasantry — those who have land and also sell their labor power — has almost ceased to exist. Why? Because the peasant now has access to credit and services.

*Q. Have there been frictions with the Association of Rural Workers, the ATC?*

A. The ATC organizes all the rural agricultural workers who sell their labor power. We had, I would say, certain contradictions with respect to the fact that we were demanding that the workers produce more. In a country in revolution, you have to work, work, and work.

Thus in the National Assembly of the UNAG, ATC President Edgardo García read a document supporting the demands of the UNAG. The wage norms for agricultural workers that just came out were the product of work we have been doing with the Ministry of Labor, the UNAG, and the ATC.<sup>5</sup> Why? Be-

5. At the beginning of October, Nicaragua's Ministry of Labor issued new wage scales for agricultural labor, paralleling a wage system for non-agricultural workers known as the National System for the Or-

cause what interests us, what dignifies man, is work. Nothing dignifies man more than work. Nothing, absolutely nothing.

If we created a working class that did not have a spirit of sacrifice, that was not capable of understanding that in a revolution you have to work more, if we fell into paternalism, we would sink the economy of this country.

*Q. Didn't the agrarian reform affect the availability of labor in the countryside a great deal?*

A. There was incredible unemployment in this country. There was unemployment under Somozaism because Somozaism did not guarantee work. When the revolution triumphed there was a large number of unemployed workers. When they were given land, they came to work.

Here in Managua there is still a problem: there are more merchants than producers. We have to get rid of the *buhoneros*,<sup>6</sup> the speculators, all those lazy people here. Let them go and work the land. If not, we will not go forward.

*Q. Was it the escalation of the aggression that led to redefining the breadth of the UNAG?*

A. No, the UNAG was born with this breadth, the problem was that the leaders of the UNAG lacked the forcefulness to make the lines of the organization prevail.

*Q. So it was more a question of the work of the UNAG itself than of the development and evolution of the revolutionary process?*

A. The UNAG was the first organization that came into being after the revolution. The

organization of Work and Wages. The immediate aim of this system was to do away with what Nicaraguans called "wage anarchy" by providing equal pay for equal or comparable work through raising the wages of the lowest-paid workers. A system of bonuses for fulfillment or overfulfillment of production quotas is being prepared for implementation as a second stage of the program.

In the case of agricultural labor, pay according to productivity is being implemented simultaneously with homogenous, nationwide scales for all field hands doing the same kind of work.

6. *Buhoneros* are small import-export merchants, restricted to a maximum importation of \$1,500 a month. The Ministry of Internal Commerce is negotiating with the leaders of the *buhoneros'* organization in an attempt to bring this sector of foreign trade under a degree of government control. Negotiations have been complicated because, while in theory the *buhoneros* use the income they generate from selling Nicaraguan products abroad to finance their importations, in fact a large part of the dollars they use to buy goods abroad are bought on the black market in Managua at exchange rates of up to 350 córdobas to the dollar. This has led to a sharp escalation in the córdoba price of imported commodities to reflect the black-market exchange rate.

7. AMNLAE — The Luisa Amanda Espinosa Association of Nicaraguan Women.

ATC already existed before the triumph, AMNLAE<sup>7</sup> already existed; but the UNAG did not exist; the UNAG was born with the revolution.

And why was it born? To create an organization that would be able to respond to the interests of the producers, no matter whether they were small, medium, or large. For me, everyone, from those who produce 100 pounds to those who produce 100,000, is a producer. That is the important thing.

*Q. Have there been contradictions between the patriotic large producers and the small and medium producers?*

A. With the agricultural wage-workers there have been contradictions, but with the medium and small producers there is no problem, because what holds them together is an attitude: honesty.

Here we measure producers in practice by their honesty. So there is no problem. If there were problems, the small producers would say, we do not accept the large producers.

*Q. At the assembly of the UNAG you proposed that the UNAG had to be more forceful in its relations with the enterprises of MIDINRA [Ministry of Agrarian Development and Reform].*

A. That is correct. Why? Because they are productive enterprises, independently of the fact that they are state enterprises. And as enterprises for production we have to be vigilant over how they produce. If they produce badly, we have to see why.

*Q. But the question of credits, fertilizers, seeds, inputs, . . .*

A. You have to be forceful in everything — in credit, in financing, in services, in technology, in everything. The problem is that the state has to be made more dynamic. Because if production stands still, it rots; if it stands still, it goes backward. Thus, if this enterprise is supposed to give me services but is blocking me, I have to move it so it will let me pass and give me services.

The policies are integral. We cannot make demands of the producers and of the COSEP if we do not make demands of the state producers.

*Q. What are the other organizations of producers, and what are your relations with them?*

A. We have relations with them on an individual level, because there are producers who are in UPANIC or CAFENIC, who got there for historical reasons, but who suddenly realized that these organizations are not going to solve their problems because they defend other interests. Our relations with them as organizations are relations of conflict. This is because we defend different positions. They defend reaction, we support and defend the revolution.

*Q. Are there people affiliated both to UNAG and to these other organizations that are part of COSEP?*

A. No. Either one is in the UNAG or one is not. We cannot accept double affiliations, because we would be dishonest. However, there are producers who have been there and who are now with us.

*Q. The three capitalist parties that are participating in the elections have made criticisms of the agrarian reform around the question of the land titles — around whether they are titles of usufruct or of property. These parties say that they are actually rental titles that can be taken away. How does the UNAG respond to this?*

A. The problem of Nicaragua is not a problem of a lack of land; the problem is to work the land. The revolution is more serious than these people think. What is given is not taken away.

So if we give an agrarian reform title, it's because that title is for the peasant — forever. There is only one condition. He can lose it if he is dishonest with the financial system, if he does not work the land. So there is one condition, which is to work the land.

*Q. Can they sell the land?*

A. They can pass it on to their children, but not sell it, because that would be wrong. It is wrong to give a gift to someone so that they can sell it. They can give it to their children, to their wife, to their family, within the nuclear family, but not to anyone else.

*Q. Does this also protect the peasants from losing their lands through foreclosures?*

A. Yes. The government has forgiven debts, has forgiven 500 million córdobas<sup>8</sup> of debts for producers of basic grains.

*Q. Can't the government say to the peasant, your crop failed but you have your land; sell it and survive in that way?*

A. But what's involved is creating laws that protect the peasant. That example you gave is an atrocity. Because at any rate that man is producing for the country. He is producing to guarantee the food of the country.

*Q. Doesn't this measure make the rich patriotic peasants nervous?*

A. The land the revolution gave the peasant through the agrarian reform cannot be sold, but if he has his own land he can sell that. If a large private producer wants to sell his land, he sells it.

*Q. In other words, the only lands that are*

8. Nicaragua has multiple exchange rates, and moreover the córdoba's value has substantially declined over the past few years. Most government-controlled transactions are computed at a rate of 28 córdobas to one U.S. dollar.

*nationalized are the state lands and those of the Agrarian Reform.*

A. Yes, those that the government turns over. Because here there is private enterprise and a mixed economy.

*Q. Has this question of the titles and the certificates of nonaffectability<sup>9</sup> now been re-*

9. The government is discussing the possibility of issuing certificates of nonaffectability, to reiterate the revolution's promise that the agrarian reform will not affect the lands — no matter how large — of

solved?

A. A law of nonexpropriability is being studied. But neither are we going to give a title of nonaffectability to a lazy good-for-nothing or to someone who is decapitalizing or who is taking out the wealth of the country. So it depends on how they work the land.

There are producers who say, don't give me a title. If I am a good worker I don't need a title. Those who are requesting the certificates the most are the 10 percent not affiliated to

those producers who continue working efficiently and do not decapitalize their holdings.

UNAG. And mostly they are using it as a political question, not because they are concerned whether the small and medium producers are given titles of nonexpropriability.

*Q. So on both questions — if there are going to be certificates of nonexpropriability and if the Agrarian Reform titles are going to be changed — neither of these things has made the peasant nervous?*

A. Absolutely not. Look, if the peasantry did not trust the revolution, we would be through. □

## DOCUMENTS

# Castro speaks on U.S.-Cuba accord

## Washington lifts some restrictions on Cuban immigration

[The following is the text of a Dec. 14, 1984, television address by Cuban President Fidel Castro on the agreement reached earlier that day between the governments of Cuba and the United States concerning migratory relations. The agreement was the first of any kind between the two countries since 1977.]

[The text of the speech is taken from the December 23 issue of the English-language *Granma Weekly Review*, published in Havana.]

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Fellow Citizens:

A few days ago, during the closing session of the Congress of the Federation of Students in Intermediate Education (FEEM), I announced that talks between Cuba and the United States on migratory issues were advancing. Today, I can report that those talks have concluded and that an agreement was reached this afternoon.

I would have preferred to announce this TV appearance, held to inform the people, earlier, but the agreement was reached at 1:40 this afternoon. Besides, we agreed to make it public at 4:00 p.m., so there was little time to announce this appearance.

Today, I have been really busy with the delegation headed by Comrade Mengistu [Haile Mariam, chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council of Ethiopia], a close friend. I'm dressed this way not because this is a special occasion but because, from here, I'm going straight to a reception in honor of the visiting delegation. However, in view of the importance of this question, I wanted to explain it personally to the people.

I will begin by reading the communiqué which the representatives of the Republic of Cuba and of the United States signed this afternoon. It reads as follows:

"Discussions between representatives of the United States of America and of the Republic

of Cuba on immigration matters concluded today with the adoption of agreements for the normalization of immigration procedures between the two countries and to put an end to the abnormal situation which has existed since 1980.

"The United States will resume issuance of preference immigrant visas to Cuban nationals residing in Cuba up to the number of 20,000 each year, in particular to close family relatives of United States citizens and of Cuban permanent residents in the United States.

"The United States side expressed its willingness to implement — with the cooperation of the Cuban authorities — all necessary measures to ensure that Cuban nationals residing in Cuba wishing to emigrate to the United States and who qualify under United States law to receive immigrant visas, may enter the United States, taking maximum advantage of the number of up to 20,000 immigrants per year.

"For its part, the United States will continue granting immigrant visas to residents of Cuba

### **These migratory problems have existed under abnormal conditions for nearly 26 years — not just since 1980 . . .**

who are parents, spouses, and unmarried children under 21 years of age of United States citizens. These immigrants will not be counted against the annual limit indicated above.

"Cuba will accept the return of those Cuban nationals who came to the United States in 1980 via the port of Mariel and who have been declared ineligible to enter the United States legally. The number of such persons is 2,746, and their names appear on an approved list.

"The return of these persons will be carried out by means of an orderly program of returns

with the cooperation of the immigration authorities of both countries. The returns will proceed in a phased and orderly manner until all the identified individuals who appear on the approved list have been returned.

"The returns will be effected at a rate of 100 each calendar month, but if the figure of 100 is not met in a given month, the remaining numbers may be used in subsequent months, provided that no more than 150 will be returned in any calendar month.

"The United States stated that measures were being taken so that the Cuban nationals who came to the United States in 1980 via the port of Mariel may acquire, beginning now and with retroactive effect of approximately 30 months, legal status as permanent residents of the United States.

"Both delegations expressed their concern in regard to the situation of those persons who, having been released after serving sentences for acts which Cuban penal legislation defines as 'offenses against the security of the state,' wish to reside permanently in the United States. The United States will facilitate the admission of such persons and their immediate family members by means of a program to be carried out under applicable United States law.

"The United States delegation stated that to this end the necessary steps have been taken for admission during fiscal year 1985 of up to 3,000 such persons, including immediate family members. The size of the program and any possible increase in subsequent fiscal years will be determined in the light of experience with the process and the desire expressed by both parties to carry out this program in such a way as to allow for its ongoing implementation until fully completed in the shortest possible time.

"The representatives of the United States of America and of the Republic of Cuba decided to meet again within six months in order to analyze progress in the implementation of

these agreements."

I would like to examine the background of the agreement.

The question of normalizing migratory relations between the two countries was first examined with the Carter administration after the happenings at the port of Mariel, in December 1980.

The first contacts and talks on this issue were held in December and in January 1981, but the time frame was very short. The new administration was inaugurated early that year,

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**We would never do such an absurd thing as to take a patient from a mental hospital and send him to the United States. We feel too much respect for patients to do this . . .**

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and the contacts and exchanges on this issue were interrupted until May 1983, when we received a note from the U.S. government asking our country to accept the return of such Cuban citizens who had arrived in the United States via the port of Mariel who, according to its criteria and legislation, were inadmissible.

At that time, we were sent a list of approximately 800 names, and it was announced that, of course, the final figure would be several times as high and that, as long as the Cuban government didn't accept such citizens regarded by the United States as inadmissible or excludable, the United States would be unable to issue immigration visas to other Cuban citizens, enabling them to enter the country, since its legislation stated that acceptance of the principle of the return of the so-called excludables was prerequisite.

At that time, the Cuban government replied that it was willing to examine this question, together with all other migratory issues that had a bearing on the relations between the United States and Cuba. That is, we couldn't accept the principle of simply agreeing to the return of the excludables without discussing, examining, and solving the other migratory problems.

In March this year, the U.S. government sent the Cuban government a note expressing its willingness to discuss the question of the excludables and the other issues related to migratory relations between the United States and Cuba. I repeat, this took place in March this year.

The Cuban government analyzed the proposal bearing in mind that the election campaign was being launched in the United States. Concerned over the possibility that this complex and sensitive question might become an election issue in that country and that a reasonable solution could be jeopardized, we agreed to initiate the examination and discussion of this subject but added that we would rather do so after the election in the United States, for the reasons I have already given.

Later, when [Jesse] Jackson visited Cuba, in

the meetings that were held on June 26, this problem was included in the ten points that Jackson considered to be important issues for improving the relations between the United States and Cuba.

We told Jackson that in March the U.S. government had proposed to the Cuban government that these talks be held and that we had agreed, suggesting that they be postponed until after the election, for the reasons I gave. We stated, however, that if both parties agreed and if the United States and its people wanted to find a solution to this problem, we would be ready to discuss it even before the election.

During the press conference held that same evening, on the 26th, I explained what our position was regarding this problem and publicly stated our willingness to discuss it if both parties agreed. In a matter of hours — perhaps 24 or 48 hours — before Jackson left Cuba, the U.S. government expressed its willingness to discuss the problem immediately, just as we had suggested.

The answer wasn't immediate; it took a few days, for we had asked Jackson to contact [Walter] Mondale, the most likely opposition candidate at the time, to find out what he thought and get his approval, since we had stated that we were ready to go forward on a bilateral basis.

Naturally, Jackson agreed to do this, and, as soon as he contacted Mondale, informed him about the subject, and obtained his approval, he let us know. As soon as this had been done — which we considered an essential prerequisite — we contacted the U.S. government expressing our readiness to discuss the issue immediately.

The United States proposed a first meeting of delegations of the two countries for July 12. We immediately formed our delegation, headed by Deputy Minister [Ricardo] Alarcón, and it traveled to the United States.

The question of where the talks were to be held — in Havana, New York, Washington, or elsewhere — was discussed. We didn't feel that this was an essential problem. We raised no objections, stating that we were ready to go wherever it would be easiest to hold the discussions. We weren't going to start arguing about whether they ought to be held here or there; we said that we weren't at all concerned about this.

The talks on this subject began on July 12. The delegations met on the 12th and 13th and set forth their positions — I won't go into details — and work began.

The second meeting took place some time later, on July 31 and August 1. The U.S. delegation was headed by Mr. [Michael] Kozak — I'm told he's a legal adviser at the State Department.

Progress was made in that second meeting, even though the subjects discussed were complex. Both delegations worked very hard. Comrade Alarcón told me that each point was discussed exhaustively, for many hours, almost nonstop. The members of the Cuban delegation returned to our country in early Au-

gust.

Progress had been made, but, in the first half of August, some difficulties arose which interrupted the negotiations. This interruption lasted for approximately two months: the rest of August, September, and part of October.

In October, as a result of the exchange of messages between the two countries, it was decided to resume the talks in November. The United States proposed November 28 and 29. Our delegation left for New York, and, on November 28, the third round of talks began. This round lasted until December 5. The participants in the talks worked very hard for almost a week.

Our delegation was in constant communication with our country, and each of the points, each of the questions, was carefully analyzed. During that period, remarkable headway was made, and some draft agreements were even prepared.

The delegation returned to Cuba, and a fourth meeting was scheduled for December 13 — that is, yesterday. The members of the delegations worked all day yesterday. This time, too, our delegation kept in constant contact with our country. Details, the wording of the draft agreement, were analyzed. The delegations worked almost through the night — later, I will explain why it took so long — until, at 1:40 p.m., an agreement was reached.

Both delegations are to be congratulated for having worked hard, carefully, and diligently. Some points required long discussion: first of all, the concept of excludables because, if we analyze the legislation, the fact that somebody entered the country illegally already constitutes grounds for his inclusion in that category. Well, all those who left via Mariel could be considered excludables. The first point, then, was to determine who were the excludables.

I don't want to go into too much detail, I don't want to be indiscreet, but this was an important point: the U.S. party expressed its intention to settle the legal status of the vast majority of those who had arrived via Mariel and to limit the number of the excludables, according to the criteria of the U.S. authorities. Then it became necessary to identify and determine the exact number of these excludables.

In the course of this process, several lists were presented — a first, a second, and a third. Our delegation worked on those lists, and we also worked on them in our country, employing the criterion that the most important thing was to verify that it was a person who really had left via Mariel.

Even during the period when negotiations were suspended, an exchange of information about the lists was kept up. Our staff analyzed those lists carefully, and, thanks to the work done during those months, considerable headway was made in identifying all those people. Sometimes all we had was a first name; sometimes, only a last name; there wasn't much information. There were instances in which a name was repeated by mistake.

In this way, the list — the first list, the second, and the third — were gradually screened.



And this work continued until the wee hours this morning. When all the other points had already been agreed on, the lists had to be screened to avoid any possible repetition or error, and it was in this that the comrades worked through last night and this morning in New York.

This was to have ended at midnight and to have been announced at 3:00 a.m., but it wasn't until nearly 2:00 p.m. that the exact figure, the exact number of people, was determined. The lists, the definition, and the identification of the excludables took a lot of work and a lot of time.

Another point that was discussed at length concerned the period of time over which those people should return. The U.S. view was that they should return within six months. Our view was that, if their return and adjustment were to be effected in an orderly and careful manner, it would take longer. We felt that even the United States needed more time to take all the legal measures that those persons' return implied.

Therefore, we proposed that approximately 50 return each month. Finally, we arrived at the figure of 100 per month, and if, in one month, 100 people didn't arrive — if, for example, only 70 came — then the remainder could come the following month, or as many as were pending, up to a maximum of 150. An agreement was also reached on this point.

Another question was that, although there was talk of 20,000 migrants a year, we raised the need to establish a minimum — or, rather, a maximum — of 20,000, apart from the relatives of U.S. citizens (parents, husbands, wives, and unmarried children under 21) and from those who would leave, under a program, for having been counterrevolutionary prisoners.

After making a very careful analysis, we found that it was impossible to establish a minimum; according to the laws, no exact figure could be given, since each case had to be examined. We felt that this argument was reasonable, which is why, in one paragraph, we agreed that both parties would do their ut-

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## The ones who stole millions of pesos in this country left immediately for the United States in 1959 . . .

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most to see to it that full use was made of the quota. An agreement was reached on this point.

Moreover, everything had to be carefully studied, because, if anything in the agreement was contrary to U.S. law, this would seriously hinder its implementation, for it would require changes in laws, Congressional approval — a long and complex process.

Therefore, it was necessary to analyze each point in the light of U.S. laws, since those people are there, in the United States, and it is the United States that is going to accept the people that are going to join their relatives or who are going to emigrate from our country. Since it is involved in this question, we had to pay close attention to all U.S. laws. Finally, an agreement was reached, and it was drafted in a form that was satisfactory to both parties.

It should be kept in mind that these migratory problems have existed under abnormal conditions for nearly 26 years — not just since 1980. Of course, a particularly abnormal situation has existed since 1980, but it really dates back to 1959.

We were very careful to maintain the utmost

discretion regarding the content of the talks. In the United States, there were some leaks about what was being discussed, and the press and the wire services placed special emphasis on the return of the excludables, claiming that they were mentally ill or criminals. I feel that I should explain, objectively, something that all our people know.

Regarding these two myths, I think that international propaganda has deliberately placed a lot of emphasis on the mentally ill and criminals. It speaks of patients who were taken out of the hospital and sent via Mariel.

I would like to reiterate, once again, that no mental patients left any hospital in our country to travel to the United States via Mariel — first of all, because our country takes excellent care of our people's health and has made enormous efforts to care for every citizen in this country, without payment, whatever the cost, whoever it may be, and would never do such an absurd thing as to take a patient from a mental hospital and send him to the United States or any other country.

We feel too much respect for patients to do this. A patient of any kind is sacred to us, and such an action would go against an essential part of our philosophy, our conduct, and the history of our Revolution. No one in our country would be capable of, would have dared to accept such a thing.

All of this is part of the campaign, the lies, the malice, and the myths; but that was one of the points that was greatly emphasized and propagandized abroad.

If any mental patients left here, it was because their relatives claimed them and nobody was aware of their illness. The relatives said: We want So-and-so and So-and-so. If any did leave, they must have been exceptions, and no one noticed, because they weren't in the category of those who left via Mariel.

A few of those who left may have become ill in the United States during the past four years — more than four years. As a matter of fact, we have heard that some of the ones who were imprisoned there later had problems of this sort, and, in a contingent of more than 125,000 persons, anywhere in the world, mental problems can crop up in some people in a period of four years.

That is why I say that those who are in that category are there because their relatives claimed them and no one noticed, or because they became ill in the United States afterwards. That is the historic, objective, and strict truth: no one left any mental hospital here to be sent to the United States. I want to make this perfectly clear.

Second, no one guilty of bloody crimes left via Mariel — everyone knows this, too. If any did leave, they must have been very exceptional cases, because no one was aware of it; no one noticed; it was a mistake, a confusion — never because we had considered the idea of sending people guilty of bloody crimes to the United States.

This was so, also, for an elementary reason: the safety of our country and our society makes

## The exodus from Mariel

In the wake of the revolutions in Grenada and Nicaragua in 1979, the Carter administration in Washington stepped up its threats against the Cuban revolution. Then in early 1980 major military maneuvers were announced, directed at Cuba. They included a planned "mock invasion" of the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo on occupied Cuban territory.

These military threats, coupled with the years of U.S.-imposed travel restrictions, led to a series of cases in which various Latin American governments granted political refugee status to Cubans who had broken into foreign embassies in Havana. After one such break-in killed a Cuban guard at the Peruvian embassy in April 1980, the Cuban government removed the guards, and several thousand more people came to that embassy seeking asylum.

Later in April, the Cuban government announced that Cubans wishing to leave could simply go to the port of Mariel,

where anyone willing to take them could pick them up. A total of about 125,000 left from Mariel in the following weeks.

The flight of these thousands and the accompanying anticommunist propaganda and U.S. military threats were answered at the time by the biggest mobilization of supporters of the revolution in its history. Some 5 million — out of a total population of 10 million — participated in the "march of the fighting people" throughout Cuba on May 17, 1980. They denounced those who had deserted the revolution as antisocial "scum."

Some of the 1980 arrivals have been imprisoned in the United States ever since, many at the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary. But even those who were not incarcerated have been denied normal treatment by U.S. immigration officials. It was only in November 1984 that an Immigration and Naturalization Service ruling enabled them to pursue their applications for permanent residency, a step toward citizenship.

it impossible to exonerate those who are guilty of bloody crimes and give them the pleasure of traveling to another country, to the United States.

So, if there are any such cases, they can only be very exceptional and are the result of no one's noticing, for that was one of the guidelines that were laid down: that category of person wouldn't be authorized to travel to the United States — I repeat — to protect our people's safety.

If this weren't so, an attempted homicide or

worldwide campaign.

We said: Fantastic! Anybody who wants them can have them, and various countries responded. A UN commission even became involved, and Costa Rica said, send them, and Peru said, send them, and Spain said the same. We couldn't have been more delighted; we sent them all they wanted.

Well, the facts showed that we were right. Moreover, those individuals didn't want to go to the Dominican Republic or to Central America or South America; they wanted to go to the

World country; they wanted to go to the United States. And those who went to Peru were welcomed with applause — not the people's, of course, but that of the authorities, who paid their travel expenses; lodged them in a park; played the role of humanitarians, of the civilized who were saving them from socialism, saving them from Cuba; and had four years of experience with them — enough to bear out what we had said: that those people, those "heroes," weren't dissidents but antisocial elements.

Later, they began to run wild: they destroyed that park; none of them wanted to stay in Peru; and they did everything possible to leave for the United States. In the end, they held demonstrations, stirred up conflicts, made demands, and engaged in blackmail, saying they didn't want to leave the park and wouldn't go, after four years, unless they were given visas so they could go to the United States.

Many of the people who wanted to leave and did leave via Mariel were of that type, with that spirit and that mentality, people who considered themselves heroes and were given worldwide publicity.

In addition, there are other circumstances. Some actions are considered crimes in Cuba but not in the United States. For example, prostitution is punished by law in Cuba, but not in the United States; gambling is punished by law in Cuba, but not in the United States; the use of drugs is punished by law in Cuba, but not in the United States.

There are people who do things that are crimes according to Cuban law but not according to U.S. law. People of that kind left via Mariel, but they weren't in the category of the mentally ill or of those who had committed bloody crimes.

Some of them may have committed bloody crimes later on, in the United States — as may happen anywhere. People who have never committed bloody crimes may do so one day, anywhere in the world. There may be people of that type there, people who have committed that type of crime. But the category of people who had committed bloody crimes was not included among those who left via Mariel. That is the historic truth.

This situation has a long history. As I was saying, the abnormal situation surrounding the migratory relations between the United States and Cuba dates back nearly 26 years. It began on January 1, 1959, when dozens — hundreds — of torturers and murderers who committed atrocities against thousands of citizens of this country and committed crimes of all sorts — some killed 20, 40, or 50 people — went to the United States.

Where did the Venturas, the Carratalás and all those people go? To the United States — hundreds of them, fleeing from revolutionary justice. Those people had committed acts of genocide in our country, and they were welcomed in the United States; they were given refuge and abetted right from the first. Those people were indeed the real criminals.



Jose G. Pérez/IP

"March of the Fighting People" in Havana on May 17, 1980. Cuban people mobilized to back government in wake of Mariel exodus.

homicide would be taken lightly, with no further implications or consequences, but these crimes are much too serious and are too severely punished by our laws for us to incur the irresponsibility of exonerating such persons.

Several categories of persons left via Mariel. Some of them had relatives abroad with whom they wanted to be reunited, but people of the type who forced their way into the Peruvian embassy also left via Mariel. As a matter of fact, many of the people who forced their way into the Peruvian embassy left via Mariel.

I remember the applause, the solidarity, and international campaign that was launched in support of the people who forced their way into the Peruvian embassy following the incident that cost the life of a guard. We are all familiar with that story. They said they were dissidents, but we said: They aren't dissidents; don't be confused. Those people didn't force their way in there for political or ideological reasons. For the most part, those people are antisocial elements — we said this and explained why — or individuals who don't want to work or who haven't adapted themselves to the people's laws, discipline, and spirit of sacrifice.

No ideological questions were involved; rather than political dissidents, they were antisocial elements, but some went ahead and fabricated the story about the dissidents. It was a

United States, to paradise, to the ideal. Really, they were that kind of people. I'm not going to say that they were all the same; there were others that I can't classify as antisocial elements.

What I can say is that they may be insensitive to the Revolution, to their homeland, and are self-centered, people who think only of their own personal interests and who have no spirit of sacrifice or who are afraid of the risks of living in Cuba. As a matter of fact, this factor has had some weight; there are people who have been afraid.

We know that, at the beginning of the Revolution, many families sent their children to the United States because they believed the stupid rumor that they were going to be deprived of their parental authority. All of those factors have had an influence, apart from the fact that living here means struggling and working in a developing or underdeveloped country that was subjected to colonialism for centuries and to neocolonialism for decades, while the United States is a country with much greater economic development than ours.

There have always been people all over the world who have wanted to emigrate from countries whose wealth had yet to be developed to another with better material conditions or more wealth.

These people didn't want to go to a Third

Criminals did leave here, but they left on January 1 — real criminals, dangerous criminals, hundreds of them, by ship and by plane. Those people didn't have any difficulties — and there were thieves and embezzlers of all types, real thieves.

I'm not talking about an individual who may have stolen a piece of furniture or a suitcase — no, not that. It's not that I justify it; I don't mean to say it's right. But the ones who stole tens of millions of pesos in this country left immediately for the United States on January 1.

Those indeed were real thieves, not petty thieves. The owners of the casinos, of the gambling dens, of the lottery, of the drug traffic — all of them went to the United States and were welcomed there. Those people, objectively and unquestionably, were worse than the ones who left via Mariel. And that began on January 1.

Later, even though people were being authorized to leave legally, anyone who stole a boat and went to the United States was welcomed — both he and the boat — and anyone who skyjacked an airplane was, too — he and the plane. Dozens of Cuban planes of various types were stolen from this country.

The fact is, the history of skyjacking started in Cuba, against Cuba. Skyjacking was something totally unknown in the world. It was after the triumph of the Revolution, when anyone who skyjacked a plane was given a hero's welcome in the United States, that the nefarious business of skyjacking began. It happened at that time and for those reasons.

At that time, no one could foresee the consequences of this phenomenon that was just beginning. They even offered rewards of thousands of dollars to anyone who skyjacked a Cuban plane and took it to the United States. They not only welcomed all those persons I mentioned before, but they started encouraging others to leave our country.

Before the Revolution, there was a limited entry quota to the United States — a few thousand — and many people were waiting to go there to work; they had no jobs. Before, jobless people were the ones who emigrated; now, the ones wanting to emigrate were the ones who just didn't want to work, which is something quite different.

Some time afterwards began the counterrevolutionary subversive actions against Cuba: a long period of recruitment of individuals who had left Cuba; training them in the use of explosives and weapons. They started smuggling weapons and explosives into our country by air and sea; the sabotage schemes; the counterrevolutionary bands in the Escambray and in Pinar del Río and other provinces of the country.

And not only that, they embarked on plans of economic sabotage — I'm not making this up; they've written about these things, they were verified by the U.S. Senate committees that investigated that period.

That was the time when assassination plans against leaders of the Revolution began; they tried to kill me by all means available: chemical products, poisons, diseases, rifles with

telescopic sights, explosives, by all means. And it's not I who says so; Congress said it, the U.S. Senate.

It was an extended period. They encouraged the establishment of organizations; hundreds of counterrevolutionary organizations were created. Whenever any Tom, Dick, and Harry got together, they made up an acronym, a name, and asked for U.S. help.

Later we had the Girón [Bay of Pigs] invasion — men armed to the teeth, with bombers, artillery, and tanks, invading the country on behalf of a foreign power. Those were really dangerous persons; they were indeed criminals in the worst sense of the word, because they murdered children and entire families.

What would have happened, how many would they have murdered? Don't forget that Calviño — one of Batista's most notorious henchmen — was among them. How many more would they have tortured and murdered? Thousands! Those were really dangerous men.

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### It is Cuba that has solved the skyjacking problem . . .

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And we sent them back. They were give a warm welcome, with all honors and pomp. And, later on, there was a protracted period of irregularities.

I said that there was a small quota. After the triumph of the Revolution, they opened their doors to all who wished to leave — it didn't matter whether there were 50,000 or 100,000.

They wanted to drain us of technicians, engineers, teachers, professors, doctors. They took away half of our doctors, and we overcame that hardship; we started to train more technicians, more doctors. Our struggle to develop our universities started then.

They took away our intelligentsia that couldn't adjust to the sacrifices and struggles of a revolution. Yes, at the beginning they took many such people from our country. And we warned them — after the events at the Peruvian embassy and Mariel — that, whereas they had taken technicians and intellectuals before, now they were taking antisocials, which was quite different. We warned them.

Later, during the Missile Crisis of October 1962, they canceled all flights to the United States. At a time when tens of thousands of families had been granted exit permits, they were stranded here de facto. They didn't authorize flights. No one could leave; since we had been blockaded in Latin America except Mexico, they had no country through which they could travel.

Many people were encouraged to leave the country illegally. Any time anyone landed in a small boat or fishing vessel — and they hijacked dozens of such vessels — the publicity and news coverage were tremendous. All this led to Camarioca\* and to a solution, and

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\* In 1965 Cuba opened the port of Camarioca for those who wished to leave. This compelled Washington to again accept Cuban emigrés. —IP

all those people who were stranded were able to leave. Afterwards, everything was stopped once again.

The policy of encouraging people to leave the country illegally continued; we warned them many, many times that this policy was being used as a political weapon and that anti-social elements were doing all kinds of things — murdering people to steal boats, hijacking boats — and, when they reached the United States, they went unpunished.

We warned them many, many times that measures had to be taken against that policy, that something had to be done to stop this situation and that it was going to lead to trouble, until finally it led to the Mariel episode.

I believe that these problems should have begun to be solved 20 years ago. It was lack of maturity, deliberation, common sense and responsibility, the lack of foresight with regard to future problems, which allowed such a policy to be pursued for so long. That is the objective truth.

Now, then, what changes have come about? An important change. We all remember that mercenaries were organized and trained not only to commit acts of sabotage and other crimes in Cuba but to perpetrate them in foreign countries against Cuban facilities and against Cuban officials at the United Nations, in Canada, in Mexico. They departed from the United States and murdered our comrades; afterwards those same individuals strolled freely in the streets of the United States.

Let us recall that those who perpetrated the atrocious assassination of the passengers on the plane that was blown up off the coast of Barbados [in 1976] were individuals who had — at a given moment — received training in those techniques in the United States. That is the truth. That policy claimed many lives. No measures were ever adopted.

An important, real, and objective change has taken place during the last four years: the present U.S. administration — whose hostility to our Revolution is well known — nonetheless adopted measures against groups, once trained by the CIA, that engaged in terrorist attacks on Cuban personnel in the United States.

For the first time, effective measures were adopted, and, in recent months, one of the most notorious ringleaders [Eduardo Arocena] was arrested, tried, and convicted. That is, it may be stated that those persons no longer operate freely in the United States, which has had the elemental common sense of trying to guarantee law and order within its own borders.

If the precedent that anyone can start doing whatever he wants to were to be set, all sorts of situations would be unleashed. That is a fact.

A second fact: for the first time in this long period, measures have been adopted to curb illegal departures from Cuba in order to enter the United States illegally. We know that measures have been adopted, though with some hesitation at times.

Recently, a group of traitors hijacked a boat

in Varadero to go to the United States and threw the skipper overboard several miles offshore, but, miraculously, he was saved. They were interned in some camp in the United States and there was some publicity about the event, but measures were taken. We stated the case; they said the skipper should go there to file charges. The skipper has already gone to the United States once and will go there again.

This occurred several months ago, in addition to a few other cases. We know that at present the United States isn't interested in encouraging people to leave Cuba illegally. That is a second fact, and it was one of the factors we took into account when we were working out this agreement.

A third fact, and this merit belongs to Cuba: for our part — due to strict measures adopted in our country against skyjackers — we have virtually solved this problem, which was one of the problems that most concerned the people of the United States, because they feared that anyone with a bottle of gasoline, or a bottle of water, could say that he was going to blow up a plane, so he could skyjack it to Havana.

Even though the official agreement between our two countries was no longer in effect after the plane was blown up off Barbados, we have adopted increasingly strict measures against skyjackers during the last few years.

In 1981, there were two skyjackings; the skyjackers were sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. In 1982, five skyjackings; the skyjackers were sentenced to 12, 15, and 20 years' imprisonment. In 1983, 11 skyjackings, ten of which came from the United States; the skyjackers were sentenced to 10, 15, and 20 years' imprisonment. In 1984, four: one from Brazil, one from the United States, and two from Colombia; one group is awaiting trial, and the rest have been sentenced to 15 years.

It is Cuba that has solved the skyjacking problem — a diabolical invention that has been aimed against Cuba since the beginning of the Revolution — in the United States. This is an irrefutable fact.

Later, measures were adopted — for the first time in the past 26 years — to guarantee normal migratory relations between two neighboring countries. By virtue of the measures adopted and in conformity with this agreement, steps have been taken for the first time to put an end to skyjacking — something that is more beneficial to them than to us, since they own far more planes than we do.

The fact that no skyjacker goes unpunished has discouraged them, and skyjacking has almost disappeared. In case anyone doesn't know it or doesn't understand it and goes ahead and skyjacks a plane, he'd better learn that, in this country, far from getting a hero's welcome, he will be severely punished.

Measures have been taken to eradicate illegal departures or attempts to leave illegally and tolerance of and a hero's welcome for the hijackers of vessels and for those who try to enter the United States illegally. I imagine that they will be interested in backing up these

measures and discouraging illegal departures at all costs, since 25 years of bitter experience are more than enough.

Measures have been taken to put an end to the unpunished terrorist attacks on the lives of Cuban officials and on Cuban facilities. Many things have changed since the times when motorboats left Miami to attack refineries, warehouses, ports, and ships in our country. We have come a long way. Measures have

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## **We have stated that making a revolution and building socialism is a task for free and conscientious people . . .**

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been adopted to normalize migratory relations.

On the above grounds, for those who have relatives in the United States and want to join them, the possibility of leaving is in keeping with our policies and our traditions of the past 25 years.

We have stated that making a revolution and building socialism is a task for free and conscientious people. Of all voluntary things, the most voluntary is the construction of socialism in full awareness.

We have never been interested in those who fantasize about consumer society or about vice or whatever in capitalist society. We have never been interested in them, and our doors have always been open for them to leave the country. This situation has been normalized, so to speak, and it is well within our tradition.

If it is a question of someone who holds a very important post and has no immediate replacement, all right — we delay his departure as long as necessary until we find a substitute. That doesn't worry us. But the doors are open.

Of course, this has to do mainly with those who have relatives, because they are given priority. I believe that this will be good news for those who find themselves in this situation — and for us, too — and they will be able to join their relatives.

Unfortunately, we can't offer them reunification here, because our country is struggling for its development and is in need of housing, and it is logical that we give priority to those who are here working. For the time being, we can't propose reunification here — it must be reunification in the United States.

As for those who have been in prison for counterrevolutionary activities — I have already said that here, initially, there were 300 organizations. These had thousands of members — not as many as they said (30,000 or 50,000), but they did total some 15,000 members in the early years of the Revolution — most of whom left the country by virtue of the plans of the Revolution or the generosity of the Revolution, which in one way or another arranged for their departure by reducing their prison terms or by some other means.

We are aware that the population in general rejects or mistrusts people who are involved in

counterrevolutionary activities, and this is logical. Only in some instances, with much effort, can this be overcome.

For some time we have expressed our readiness to authorize all those who have been convicted of counterrevolutionary activities, together with their families, to go to the United States and stay there. All of them, naturally, think that the United States has some obligation to them because it encouraged them to carry out counterrevolutionary activities.

They feel they have the right to go to that country and to receive some compensation and have their merits recognized in some way. I think this will be very good news for them — and for us, too. This is aside from the question of those who are relatives of U.S. citizens, which is another category.

Our part of the bargain is to accept, in a reasonable period of time, the 2,746 who are considered inadmissible, or excludable, by the U.S. authorities.

In the United States, many may have thought that we couldn't — that we wouldn't be able to or wouldn't dare — discuss and find a solution for this subject, since they know the revolutionary fervor of the people and their profound rejection of those individuals who, in one way or another, left the country. However, those who think this aren't taking into consideration the people's identification with, closeness to, and confidence in the leadership of the Party and the Party leadership's confidence in the people.

They may be much taken aback and say: What a catastrophe! For us, this is very simple. We have performed tasks and tackled problems which have been much more difficult, and we have the moral courage to say: Yes, we will accept them.

They made the people of the United States believe that those individuals were some sort of Draculas and fearsome. In fact, they weren't so fearsome. I've already said that the really fearsome ones, the ones who committed atrocities and who embezzled fabulous amounts, had already gone to the United States and were welcomed with applause and all honors.

These individuals — I say it, and I sincerely believe it — are only a little bit dangerous, just a bit; they are no big leaguers or anything of the sort, nor are they the cream of the crop. They constitute no danger for our country.

What are we going to do with these individuals who are coming back, who will return little by little, over a period of time? We intend to honor all the agreements, not resort to any subterfuge or create any obstacles — nothing at all. We are serious. One of the characteristics of the Revolution is its seriousness in doing the things it sets out to do and fulfilling its commitments.

First of all, as they arrive, we will place them in quarantine, for health considerations, since there are diseases in the United States that we don't have here — AIDS [Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome], for example.

Obviously, the possibility of importing any

of those diseases that exist in the Western world is much greater via the thousands of people who come to Cuba and then return to the United States and the thousands who come as tourists from the Western world. But, still, we don't want to run the risk of acquiring them in this way.

All the medical experience gained in our country shows that the first thing is quarantine, with a rigorous medical checkup to see if there are any cases, and then adequate therapeutic measures — isolation, if necessary — health measures. We have time, and we can do it. If 1,000 were to arrive at once, we couldn't, but if 100 at the most arrive at one time, we can take all these measures.

The policy we intend to follow is that, if the individual was a sick person who by chance traveled to the United States without anyone realizing it or if he got sick there — which is the most probable thing — we'll be able to ascertain everything when we have the information; we haven't been able to obtain all the information yet, because many of those people are in different places in the United States, and one of the most difficult things was the list; we wanted concrete cases, all the details, but this wasn't possible.

We, of course, were interested first of all in whether or not the person left via Mariel and whether or not he is Cuban. We even decided that, if there was an agreement and someone had changed his name and by chance came but wasn't in this category, he would be returned to the United States. That was agreed on in the "Minute on Implementation."

People who are mentally or otherwise ill will be sent to a hospital and receive the best care, as do all patients.

Our hospitals have worldwide prestige. It is no burden for us to accept people, even if they became ill there, and care for them in our hospitals. We are sure that they will be better cared for here than in the United States, and it won't cost them anything.

If there is a possibility of curing them, they will be cured. Many mental patients have been cured in our hospitals. I'm not talking just about citizens who left the country and became ill; we wouldn't even mind caring for U.S. citizens in our hospitals in Cuba; they would receive the best care we can provide.

Those who have been in prison ever since they arrived in the United States — there is a group of people who have been in prison for more than four years, in the Atlanta penitentiary and elsewhere — if they haven't committed any crimes in the United States and come back, after going through the physical examination, they will be given jobs; an effort will be made to reincorporate them in society; and they will have no difficulties if this is done successfully.

If they have committed any crimes in the United States or any other part of the world — any serious crime, especially bloody crimes — respect for basic ethics and for our own safety demands that they not go unpunished. We cannot allow an individual who has committed a

bloody crime to return here and go free; that would be inconceivable. Therefore, even though there is no treaty or agreement on this, that person would have to serve his sentence in our country.

Cases of misdemeanors could be analyzed, but as a matter of principle, whoever has committed a crime that is punishable here will have to serve his sentence: either the one that has been imposed or the one that is stipulated by our laws.

We still have to analyze the legal aspects of the matter, but that is our intention, and it is, in fact, being applied with regard to many countries with which we have agreements: if someone commits a crime abroad, he is tried here. We don't have that commitment, but, for ethical reasons, that would be the policy we would follow in such cases; there will be no impunity for any of those crimes.

The U.S. authorities have promised to send us all the documents, details, and evidence concerning those cases; whatever crimes are proved, there will be no impunity. That is the line we intend to follow.

Mention has been made of 2,746 persons. This doesn't mean that they can send all of them back. I imagine that many of those who

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### **If they haven't committed any crimes in the United States, they will be given jobs; an effort will be made to reincorporate them in society . . .**

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have been in prison for four years will choose to return if they haven't committed crimes in the United States and can, therefore, obtain their freedom in our country.

I don't think they can feel much enthusiasm for consumer society after having spent four years in a maximum security penitentiary. But, in any case, this is apart from their inclination, apart from their ideology; if they haven't committed any crimes there, we will simply follow the policy I have outlined with regard to them.

The United States may face some difficulties in sending them; many different types of legal arguments, diverse pretexts, may be employed. Some have said that, if they come, they will be made to suffer here and be treated as political pariahs.

The fact that they are being sent here, however, shows that they don't really have any political or ideological contradictions with the Revolution, and they will be treated with a maximum of humanity and in line with the principles of the Revolution, following the policy I have stated.

How many may come? We will see that in practice, but we will keep our part of the agreement. And, if they can't come, the moral and historical fact will remain for the people of the United States to see that, if those people who are considered fearsome, dangerous, don't come, it isn't because we aren't willing to ac-

cept them on a rational basis, through fair and equitable agreements.

We are willing to accept them, and this isn't a task that the Revolution — which is accustomed to tackling difficult tasks — can't solve, employing all of its authority and moral principles.

Objectively, the discussions were characterized by a spirit of hard work. Both delegations worked intensively, and the discussions were serious, responsible, and respectful, showing a willingness to find solutions.

Several days ago, in the meeting with the students I went over and explained the current world situation and a large part of mankind's great concern over what awaits it in the coming years — especially what is going to be decided about the future in the next few months. I'm not going to repeat here what I said and those lines of reasoning.

In the coming weeks, talks that are much more important and far-reaching than these will be held.

These were limited to a specific problem: that of migration. We had no intention whatsoever of bringing up any other problems, nor are we impatient in this regard. We are calm, serene, firm, and strong. We won't implore anybody for anything; our constructive, positive, receptive stand doesn't mean that we are overconcerned about negotiations. I would like to make this clear.

There will be far more important talks, which the world is waiting for to see whether or not a ray of hope appears.

There are the talks with the Contadora Group regarding Central America; the talks between the revolutionary forces and the Salvadoran government; the talks between the United States and Nicaragua in Manzanillo [Mexico], and the very important talks that will be held in Geneva in January between Foreign Minister [Andrei] Gromyko, of the Soviet Union, and U.S. Secretary of State [George] Shultz, on matters of the utmost importance. There are the talks regarding southern Africa and the talks in other parts of the world on various topics related to peace or the world economy.

May the same spirit that characterized these talks prevail in those that are now in progress and that will be held in the world in the weeks and months to come. May rational results be obtained. This is possible — I repeat — if matters are discussed calmly, without arrogance, seriously, and responsibly, with a real desire to find solutions.

As I said when I spoke to the students, we have no right to harbor illusions; we must understand and bear in mind that the present world situation is a very dangerous and critical one and there are difficult and complex problems. Therefore — I repeat — no one should harbor illusions. We, especially, should not lower our guard or in any way neglect our defense, but — I repeat — these talks, on a very specific topic, on a difficult and complex problem, have been positive and constructive.

Thank you very much.

# Anti-immigrant campaign weakens unionism

## Attacks on Maori sheep shearers from New Zealand

By Andy Jarvis

[The following two articles are reprinted from the Dec. 7, 1984, issue of *Socialist Action*, a fortnightly newspaper published in Auckland, New Zealand, that reflects the views of the Socialist Action League, New Zealand section of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

Leaders of the Australian Workers Union (AWU) are appealing to the newly reelected [Robert] Hawke Labour government to introduce work permits and other immigration controls in an attempt to restrict entry to Australia by workers from New Zealand.

Similar appeals by the AWU officials have been made over the course of the past two years to both the Labour government and the previous Liberal government.

The AWU, which organises Australian shearers, has been spearheading a campaign against immigrant workers that has broader support among Australian trade union and Labour Party officials.

As part of this campaign, AWU officials have sought to mobilise members of the Workers Union in a campaign of violence and intimidation against shearers from New Zealand — predominantly Maoris — and from the Pacific Islands — predominantly Tongans.

### Racist shooting

This violence came to a head in October with the shooting and wounding of two Maori shearers at Coleraine, in the south-west of the state of Victoria.

At the heart of this reactionary campaign is the claim put forward by the AWU officials and other union leaders that "foreign" workers, especially from New Zealand, are taking "Australian" jobs, and are therefore the cause of rising unemployment in Australia.

For example, a resolution carried at meetings of shearers in all states earlier this year says in part: "It seems unfair to us that New Zealand is able to sign agreements with such places as Tonga to teach people from there various trades and skills, then obtain jobs for them in the Australian workforce. . . . We have plenty of good Australian citizens . . . who can fill these situations.

"Surely the trans-tasman agreement\* was not drawn up to solve the unemployment problems in New Zealand and Tonga. . . ."

In their own way, many union and Labour Party leaders in this country often raise similar arguments based on appeals to national

bigotry. The issues at stake in this conflict are therefore important for workers on both sides of the Tasman [Sea].

Anti-immigrant campaigns are not new to the Australian Workers Union. This was one of the key issues around which the union was formed late last century. For example, the original constitution of the AWU excluded Asians, Pacific Islanders, Australian Aborigines, and "half-castes" from membership in the union.

### 'White Australia'

AWU leaders — both through their union and through the Labour Party, which they helped to form in the 1890s — also played a prominent role in campaigning for the "White Australia" policy, which was introduced by the first federal parliament elected in 1901.

Under this legislation, all non-white peoples (with the formal exception of New Zealand citizens) were effectively denied entry to Australia. Thousands of Pacific Islanders, brought to Australia to work on Queensland's sugar plantations, were deported. In addition, apartheid-type laws were introduced against non-white residents (including Australian Aborigines and New Zealand Maoris), who were denied equal citizenship rights.

Inside the labour movement, only a small minority of militant socialists spoke out against these policies.

Most of the overtly racist legislation of the "White Australia" policy was not formally overturned until the early 1970s, under the [Gough] Whitlam Labour government, although the essential features of this policy have continued.

### Immigrant workers

Since World War Two, large numbers of workers from Western and Eastern Europe and from the Middle East have migrated to Australia.

The past decade has also seen hundreds of thousands of workers from New Zealand, including tens of thousands of Maoris, cross the Tasman in search of jobs. In contrast to New Zealand, which has experienced 10 years of deep-going recessions, the Australian economy is the fastest growing in the capitalist world.

The average ordinary-time weekly wage in Australia is NZ\$633.92 [NZ\$1 = US\$0.48], more than double the New Zealand figure of \$284.51, while prices are roughly similar. In the shearing industry, the award [contractural] wage for an eight-hour day in Australia is almost four times that paid for a nine-hour day in New Zealand.

In many of Australia's industries immigrant workers are often a majority of the work force. Next to Australian Aborigines, they are also to be found among the most exploited and oppressed sections of the Australian working class. For example, unemployment among Asian workers in Australia is more than double that among Australian-born workers. Among New Zealand and Pacific Island workers, the unemployment rate is around 50 percent higher.

### Controls tightened

As in all imperialist countries, the past few years have seen moves by the Australian ruling class to tighten immigration controls, and thereby intensify the victimisation of immigrant workers.

The first step in this direction came in 1981 with the introduction of the requirement of passports for New Zealanders seeking entry to Australia. This move was aimed particularly against Pacific Islanders seeking "illegal" entry to Australia via New Zealand.

Then in late 1982 the Liberal government ordered a crackdown to deport 40,000 "illegal" immigrants it claimed were working in the country. "The government is determined to eradicate an illegal work force which takes the jobs of Australians," declared the then Minister of Immigration, John Hodges.

Immediately after it took office in February 1983, the Hawke Labour government cut back immigration quotas, reducing the annual migrant intake by over 20 percent.

These moves also had their reflection among the top layers of the union officialdom as well. For example, in September 1982 the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU — the equivalent of the Federation of Labour in New Zealand) called on the federal government to end unrestricted New Zealand entry to Australia. Similar calls have been made by Labour Party branches and MPs.

### New Zealand shearers

This is the context in which the AWU campaign against New Zealand shearers has been mounting. While the AWU officials say they are for restricting immigration by workers from all countries, the immediate focus of their campaign has been on workers from New Zealand — because they have unrestricted entry to Australia, and because they include shearers.

Last century, shearers from both Australia and New Zealand freely migrated between the two countries, following the seasons in search of work. From the very beginning, a large percentage of these shearers were Maoris.

With the development of unionisation and

\*A 1982 agreement to reduce duties and other trade restrictions between New Zealand and Australia.

government protection, however, the shearing industry in Australia became increasingly organised as a job trust.

Throughout much of this century, New Zealand-born shearers have been officially or unofficially barred from membership of the Australian Workers Union, thus denying them access to shearers' jobs in Australia or forcing them to work without union protection.

Far from helping to secure the jobs of Australian shearers, however, this policy has only made it easier for employers to use New Zealand shearers to help undermine the wages and working conditions won by Australian shearers through their union.

### Economic boom

In the 1960s, booming sheep flocks in Western Australia resulted in a labour shortage. Gangs of New Zealand shearers were brought in to fill the gap. In line with the conditions prevailing in the New Zealand shearing industry, they often worked weekends, were often paid less than Australians, were often non-unionised, and commonly used wider (and more efficient) shearing combs than those in use in Australia.

In contrast, over this same period Australian shearers, through their union, were able to take advantage of booming economic conditions to consolidate many gains. They were able to establish permanent all-year-round jobs, a 40-hour week, increased wages, and a high degree of union coverage in the shearing industry, especially in the eastern states.

Unlike New Zealand shearers — who remain predominantly seasonal, migratory workers — large numbers of Australian shearers, organised in the AWU, became permanently settled, urbanised workers.

Now, however, under the impact of recession in the world economy and mounting anti-union attacks by the bosses, this relative stability has come under threat.

### Reactionary campaign

It is this threat to their livelihoods that has justifiably aroused the militant anger of many Australian shearers. This "militancy," however, has been misdirected by the AWU officials into a reactionary campaign of bashings, bombings, and other violence directed against Maori and other New Zealand shearers.

To help disguise the reactionary and racist character of this campaign, the AWU officials have put forward a number of false arguments. Let us look at some of the main ones.

- At first, AWU officials claimed their dispute centred on the use of wide shearing combs, which they said were illegal, and, because of their greater productivity, were being used to undermine pay rates.

Firstly, the wide combs, which are widely used by shearers throughout Australia as well as in New Zealand, have nothing in common with the wide combs banned in the Australian shearing industry in 1926. These were simply narrow combs with the points at each side bent

outwards, and were outlawed as dangerous to both workers and animals.

Secondly, to oppose the use of more efficient shearing equipment in this way can only pit the union against the workers using it. Rather than uniting, it divides workers and inevitably leads to the sort of violent clashes that have taken place in Australia, thereby weakening any union fight to defend jobs and conditions.

### 'Scabs'

- AWU officials have asserted that shearers from New Zealand are non-union "scabs" helping the bosses undermine the union award.

This claim fell flat following the shooting of the two Maori shearers from Hastings — Joseph "Ozzie" Carrington and Nick Sullivan. They were members of both the Australian and New Zealand Workers Union, and neither had breached any award conditions.

Sullivan gave a different reason from the AWU officials for the cause of the events that led to the shooting. He says he was set upon by seven white AWU members who called him a "black Maori bastard" and attempted to beat him up.

- Other claims put forward by the AWU officials have simply sought to appeal to backward prejudices and conservative morality.

For example, they assert that New Zealand shearers "don't pay taxes," that they use "false names," that they live in condemned accommodation and in sheep sheds, that males and females in the shearing gangs often sleep together, and that they start fights "nearly every night of the week."

Such appeals to bigotry should have no place in the workers' movement.

- Confronted by the failure of their original arguments, AWU officials over recent weeks have more directly motivated their campaign against the New Zealand shearers on the grounds that they are "foreigners" taking away "Australian" jobs.

Fellow workers — whether "foreign" or otherwise — are never the cause of job losses. Unemployment is a permanent feature of all capitalist economies. It is built into the way workers' labour is exploited under this system.

Over the past 10 years all the advanced capitalist countries have been hit by recessions that have seen millions of workers thrown out of work.

Any union fight which has as its axis blaming fellow workers for the ills of capitalism and pitting working people against each other — whether it be a campaign for immigration restrictions or for protectionist import controls — is a dead end. It undercuts the working class solidarity which is at the heart of unionism, and thereby weakens the labour movement and strengthens the hand of the bosses.

### National chauvinism

National hostility between working people in New Zealand and Australia is one of the weapons used by the bosses in both countries to weaken the labour movement. It is promoted in numerous ways — from conflict over sports matches, to chauvinist jokes spread by the media.

The trade union movement on both sides of the Tasman needs to combat such national chauvinism. It needs to have a perspective of seeking to develop and strengthen solidarity among working people throughout Australia, New Zealand, and the entire South Pacific.

As part of this perspective, the labour movement needs to vigorously oppose the racist immigration policies maintained by both the Australian and New Zealand governments, which hinder the free movement of working people throughout the region and restrict their right to work.

It is also necessary to oppose specific instances of racism when they arise, such as the recent shooting in Coleraine. Unfortunately, to date, no leaders of the labour movement on either side of the Tasman have condemned this incident.

### Murder threats

In Australia, the response of the AWU leaders was to threaten even greater violence, including murder, against New Zealand workers — shearers and non-shearers alike.

No prominent union or Labour Party leaders have disassociated themselves from these threats. Neither have any of the major organi-

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sations claiming to be socialist. They have either been suckered by the AWU officials' false "militancy" into backing the union's anti-immigrant campaign, or have remained silent throughout.

## Maoris face discrimination

By Helen Sheridan

Recent events in Australia, such as the shooting of two Maori shearers in Victoria, have brought the situation facing Maoris living and working in Australia to the attention of the news media.

There are estimated to be at least 80,000 Maoris living in Australia — about one-fifth of the total Maori population. The majority live in New South Wales and Queensland, and many are second-generation Australian residents.

There are 10,000 Maoris living in the Sydney suburb of Bondi — a place where most of the accommodation is rental and there is a high rate of unemployment. But now Bondi is becoming a fashionable place to live, and the longer-term residents — including the Maoris — are being pushed out.

### Kotahitanga

Earlier this year a group of young, mainly unemployed, Bondi Maoris formed a cultural group called Kotahitanga. They have played a number of benefit concerts featuring Maori concert parties and reggae bands. One of these concerts was held on February 6, to protest against the Treaty of Waitangi\* celebrations.

The unofficial spokesperson for the group is Jim George, a 34-year-old former teacher who has lived in Australia since 1970. George has called for a drop-in centre to be set up in Bondi to provide a cultural and community centre for Maoris and to be a place where they could seek help for problems they were experiencing.

In August, Jim George and 14 other homeless Maoris were evicted from a derelict shop owned by the local Waverly Council, which they had occupied for the previous two and a half months. The building was demolished, and George was arrested for trespassing.

The September 14–20 issue of the Australian newspaper *The National Times* carried interviews with several members of the Kotahitanga group, in which they describe the racism and discrimination they have experienced in Australia. Below we have reprinted excerpts from these interviews.

\* \* \*

Robert Wharerau, 25, came here four years ago because New Zealand was "too small." First he worked as a truck driver, then got involved with a reggae band. . . .

\*The 1840 treaty between Britain and some Maori chiefs that marked the formal assertion of British sovereignty over New Zealand. — IP

In New Zealand, officials of the New Zealand Workers Union have simply echoed the arguments put forward by their counterparts in Australia, while other union leaders to date have remained silent. □

"Life isn't difficult here except when it comes to getting a flat," he said. "The policy of a lot of real estate agents, so a girl who works for one told me, is to avoid Maoris. It's because of those stereotyped ideas . . . we're big and aggressive, we throw wild parties, we smash flats up, and all that bullshit. . . ."

"They don't want people like us in the area. They want to make it like Double Bay. A money-making area. Well, it won't work. There's too many people here from our end of the social scale. . . ."

"One night I checked out a gig at Maroubra and there were nine Australians standing outside. The pub was full of Maoris. They began saying really bad things about us — they told me to get in my f. . . king canoe and go home. I said: 'You shouldn't say things like that . . . especially outside a pub full of Maoris.' They beat me up.

### Cops racist

"When someone says something racist to you naturally you react. I've seen Italians and Greeks react to being called names. But when you do, you end up being the one who's accused of starting the trouble. When the cops turned up at Maroubra they went for me, not the nine Australians.

"The cops are just as racist, we're always being hassled. We've got a reputation for being scrap-happy. Not a week goes by without hearing such a comment."

Despite this, Wharerau would rather live here than in New Zealand.

"People here don't tell you how to live your life, you can do what you like. You meet more people here; at home if you see a Maori in a pub you don't speak to him unless you met him through someone else. We have big families but they each belong to a circle, a tribe, and it's hard to get in if you don't have a connection. . . ."

Thelma Kingi, 22 . . . came here seven years ago to join her mother. . . .

"I've worked as a cook, housemaid, bar maid, that sort of stuff.

"Here everyone looks after themselves . . . number one. Where I come from that doesn't exist. Like you live at your aunty's, your grandmother's, your friends' and you've got heaps of places to call home.

"Sometimes it gets pretty lonely here because all of us are used to having a lot of family and lots of kids. . . ."

Coral Martin, 25, came over a year ago to join friends. □

"There was nothing happening back in New Zealand for me. . . . I was an electro-plater. . . . there are only two women electro-platers in Australia and we both got a job at the same company and the men didn't like it.

"I suffered double discrimination — being a Maori and a woman. The men gave me a bad time; they didn't think I knew what I was doing and when I showed them up, they hated it.

### Difficult to get jobs

"It's been difficult here, specially jobwise. I tried for a job as a housemaid at an hotel in Kings Cross and even with references I didn't get it. The woman said: 'New Zealanders have got a bad name for not keeping their jobs.' She was prejudiced, the white girls got the jobs before me. . . ."

The Maoris feel the Australian education system does not allow for cultural development. Rather, the accent is on conformity, material values and academic achievement.

Ted Andrews, 30, who came here six years ago looking for a "change of scenery," said:

"There's a lot of prejudice and racism in Australian society, it's deeply ingrained here, a lot of barriers have to be broken down but it won't happen overnight. There's a lot of ignorance about any culture that isn't Australian.

"There have been several incidents that have bothered me and I begin to wonder when it will stop. . . ."

"The Maoris are trying to bridge that gap within their own communities. They have organised maraes, meeting places, where anyone can get to know the Maori culture, where everyone is welcome.

### System to blame

"There is now a fulltime Maori teacher at North Bondi school because they're having problems with the kids. . . ."

"Some have been expelled. They don't fit, they have an Australian accent but are considered Maori. If they went home they wouldn't fit either.

"We want to give the children their culture. . . ."

New Zealand has one of the highest imprisonment rates of countries with similar dominant cultures: 90.3 per 100,000 population. About 50 percent of prisoners are Maoris. Every Maori knows someone in gaol. The Bondi group blames the system: If a pakeha [non-Maori] and a Maori each steal a car, they say, the pakeha will get a fine and the Maori will get three months.

[Jim] George has been picked up by the Bondi police twice for car stealing — and he can't drive. Because of their size and colour, Maoris are instantly identifiable.

Andrew Oakley, 23, has been here four years. "I found it very difficult to get a job when I first arrived," he said. "I'd mention I was a New Zealander and that was the end of that. Even New Zealand Insurance wouldn't take me."

Out of this gathering of 14 only one, [Whatuaia] Hona, spoke Maori. . . . □



# Bosses hail racist vigilante

*Why workers should oppose rulers' 'anticrime' drive*

By Andrea González

[On Dec. 22, 1984, Bernhard Goetz, a white businessman riding in New York City's subway system, shot four Black youths, who he claimed had attempted to rob him of \$5. Three of them are recovering from their wounds, but one, whose spine was shattered, will be crippled for life. According to neighbors of Goetz, he had a reputation as a virulent racist and had been carrying a gun around waiting for such an opportunity to use it. Rather than condemning this racist vigilante, the capitalist news media in the United States has been hailing him as a hero.

[The following article is taken from the January 18 and 25 issues of the U.S. socialist newsweekly *Militant*. The author is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York City.]

\* \* \*

The cops, capitalist politicians, and the big business press have seized on the shooting of four Black youths on a New York City subway by racist vigilante Bernhard Goetz to escalate their reactionary propaganda campaign on the themes of law and order and crime.

This propaganda is designed to convince us that to protect ourselves from "crime" we need more cops, fewer rights for those arrested, and stiffer penalties for those convicted. This racist, reactionary campaign, like the vigilante action that is propelling it forward, is *against* the interests of working people.

Crime means breaking the law. The ruling class "anticrime" campaign centers on what's commonly referred to as "street crime," the amount of which is greatly exaggerated by the capitalist media. Their coverage of "street crime" is geared toward making working people believe that it is the biggest problem we face. And it's used to smear Blacks in particular as an entire race of criminals.

## The real criminals

The biggest rip-offs and most grotesque violence committed against working people, however, are by and large not even considered crimes and are not reported as such by the big business media.

Why?

Because they are *legal*.

It's legal for supermarkets to overcharge you so that \$20 worth of food costs you \$40. It's legal for landlords to make millions off of outrageous rents for apartments that often don't even have heat or hot water. It's legal for banks to collect thousands of dollars in interest on each car or home loan. It's legal for hospitals and doctors to charge exorbitant fees just to look at you — and to refuse treatment if you



The real target of rulers' 'anticrime' measures: working people.

don't have the cash to fork over.

It's legal for employers to make billions off the products that we produce, while they pay us a small amount back in wages and lay us off at will.

How many capitalists are arrested for industrial "accidents" — like the recent mine disaster in Utah — which kill or maim thousands?

How many cops that gun down Black and Latino youth are ever arrested — let alone tried, convicted, and thrown in jail? And the Supreme Court itself sanctions legal murder through the death penalty.

Nor do the capitalists' crimes stop at the borders of the United States. These international outlaws fund counterrevolutionary terror against Nicaragua. They give arms to the Salvadoran government to use against the working people of that country. They withhold food from starving millions in Africa.

None of these things are crimes, according to the ruling class's definition of law and order. Since the bosses, bankers, and landlords who profit from these crimes make up the social class that runs the government through the Democratic and Republican parties, they make the laws to protect their interests.

When necessary, however, the capitalists even violate their own laws. Employers routinely violate health and safety regulations. Companies bribe government officials to win lucrative contracts or to block the enforcement of the hundreds of environmental laws that are on the books.

Capitalism is built on crime. It is not surprising therefore that what is referred to as organized crime is also part of capitalist crimi-

nality. Organized crime is simply the illegal side of business that meets the market demands for gambling, prostitution, drugs, and murder contracts. Like other businesses, it yields profits and attracts capital. Despite the hoopla surrounding police investigations of organized crime, these investigations are not designed to stop it but simply to hold it in check.

Heads of organized crime mingle with the capitalists. They buy capitalist politicians. They invest in the businesses of the capitalists. The Kennedy family, for example, made its fortune through smuggling liquor during Prohibition.\* They are now respectable, legal capitalists and ruling-class politicians.

Your view of who is a criminal is determined in large part by what class you are a member of — the working class or the capitalist class. During the 1981 air traffic controllers' strike, for example, many working people saw President Reagan, who busted the union, fired the strikers, and made the skies unsafe, as a criminal. The capitalists, on the other hand, viewed him as their hero and the air traffic controllers as criminals.

Today the capitalists see the four Black youths who were the victims of the vigilante attack as the criminals and the racist Goetz as their hero.

## Does 'poverty' cause crime?

One view of what causes crime, which is often presented as Marxist, is the idea that capitalism causes poverty, and poverty causes crime. While blaming the social system for the problem, this view portrays the working class as the source of crime. But impoverished working people are not the source of crime. The ruling class is. The view that poverty per se is the cause of crime leads to supporting the call for more jails, more cops, and more restrictions on the rights of the working class today — since poverty does exist.

While most working people would not steal except to survive, the wealthy families that run this country have no such moral compunctions. They continue to steal no matter how much wealth they have. The owners of General Motors, for example, after making billions in record-breaking profits last year, had no hesitations about stealing millions more from auto workers in the last contract.

Crime by working people against each other is a product of the breakdown of human solidarity bred by the private-profit system. This system pits individual against individual in the constant battle to survive. The divisions along race and sex lines; the competition for jobs among workers and the divisions and insecurity it breeds; the ideology that sees all social problems as individual ones to be solved individually at the expense of others — these are rooted in class-divided society. For example, violence in working class families — the abuse of women and children — is a product of the

\* The period from 1920 to 1933 when the manufacture, transport, and sale of all types of alcoholic beverages was prohibited by law in the United States.

pressure capitalism puts on the individual family unit and the oppression of women.

These kinds of crimes can only decrease when working people overcome these divisions and collectively struggle for their rights.

An example of how the increase in solidarity leads to a decrease in crimes by working people can be seen in Nicaragua. Although that country remains poor and there is still unemployment, "street crime" has declined approximately 65 percent since the victory of the revolution. The Nicaraguan government, because it represents the workers and farmers, does not deepen divisions among working people but leads them in collective struggle for social solutions to their problems.

#### Capitalists' 'war on crime'

Law-and-order campaigns, proposed by the capitalist class to supposedly end crime, are an obstacle to building this kind of solidarity. These campaigns deepen the divisions among working people and strengthen the repressive

apparatus of the capitalist class which produces more violence against working people.

Attorney General William French Smith outlined before the Federal Legal Council in October 1981 what the government really has in mind when it talks about launching a "war on crime."

Smith said, "We have proposed a new approach to immigration and refugee policy designed to reassert control over our borders. . . . We have firmly enforced the law that forbids federal employees from striking. We have opposed the distortion of the meaning of equal protection by courts that mandate counterproductive busing and quotas."

As the attorney general's speech clearly shows, in the government's war on crime there is no distinction between "criminals" and workers and oppressed who fight for their rights. For this reason, working people must reject any attacks on the rights of those arrested for "criminal" as opposed to political reasons. If, for example, bail rights are taken away

from someone who allegedly robs a bank, it sets a precedent. It makes it easier for these rights to be taken away from those arrested in a strike, or in defense of Black rights or for any other political reason.

Vigilantism of any kind serves only to inflame racism and escalate the breakdown of working-class solidarity. It is linked to calls for more cops. It, like the law-and-order campaign of the capitalist class that spawned it, must be rejected for what it is — a weapon in the capitalist arsenal against the working class.

Socialists fight against the crimes of the capitalist class — both those that are sanctioned by law and those that are illegal even under its own judicial system. In the fight for our rights as a class and in defending the rights of the most oppressed, we can build solidarity among working people. This solidarity — the standing together of working people against the bosses on a world scale — can build a new society freed of crime and violence through eliminating its roots. □

## DOCUMENTS

# Commentary on Grenada revolution's defeat

## Views of Antigua radical leader Tim Hector

[The following are excerpts from articles by Tim Hector, the chairman of the Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement (ACLM), commenting on the overthrow of the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) of Grenada, headed by Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, in October 1983. That overthrow, in which Bishop and other Grenadian revolutionaries were murdered on October 19 by supporters of Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard, preceded the October 25 U.S. invasion of Grenada.

[Hector is a well-known radical figure in the English-speaking Caribbean, and the ACLM is the largest left-wing party in Antigua. The views presented by Hector and the ACLM on the overthrow of the PRG are part of a broader political discussion and debate in the region over the meaning of the Grenada events.\* The

articles from which these excerpts are taken were all run in Hector's "Fan the Flame" column in the ACLM's weekly newspaper, *Outlet*, and are taken from the June 15, July 13, and Oct. 19, 1984, issues.]

\* \* \*

June 13, 1980, and June 19, 1980, are two indelible dates in modern Caribbean history. The first marks the death of [Guyanese radical figure] Walter Rodney. The second marks the first attempt, by counter-revolution, on the life of Maurice Bishop, as a bomb was placed under the speaker's platform at a public rally in Queen's Park at which Maurice Bishop was to speak. Eventually, on 19 October, 1983, a counter-revolution, led by the Party, succeeded in doing what the counter-revolutionary terrorist bomb did not accomplish on June 19, 1980.

I wish to remind as well, that Walter Rodney was killed by a bomb, planted not by the central committee of a one-party state, but by a bomb organised, planned and executed on the orders of a two-party state, over which the ruling party (PNC) [People's National Congress] was paramount. That paramountcy was predominant over the standing army.

In the Caribbean today, the one-party or two-party state produces the same murderous result against the proponents and advocates of mass democracy.

And it is equally necessary to remind that two documents from the Working People's Alliance of Guyana in the October 15 issue.

Maurice Bishop was murdered on the orders, specific and direct, of the Central Committee of a one-party state, which had established paramountcy over the army, and used that dominance over the army to execute its will.

Tragically, Maurice Bishop recognised that the NJM [New Jewel Movement] had become its opposite, that is the party of counter-revolution, only after he was put under house arrest by the (Girondist) counter-revolutionary party.

And that, dear reader, is not only philosophy, it is philosophy which is substantiated and made manifest by the tremendous march of the people which freed Maurice Bishop in the face of armed might of the party on October 19. The people were overcoming in actuality, in life, by self-activity and struggle, the negation which the NJM had become.

The logical step from there for Maurice Bishop was not simply to go to Fort Rupert, but to arm the people, thus taking away the monopoly of force from the party, and placing it in the hands of the people. With that one stroke the counter-revolutionary party would have been routed.

Now I want to move back to the science of history. And I am going to refer to C.L.R. James, undoubtedly the most important thinker of the 20th Century, and that is becoming more and more evident with the unfurling of events in Poland as in Grenada.

Here I want to quote James writing in the *Caribbean Revolution*: Says C.L.R. James, "Always remember that in Revolution the struggle is not against the government. Never.

The government [Gairy] is defeated. The struggle is between the Right wing and the Left wing of the revolutionary elements. The struggle is between what is to be done between the left wing and the right wing of the Revolution." That is the key to understanding what took place in Grenada.

Then referring to the French Revolution of 1789 James demonstrates his point by showing that the struggle in France was "between in fact Girondist and Robespierre, the Girondist on the Right and Robespierre on the Left." James could have added in the Russian Revolution the same struggle was between Lenin on the Left, and Stalin on the Right; and in Cuba, between Fidel Castro on the Left, and Anibal Escalante on the Right; and in Grenada, between Maurice Bishop on the Left and Bernard Coard on the Right.

Essentially that difference in Grenada hung on the question, that with the help of the Army, Bernard Coard would establish the authority of the Central Committee over the people and subordinate them and their dissatisfaction to party directives from the all-wise, all knowing Central Committee. The party would rule forever.

Or, on the contrary, Maurice Bishop with the people, could establish new popular institutions for the management of the economy, the military, and of society in general.

Put another way, Maurice Bishop represented that tendency which by relying on impulses from among the people would organise the spontaneous impulses of the people to overcome their own dissatisfactions, through their own discussion and activity. Walter Rodney belongs to the same school of thought and action.

True that [Guyana's Prime Minister Forbes] Burnham was still the government, not yet defeated, but his party, the PNC, like the NJM in Grenada, was and is incapable of arresting economic decline in the state sector and the economy as a whole. True too, that Walter Rodney was the most effective challenge to Burnham's party paramouncy over the Army — as supreme force — and therefore real power. True too, that Coard in Grenada had established the same paramouncy over the army, and Maurice Bishop as mass leader represented alive the certain challenge and victory over that arrangement, with the People becoming paramount and not the party.

I am suggesting here, that the deaths of Walter Rodney and Maurice Bishop represent some of the most profound conflicts in philosophy and social life in the modern world. They both lost. And the people lost temporarily. But the victory of the people will not come about until we clear away a lot of sheer philosophical and political humbug which has come to characterise the modern institution called the PARTY.

## July 13

The ruling ALP [Antigua Labour Party], as everyone knows has all the power. Like [Prime



Minister Edward] Seaga in Jamaica they preside over a one-party State. They control everything. Radio, television, Treasury, Police and Army — the works. This ruling family and clique constantly and definitely maintain "an immense mass of interests and livelihoods in the most absolute dependence." The State, which they control and direct, steadily "enmeshes, controls, regulates, superintends, and directs" the whole of society, from "its most comprehensive manifestations of life to its most insignificant stirrings."

This is the type of State, complete with censorship, which Coard in Grenada wanted to install in place of Maurice Bishop. It is a type of State, suited to both Coard and [Antiguan Prime Minister Vere] Bird, in which you reward friends with surplus posts while they reward themselves with endless travel allowances and kick-backs from investors. Meantime, they remorselessly punish and harass all those who bring enlightenment to the nation.

This kind of centralisation of power is a definite kind of dictatorship. In the case of Bernard Coard, he wished to establish in Grenada the dominance of the party over the people and the revolution, and then the dominance of the Central Committee over the party, and finally the dominance of the Leader over the Central Committee. This is the only means and medium by which the modern State-capitalist elite can dominate the mass of people in underdeveloped countries.

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## October 19

Recently, and in Puerto Rico at an international conference involving scholars and intellectuals from the Caribbean, Central America and the USA, I was required to speak on the internal crisis that led to the collapse of the Grenada Revolution. Today being the first anniversary of the death of the Revolutionary leader of Grenada, the indomitable and undying Maurice Bishop, I must of necessity reproduce here what I said in Puerto Rico.

First of all, the United States media have been working over-time to convince the world

that the collapse of the Grenada Revolution was the result of a power struggle between Moderates (led by Bishop) and hard-line Marxists (led by Coard). As always with the U.S. media, nothing is further from the truth. It is not that U.S. media intend to lie. It is that their nature and purpose prevent them from knowing any better, or arriving at any kind of truth.

Now until I present the proof, proof positive, you would not believe that Coard himself admitted in print, at the height of the internal crisis in Grenada, if you please, that he was a Marxist at all. So all this talk about Coard being Marxist or hard-line Marxist is pure hocus-pocus having no other purpose but to discredit the new political forces in the Caribbean who are opposed to dependent capitalism, with its inevitable neo-colonialism, corruption and mal-administration of society. Here is the proof.

Now, at the September 23 [1983] plenary of the NJM, Coard himself unambiguously and forcefully stated the following as his own rejection of Marxism. Said Coard: "The standards (of party organisation) we are aiming for are out of harmony with the level of development of the productive forces of our country."

Every student knows that the basic, the most fundamental point and foundation of Marxism and classical socialism is that the consciousness of a people, and therefore their political organisation, is based on and arises from the "level of development of the productive forces." To reject that is to repudiate and annihilate the very foundation and fountain-head of Marxism and socialist organisation. And this is precisely what Coard stated and did.

Permit me to explain. In slave society, the very nature of the organisation of production by slaves precludes and prevents the organisation of a political party, open agitation, and the organisation of slave labour to combat enslaving capital. Resistance takes other forms, precisely because of the level of development of the productive forces.

Further, the organisation of production in capitalist society makes possible Trade Unions, political parties, newspapers which serve as tribunes of the people in opposition to the media of the powers that be. This level of organisation is and was impossible under feudalism, because the level of development of the productive forces under feudalism did not allow it.

To extend the argument, in advanced capitalist society the industrial working class no longer needs a political party to raise its consciousness of its own oppression. The very socialisation of labour, in large numbers in huge factories, overcomes that limitation. Therefore, in Poland the working class, in less than a month, in August 1980, organised itself, over 10 million strong, to combat the oppressive state power which sought to regulate, direct, superintend and control "the most comprehensive manifestations of life, down to its most insignificant stirrings; from its most general modes of being to the private existence of

individuals." The working class by itself rejected that organisation of society and developed an organisation by itself, to overcome that internal antagonism.

So when Coard admits, and confesses in print, that the "Joint-leadership" and other political abracadabra he was advocating in Grenada was "out of harmony," completely out of harmony, "with the level of development of the productive forces," he has stated clearly and unequivocally that he was no kind of Marxist at all, hardline or soft-line.

He was simply just another epigone of Stalinism using phrases and the apparatus of the party and army to wrest power from the people and to turn the revolution into its opposite — counter-revolution.

We have now laid to rest, once and for all, the idea that Bernard Coard and his OREL [Organisation for Revolutionary Education and Liberation] gang were any kind of Marxists or socialists. They were unabashed Rightists and counter-revolutionaries in revolutionary garb.

I want to emphasise and re-emphasise that Maurice Bishop's entire political record from 1970–1983 shows him to be irrevocably and unshakably committed to the idea of power to the people. He was committed to the idea of power to the people. He was committed to power to the people organised in assemblies or councils of farmers, workers, women and youth as the only corrective to the corruption and barbarism wreaked on the Caribbean people under the mace of parliamentary democracy — westminster style.

That is Maurice Bishop, the essence and quintessence of his revolutionary life. He was, to be sure, nobody's moderate. He was a revolutionary, committed, unshakably committed to transfer power from the old colonial State, to workers, farmers, women and youth Councils.

It was this commitment, this goal, that led to his murder most foul, by the Stalinist conspiracy of party and army.

The fact of the matter is, and the hub of the crisis in Grenada revolved around the question, would the Dictatorship of the Central Committee led by Coard exercise power over the people. Or, would the people in workers, farmers, women and youth councils exercise real power, and so expand democracy while expanding the productive forces. That, when all obfuscation is removed, is the heart of the matter.

Coard unmistakably contended that power, all power would be centred in the Central Committee, and unanimous (but forced) agreement with the Central Committee would be termed democracy. And this specious order was, of course, termed democratic centralism. It was centralist alright, but neither democratic in practice nor theory. Socialism is nothing if it is not democratic!

That is why on October 19, 1983, the most momentous day in the history of the modern English speaking Caribbean the people of Grenada, en masse, rose up, in a mighty throng, against the dictatorship of the Central Commit-

tee allied to the army.

The dispute was clear: Leader and people, for peoples power, vs. the Dictatorship of the Central Committee and the army. The democratic self-organisation of the people on October 19, 1983, signalled an expansion of both revolution and democracy. Coard chose to shoot down both revolutionary leader and the revolutionary democratic self-movement of the people.

In plain terms what collided on October 19, 1983, in Grenada were two contending forces. One in favour of Power to the People in Council. The other in favour of Power to the Party and Army in secret but total power.

Maurice Bishop was unaware that the proponents of Power to the Party and army, as they have done throughout history, would use murder, and "turn their guns on the masses" to achieve their ignoble ends. This was his tragic flaw.

However, on October 20, 1983, Fidel Castro became the first socialist statesman in the world to repudiate that political tendency.

Coardism, and its ancestor Stalinism, was thus firmly, resolutely, and heroically repudiated by the first and foremost socialist in the region, and perhaps, the world — Dr. Fidel Castro.

Now I want to end with one of the ironies of the Grenada Revolution, namely, Maurice Bishop criticising Maurice Bishop himself.

In that same last interview of August 1983 Maurice Bishop uttered some words, some memorable words. He said: we have to disabuse ourselves of the idea of relying "on a professional standing army, police force and what not" to defend the country. Then he continued: "Take Chile, where Allende takes power in September 1970 and is overthrown in September 1973 three years later. In the meantime, there was nothing about building a militia because the specific situation was different! However, it was the very army which he (Allende) was relying on that was used as a basis to overthrow him."

In spite of Maurice's obvious wisdom and charitable understanding of events in Chile, the identical thing happened in Grenada! Though Maurice Bishop has initiated a militia bringing the whole people to defend the country, the Grenada militia, like People's Power, was "still embryonic." In the meantime, the People's Revolutionary army in Grenada, was transformed into its opposite. It became a standing army preoccupied with the two principal concerns of all standing armies — food and pay. Thus, Coard could easily win over the Army, in Maurice Bishop's absence in Eastern Europe, with the promise of a substantial pay increase and more and better food.

One is reminded that Marx himself criticised a "standing army" as "a parasitic body" and declared that the next attempt at revolution "would no longer as before seek to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but would smash it." And this smashing of the "bureaucratic military machine is the preliminary condition for every

real people's revolution."

Grenada reminds of that powerful lesson even more concretely than when Marx wrote.

Maurice's profound mistake, in both theory and practice, was that the army and militia were not integrated. The army remained parasitic, dependent on state revenue and state surplus for its upkeep. Maurice failed to make the army produce its own surplus and advance the productive forces by its own involvement in meaningful productive work.

Thus the army in Grenada was transformed from its revolutionary intent, by Coard, who, mark well, controlled the purse strings and with that power, manipulated the People's Revolutionary army until it became a standing army. That is, a bureaucratic, parasitic, military machine which overthrew the very revolution it was created to defend. This is not a paradox. It is a dialectic.

When on one occasion two army officers were taking me to see Maurice Bishop for the second-to-last time in November 1982, they drove so recklessly that we nearly toppled off the road to our death. The disregard for public property (cars etc.) was obvious and alarming.

I told Maurice on my arrival that my perception of the army in Grenada was that it was not revolutionary. It was not only parasitic in character, but destructive in name and nature. Maurice was suitably outraged. Maurice felt I was putting too much store by my own horrendous experience of the army's recklessness. And, according to him, I was not being "theoretical or practical, but frantic." Theoretically, he claimed the army was needed "to lead the people in its defense against impending attack from U.S. imperialism, and, Tim, you should understand that elementary point."

He missed the point. The very organisation of the army, its divorce from the productive life of the country, its inability to produce and generate economic surplus for its own sustenance as well as for national development, made it a standing army, and therefore the base of counter-revolution. Little did I know that I was dead right. Were I certain then, the dispute would not have ended as it did.

The point is, Maurice was not naive. He could not bring himself to believe that an army created in the high tide of revolutionary fervour could become its very opposite, in so short a time as four years. He was awe struck when he recognised his error. And his last recorded words, "O God, they have turned their guns on the masses," records not his naivete as sympathetic critics are wont to observe, but his shock that a revolutionary instrument had become a counter-revolutionary force so soon.

Far from being naive, Maurice Bishop had a profound faith in the masses, and could not foresee, (except he were God) that the "embryonic" militia would be disarmed as the Army and Central Committee sought total power with Coard as absolute and sole leader. To ask Maurice to predict that, would have been too much in his particular and peculiar circumstances. With his death many are wiser. □

# C.L.R. James views Grenada

*'From self-defence to self-destruction'*

[The following are major excerpts from an article by C.L.R. James entitled, "The Grenadian Revolution: From Self-defence to Self-destruction." James, who was born in Trinidad, has been a well-known figure in Marxist and radical movements since the 1930s. His article assessing the overthrow of the Bishop government appeared in the July 1984 issue of *Communist Affairs*, a quarterly journal published in Britain.]

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Bishop and his circle had been campaigning, agitating and mobilising thousands of people from 1972 or thereabouts. Throughout the Caribbean many leftists, middle-class leftists, used a lot of phrases; they went abroad, they went to college, joined the Labour Party or Communist Parties. They came home, talked a lot and the ruling class was unable to deal with them. It left them alone or it gave them a job or made them into people of importance. But we have shown how difficult it was for such a process to take place in Grenada.

So in the agitation and mobilisation of thousands of people there were severe and violent conflicts. Then it eventually came to 1979. [Dictator Eric] Gairy was going away. He went away and left instructions that the opposition leadership should be killed. Several officers in the police force told Maurice Bishop that Gairy had plans to do this. Therefore, they, in order to avert their own murders, to prevent themselves from being killed, took power in March of 1979. It was not a revolutionary action but self-defence.

I have been trying to lay a basis for when the people move. The leftists in the middle class (educated people, talking a lot about socialism and the development of the Caribbean nation) now find that they have to do something. And they are not able to do anything. So the people move with power, but empirically. In 1979 the people moved, they took power and to Bishop (one of these middle-class intellectuals who are always talking in extreme terms) the people said: "Well, alright, you are talking all the time, here you are Bishop — do something." That is a crude expression of what actually happened.

Finally there rose up inside the mass movement a group of people critical of Bishop. One must get the basic situation clear — the movement takes place, the people come out and the people go to Bishop and they say "You are the leader, you are the man, well let us see now what you are going to do." Bishop is the leader, but Bishop has nothing to do. The attack on the system means challenging the power of the United States and he is not prepared to do that; that means a lot of trouble.

I cannot say for certain but it seems pretty clear that they [those critical of Bishop] had been in contact with Moscow. At any rate Moscow and Cuba were encouraging them. Moscow could not have wanted a takeover; it helped sustain the revolution, approved of Bishop's power; Moscow did not want the Stalinists to fight Bishop. The Soviets preferred Grenada to have a native movement with a native leader. But time passed and time passed and the people who had made the revolutionary movement saw that nothing had happened. They began to press Bishop.

The group within the mass movement called the Organisation for Revolutionary Education and Liberation [OREL] was led by a known Muskovite, Bernard Coard. He had about twenty or thirty devoted supporters. He had only perhaps a core of people, perhaps two score, but they would have been in touch with hundreds of people feeding them the political ideas from Moscow and Cuba.

But time was passing, the revolution was stagnant, the people angry. The Coardites called on Bishop to share the leadership with Bernard Coard. In calling for this, they were saying that there was great dissatisfaction among the population. They were saying that the thing had fallen apart — in all the local mass organisations, people were not attending. This must be emphasised because it is a typical Caribbean situation where the "revolutionary" leftists when power is placed in their hands do nothing serious. That happened to [Eric] Williams in Trinidad.

In Grenada's local popular organisations — the parish councils, youth and women's organisations — people simply voted with their feet and would not come back to meetings. There was also general dissatisfaction in the military.

So this OREL clique went to a Central Committee meeting, over which Bishop presided. As usual he presented an inane report. But a Coardite told him to put it in the dustbin. The Coardites proposed a new analysis of the state of the revolution, the state of the party and the state of the Central Committee. A lot of them spoke at the Central Committee meeting criticising Bishop for not giving leadership to the revolution and to the Central Committee.

Now the crisis was apparent and the clique asked Bishop to share the leadership with Coard. Inevitably he vacillated and said he would think about it. In the middle of the crisis and discussion Bishop went off to Eastern Europe, looking for loans. By the time he returned the national leadership was in charge of the army; it disarmed his faction and put Bishop under house arrest.

A mass movement above all needs leader-

ship, and if the political leader does not give it people turn to another organisation, often the army. The army consists of organisation — commanders, lieutenants, majors, etc. So when people want somebody to take steps it is not surprising that they turn to the army. It has happened repeatedly in the course of revolutions.

Once it went out to the population that Bishop was under house arrest, people started to gather. They felt that the revolution was threatened, they stormed his house, about five or six thousand of them. They took him away and put him on a truck. The crowd developed into thousands — people coming from all the rural areas, in trucks and carts, walking, on bicycles, by any transport they could get they came. At the end of the day there was crowd of twenty thousand or thereabouts in St. George's, out of a population of 110,000. They took Bishop from his house and up to Fort Rupert and asked him address the population.

The faction who had taken power and put him under house arrest got the army together (or a faction of the army) and went and shot Bishop and his friends. Then they instituted a military regime and martial law. It seems they had been preparing. They had imported thousands of overalls and agricultural implements from Eastern Europe. They also had a programme: a series of commissions to replace ministries, each run by a secretariat, a Five Year development plan and targets to be set. They would carry out their programme — in actuality power would be concentrated in a pro-Moscow leadership.

The Americans had long prepared to invade the country. They had held military manoeuvres, aimed against "Amber and the Amberdines."

We would appear to be bringing in the United States late. If that is so, we are not submitting to the view which sees the former colonial territories primarily as areas dominated by superpowers. That is *wrong*. The conflicts are these. The powers intervene. Theory? No. Hard fact.

If there is a local power which is strong and popular the powers keep away. People, citizens, groups from Moscow, Cuba and the United States may intervene politically and then militarily — but they must have a base. The Russians may have strong influence, but only if Moscow's supporters seize power would the Americans (Washington) intervene.

That the Americans were long ready to intervene in Grenada has been established and we have to ask ourselves why. First because the Americans cannot stand the idea that the people of the CARIBBEAN ISLANDS MAY AND CAN REVOLT. They feel that they have to keep what they call order. But the Americans also intervened because they refuse to have Moscow's influence in the Eastern Caribbean; there was a huge Russian embassy and a large East German presence in Grenada. The Eastern Caribbean is of strategic interest to the United States. □

# Interview with Ernest Mandel

## Following return from visit to Nicaragua

[In early December 1984, Ernest Mandel was in Nicaragua at the invitation of the Center for Investigation and Study of the Agrarian Reform, connected with the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Reform (MIDINRA). He had numerous consultations with officials responsible for economic sectors and for training cadres of the Nicaraguan government and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

[In addition to several talks given to students at the Central American University, Mandel gave a public lecture, entitled "The World Crisis of Capitalism," under the auspices of the Nicaraguan Association of Social Sciences. The lecture was attended by several hundred people.

[On his return from Nicaragua, Ernest Mandel was interviewed in Brussels on December 16 by *la Gauche*, the French-language newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party (POS), Belgian section of the Fourth International. The interview appeared in its Jan. 11, 1985, issue and was reprinted in the January 7 issue of *Inprecor*, a fortnightly magazine published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. The following translation, from the French *Inprecor*, is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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*Question. What was the class character of the elections in Nicaragua?*

*Answer.* It is wrong to speak of bourgeois parliamentary elections or elections for a bourgeois parliamentary assembly, as we already pointed out in the article that appeared in the Nov. 16, 1984, issue of *la Gauche*. Our stay on the scene fully confirmed our conviction that the state power in Nicaragua is a power of workers and poor peasants, with 450,000 armed workers keeping their weapons at home. The class character of the assembly must be defined in the context of that kind of power, not through formal criteria.

*Q. What is the meaning of the Sandinista statements in favor of political pluralism?*

A. It is impossible to judge individual motivations. It is even more difficult to make a prognosis on possible future changes in attitude. But one thing is certain: at present the Sandinista leaders state that political pluralism is not a domestic tactical maneuver toward the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie nor a concession to international public opinion, whether social democratic, left Christian, Latin American bourgeois, or even imperialist.

They state that political pluralism is useful and essential for the revolutionary process,

useful and essential for building socialism in Nicaragua. It is especially essential for raising the consciousness and activity of the working masses, for their growing participation in the real administration of the economy and the state, for the struggle against bureaucratic deformations right within the revolutionary camp and the FSLN.

These statements, made over and over, are an outstanding contribution to the development of international revolutionary consciousness, a return to the original thought of Marx, the Lenin of 1917, Rosa Luxemburg, Trotsky. Here we see the confirmation of what we have continuously stated for decades. To the degree that Nicaraguan reality corresponds to these stated positions, the whole international workers movement, the whole world working class will derive immense advantages from it.

*Q. Can you give some practical examples of the fruits of political pluralism for the working masses?*

A. You cannot separate political pluralism from the self-organization and self-management of the masses: one is a precondition for the other. The combination of the two has begun to take hold in Nicaragua. It is far from having reached its full development. But the fact that things are starting to go in that direction represents a new step forward compared with what workers self-management represented in Yugoslavia, where it was partially stifled by the single-party system.

Regarding workers control and mass participation in the management of enterprises, production committees are functioning in more than half the enterprises. The real extent of independent organization varies considerably, but nonetheless continues to grow.

Regarding territorial organization, the Sandinista Defense Committees are neighborhood bodies representing the big mass of the population, entrusted with a series of state activities such as the distribution of ration coupons and the control of the distribution of basic goods, as well as control over schooling.

Regarding rural education, there are consultative councils of parents (and sometimes parents and students) that strive in particular to link the teaching and preparation of the students to their integration into productive labor.

At the same time a vigorous polemic in the press is developing. *Barricada* and *Nuevo Diario* answer *La Prensa* every day, unmasking the opposition's lies or demagogic half-truths.

For example, when *La Prensa* stated that the government had prevented opposition leaders from freely traveling abroad, *Barricada* pub-

lished the list of their numerous trips, based on the exit stamps collected at the Managua airport. Another important fact, if you want to talk about pluralism and democratic rights, is that strikes are taking place and are no longer repressed at all.

*Q. Will the progress toward socialist democracy be reflected in the constitution that the assembly is going to begin to work on?*

A. I think so, but obviously I cannot predict to what degree. That depends on the discussions taking place, the degree of mass participation and political activity, the outcome of social struggles in coming months, and, above all, the outcome of the confrontation with imperialism and the counterrevolution. Up to now, two achievements should be stressed: first, the codification of civil liberties, of party pluralism, of the right to strike, of freedom of the press and association seems to have taken place; second, the Sandinista leadership has just taken an important step forward by recognizing the right to regional autonomy of the ethnic minority of Miskito Indians.

The big question remaining to be worked out is the question of the institutionalization, alongside the National Assembly, of people's power in an assembly or under another form that is real, not purely formal, not a "rubber stamp" body.

In other words, people's power must be established not simply at the grassroots level, in the neighborhoods, the villages, the enterprises, but also at the level of towns, regions, and the entire country.

*Q. This advance of socialist democracy is unfolding in the context of an ongoing imperialist aggression against the Nicaraguan revolution. Isn't this a paradox?*

A. Not at all. Sandinista power in Nicaragua is a victim of one of the cruelest imperialist military-economic offensives. In addition to the lessons drawn from the Nicaraguan revolutionary process itself and the lessons from other countries, this imperialist offensive is a stimulus for the FSLN to constantly increase its popularity among the masses and the active support it receives from them, in order to be ready to mobilize the whole people in the event of massive aggression by the Americans. This orientation has been crowned with success. I think that in the fight against imperialism and its *contra* mercenaries, the mass support for the FSLN is almost total. Even the bourgeois opposition parties have stated that they would mobilize as a single person in the event of a U.S. invasion.

*Q. You speak of a cruel counterrevolutionary offensive. Can you give some examples?*

A. During my stay in Nicaragua, a group of 200 counterrevolutionaries staged an ambush near El Pericón, north of the city of Estelí, massacring 28 workers who had gone to harvest coffee. Most of the victims of this unspeakable murder were telecommunications workers. Several victims were burned alive by the counterrevolutionaries. Others were finished off with bayonets. At the funerals, the whole city of Estelí was in the street, proclaiming its grief and its resolve to avenge its brothers and sisters.

*Q. What do the counterrevolutionaries hope to achieve with such massacres?*

A. Imperialism is completely conscious of the fact that international public opinion grows daily more aware of the danger of a massive aggression, bombardment of Nicaragua by the U.S. Air Force, or an invasion by marines. If such crimes were carried out, there would be hundreds of thousands of demonstrators, not only in Western Europe, but also in Mexico, Latin America, and especially the United States and Canada. The political price Washington would have to pay would be very high. In addition, we must do everything possible to make that price higher and higher still, even unacceptable.

Under these conditions, for the moment, imperialism has chosen a war of attrition as its line of attack against the Nicaraguan revolution. It combines incursions by armed counterrevolutionary gangs with a growing blockade and economic sabotage. The gangs basically operate from Honduras. They are given the most modern equipment and sometimes even are backed up by helicopters. Obviously imperialism is supplying them with this logistical support, through the intermediary of the CIA.

*Q. Does the counterrevolution have a social base in Nicaragua itself?*

A. You cannot speak of civil war in the real sense of the term, inasmuch as the social base of the contras is very limited. Basically we are talking about the former National Guards of Somoza, their families, and their retainers, all depending on camps established abroad. This base has undergone a certain erosion. They are beginning to replace their losses through recruitment of mercenaries of other nationalities rather than Nicaraguans.

*Q. Is this war of attrition effective from the counterrevolutionary vantage point?*

A. It clearly cannot either reverse or even undermine Sandinista power. But it can place the government in increasingly difficult economic conditions. The war of attrition has forced the government to spend 35 percent of the state budget on military expenditures. Imports of spare parts, raw materials, and consumer goods are down. In addition, it has caused destruction that has risen to the equivalent of one-quarter of the budget.

It forces the people's government to permanently mobilize a great mass of workers in the army and the militia, causing serious interruptions in the production and circulation of goods. The government must place its emphasis on the battle of military defense and the battle for the coffee harvest: it is a considerable burden for the mass of the people.

*Q. Has the economic situation in Nicaragua deteriorated as a result?*

A. During the first years after the Sandinista victory, the material situation improved for the working masses, a rare fact in the history of revolutions in the 20th century. In 1983, Nicaragua had the highest growth rate in all of Latin America.

In contrast, 1984 was a difficult year, a year of war economy as the Sandinista comrades say. The costs of war and destruction caused by the aggressor reduced the available resources by nearly 25 percent. The masses understand this and accept it, but they still suffer the consequences.

*Q. Can you specify the economic burden imposed on the Nicaraguan masses by the imperialist aggression?*

A. The expenses of the war mean a reduction in the quantity of goods distributed by the public network. That network is in fact increasingly limited to rationed goods (basic foodstuffs) and essential services (housing, education, health, public transportation, which is inadequate, water-gas-electricity, which also are going through difficulties). The salaries of blue-collar workers, white-collar workers, and civil servants are more than sufficient to acquire these goods and these services. But they do not allow them to shop in the free

market. Helped by the black market in the dollar (where the dollar is quoted at 20 times its price on the official market!), goods increasingly flow toward that network, making clothing, toys, appliances inaccessible to that segment of the population that must make do on wages.

Except for a few products, there are no real shortages. There is however this imbalance between prices and income. This causes an economic reaction from the masses: more and more people, including workers or members of their households, prefer to be middlemen. They then make four or five times more than by working in a factory or cooperative. Unemployment has completely disappeared. There is a shortage of labor.

*Q. Does this mean the failure of the mixed economy?*

A. It is more complicated. When you speak of mixed economy, you generally think of what remains as capitalist enterprise in the strict sense in Nicaragua. This is not where the principal difficulties come from, because the production and exports of this sector are strictly controlled by the state (the situation is comparable to that of the New Economic Policy in Russia). The problems come from the uneasy coexistence of a nationalized industrial sector that is too weak to supply the whole population and a sector of small peasant production that cannot be done away with by forced collectivization. The maintenance of the worker-peasant alliance is essential, for political and social reasons as well as for economic reasons. But it is necessary to make sure that this uneasy coexistence does not lead to imposing sacrifices on the workers and does not block planning, industrialization, and reasonable economic growth. □

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# Workers fight for their rights

*Resist employer, government, U.S. offensive*

By Larry Johnston

ST. GEORGE'S — Since the overturn of the Grenadian workers and farmers government in October 1983, the employers have gone on an offensive against working people.

Unemployment has increased from 14 percent to 48 percent. Several enterprises established by the government of the slain prime minister, Maurice Bishop, like the Agro-industries plant at True Blue and the Sandino building plant, have been shut down. Many cooperatives that used to get government support through loans and marketing assistance have been forced to close. Also many jobs related to tourism have been lost due to a decline in tourism since the U.S. invasion.

In the initial period after the invasion, many employers refused to negotiate with the unions, claiming that the unions had died with the revolution.

However most unions are attempting to hold firm and defend their members.

The most determined of these is the Commercial and Industrial Workers Union (CIWU). It has weathered the employers' attacks well and has been able to make some gains for its members in recent months. In part, the CIWU attributes its success to the strong base and high level of membership activity it was able to achieve before and during the revolution. This allowed it to reorganize itself quickly after the revolution's overthrow.

A major test for the union came in negotiations with the Grenada Nutmeg Cooperative Association (GNCA). The GNCA refused to give any wage increase to the workers, claiming a lack of markets for their product. In July, the workers were forced to take action and staged a two-week sit-down. The interim government — which was imposed by Washington following the U.S. invasion — intervened, and the workers went back to work with no immediate gains.

## Modest gains

However, employers took note of the willingness of workers to struggle, and several other employers decided to sign contracts with the union. Since then, Steele's Auto Supplies, Jonas Browne and Hubbards, the Nutmeg Restaurant, Bryden and Minors, the Tempe bottling plant, and others have signed agreements with the CIWU in which the workers made modest wage gains.

The Technical and Allied Workers Union, Public Workers Union, and Grenada Union of Teachers negotiated a contract with the interim government in November. The public workers gained a 12.5 percent raise retroactive to June and 10 percent retroactive to January 1984.

Other incidents also indicate that workers

are prepared to defend their rights. When the interim government fired supervisor of elections Roy Chateau because he was open to a proposal of the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement (MBPM) to reopen the voter registration rolls to allow thousands of those who had not registered to do so, the election workers organized a protest. When they too were fired, they organized to get solidarity from unions in Grenada and throughout the Caribbean.

Likewise the workers at the Marketing and National Importing Board organized to protest the interim government's attempts to destroy the board's monopoly on importing basic products like sugar, milk, rice, and cement. They also protested the government's disregard for the workers' right to participate in the managing of the board. Although these workers were unsuccessful, their willingness to struggle has sent a message to the bosses.

## AIFLD intervention

An important aspect of the attack against workers and their unions is the activities of the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), a CIA front organization that includes officials of the U.S. AFL-CIO union federation on its board of directors. AIFLD has carried out a campaign of slander against the main progressive leaders of the trade unions in an attempt to turn the workers against their leaders.

For the most part the AIFLD has been unsuccessful in these attempts. Osborne Baptiste, a key AIFLD agent, was expelled from the CIWU for his activities. The Trade Union Council also denounced the disruptive activities of Baptiste.

However, Baptiste and AIFLD have won support from one union, the Seamen's and Waterfront Workers Union (SWWU). The conservative leadership of the SWWU backed the U.S. invasion and has given the AIFLD an office in its union hall.

Before the invasion, the SWWU operated along strict craft lines, refusing to organize anyone outside of their craft, thus excluding even some of the laborers on the docks. However, in the past year it has carried out a raiding campaign against the more militant unions. Its activities have not been limited to the docks and waterfront, but have been extended to hotels, factories, and shops.

In these efforts it has had the aid of the interim government. For instance, at Grenada Breweries, where the workers were represented by the Bank and General Workers Union (BGWU), the SWWU applied to the labor commissioner for a poll of the workers to see if they would join the SWWU. Such a poll was in

violation of the Trade Union Recognition Act of 1979, since the BGWU had a contract in effect until 1986. Nonetheless, the labor commissioner conducted a poll, which the SWWU won narrowly.

## Unions not welcome

In the area around True Blue and the Point Salines International Airport, plans appear to be under way to set up a free trade zone, which would also be union-free. The U.S. contractors at the International Airport have made it clear that no unions will be allowed to operate there. Although this contravenes Grenadian law, the interim government did nothing to challenge the contractors' stand.

In November several airport workers were refused holiday pay, and about 100 were laid off after protesting the low wages and a new work rule. Two more workers were fired for eating an orange on the job.

The Ingle toy factory has become the first of what government officials hope to be many new enterprises in Grenada. The toy factory, employing up to 80 workers, is situated at True Blue. Owner Bill Ingle decided to set up a factory in Grenada at the suggestion of the U.S. government. He had applied for government assistance to expand his plant in Virginia, but the White House proposed he expand to Grenada instead. Ingle agreed, and the interim government of Grenada granted him a 20-year duty-free, tax-free grace period.

Working conditions at the factory are poor and wages low. No toilet facilities are available save an open pit latrine, and the workers have been subjected to racist insults by the U.S. manager.

According to an official of the CIWU, there is interest in the plant in joining a union, but as in the case of the airport, employees have been told no union will be allowed.

It is becoming increasingly clear to the workers of Grenada that as MBPM leader Kendrick Radix told an election rally in St. George's, "It is them [the bosses] who get rescued, and the workers who get invaded."

In the four and a half years of the workers and farmers government, the working people of Grenada tasted freedom and learned to struggle. Today they are continuing to fight for their rights. □

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