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Taiwan regime guns down critic in United States

By Will Reissner

The U.S. government knew from day one that Taiwan's Military Intelligence Agency organized the Oct. 15, 1984, murder of Chinese-American journalist Henry Liu in California. This information was revealed January 23 by Jerome Garchik, a lawyer for the Liu family.

Liu, author of a critical biography of Taiwan's ruler Chiang Ching-kuo, was gunned down by three men outside his suburban San Francisco home.

On the day of the murder, according to Garchik, the U.S. National Security Agency monitored a telephone call from gunman Chen Chi-li in San Francisco to Taiwan's Military Intelligence Agency reporting that his "mission" had been accomplished. Chen Chi-li is reportedly the head of the powerful Bamboo Gang crime syndicate, which has close ties with Taiwan's secret police agencies.

Despite this information, the gunman and accomplices Wu Tun and Tung Kuei-sen, also reportedly Bamboo Gang members, were allowed to leave the United States for Taiwan. The Taiwanese government vowed that they will not be sent back to the United States to stand trial.

The close ties between organized crime groups and the Taiwanese secret police have been the subject of frequent comment over the years. One Taiwanese journalist in Los Angeles told *Washington Post* reporter Jay Mathews: "Some if not all of our intelligence people have good connections with the underworld figures" in many Chinese-American communities.

And writing from Taiwan, *Washington Post* reporter Dinah Lee noted: "One local reporter said that [crime] syndicate shops selling illegal imports from the communist mainland make no secret of their connections with the security apparatus, and even leave the calling cards of government officials lying around.

"The DIB [Defense Intelligence Bureau] and Bamboo Gang have a lot in common because both groups started out on the mainland," before fleeing to Taiwan with the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949.

Silence in Washington

Because of the long and close ties between Washington and Taiwan's Kuomintang regime, first under Gen. Chiang Kai-shek and now under his son Chiang Ching-kuo, U.S. authorities made no attempt to solve the case.

Liu-family attorney Garchik charged January 23 that "the U.S. Government, the Justice Department and the State Department has known the full story of who killed Henry Liu for several months now and has refused to

speak out to the public or to the press to reveal this story."

California Congressman Norman Mineta was driven to write to Attorney General William French Smith protesting the "apparent lack of interest and activity by the Justice Department in pursuing the killers of Henry Liu."

Had it not been for pressure from family members, Taiwanese activists, and a handful of members of congress, the murderers of Henry Liu may well have remained untouched.

Liu was not the first U.S. citizen murdered by the rightist regime ruling Taiwan. In 1981, Chinese-American professor Cheng Wen-chen was found dead in Taiwan following 13 hours of questioning by Taiwan secret police agents.

Following Cheng's death, for which no one was ever punished, a 1982 amendment was passed to the U.S. Arms Export Control Act, imposing a ban on arms sales to countries found "to be engaged in a consistent pattern of intimidation or harassment directed against individuals in the United States."

The possibility that the U.S. Congress would hold hearings on whether Liu's death had violated this provision, thereby threatening the \$780 million in annual U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, prompted Taiwan's government to arrest Chen Chi-li and his two accomplices.

An incriminating tape

Chen, however, had not risen to the top of the powerful Bamboo Gang by being naive and overly trusting. After his return to Taiwan, Chen had made and hidden a tape recording describing the involvement of secret police officials in planning Liu's murder. The existence of this tape was revealed, after Chen's arrest, by a pro-Peking daily published in Hong Kong, *Wen Wei Po*.

When the existence of the tape became public knowledge, the Taiwan regime was forced to move against some of the figures implicated. The head of the Military Intelligence Agency, Vice Adm. Wang Hsi-ling, was relieved of his duties and arrested, as were deputy chief Hu Yi-min and Col. Chen Hu-men, the man telephoned by the Bamboo Gang leader from San Francisco.

Vice Admiral Wang had previously headed the Taiwan government's spy operations in the United States, primarily directed against the 20,000 Taiwanese students in the United States.

A Chinese scholar at the University of California at Berkeley told Fox Butterfield of the *New York Times* that he was "shocked" that the Chiang government had for the first time acknowledged its role in a political assassination. But, Butterfield reports, "the professor,

who asked that his name not be used because he was afraid for his safety, contended that the government was still putting up a 'smoke-screen' to mask the identity of the real culprit."

Any thorough investigation would surely have to focus on another member of the Chiang dynasty. Chiang Hsiao-wu, the second son of the present strongman, is widely believed to hold a key post in the National Security Council, which oversees the intelligence agencies.

'Contain the damage'

The Reagan administration, according to a January 18 report in the *Wall Street Journal*, is "working hard to contain the damage caused by the allegation that Taiwan intelligence agents were involved in the Liu killing." A State Department official told *Journal* reporter Eduardo Lachica that the Reagan administration would like to "get this thing behind us as quickly as possible."

The Taiwan government's readiness to murder a U.S. citizen on U.S. territory is striking confirmation of Washington's willingness to turn a blind eye to the operation of right-wing death squads in the United States.

The U.S. press has reported that Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos has "action teams" operating in the United States against anti-Marcos exiles. The Marcos regime is believed to have been involved in the 1981 murder of two Filipino trade unionists in Seattle.

In addition, a right-wing group calling itself the Vietnamese Organization to Exterminate the Communists and Restore the Nation has taken credit for the murders of several Vietnamese residents of the United States who favor normalized relations between Washington and Hanoi.

The military dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet of Chile organized the Washington, D.C., bombing death of Chilean exile Orlando Letelier.

And for years, CIA-trained Cuban counter-revolutionaries have murdered Cuban diplomats and Cuban residents of the United States with virtual impunity.

Whatever the ultimate outcome of the Liu case, Washington thus bears as much guilt for his murder as those who pulled the triggers. □

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U.S. military exercise a provocation to North Korea

By G.K. Newey

The huge U.S.-South Korean Team Spirit '85 military maneuvers that began on February 1 are a provocation against North Korea and have set back the North Korean government's efforts to improve relations with South Korea.

The annual Team Spirit maneuvers, involving more than 200,000 U.S. and South Korean troops, feature practice invasions of North Korea by air, land, and sea. The war games are to continue until mid-April.

Because of the scheduled maneuvers, North Korean authorities postponed a planned January 17 meeting with South Korean officials to discuss the establishment of economic relations across the demilitarized zone that has separated the workers state in North Korea from capitalist South Korea since the end of the Korean war in 1953.

North Korean Vice-premier Kim Hwan told his southern counterpart in a January 9 telephone conversation that Seoul's participation in the Team Spirit '85 joint military exercises "is a provocation that lays artificial obstacles in the way of the planned Economic Talks and [is] an insult to our side, which put forward a peace proposal."

Son Song Pil, chairman of the Red Cross Society of North Korea, postponed talks with the South Korean Red Cross scheduled for January 23 in the South Korean capital, noting that "the war rehearsal is almost timed to coincide with the departure of our delegation for Seoul." He added that under those conditions "good results can hardly be expected."

The postponement of the economic and Red Cross talks marks a setback in a process of easing tensions initiated by the North Korean government in late 1983. In a New Year's 1985 address, North Korean President Kim Il Sung held out the hope that "if the north-south dialogues proceed successfully . . . these will develop gradually onto higher-level talks and, further, culminate in high-level political negotiations between north and south."

A reduction of tensions and military threats is a key goal of the North Korean government. Hundreds of thousands of South Korean and U.S. troops are poised on the border dividing the 60 million Korean people.

The 39,000 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea are believed to have 1,000 nuclear weapons in their arsenal, and North Korean officials fear that the Pentagon plans to deploy Pershing 2 and Tomahawk nuclear-armed missiles in South Korea, only minutes away from the northern capital, Pyongyang.

The North Korean government proposed on Oct. 8, 1983, that three-way talks be held between Washington, Seoul, and Pyongyang, with the goal of signing a nonaggression pact between north and south and a peace treaty be-

tween North Korea and the United States to supplant the 1953 armistice.

Pyongyang has repeated its proposal for three-way talks many times since.

The most dramatic sign of a lessening of tensions came in late September 1984, following massive floods in South Korea that left some 200 dead and 200,000 homeless.

North Korean authorities offered to send large quantities of relief supplies. Similar offers made in 1956, 1957, and 1961 had been turned down by Seoul. This time, however, South Korean authorities accepted the relief

offer, and 100,000 tons of cement, 550,000 yards of cloth, 7,200 tons of rice, and 759 cases of medicines were shipped south in a two-day period.

A week later, North and South Korea set up a telephone line between their Red Cross offices, the first direct telephone connection between the two sides since 1976, and in November 1984 a first round of economic cooperation talks took place.

Washington and Seoul, through their massive military maneuvers, have now thrown a chill over this whole process. □

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Antiwar actions called for April

Coalition hits U.S. intervention in Central America

By Steve Craine

Antiwar actions called for April 20 in Washington, D.C., provide a rallying point for all opponents of the rapidly escalating U.S. war in Central America and the Caribbean.

The "Call to Action" published by a broad coalition of forces backing the demonstration declared, "we call for an end to U.S. military intervention in El Salvador, Nicaragua and the rest of Central America, an end to support for brutal dictatorships such as those of Pinochet in Chile and Marcos in the Philippines, and a new beginning for free and democratic South Africa with majority rule."

The impressive list of initial sponsors for the April Actions for Peace, Jobs and Justice shows the potential to tap and give voice to the deepgoing antiwar sentiment of working people in the United States. Especially significant is the representation of a number of major trade unions and union-sponsored antiwar committees as well as organizations of the Black, Latino, and Native American communities. The four demands of the April actions help to forge ties among these forces. They are:

- *Stop U.S. military intervention in Central America.* Support human freedom and dignity by also ending intervention in the Caribbean, the Middle East, Asia, the Pacific and Europe.

- *Create Jobs; cut the military budget.* Provide for human needs and challenge racism and discrimination based on sex and sexual orientation.

- *Freeze and reverse the arms race* beginning with a halt in the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons.

- *Oppose U.S. government and corporate support for South African apartheid and overcome racism at home.*

In addition to a mass demonstration on April 20, the coalition plans educational and cultural events on April 19 and a day of congressional lobbying and civil disobedience on April 22 in Washington. On April 20 demonstrations will also be held in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle.

International support

The call for these U.S. actions has already found an echo internationally. A coalition of groups in Canada is building a similar demonstration in Toronto on April 20, and groups opposed to the U.S. intervention in Central America are planning to organize a contingent to participate in a peace march that had previously been scheduled for that date in Vancouver.

The growing opposition to U.S. war moves comes as the White House and the Pentagon

are increasing attacks on the revolutions in Central America and the Caribbean. In the past month, the Reagan administration has taken steps to bolster the right-wing government of El Salvador and the counterrevolutionary mercenaries attacking Nicaragua. At the same time Washington has tried to sabotage various negotiation efforts in the area.

On January 18, the U.S. government decided to withdraw from the World Court in order to duck a suit brought by Nicaragua. The suit challenges U.S. support for aggression against Nicaragua, including the mining of its harbors. U.S. State Department spokesman Alan Romberg, explaining his government's action, asserted that "the broad political, economic, social and security problems of Central America will be solved only by political and diplomatic means." Yet the same day, the Reagan administration announced that it would no longer participate in the series of direct talks with the Nicaraguan government in Manzanillo, Mexico.

Following Washington's lead, U.S. allies in the region — El Salvador, Honduras, and Costa Rica — have threatened to boycott the next session of the Contadora negotiations in February, and Salvadoran President José Napoleón Duarte has suspended talks with leaders of the Revolutionary Democratic Front—Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FDR-FMLN).

U.S. military buildup continues

Washington is also stepping up its military presence in the region, sending an additional 1,300 U.S. troops to Honduras in preparation for another round of military "maneuvers" scheduled for March and April. On January 8 the Salvadoran air force used a new U.S.-supplied plane for the first time in combat during an 18-hour battle in San Vicente Province. The modified C-47 aircraft is capable of firing 1,500 rounds per minute from its three .50-caliber machine guns. Salvadoran Army Chief of Staff Gen. Adolfo Blandón said he would ask the U.S. government to provide a total of six of these gunships and 10 Hughes 500 helicopters equipped with rapid-fire "mini-guns."

Anti-Sandinista mercenary forces operating from Honduras and Costa Rica will also receive more funding from Washington. In October, Congress, in a bipartisan move, approved \$14 million in "covert aid" to be channeled through the CIA. It will consider adding to this sum in February. At the same time, the Reagan administration is discussing other ways to funnel arms and money to the *contras*. One alternative is to "go public" with the aid.

Another option being considered in the White House is increasing the use of other governments and private organizations as intermediaries.

Reagan has stepped up non-military pressure on the Nicaraguan government as well. U.S. representatives to the Inter-American Development Bank have attempted to block a \$60.3 million loan requested by Nicaragua for agricultural development. Verbal threats have escalated, too, with Reagan warning of a "new danger" in Central America stemming from "the support being given to the Sandinistas by Colonel Qaddafi's Libya, the PLO, and, most recently, the Ayatollah Khomeini."

Broad support for antiwar actions

Unity of all potential antiwar forces is especially important in the face of these escalations. The April Actions for Peace, Jobs and Justice has already made real progress as shown by the endorsement of two large industrial unions, the International Association of Machinists and the United Food and Commercial Workers.

Most of the major disarmament and anti-intervention groups in the United States are sponsors of the April 20 demonstration and the related actions. They include the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, Mobilization for Survival, U.S. Peace Council, SANE, the Nicaragua Network, the Guatemala Network, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and the American Committee on Africa.

Organizations of the oppressed minorities in the United States, including the American Indian Movement, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Operation PUSH, TransAfrica, and the National Congress of Puerto Rican Rights, are also among the initial supporters of the antiwar mobilization. The inclusion of the demand against support for apartheid is an important step in exposing U.S. imperialism as the common factor behind oppression in South Africa and Central America. The anti-apartheid movement is growing, and its activities will add momentum to the April actions. (See following article.)

The "Call to Action" pointed out, "Ten years ago this April the War in Vietnam ended. We recall that war and what it took to stop it. We know our protests make a difference, and when we stand with the struggling people of the world we have the strength to turn the tide."

Already the breadth of endorsements for this action exceeds that given to the movement against the U.S. war in Vietnam at a comparable stage in its escalation. Especially the union

backing and the link with other anti-imperialist struggles like the fight against South African apartheid indicate the potential for a powerful

demonstration on April 20 and a growing anti-intervention movement developing out of that action. □

U.S. anti-apartheid protests grow

Unionists join picket lines

By Steve Craine

The past two months have seen a big surge in protest in the United States against the racist policies of the South African government and against U.S. government support for the apartheid system. This growing movement is a shot in the arm for all anti-imperialist struggles, especially the fight against Washington's war in Central America.

Since late November 1984, thousands have joined protests in dozens of U.S. cities from New York to Seattle and from Boston to Birmingham. Several hundred have been arrested in these actions. The protests have pushed the issue into the major news media to an extent unprecedented in many years.

The recent wave of anti-apartheid activities began after a two-day general strike involving a million Black workers in South Africa was met with repression by the white minority government. During the November 5-6 strike, 21 strike leaders were arrested. Some have since been released, but others face trial.

The movement in the United States has placed the freedom of these Black unionists at the center of its demands. It also calls for release of long-held political prisoners, including African National Congress leaders Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu.

Embassy picket lines

The major target of the protests has been the South African embassy in Washington where picket lines have been held daily, some as large as 1,000. Special days of picketing have drawn in members of designated groups such as students, lawyers, unionists, and residents of particular cities.

Every day several prominent people have walked to the door of the embassy and refused to leave, resulting in their arrest by local police. Members of Congress, national trade union leaders, artists, athletes, and figures in the Black rights and women's movement have been arrested.

The publicity given to the pickets and arrests in Washington has spurred anti-apartheid actions in many other cities. In addition to calling for the release of political prisoners, some of these actions have focused on bringing economic pressure on the South African regime.

The campaign to withdraw funds from U.S. companies doing business in South Africa — which has been going on, especially on college campuses, for several years — has gained new support. Students at the state university in New Jersey sponsored a rally of 800 in November to demand the university divest itself of \$12 million of holdings in South African-related



Steven Fuchs/Militant

Members of Seafarers International Union picketing South African embassy in Washington on Dec. 4, 1984.

businesses. Movements have begun in Michigan, Ohio, and other states and cities to remove public investments from these partners of apartheid. The state of Michigan owns \$2 billion worth of stock in such companies as General Motors and Ford, that have operations in South Africa.

Another long-standing fight against South African economic interests that has gotten a big boost in recent months is the boycott of the sale of gold Krugerrand coins. The \$450 million of Krugerrands sold in the United States in 1983 represented the biggest single U.S. import from South Africa.

Trade unions get involved

An especially important aspect of the nationwide protests has been the substantial participation of the trade union movement, both officials and rank-and-file unionists.

"AFL-CIO Day" at the South African embassy December 4 drew 600 unionists from 25 different unions. Well represented were postal workers, seafarers, electrical workers, and municipal employees. Three union officials, including the secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO union federation, were arrested that day.

Union signs are seen on the embassy picket lines, nearly every day, and a number of officials have been arrested during the course of

the protests. When a "Baltimore Day" at the embassy was organized for residents of that nearby city, the United Steelworkers of America provided two buses. Twenty steelworkers from the giant Sparrows Point steel complex in Baltimore formed a contingent in the 400-strong protest.

Targeting Washington

In many cities across the country, protests have been directed at offices of the U.S. government. This indicates recognition of the fact that apartheid's most vital support comes from Washington.

Big U.S. corporations find investing in South Africa especially lucrative precisely because the racist policies of the government there encourage the super-exploitation of Black labor. More than 350 U.S. companies have direct investments of about \$2.3 billion in South Africa, and bank loans and stock holdings in South African companies total another \$10 billion or more.

The racist policies of apartheid, despite recent cosmetic changes, are designed to protect the system of super-exploitation for the benefit of South African, U.S., and European capitalists.

The repression and brutality of the white minority regime is as necessary to maintain the oppression of the Black majority there as the U.S. military intervention in Central America is to preserve capitalist rule in El Salvador and to turn back the Nicaraguan revolution.

This is why the capitalist rulers of the United States will go on propping up the racist rulers of South Africa. It is also why the movements against apartheid and to stop the U.S. aggression in Central America are closely linked.

A powerful expression of both these movements will be the mass demonstration called for April 20 in Washington. TransAfrica, one of the initiators of the embassy protests, is also a sponsor of this march. From the outset, the organizers of the April 20 demonstration have linked its main demand of "Stop U.S. military intervention in Central America" to the slogan, "Oppose U.S. government and corporate involvement in South African apartheid." □

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'We are fighting for a just society'

Interview with Transvaal strike leader Thami Mali

[On Nov. 5 and 6, 1984, the largest political strike in South African history brought out some one million Black workers in the heavily industrialized region around Johannesburg and Pretoria, in Transvaal Province. Among other things, the strikers demanded an end to army and police repression in the Black townships, the release of all political prisoners, an end to increases in rent and bus fares, and the resignation of all members of the government-established Black community councils.]

[The strike was organized by the Transvaal Regional Stayaway Committee (TRSC), a coalition of 37 organizations, including the two largest predominantly Black union federations, the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) and the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA). Many of the groups also belong to the United Democratic Front (UDF), a broad coalition that has been involved in many of the mass protests in South Africa in recent months.]

[The following is an interview with Thami Mali, the chairman of the TRSC, as well as of the Soweto Area Committee of the UDF. Although just 26 years old, Mali has already spent five years in the Robben Island prison, on charges of aiding two activists of the African National Congress (ANC), the main liberation organization.]

[This interview is taken from the Nov. 16, 1984, issue of the Johannesburg *Financial Mail*, one of South Africa's leading business journals, which obtained it just a day before Mali was detained under the Internal Security Act, as part of the apartheid regime's crackdown on the leaders of the stayaway strike. Mali was subsequently charged with "subversion" — which carries a maximum prison sentence of 25 years — and released on bail.]

* * *

Question. You say the aim of the TRSC is to make the country ungovernable so as to make government sit down and talk. Assuming government agrees, what will you call for?

Answer. The minimum demands of the people are contained in the Freedom Charter.¹ Of course, the people will have to come forward and lay these out. But even if such a call is made, it cannot be to the TRSC. There are leaders of the people of SA and there are leaders of the workers of this country.

1. The Freedom Charter, drawn up by a broadly representative Congress of the People in 1955, has been adopted as the program of the African National Congress.

Q. Who?

A. The leaders of the people have been jailed for life: [ANC leader] Nelson Mandela and others, and there are leaders of the people in exile. Those are the people government should talk to, not us. We want those people back and we are standing for the same ideals: we want change in this country, we want to live normal lives in a free non-racial country that will accommodate anybody — nobody will be driven into the sea.

Q. You have said there will be further and more effective stayaways in future.

A. Exactly, because the demands that led to the call for a stayaway have not been met. In fact, the situation has worsened because of the reaction of Sasol management in dismissing 6,500 workers. One of the demands that came particularly from the trade unions [in the stayaway campaign] was for the reinstatement of all dismissed workers, including the 464 Simba workers who, subsequently, were reinstated. But the fact remains, workers are being entrenched daily.

[Education and Training Minister] Gerrit Viljoen has said nothing to solve the education crisis, which is part of the reason for us calling the stayaway. Back in the townships the problems of rents, electricity, fake water meters, still remain unresolved. Moreover, there is the coming Putco [bus] fare hike.

Q. Chief Gatsha Buthelezi² has warned that stayaways are ill-advised until there is black unity. Are you worried about a backlash by workers since the stayaway resulted in the dismissal of workers at Sasol?

A. Our people have actually proved that they are not going to listen to Gatsha Buthelezi's reactionary advice. Anything that he advises is treated with suspicion. What he said was not different from the pamphlets distributed by the police over the weekend [before the stayaway]. The unity he talks about is not genuine. We will never at any stage think of forming a unitary force with Inkatha. The unity he talks about is forming an alliance with him. He must get out of the system first, then we can consider such an alliance.

As to a backlash, because of the reaction of the State to whatever we do we know that every step we take in our liberation struggle has

2. Chief Gatsha Buthelezi is the head of the KwaZulu Bantustan. Although he sometimes adopts the pose of a critic of the apartheid regime, he collaborates with it. Buthelezi's political organization is called Inkatha.

some boomerang effects. We know that in calling for a stayaway we might suffer here and there, but if this suffering will shorten our sorrow then sacrifice is the price we are willing to pay.

Q. Are you sure that Fosatu will support further stayaway action?

A. Yes, because we are fighting for a just society that will be ruled by the working class and this is what Fosatu is fighting for. It wants a government that will take care of the needs of the working class and the unions. More than ever before people have realised that their struggle at the factory floor will never be solved until the whole system of government has been changed. And student organisations have also realised that their problems in education will never be solved until the problems of the workers have been solved and until the problems of the community have been solved. All these problems will be solved if we change the system of government.

Q. Is that realistic? For one thing it is not clear the stayaway was an overwhelming success.

A. The stayaway was a tremendous success taking into account that we are operating under very trying circumstances and with the State having the advantage of TV and the media on its side. Despite that propaganda thousands stayed away.

Q. What about the charges of intimidation?

A. Aside from a few reported cases which were isolated, thousands decided to stay away without any intimidation. Where people were met on their way to and from work we as political activists at all times tried to educate our people and discuss the issues with them. Take, for example, the hostel dwellers³. In previous stayaways there were problems [convincing them] and we realised we had not done our work there. This time we did a lot of ground-work there before we produced the stayaway pamphlets. The first meeting convened by Cosas⁴ was on October 10. We decided to go

3. Migrant workers, who are technically "citizens" of one or another Bantustan but spend large amounts of their time working in the main urban centers under periodic contracts. They are not allowed to bring their families with them or to live in regular residential housing, but must stay in crowded barracks-like hostels.

4. The Congress of South African Students, which first proposed calling the strike.

to the communities and assess our strength there. We sat down and spoke to people and got their views because some people have a very low level of politicisation. We got a very good response.

Q. Can you say categorically that nobody was threatened, that anyone was free not to stay away? How much control do you have, since there seems to be a criminal element?

A. The feeling of ordinary people in the townships is that we will not tolerate people who allow themselves to be bought for the perpetuation of their own exploitation. Why, after being spoken to and after they understand, do these people decide to go against their people and be fellow travellers with the enemy? People just can't understand this because we believe that we the oppressed people have

more than ever before to stand together. We should not at any stage allow ourselves to be bought for the perpetuation of our own exploitation. That is why people are angry with the councillors.

Sometimes it is not easy to go against the people. For instance, it becomes difficult on my part to convince people not to loot a Putco bus. The reason is Putco is seen as an ally of the government. It receives a government subsidy and the government is always siding with it. They see Putco as part of the system, as with the railways.

Q. What did the stayaway achieve?

A. It has actually shown that we have power in our hands. It showed that we can bring the machinery of this country to a standstill. □

Nicaragua

Medal awarded to Fidel Castro

For 'his example in the revolutionary struggle'

[As part of the ceremony opening the Victoria de Julio sugar refinery on January 11, the Nicaraguan government awarded to Cuban President Fidel Castro the Order of Augusto César Sandino in its highest degree, the Battle of San Jacinto. Castro had arrived in Nicaragua on January 10 for the inauguration of Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega as president of Nicaragua.

[The following is the text of the speech given by Ortega in presenting the medal to Castro, as well as the formal decree of the Nicaraguan government, which was read by Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto. The translations are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Yesterday was a historic moment for the people of Nicaragua, and we would also say for the peoples of Latin America, of Asia, and Africa, for the peoples of the world that love Nicaragua. And today we are here with a broad representation of the international delegations inaugurating this plant, which is the fruit of the Nicaraguan people's struggle, which, at the same time, is a part of the struggle of the peoples of the world.

And that is why it is not strange that the solidarity of a revolutionary people like the Cubans should have made itself felt in such a concrete way, participating in the building of this project.

On Jan. 10, 1929, a Cuban who defended Nicaragua, a revolutionary Cuban, a defender of the workers and therefore a defender of the struggle of Sandino, fell in Mexican territory: Julio Antonio Mella.

And in these January days, which are so rich

in the history of Nicaragua, another Cuban, who has loved the people of Nicaragua; who has offered them his example in the revolutionary struggle waged to achieve the freedom of his own people; another Cuban who has known how to defend the sovereignty and integrity of the peoples of Latin America by defending the sovereignty and integrity of Cuba; another Cuban who was an example for our then-novice fighters of the Sandinista Front; who was an inspiration for the daily struggles; who was an example during the difficult moments; another Cuban who knew how to offer his solidarity to the fighting people of Sandino, of Carlos Fonseca, who knew how to offer his solidarity with the Sandinista National Liberation Front; that Cuban who accompanied us in the struggle against the Somozaist dictatorship and against imperialism; that other Cuban who accompanied us in the victory, and who has kept on accompanying us after the revolutionary victory, offering us solidarity, fraternity, and the fighting morale of the Cuban people. That other Cuban is with us today. (Applause)

And we want to give him just recognition. For if the Nicaraguan people are indebted to any people, it is to the people of Cuba, which has known how to offer a historic solidarity to the Nicaraguan struggle and has joined its blood with our blood, because already there have been several dozen Cubans who have died in Nicaragua, victims of imperialist aggression. Cubans who have come to Nicaragua to bring education, to bring health care, to bring services to the people, who have come to build, who have come to help, who have come to collaborate.

But that gesture of solidarity by Cuba toward Nicaragua is violently attacked by the aggressive policy of the United States that tries to destroy our revolution.

Today we are proud, in the name of the people of Nicaragua, of the Nicaraguan workers, of those who are cutting the coffee while holding onto the gun in the war zones, of those who are defending the revolution by producing in the rear guard, on behalf of the humble people of this land of Rigoberto López Pérez, on behalf of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, of its National Directorate, of the government of Nicaragua, we want to at least fulfill our duty of awarding the Order of Augusto César Sandino to *compañero* brother revolutionary Fidel Castro.

Formal declaration of award

The president of the republic, making use of the powers conferred on him by decree Number 851 of Oct. 28, 1981, which institutes the Order of Augusto César Sandino,

Considering:

Article 1. That commander Fidel Castro Ruz, president of the councils of state and of ministers of the Republic of Cuba, is one of the highest political figures of the Latin American continent and that with his ideas and his actions he has notably influenced the world revolutionary movement;

Article 2. That the Cuban revolution, whose principal forger is Commander Fidel Castro Ruz, is one of the far-reaching events that has most contributed to defining the present-day profile of the peoples of Latin America and the struggle for independence, sovereignty, and dignity;

Article 3. That since the time of the struggle by our people for its liberation, the Cuban revolution, under the guidance of Commander Fidel Castro Ruz, gave solid support to the Sandinista National Liberation Front, and this internationalist and fraternal backing has continued throughout the Nicaraguan revolutionary process, making the relations of cooperation, friendship, and solidarity between Cuba and Nicaragua exemplary ones;

Therefore be it decreed:

The Order of Augusto César Sandino, in its highest degree, the Battle of San Jacinto, is hereby conferred on Commander Fidel Castro Ruz, president of the councils of state and of ministers of the Republic of Cuba.

The medal will be awarded to Commander Fidel Castro Ruz in a ceremony Jan. 11, 1985. This decree will enter into effect as soon as it is published by any means of communication of the country, independently of its later publication in the official daily gazette.

Given in Managua on the 11th day of the month of January of 1985.

For peace, everyone against the aggression.

Daniel Ortega Saavedra.

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Revolution advances on Atlantic Coast

FSLN discusses local autonomy, builds support among Miskitos

By Ellen Kratka

MANAGUA — The Sandinista revolution is making important progress on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast,¹ which has been a major target of the U.S. government's counterrevolutionary war. A new national commission has been set up to discuss establishing local government autonomy in the region. In addition, Brooklyn Rivera, a Miskito leader of one of the counter-revolutionary groups that has carried out armed attacks on the coast, began cease-fire talks with the Nicaraguan government in December 1984.

Both developments register the increasing support for the revolution among the Atlantic Coast's Miskito, Sumo, and Rama Indians, and Blacks.² By and large these groups did not participate in the 1979 revolution that overthrew dictator Anastasio Somoza. The battles of that revolution, led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), were concentrated in the Pacific Coast section of the country and involved the Spanish-speaking masses.

As far back as 1969, however, the FSLN's program stressed the need for development projects on the Atlantic Coast, the most backward part of Nicaragua, and called for an end to racist discrimination against the region's Indian and Black populations.

"The Sandinista people's revolution will put into practice a special plan for the Atlantic

1. The term "Atlantic Coast" traditionally has been used loosely to refer to the eastern half of Nicaragua, which comprises the provinces of Zelaya and Río San Juan (see map).

Following the victory of the revolution, the whole country was redivided into six regions and three special zones. Central Zelaya, part of Zelaya Province but more closely tied socially and economically to the "Pacific," became part of Region V. Río San Juan Province became Special Zone III. Northern Zelaya, where most Miskitos live, became Special Zone I, and Southern Zelaya, where English-speaking Blacks are concentrated, Special Zone II.

Thus, while "Atlantic Coast" is still frequently used in the traditional sense, it can also refer to the three special zones and especially to Special Zones I and II, the ones with the largest concentrations of Indians and Blacks.

2. The Atlantic Coast region comprises more than half the land area of Nicaragua, yet its population is only about 230,000 out of a total for the country of more than 3 million. There are about 70,000 Nicaraguan Miskitos, with some 20,000 currently outside the country, mostly in Honduras.

The Atlantic Coast also includes two other indigenous peoples, the Sumos in the interior mining areas and the Ramas on the southern coast. Blacks, concentrated in the south around Bluefields, make up another portion of the population (about 30,000), and there are also Hispanics throughout the region.

Coast, which has been abandoned to total neglect, in order to incorporate this area into the nation's life," the 1969 program stated. It pledged to carry out development projects in agriculture, fishing, and forestry, and to "encourage the flourishing of this region's local cultural values." It declared the revolution would "wipe out the odious discrimination to which the indigenous Miskitos, Sumos, Zambos,³ and Blacks of this region are subjected."

Carrying out this program proved to be neither rapid nor simple.

Legacy of colonial oppression

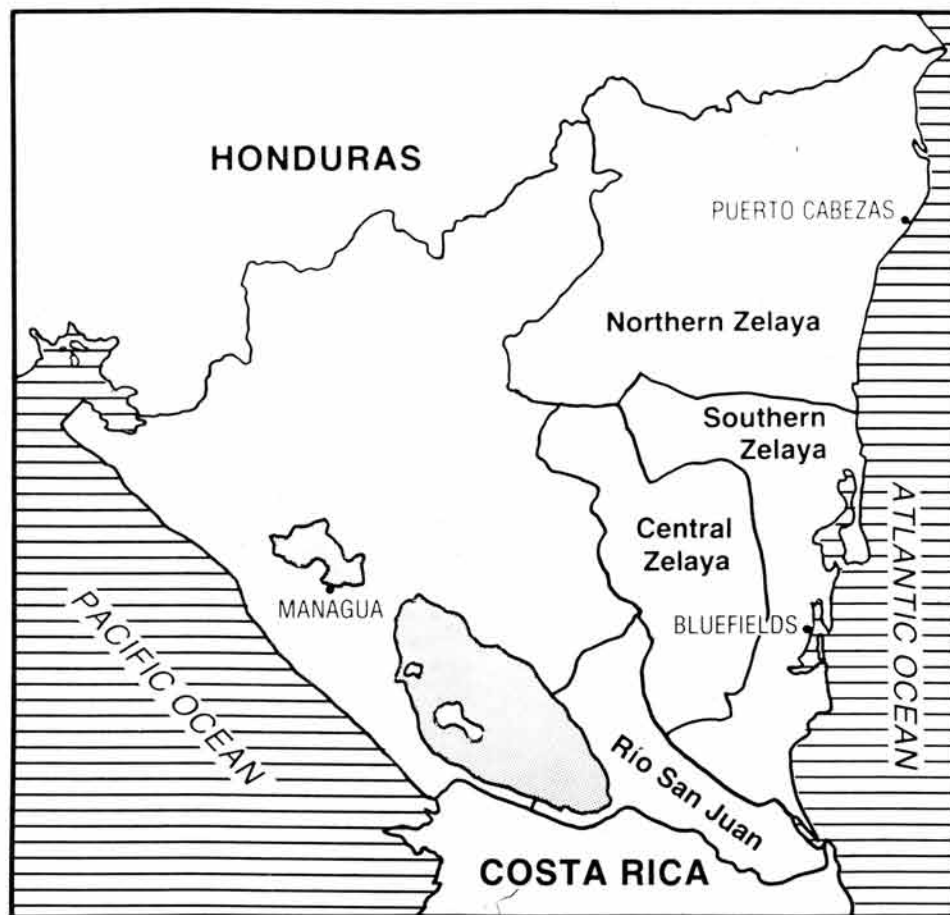
When the Sandinistas took power in July 1979, they faced the situation of tremendous poverty, division, and isolation of the Atlantic Coast. The British had made the region their

3. "Zambos" is another term for that section of the Atlantic Coast Black population that speaks a dialect known as Garifona or Caribe. Since the reincorporation of the Atlantic Coast in 1894, the majority of Blacks have learned Spanish as well as English.

protectorate in the 17th century and tried to use it to undermine the power of the Spanish colonialists who controlled the western, Pacific half of the country. This situation continued after Nicaragua won independence from Spain in 1821.

Then, in 1894, the British-ruled Atlantic Coast was incorporated into the Republic of Nicaragua, with the help of U.S. troops. But the Nicaraguan rulers who took over — and in particular the Somoza dynasty installed in the 1930s — perceived that it was in their interest to maintain the division between the two coasts once the direct colonial masters had moved out and U.S. imperialism moved in. The main resources of the Atlantic region — wood, gold, fish, and bananas — were looted by U.S. and Canadian imperialist firms in partnership with the Somoza family. The bountiful goods were all exported, mostly to North American markets, with the Somozas taking their share of the profits and maintaining a cozy relationship with the U.S. government.

The Somozas made gifts of the lands of the



indigenous communities to their cronies, while thousands of dispossessed men were forced to go to work in the mines. Many of these miners developed tuberculosis or silicosis, only to be fired when the disease was discovered.

The Atlantic Coast was without a single telephone link to the Pacific region. Often one could only get there by airplane or a long boat trip; there were no all-weather roads to the Pacific.

To better exploit the several Indian and Black groups, Somoza kept them pitted against one another and ranked in status order, with the indigenous people on the bottom of the list. He also kept the entire region completely isolated from — and oppressed in relation to — the better-off, Spanish-speaking Pacific side of Nicaragua.

The system of divide-and-rule worked fairly well. Although there was some sympathy for the anti-Somoza struggle, most people from the region did not participate in the insurrection that toppled him and knew little about the FSLN. Many tended to distrust the Sandinistas as the new "Spanish" rulers. U.S. imperialism had every interest in promoting this suspicion in order to undermine the new revolutionary government.

The difficulties for the FSLN were compounded by initial errors it made in its approach to the region. Spanish-speaking FSLN cadres sent to the Atlantic Coast knew very little about the culture and special forms of national oppression there. They acted on the assumption that there was only one genuine national question in Nicaragua, that of the Nicaraguan nation as a whole.

William Ramírez, FSLN political secretary for Northern Zelaya, commented on some of these problems in an interview published in the Oct. 21, 1984, Managua daily *El Nuevo Diario*.

In 1979, he said, "there were no Sandinista Miskito leaders who could head up and guide the population, and we who arrived were people of the Pacific, with some revolutionary consciousness, but who were unable to communicate with the population. We didn't know the language, and we also didn't know the customs, the characteristics, the way of life, the religious problem, the ethnic problem; we were totally new there.

"And on top of that," he continued, "counterrevolutionary activity developed which pushed us into a de facto situation of responding militarily without having a profound familiarity with the reality of the zone."

Washington begins contra war

By 1981, the year Washington began its direct military operations against Nicaragua through counterrevolutionary exiles (*contras*) in Honduras, many of the Miskito figures the FSLN had initially involved in carrying out revolutionary projects on the Atlantic Coast had turned against the government. With Washington's encouragement, they took up arms against the revolution, sought to persuade other Miskitos to leave Nicaragua for Hon-



Founding congress of new pro-revolution Miskito group, MISATAN, in July 1984 in Puerto Cabezas.

duras, and attacked the communities of those Miskitos who remained. The U.S. government hoped the war it was sponsoring on the Atlantic Coast would succeed in separating the region from the rest of the country, providing a beachhead for a bigger invasion, possibly using U.S. troops.

In February 1982, Nicaraguan troops evacuated some 10,000 Miskitos from their ancestral home on the banks of the Coco River, which marks the border with Honduras. They were moved to a new settlement, called *Tasba Pri* (Miskito for "Free Land"), to avoid their being massacred at the hands of the *contras*. It was a necessary move, but one that the Sandinistas paid a big price for, since it was opposed by many of the Miskitos involved.

FSLN efforts to simply set up political bodies on the Atlantic Coast like those on the Pacific — such as neighborhood defense committees — did not work. In a letter he wrote in July 1984 to greet the first issue of *Wani*, a new Atlantic Coast magazine published in Spanish, English, and Miskito, Commander of the Revolution Tomás Borge said, "Without thinking much about the consequences, we wanted to develop on the coast structures and projects similar to those of the Pacific."

FSLN leader Ramírez says that the FSLN made an error in "not discussing these problems with the leaders who were there at that time," as well as "believing that we could solve everything at the same time. We created many expectations among the Miskito people."

The situation presented fertile ground for imperialist propaganda. In his letter to *Wani*, Borge explained, "The imperialist strategy grasped at that time that the Sandinista national project did not fully understand the Miskito problem, that it did not have experience and that is why they made [the Miskito question] one of their preferred spearheads, distorting it on an international level."

The Sandinistas were made to appear to be

genocidal killers of Indians and violators of human rights. These slanders began losing their punch, however, as it became clear that the revolution was bringing a great deal of tangible, material progress to the Atlantic Coast.

Gains brought by revolution

In 1981 a literacy campaign had been carried out in all the native languages, following the massive, very successful campaign in Spanish throughout Nicaragua.

Through the agrarian reform, Miskitos have received 20,000 manzanas [1 manzana = 1.73 acres] of land.

Almost 5,000 ex-miners, nearly 800 of them suffering from lung diseases, have received pensions. And a treatment program against tuberculosis has been put in place.

The number of health posts and centers has grown from 26 to 44. The first major hospital in the region was inaugurated in Bluefields in October 1984. Smaller hospitals in five other towns have been repaired.

There are some 480 new schools on the Atlantic Coast, with a corresponding student increase of 226 percent. A college specializing in communications is soon to be opened in Puerto Cabezas. Puerto Cabezas also houses the only teaching unit for nurses on the Atlantic Coast.

In the five years since the revolution's triumph there has been increased participation of various coast nationalities in government bodies. And, reports William Ramírez, there are now 41 Miskitos in the FSLN, including five militants, or full members. The FSLN currently has a total of 15,000 militants.

Several strategic development projects are in the works, including the construction of a deep-water port at El Bluff, which will stimulate direct trade with the region. A forestry project is planned, with a goal of producing 200,000 square meters of wood per year. In 1985 the first fish-gathering and distribution center will be set up in Northern Zelaya in a

town five kilometers south of Puerto Cabezas, the capital of the zone. The zonal government is planning to buy two fishing boats.

And two projects are already in operation cultivating African palm trees, both for the oil they produce and to aid in the long-term process of reforestation. One, in Southern Zelaya, is located in Cukra Hill, and the other is in the town of El Castillo, Rio San Juan Province. Fourteen thousand hectares of land have been planted with trees.

Another kind of gain is particularly important in the current conjuncture of war and for the long-term development of political consciousness of residents of the Atlantic Coast: a militia battalion entirely composed of Miskitos and English-speaking Blacks has been formed in Puerto Cabezas. And entire companies of Miskitos have fought the contras.

Atlantic Coast culture, especially that of the Blacks, has spread throughout Nicaragua, with Caribbean music, dance, painting, and crafts growing in popularity.

William Ramirez said in his October 21 interview, "As the benefits of the revolution arrive in Northern Zelaya, the propaganda of the counterrevolution crashes into the reality of the deeds that people see."

The growing strength of the revolution among Miskitos is shown by the formation of MISATAN, the organization of Miskitos of Nicaragua.

In July 1984 more than 350 representatives from 63 Miskito communities came together in Puerto Cabezas to form MISATAN. Their main goals are to make Miskito the second official language of Nicaragua and to reunify Miskito families, encouraging people to come back from Honduras by getting out the truth about the Nicaraguan revolution. They proclaimed 1984 the Year of Hope.

Autonomy discussion

These developments on the Atlantic Coast and the evolution of FSLN policy toward the region have laid the basis for the current discussion of establishing local government autonomy there.

More than two years ago, in 1982, the Sandinistas had made a Declaration of Principles recognizing the basic rights of the Atlantic Coast peoples: to use their own language; to a bilingual education; to the possession of their lands in the traditional, communal forms; and to the use of a part of the benefits of the natural resources in their region, among others. According to Commander of the Revolution Luis Carrión, it also allowed for "certain forms of self-government in those aspects that don't contradict the prerogatives of the national state," these prerogatives being "defense of Nicaragua's sovereignty, foreign policy, and the constitution of the armed forces."

The Sandinistas now feel, said Carrión, that "the moment has arrived when the Declaration of Principles of 1982, improved and enriched with the practice of five years, should be transformed into a Statute of Special Rights of the ethnic groups," also being called autonomy for

the Atlantic Coast.

On Dec. 5, 1984, Daniel Ortega, the newly elected president of Nicaragua, announced the establishment of a national commission to prepare a draft of the law. The commission will develop a plan to guarantee the exercise of the autonomous rights of the Blacks and Indians of the Atlantic Coast. The perspective is that some time in 1985 the statute will be presented to the new National Assembly and will be in-



Jane Harris/TP

Newly trained Miskito construction worker helps build prefabricated house in Tasba Pri.

corporated into the constitution that the assembly will draft.

The commission is headed by Luis Carrión and includes Ray Hooker, a Black; Hazel Lau, a Miskito; and three other members.

Last November, after being elected to the National Assembly on the FSLN slate, Hooker had expressed his view that one of the main tasks of the assembly should be "the elaboration of a political constitution that gives form to the aspirations of the ethnic groups of the Atlantic Coast." This is now becoming reality.

He suggested that solutions to problems people on the coast face "must come from below; they don't have to be something imposed from above. The true feeling of the Miskito communities should be taken into account, and once those aspirations of the Miskito people are grasped, they should be given functional form."

Along these lines, a Group of Reflection on autonomy has just been formed in Puerto Cabezas. Convened by the zonal government, it includes representatives of the different national groups and traditional leaders of the region, including religious figures. Possibly other such groups will be formed.

The national commission has established a series of "minimal points for reflection." These are: local governmental autonomy; equality of rights for each of the national groups; the right to choose their own authorities; access to the land and natural resources of the zone to improve the standard of living and to promote economic and social development; the right to an education in one's own language; freedom of religion; the preser-

vation and promotion of the different cultures; strengthening the national unity; and understanding that autonomy does not mean separation or independence.

This last point is one that has been stressed by Sandinista leaders. Carrión has stated, "We are sure that the cultural and social diversity of the Atlantic Coast enriches the nation, and its development will contribute to the unity of the whole people." Similarly William Ramirez remarked, "The fact that autonomous regions might exist would not contribute to dividing the country; rather it will strengthen national unity."

Concretely, one of the main tasks of the national commission will be to clarify what should be decided locally and what areas should be left to the national state.

Blows dealt to contras on coast

Parallel to the increased participation of Miskitos and other Atlantic Coast peoples in the revolution has been the strengthening of the revolution's military position in the region.

There have been two Miskito groupings involved in the CIA war against Nicaragua, as part of the larger contra operation. One group, called MISURA, is led by Steadman Fagoth.

Fagoth had been the central leader of MISURASATA, a group organized on the Atlantic Coast by the FSLN a few months after the revolution triumphed. The name means Miskitos, Sumos, Ramas, and Sandinistas United. Exposed in 1981 as a Somozaist spy, Fagoth was arrested. He was released and then fled to Honduras in May of that year, taking most of the leadership of MISURASATA with him. They dropped "and Sandinistas" from their name, became just MISURA, and joined forces with the CIA-paid mercenaries of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN).

MISURA is responsible for most of the recent contra attacks in the Atlantic Coast region.

Brooklyn Rivera and a few other activists of MISURASATA remained in Nicaragua after Fagoth left in 1981. The Sandinista government asked them to renounce the openly counterrevolutionary MISURA and take a stand in support of the revolution. But Rivera refused and within five months followed Fagoth to Honduras.

However, once there, he was denounced as a Sandinista agent by Fagoth, held in Tegucigalpa, and finally deported from Honduras four months later.

Traveling to Costa Rica, according to his own account, Rivera eventually hooked up with Edén Pastora and "other Nicaraguans who said they were for rescuing the revolution." Rivera joined the CIA-directed war against the Sandinistas as part of the Costa Rican-based Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE).

"We have succeeded in getting the majority of the combatants from the north [i.e. from MISURA] to come to the south," Rivera claimed in September 1984. He said, "Fagoth is more isolated every day." Rivera kept the original name MISURASATA and maintained

his "revolutionary, democratic" rhetoric. He continued his counterrevolutionary raids — destroying productive facilities, burning health centers, and kidnapping and murdering Atlantic Coast residents — up until a few months ago.

The contra forces, including Rivera's troops, have suffered some big defeats at the hands of the Nicaraguan soldiers, however. And a small but steady stream of Miskitos has been returning to Nicaragua from Honduras. This, combined with the growing participation of Miskitos in Nicaragua in the revolution, led Rivera to accept a government amnesty and make a trip to Nicaragua in October 1984. While here he talked with government representatives, church leaders, and Miskitos about the demands of MISURASATA, the prospects for a truce, and the possibility of a return from Honduras of the layer of Miskitos who look to him.

He freed FSLN leaders Ray Hooker and Patricia Delgado, who had been kidnapped by MISURASATA forces on the Atlantic Coast a month earlier.

Rivera's statements about the Nicaraguan revolution were mixed. On the one hand, in September he said, "We believe that the Sandinista government or any other government should give a just response to the demands for land and recognize a territory within which the indigenous people can govern their own lives and communities, of course within the framework of the Nicaraguan state and not, as some think, in separatism."

During his visit to Nicaragua he stated, "The indigenous question was taken advantage of by foreign forces, and we were not in agreement with that."

On the other hand, he refused during his tour to meet with leaders of the prorevolutionary MISATAN. Fomes Rabonias, coordinator of MISATAN, asked, "What are we, if not Miskito?"

"If Brooklyn came to Nicaragua to bring about the unification of the Miskitos around the search for peace," said Rabonias, "he has our support. But we will not allow him to sow more divisions."

Speaking in Puerto Cabezas, Rivera suggested that Sandinista People's Army troops had no business being in the Miskito villages. To this a militiaman responded, "We are the Miskito people in arms, defending the communities from the contra attacks." Another, even more bluntly, told Rivera that the Miskitos carried rifles "to defend ourselves against what you and your people have done to us."

On Dec. 8, 1984, Luis Carrión met with Brooklyn Rivera in Bogotá, Colombia. As Carrión had explained earlier, this was an important move because "even if Rivera doesn't represent all the armed Miskitos, an agreement with this group would weaken the Somozaist forces of Steadman Fagoth, and even though it wouldn't end the war, it would be a great step toward achieving peace."

The Sandinistas also recognize that the re-

turn of the almost 20,000 Miskitos in Honduras would be hastened if the negotiations with Rivera succeed.

"Misura is an artificial creation around Fagoth," Rivera said in September, "and as such is not the problem; the problem is the refugees and the combatants. If this problem is resolved, the indigenous people will have no reason to be in other countries, as refugees, in a situation of suffering. Then the case of Fagoth will become an individual problem which need not affect a whole people."

Carrión stressed the difference between his talks with Rivera and "any impossible conversation with the mercenaries of the FDN and ARDE," the main contra groupings. While these other groups pursue the overthrow of the revolutionary government, Carrión explained, Rivera "has declared that he has a specific and local banner, which tries to defend the rights of the indigenous groups."

Carrión said that he would propose to Rivera "not just a cease-fire, but also the conditions for a stable and lasting peace."

Negotiations with Rivera and autonomy talks on the Atlantic Coast were initiated almost simultaneously. In response to a reporter's question about this, Carrión explained that autonomy is a policy of the government and the FSLN, the natural result of their thinking and actions over a period of time, and not a reaction to Rivera's pressures. Nevertheless, "to the degree that the military problem with MISURASATA is resolved, they can also participate fully in the discussion of the draft [autonomy] statute," Carrión said. He added that, should the outcome of the negotiations be positive, "they would accelerate . . . the formal-judicial establishment" of the special rights of native people.

At the first negotiating session, Rivera refused Carrión's proposal for a cease-fire. Carrión said after the meeting that MISURASATA "put as a condition for a cessation of hostilities that a certain concept of autonomy be recognized beforehand." According to Carrión, Rivera demanded that the government recognize the Miskitos, Sumos, and

Ramas as "sovereigns"; accept the definition of the Atlantic Coast as basically a separate territory under MISURASATA control, along with its natural resources; and agree that all of Zelaya Province — 56 percent of Nicaragua's total area — be included in this territory.

Another session of talks was tentatively scheduled for January.

Imperialism attacks Rivera

Meanwhile, Rivera and his followers increasingly came under attack from imperialism, its local allies in Honduras, and the contras.

On November 24 Honduras expelled Rivera for allegedly "attempting to violate the neutrality of the country." Rivera had gone to Honduras to talk to Miskitos there about reunification.

The FDN, which is based in Honduras, joined in the chorus of verbal attacks and threats against Rivera. MISURASATA responded to this by accusing the Honduran army and the FDN of "brazen interference" in the internal affairs of the Miskito people.

ARDE leader Alfonso Robelo said Rivera was guilty of "naiveté," accusing him of being used by the Sandinistas. Edén Pastora, of ARDE, called for MISURASATA to expel Rivera.

Carrión commented on these events: "To the degree that Rivera's actions coincided with imperialism's interests to destroy the revolution, he received support, but to the degree that he made a turn and separated himself from that position, he exposed himself, even to the point that they might kill him, and we have warned him of that."

Carrión also noted the blatant hypocrisy of the U.S. government in this matter. "The United States has appeared as the great protector of the Miskito population which flees 'desperately' from the 'repression' of the Sandinista government. . . ."

"Nevertheless," he continued, "now that an initiative arises that could put an end to Miskito participation in the counterrevolutionary war — an initiative that the Sandinista govern-

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ment supports — Miskito leaders are captured and harassed; now they are no longer legitimate representatives, and overnight they become targets of persecution."

In fact, in the first week of January 1985 there was an attempt on the life of Brooklyn Rivera. U.S. wire service and contra reports said Rivera had been wounded in battle with Sandinista troops. But Commander of the Revolution Carlos Núñez affirmed these reports were "speculation that tries to cover up what really happened" — CIA terrorists had simply tried to shut Rivera up.

Following that attack, Rivera failed to appear for follow-up negotiations with Carrión January 19 and 20.

On January 22, individuals claiming to represent MISURASATA announced in San José, Costa Rica, that Rivera had been expelled from that organization for holding talks with the FSLN.

But the following day, MISURASATA political secretary Julián Holmer denounced the supposed "expulsion" as a publicity maneuver by followers of Steadman Fagoth to disrupt MISURASATA's negotiations with the Nicaraguan government.

'Political advance for revolution'

In an interview in the December 8 FSLN daily, *Barricada*, William Ramírez assessed the gains the revolution has made on the Atlantic Coast in the last five years. The Sandinistas went, he said "from a total initial lack of knowledge to the more or less serious knowledge of the Atlantic Coast question that we have today."

He said the moves toward local autonomy for the region mark "a political advance, an advance of the revolutionary leadership, which today sees things from a different perspective."

"We think that we have been maturing a little; the experience we have had has served us for reflection, to orient ourselves in the concrete reality and to realize, for example, that before, in 1981, these things we are talking about could not be touched, because they were taboo for us. We were terrified to speak of autonomy because we didn't understand it."

"The struggle of the indigenous peoples themselves has helped us to reflect," he explained.

"The dynamic of the revolution is greater and the interests of the Miskito people are greater than the particular interests of the groups there might be abroad. Let us remember," he advised, "that Rivera is only one among the different groups abroad; the other is Steadman's. But there are also other organizations inside the country that we should also see as a reality."

The struggles of the peoples of the Atlantic Coast are also beginning to forge among all Nicaraguans, in the words of Ramírez, "a great understanding of this national unity," as opposed to a paternalistic "affection . . . for the poor little Blacks, the poor little Miskitos" that used to exist. "That is a recognition," he said,

"of our people, of their high political capacity, because this people is highly politicized. It is also a recognition of the right they [Indians and Blacks] have to participate in the direction of their own affairs on the Atlantic Coast in addition to participating in national affairs."

The revolution, Ramírez continued, "contributes to giving permanence to the ethnic groups, which, if it had not been for the revolution, would have disappeared. The only hope these ethnic groups have to live and remain as

such, keeping their language and their cultural expressions, is the revolution.

"Our example, the treatment that we as revolutionaries give to the national minorities, is something that is necessarily going to influence Latin America." The Sandinistas are, he said, "an example for the indigenous groups of Latin America and the world of how a revolution can be a true revolution, so that other peoples of the world join the struggle for freedom of their own peoples." □

Yugoslavia

Left-wing dissidents sentenced

After regime reduces charges in Belgrade trial

By Will Reissner

A Yugoslav court found three left-wing intellectuals guilty of engaging in "hostile propaganda against the state" in a trial that ended February 4 in Belgrade. Miodrag Milic was sentenced to two years in prison, Milan Nikolic to 18 months, and Dragomir Olujic to one year. All are free pending an appeal.

Until January 23, they and three other defendants had been charged with "undermining the socio-political system" and government, which carries a minimum five-year jail sentence. When charges against Milic, Nikolic, and Olujic were reduced, all charges were dropped against defendant Pavlusko Imsirovic.

Vladimir Mijanovic and Gordan Jovanovic, however, still face trial on the original charges.

The six original defendants, who were arrested in May and June 1984, were all participants in a network of informal discussion groups, sometimes described as the "flying university," that had been meeting in Belgrade for seven years without police interference. On a number of occasions, the Yugoslav press had even carried accounts of these lectures and discussions.

Milic, Olujic, and Nikolic denied having engaged in spreading propaganda hostile to the state.

The defendants received considerable public support from well-known figures in Yugoslavia. In mid-November, 19 intellectuals from the Yugoslav republic of Serbia set up a Committee to Defend Freedom of Thought and Opinion to defend the six.

In addition, important figures in the ruling League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) and in the Yugoslav government openly expressed their opposition to these arrests and the trial. Mitja Ribicic, a member of the LCY's highest body, complained to a Yugoslav news magazine: "The political damage to our country is enormous when we settle differences of opinion in court."

Before the trial began, Janz Stanovnik, a

member of the rotating presidency of the Yugoslav republic of Slovenia, had pointed out that "there is now a differentiation in the party leadership between those who are pressing for the trial, seeking to prevent further critical analysis of social and political concepts that have been taboo, and those who oppose the arrests and trials."

Stanovnik added, "Personally, even though I believe the accused [to be] guilty of silliness, I would be very, very unhappy if the trial went ahead."

The defendants emphatically denied charges that they want to undermine the Yugoslav workers state. While charges were still pending against him, Pavlusko Imsirovic told the court: "I am no enemy of socialism. Quite the contrary. I have stood for democratic socialism my entire life. I was brought up in this spirit, and it is in this spirit that I am bringing up my own children."

In an interview in the winter 1984 issue of the Vienna magazine *Gegenstimmen*, Imsirovic stated: "All the defendants in this trial are Marxists, socialists. We are fighting for a socialist democracy. I, personally, am a critical Marxist, a communist, a Trotskyist."

The political motives of the trial were also hit by defendant Miodrag Milic, a self-proclaimed "Eurocommunist," who said, "They are accusing us of undermining the social system. But we are not the ones who piled up \$20 billion in debts and threw the country into an almost colonial dependence."

Three of the defendants in the trial had been previously victimized for their criticisms of the way in which the LCY has governed Yugoslavia. Vladimir Mijanovic had been sentenced to one-year prison terms in 1971 and 1973 for "hostile propaganda."

Milan Nikolic and Pavlusko Imsirovic were sentenced to two years in prison in 1972 for "forming a group hostile to the people and the state." Both had been prominent leaders of the leftist student demonstrations that rocked Belgrade University in 1968. □

Mass terror displaces a million peasants

As Washington steps up aid to dictatorship

By Mike Taber

As Washington escalates its war in Central America, one of its key strategic objectives is to bolster the proimperialist regime in Guatemala.

According to U.S. plans, Guatemala — together with Honduras and Costa Rica — has a central role to play as staging ground for the war against the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutions. As Gen. Paul Gorman, then-head of the U.S. Southern Command based in Panama, recently told a congressional subcommittee, "the United States must try to include Guatemala in its security plans for the region."

In addition, Guatemala itself continues to be the scene of a fierce battle pitting imperialism and its backers against that country's workers and peasants. As Washington's war in Central America has deepened, this struggle has become increasingly linked with the overall conflict in the region. The U.S. rulers know that a decisive imperialist victory in Guatemala would strengthen their ability to wage war against Nicaragua and the Salvadoran liberation forces.

'Democratic' facade

In an effort to prop up its Guatemalan ally, U.S. imperialism has attempted to legitimize the tyranny of Gen. Oscar Mejía Víctores by providing it with a democratic facade. Using El Salvador's José Napoleón Duarte as a model, an effort is being made to begin fashioning a "civilian" government to act as fig leaf for the military dictatorship.

Along these lines, elections to a Constituent Assembly were held last July which White House spokesman Larry Speakes termed "fair, open, and well-ordered." Plans have been announced for a presidential election to take place some time in 1985.

In addition, Washington has been trumpeting what a U.S. official has termed Guatemala's "substantial progress in improving human rights." As evidence of this progress, the U.S. embassy in Guatemala City announced at the end of 1984 that the rate of political murders by the regime decreased from an average of 483 a month in 1981 to some 90 a month.

This effort to refurbish the Guatemalan regime's image abroad has gotten backing from other forces as well. Colombian President Belisario Betancur visited Guatemala in December and stated that it was setting a positive "example for the rest of Latin America." Costa Rican President Luis Alberto Monge has also lent his praise. The Guatemalan regime scored a further victory on September 22, when it reestablished diplomatic relations with the



Guatemalan refugees at camp in Chiapas, Mexico, forced to flee the dictatorship's massive terror.

Socialist Party government in Spain. Relations between the two governments were severed in early 1980 following an attack on the Spanish embassy in which Guatemalan security forces murdered 39 people, including Spanish diplomatic personnel.

This new image has provided the Democrats and Republicans in the United States with an excuse to step up aid to the regime. In 1984 Congress approved \$157.5 million in economic aid for Guatemala, an increase of 40 percent over 1983. In addition, open military aid was resumed, having been suspended in 1977. A total of \$10.5 million in military aid has been promised for 1985. In December, Washington was one of a dozen governments that voted against a United Nations resolution condemning "widespread violations of human rights in Guatemala."

Extent of repression

Despite these attempts at a face-lift, the Guatemalan regime remains a military dictatorship based fundamentally on the use of naked repression and terror against the Guatemalan toilers. This repression has been directed especially against the Indian peoples, who make up the big majority of the peasantry and have been the main base of support for the insurgency that expanded rapidly in the 1978-82 period. Today four main guerrilla groups operate and are allied in the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG).*

* The URNG is a coalition formed in February 1982. It is composed of the following organizations: Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP), Organization of

According to *Latinamerica Press*, a Peru-based news service, between 1981 and 1983 the armed forces murdered more than 20,000 peasants, destroyed more than 250 villages, and drove over one million people — out of a total population of 7.7 million — from their homes. The head of the Guatemalan supreme court has acknowledged that at least 100,000 children have been orphaned as a result of the army's massacres.

In carrying out this policy of terror, designed to depopulate entire regions where guerrilla forces have been active, a variety of methods have been employed. In large parts of the country, especially in the provinces of El Quiché, San Marcos, Huehuetenango, El Petén, and Chimaltenango, saturation bombing is a regular procedure. The burning of crops and forests is a widespread practice, along with the kidnapping and murder of entire villages suspected of supporting the guerrillas.

Rape is also used on a wide scale. Between April and September 1984, for example, 800 women were reportedly raped by the repressive forces in a single municipality in Chimaltenango Province.

'Model villages'

As peasants are driven from their villages, many flee to urban areas or to Mexico, others live on the run to avoid being captured by the army, and some wind up in newly built "model villages" — which seem to be "modeled" on the "strategic hamlets" set up by U.S. forces in

the People in Arms (ORPA), Rebel Armed Forces (FAR), and Guatemalan Labor Party-Leadership Nucleus (PGT).

Vietnam.

Seventy-four such camps already exist, containing 48,000 peasants. Usually built on the ruins of destroyed villages, they have been termed "concentration camps" by Guatemala's archbishop. Part of the U.S. "economic" aid to Guatemala is earmarked to help set them up.

In these camps the population is kept under armed guard and is required to obtain special permission to leave the grounds. Under slave-labor-like conditions, the peasants are forced to work to obtain food and to join the regime's "civil defense patrols."

These paramilitary patrols have been a centerpiece of the dictatorship's counterinsurgency strategy. In areas occupied by the army, all males between 18 and 55 are compelled to join them. Already, an estimated 900,000 peasants have been incorporated. Since the regime knows that many of the peasants forcibly incorporated into these units actually support the guerrillas, only a tiny percentage of the members receive firearms, and the patrols as a whole have rarely been used in actual counterinsurgency operations.

Instead, their chief function is to put the entire population under military discipline. In this way they have greatly reduced the material aid and potential recruits available to the guerrilla forces, in addition to terrorizing the workers and peasants.

The nature of these supposedly voluntary programs was described in the January 10 *New York Times*, following the reporter's visit to the Tzabal "model village": "Asked what the army would do if a resident left the village without permission or refused to join the local civil patrol, one of the men in Tzabal said matter of factly, 'They'd kill you.'"

The overall effect of these measures has been to greatly weaken the guerrilla insurgency in the countryside and put the liberation forces on the defensive. Many areas and villages that had been under guerrilla control before 1982 have either been wiped off the map or retaken by government forces.

Repression is widespread in the urban areas as well. In November, Guatemala's Human Rights Commission announced that there had been 713 "extrajudicial" killings and 506 "disappearances" between January and September 1984. Many of the victims were union activists and leaders.

As a result of the sustained repression in the urban areas, most of the trade unions and mass organizations built during the upsurge of the late 1970s and early 1980s have been destroyed. Trade unions that still exist remain under attack. In 1984, for example, the country's largest sugar workers' union was forced to dissolve. Many unionized workplaces have been closed down only to reopen a week later with a new work force and lower wages.

Economic crisis

Despite the setbacks dealt to the liberation forces, however, Guatemala's rulers have plenty to worry about. The country is currently experiencing a deepgoing economic crisis.



This crisis is rooted in the state of the imperialist world economic system, which is increasingly squeezing the dependent economies of the semicolonial countries. While the crisis is sharpened by the war measures taken by the Guatemalan regime, it is fundamentally structural in nature and thus offers no long-term solution.

With a decline in world market prices for its chief export products — such as coffee, sugar, cotton, and beef — Guatemala's balance of trade has become increasingly unfavorable. Already the foreign debt is \$2.3 billion, and 37 percent of the country's export earnings are devoted to servicing it.

Aggravating this situation is the curtailment of agricultural production caused by the military's displacement of large numbers of peasants and its destruction of crops. Massive military spending is also a burden.

In seeking additional loans to pay the interest on its debt, Guatemala has — like many other semicolonial countries — come under pressure from the International Monetary Fund to impose austerity measures. As a result, in November, the government enacted a de facto currency devaluation of more than 50 percent by letting the quetzal float against the dollar. This has led to a general price increase of around 25 percent.

The impact of this crisis on Guatemala's working people has been heavy. *Informador Guerrillero*, the newspaper of the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP), one of the four guerrilla organizations in the URNG, reported in its Dec. 5, 1984, issue that industry is currently functioning at only 50 percent of capacity, and that 150 factories have been closed. The rate of unemployment and underemployment is estimated at 47 percent and is rising as a result of the economic crisis and the growing number of refugees from the countryside.

This crisis has already fueled widespread discontent among Guatemala's working people. As it deepens it will increasingly lead working people to search for ways to fight back in spite of the massive repression they are subjected to.

Diplomatic maneuvers

This economic squeeze by imperialism helps explain the Guatemalan rulers' recent at-

tempts to obtain some bargaining room in order to seek better terms and increased aid from their imperialist overlords. This has been most clearly expressed in its diplomatic maneuvers surrounding the Contadora negotiations.

Following Nicaragua's acceptance of the original Contadora treaty on Sept. 21, 1984, Washington hurriedly pressured the Honduran, Salvadoran, and Costa Rican governments to compose an amended draft. The Guatemalan regime initially withheld its endorsement from the draft. A U.S. National Security Council report leaked to the press in November referred to the regime's "uncertain support" as "a continuing problem." Responding to this document, Guatemalan Foreign Minister Fernando Andrade commented, "We don't believe in a military solution to the crisis in Central America. . . . It would be a disaster for all of us."

In spite of this "independent" posturing, the Guatemalan regime soon fell into line. On December 8, General Mejía Victores announced that it would oppose the original draft agreed to by Nicaragua. As Washington is well aware, this maneuvering does not alter in the slightest the Guatemalan regime's role in imperialism's overall plans for the region.

Continuing struggle

Recently, prominent voices within the bourgeois media in the United States have proclaimed the Guatemalan military's victory over the liberation forces. In an article in the January 13 *New York Times*, James LeMoyné maintained: "In sharp contrast to neighboring El Salvador, the Guatemalan military has defeated an extensive guerrilla insurgency, and it has done so without the assistance of American advisers and equipment."

Unfortunately for the U.S. rulers and their ideological mouthpieces, however, statements such as this are largely wishful thinking. Despite the setbacks the revolutionary forces have suffered and a change in the relationship of forces since the 1978-82 period, the regime has been unable to crush the guerrilla forces. Many guerrilla units remain intact in spite of the loss of territory and logistical support among the displaced peasants. Guerrilla actions continue in a number of provinces; according to the URNG in late 1984, guerrilla forces had caused 806 casualties to government troops since the beginning of that year.

Although the creation of the "model villages" and the civil defense patrols has seriously hampered the guerrilla struggle, the regime has been unsuccessful in winning many "hearts and minds" among the millions of peasants who were made refugees and who witnessed the massacre of family members and neighbors.

Likewise within the urban areas, the terror has been unable to ensure social peace to the dictatorship. In December, 2,000 workers at the state-owned Guatemala Railways went on strike demanding three months' back pay. After 11 months, workers at the Coca Cola

bottling factory continue to occupy the plant in a struggle to defend their jobs and union.

Another significant development was the formation in June 1984 of the Mutual Support Group for the Return of Disappeared Family Members. Composed mainly of women, this group attempts to speak in behalf of the families of the 35,000 Guatemalans who have

been "disappeared" since the late 1960s. Despite threats against its members, the Mutual Support Group held a march of over 1,000 through Guatemala City on October 12, one of the most significant public protests in the last four years.

This continuing resistance in the midst of the most brutal repression clearly worries

Washington. There is one vital question that is at the center of its calculations: What will be the effect in Guatemala of a regionalization of the Central American conflict as U.S. military intervention grows? In this, the imperialists recognize that the fate of the revolutionary struggle in Guatemala will be inseparably linked to that of the region as a whole. □

DOCUMENTS

Guatemalan URNG hits U.S. intervention

Reaffirms solidarity with Nicaraguan revolution

[The following is a communiqué of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG), the front of Guatemalan revolutionary organizations. It is taken from the Dec. 5, 1984, *Informador Guerrillero*, published by the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP), one of the URNG's component organizations. The subheads are from the original. The translation from the Spanish is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

The Reagan administration's interventionist policy in Central America has opened a more dangerous period for the Central American peoples' aspirations for peace and freedom. In addition to the already prolonged counterrevolutionary military aggression financed, organized, and led by the CIA, our Nicaraguan brothers at this time suffer the growing threat of a military invasion.

The most eloquent demonstration of the unusual military display being carried out in the region by the United States is [U.S. Secretary of State George] Shultz's haughty declarations in Brasilia, arrogating to the United States the "right" to invade.

Manipulating public opinion to make himself appear as the representative of an election that did not even express the North American people's will in quantitative terms, Reagan appears emboldened by his electoral triumph and ready to execute his interventionist plans in Central America, particularly in Nicaragua. We are greatly worried by the right-wing shift to which the North American people are being driven through ideological manipulation.

It would be sad if that people's collective consciousness had to once again face the return of bodies of marines killed in criminal adventures in order for the North American people to react.

The significance of the Sandinista people's revolution

The defense of the Sandinista people's revolution is fundamental for all the revolutionary, popular, and democratic sectors in Latin America. Its mere existence is an example that inspires our daily struggles. The stature of its independent posture in the face of the empire's

enslaving ambition actually alters the relationship of forces in the area in favor of independence, sovereignty, and democracy.

Direct military intervention against Nicaragua would also seek to stifle the voices within Latin America that increasingly seek to put forward their own nationalist demands in the face of the avaricious U.S. economic and financial policies.

Nevertheless, despite the maneuvers, hypocrisy, pressure, and blackmail to which the revolutionary and democratic forces in Central America are subjected, these forces spare no effort to seek a way out of the conflict that would substitute dialogue, justice, and independence for aggression.

On the other hand, the confrontation between the U.S. military plans and every initiative for political negotiations in the area becomes more evident every day. From subterfuge and political maneuvers against Contadora, the Reagan administration is increasingly passing over to direct confrontation with this Latin American peace initiative.

History seems to repeat itself. The North American invasion is put forward in an attempt to duplicate the bitter experiences of Guatemala in 1954, Santo Domingo in 1965, and Grenada scarcely a year ago.

The thousands of rifles that now defend Managua express the genuine aspirations for freedom and justice of an entire people, whose mature and unbreakable resolve is to live in a free country or die.

We Guatemalan revolutionaries solidarize ourselves deeply with the defense of the Sandinista people's revolution. We reaffirm our pledge to fight in the face of the threats we confront. It falls on us to continue pushing forward with greater determination the Revolutionary People's War our people are waging, whether it be in the region's current political-military framework or in the outbreak of a regionalization of the war in Central America that a U.S. military invasion could provoke.

The Guatemalan regime's double policy

Although they are in agreement with imperialism's overall strategy in the area and

have been assigned a role in it, the dominant sectors in Guatemala — particularly the army — show positions of relative contradiction with it. These are an expression of belligerent chauvinist interests that attempt to extract the greatest particular benefit in the carrying out of this overall strategy.

Thus, while Guatemalan diplomacy is not openly aligned with the United States, internally the regime continues in a bloodthirsty fashion to repress our people, militarize the population, indiscriminately bomb whole areas without regard to the noncombatant civilian population, maintain a climate of terror, and push through an electoral law that does not permit democratic participation, but only seeks to confuse sectors of the people and international public opinion.

It is a contradiction that while the diplomatic speeches of the government speak in favor of peace, it consolidates and develops its own manufacture of arms, munitions, and armor to supply itself and the other proimperialist regimes in the area.

While the foreign minister states his support for the Contadora initiative, the Guatemalan army repeatedly violates the sovereignty of the Mexican state, even to the point of murdering whole villages that had sought refuge in Mexican territory. Or, as is the case during times of sharpening regional crisis, it concentrates troops on the border with Mexico under the absurd pretext of the struggle against smuggling.

The Sandinista people's revolution is relegitimized nationally and internationally

We declare finally our recognition of the support being given to the revolutionary process in the area by the Sandinista people's revolution in proving in practice that even under the fire of the enemy bullets and imperialism's economic and military harassment, the Nicaraguan people had the opportunity of freely expressing themselves for the first time in their history, ratifying at the ballot box what they have decided to protect arms in hand.

The Guatemalan revolutionaries will make every effort to be equal to the even more difficult times that are approaching. □

Coal talks end, strike rolls on

Miners push drive for greater solidarity

By Clive Turnbull

SHEFFIELD — On February 1 the National Coal Board (NCB) announced that there was no basis for negotiations with the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). So concluded the latest effort to end the 47-week-long British miners' strike.

Ten days earlier, the NUM had indicated that it was prepared to re-enter negotiations without preconditions, with a view to ending the strike in an "honorable settlement."

The capitalist press immediately started crowing that victory over the miners was in sight. A leading article in the *Financial Times* on January 26 summarized: "The mineworkers' strike, as a living entity with some sap left in it, is over." Talks between NUM and NCB officials agreed that there was a basis for reopening negotiations.

Thatcher's precondition

However, the Thatcher government intervened to demand that the NUM accept, as a precondition for talks, the "right of management to manage." Referring to the seven rounds of talks over the 11 months of the strike, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said, "They have all foundered on the same thing — that this leadership of the NUM will not accept what has always been the case, that loss-making pits, indeed uneconomic pits, shall close after due procedures and that the NCB shall have the right to make the decision.

"It foundered on that very thing. You cannot compromise with the right of management to manage."

Thatcher expresses what is at stake for the capitalist class in the miners' refusal to accept the loss of jobs in the mining industry. For the capitalist class, production is based on profits. The capitalist class cannot tolerate any "compromise" with their "right" to maximize profits. The employers' aim is to smash any idea that the working class has any rights — to jobs or decent wages and conditions — these only being determined according to whether it is "economic" or "uneconomic" for the capitalist class.

'A determination to smash this union'

NUM President Arthur Scargill underlined the government's intentions and the union's response: "There appears to be a determination to smash this union and to make us accept the principle that pits should close on economic grounds even before getting to the negotiating table to talk about the problems in the industry.

"There is no possibility of this union accepting conditions of that kind. No union leaders



G.M. Cookson

NUM leader Arthur Scargill.

worth their salt would be a party to that sort of measure."

The NUM executive unanimously voted to reject the government's terms for negotiations.

The miners have come under pressure since the new year from the NCB's strike-breaking drive. Advertisement campaigns, letters, and phone calls have been made to strikers appealing to them to break the strike. Faced with the hardship of the long strike, some miners have buckled and returned to work, enticed by the prospect of tax-free earnings up to April and back pay for holidays.

Fake rumors have been circulated that when the strike becomes a year old, on March 12, there will be a breach of contract, with loss of pension rights and redundancy (unemployment) payments for older miners.

The prospect of negotiations is also being used to build up miners' hopes for a settlement, by saying at one moment that talks are on, and then that they are off; by raising expectations and then dashing them.

Fighting against a split

The NUM leadership has also been confronted throughout the strike by the scabbing actions of officials in areas such as Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire. The executive committees in these areas started moves to formally split from the national union. An NUM

special delegate conference was called for January 31, to expel these areas unless they reverse their split moves. This was subsequently canceled as the prospect of negotiations to end the strike arose.

Striking miners in the scab areas have been campaigning to win the maximum number of NUM members away from any split. Two scab-dominated NUM branches in Nottinghamshire voted to stay in the NUM. At Ollerton a petition against the split collected 300 signatures on two shifts. The scab leaders in the Working Miners Committee, who have repeatedly called for a ballot over the strike against mine closures, have refused a membership vote on splitting from the NUM.

Bureaucrats withhold solidarity

The most decisive pressure on the NUM is the lack of solidarity from the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress (TUC) leaderships. The TUC conference in September called for solidarity action in support of the miners. This centered on boycotting scab coal or oil substituted for coal. Only in the rail industry has there been any significant solidarity action, and there the lead has come from the ranks.

The right-wing-dominated steel and electrical unions have openly fought against solidarity with the miners. In the electricity generating industry, solidarity action has only come from mining areas such as Yorkshire or from the unskilled or semi-skilled workers in other power stations.

Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock has con-

Total strike days in 1984 among highest in century

The British government's Department of Employment has released figures showing that last year the total number of days lost due to strikes was the third highest of any year this century.

The miners' strike accounted for 22.3 million strike days out of a total of 26.6 million in 1984. Even without counting the coal strike, however, the remaining 4.3 million strike days represent an increase of 31 percent over the 1983 figure.

The two years of greater strike activity in the country were 1926, the year of the general strike, and 1979, when the "winter of discontent" struggle was waged against the austerity policies of the Edward Heath Labour government.

sistently attacked the miners' leadership throughout the strike. It was not until the 10th month of the strike that Kinnock even visited a picket line.

The Labour and TUC bureaucracies fear a victory for the miners far more than a defeat. The NUM leadership has led a determined, militant fight in defense of jobs by mass working-class action. By contrast, the right-wing labor bureaucracy has accepted the employers' case that, with the economic crisis, job losses and declining wages and conditions are inevitable.

The labor bureaucracy shares the aim attributed to NCB boss Ian MacGregor and Prime Minister Thatcher in a leading article in the *Financial Times* on January 26: "That is to insure that the end of the dispute makes it clear that 'Scargillism' which they define as a mixture of industrial coercion allied to revolutionary ambitions, must be seen to fail, and fail utterly."

Ranks press the fight

The miners have responded to the latest NCB-government offensive. In many parts of Yorkshire, rank-and-file broadsheets have been produced by miners for distribution to NUM members not actively picketing or fundraising, for distribution alongside the more irregular national and area publications. Wayne Frost and Steve Shukla, two young miners in Armthorpe NUM, explained that since the production of the *Armthorpe Tannoy*, attendance at union meetings had increased, as had the numbers picketing.

On January 29, as the capitalist press looked for an imminent victory in the strike, Yorkshire miners responded with a 3,000-strong mass picket at Corton Wood, the mine at the center of the NCB's closure plans.

Dave Barker, an Armthorpe miner, expressed the mood of many in a national television news interview on the picket line. "These lads are solid. We are showing we are solid. This is the time we want to be building up our campaign. This is the time when you start a miners' strike, a coal strike, at the end of January. As far as we're concerned, we're out to win this strike, and I believe that we still can win it, and all these lads here believe that we can win it. That's why we've come here.

"And our message to our leadership is whether you get the money from abroad, Qaddafi, Russia, wherever you get it, beg, borrow, or steal it, we want the money. We want to step up the picketing, and we want to win this dispute, because we are determined to fight and save our communities and save our jobs.

"And our message to the rest of the labor and trade union movement is to get off your asses, come and join us on the picket lines.

"That's what we want. Mass picketing out here, to show that we can win."

National and area NUM leaders have been touring the branches to keep members informed of developments and counter government propaganda. Dave and Aubert Boyle, Silverwood NUM members, described such a



G.M. Cookson

Striking miners confront scabs in South Wales.

meeting at their branch. "The meeting of our branch yesterday was addressed by Jack Taylor, Yorkshire NUM president. About 700 attended, about 50 percent of the branch. The outcome of the meeting was that many of the membership's problems were ironed out, and the attitude was that we should stick with the union. The morale now is higher than ever, excepting the first few months of the strike. This was proved today by the increase in pickets at the pit."

Despite the role of the Labour Party and TUC leadership nationally, solidarity action

with the miners is continuing in factories and workplaces up and down the country. Each week tens of thousands of pounds are collected. Miners and miners' wives are active at factory gates, canteens, and union branches explaining the stakes in the strike.

The Yorkshire and Humberside and South East regions of the TUC have called for a week of solidarity culminating on February 11 in a day of action. Many thousands of workers have indicated that they will be taking strike action and joining the miners on their picket lines on that day. □

Philippine KMU supports British miners

[The following statement, dated Nov. 18, 1984, was signed by Rolando Olalia, chairman of the May First Movement (KMU), an independent labor coalition in the Philippines. The text is taken from the January-February issue of *Ang Katipunan*, the newspaper of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP) published in Oakland, California.]

* * *

The *Kilusang Mayo Uno* [KMU] views with grave concern the indifference of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher over the demands of the striking coal miners who have entered their ninth month of strike.

At the same time, the KMU condemns two separate incidents of violence inflicted by the state police forces on the striking miners last week along with the deceiving tactics applied by the British government to divide the ranks of the coal miners. The KMU considers these acts as unnecessary in meeting the strikers' just and legitimate demands.

Already, a 24-year-old striker, David Jones, has reportedly died in a clash between police and coal miners during the early stage of the strike that virtually shut down all but 29 of Britain's coal mines.

The KMU also joins the British Trades Union Congress (BTUC) in extending the fullest support to pressure the Thatcher government to give in to the miners' demands in dropping plans to close alleged unprofitable coal mine pits and displace some 20,000 mine workers.

The KMU is sending a separate petition to the British embassy in the Philippines urging the government of Prime Minister Thatcher through the stated-owned National Coal Board to act favorably on the workers' plight. The KMU will also petition the British government to halt harassing the strikers and stop the use of force on the striking coal miners.

Finally, the KMU is expressing its utmost in solidarity with the British coal miners in behalf of the Filipino working class. □

Famine: a fruit of imperialist oppression

Washington uses hunger as a political weapon

By Ernest Harsch

Millions of Africans are dying. And it is imperialism that is killing them.

For the past two years, famine has been spreading across the continent. Ethiopia, which is particularly hard hit, has recently received some international publicity. But Ethiopia is far from alone. Drought and famine have already touched some 36 African countries. And in the rest, hunger and misery remain a constant feature of life for the masses of the oppressed and exploited.

By some estimates, more than 14 million Africans are in danger of starving to death. As many as 100 million are malnourished. To head off an even worse catastrophe than has already taken place, Africa will need nearly 10 million tons of food aid by June 1985 — far more than has been pledged by international relief agencies and foreign governments thus far.

In human terms, the toll has been tragic. In Ethiopia alone, more than 200,000 have starved to death since the beginning of 1984. The old and the very young have died in the greatest numbers, either directly from hunger or from diseases they could no longer resist. Entire villages have been wiped out, and perhaps several million have been driven from their homes in search of food.

The famine is also approaching severe proportions throughout the Sahel, the arid region that stretches across the continent along the southern edge of the Sahara Desert. Millions of the peasants and nomadic herders who populate the Sahel have been driven from their land and grazing areas. In Mauritania alone, more than half of the livestock have been wiped out and some 1.8 million herders have crowded into the capital or the few towns along the Senegal River. The nomadic Tauregs of Mali and Niger have been pushed southward, before the advancing Sahara Desert.

Southern Africa, too, has been severely hit. In Mozambique, a combination of drought and imperialist-instigated war has left some 100,000 dead.

Drought and 'socialism'?

According to the imperialists, it is nature that is to blame — or the African peoples themselves.

In the United States and Western Europe, the big-business news media, government figures, and officials of various relief agencies have often pointed to the severe drought that has plagued Africa over the past few years as the cause of the famine.

But this ignores the fact that droughts,

floods, blights, and other natural disasters strike the United States and other imperialist countries from time to time without causing famine. Food and water storage facilities, efficient irrigation, and a highly developed transportation system help prevent such natural disasters from turning into human tragedies.

Adequate economic development can also overcome some chronic natural limitations. Southern California, for example, has a very low annual rainfall, and its aridity equals that of some deserts. Yet with the aid of widespread irrigation, it has been transformed into one of the most fertile farming areas in the United States.

The imperialists also frequently blame the political and economic policies of the various African governments, charging that they restrict and hinder agricultural production.

On January 3, for example, U.S. President Ronald Reagan demagogically proclaimed that "socialist economic systems" in underdeveloped countries were at the root of their problems.

Two months earlier, before the United Nations General Assembly, U.S. representative Jeane Kirkpatrick struck a similar note. "Many parts of the [African] continent, including areas that were previously net food exporters, have become dependent on food imports," Kirkpatrick said, suggesting that "coercion failed where market incentives might well have succeeded."

It is true that many African countries have become dependent on food imports, but it is precisely the *coercion* of imperialist domination, including the pressures of the imperialist world market, that has made them so.

In response to Kirkpatrick, Cuba's UN representative, Oscar Oramas-Oliver, pointed to this. He told the General Assembly that "a century of colonial domination" fostered the production of cheap raw materials but "left behind distorted economic structures."

Legacy of colonialism

Before the advent of colonialism, most African communities were largely self-sufficient in food production, though they were also generally poor. Despite their low level of technology, in many areas African peoples practiced irrigation, crop rotation, terracing, manuring, and the use of mixed crops to enhance soil fertility. They were careful not to overfarm or overgraze Africa's often fragile soil.

But in the 16th century, the colonial slave trade began. Millions of Africans were torn from their land and homes and shipped to the European colonies in the Western hemisphere,

many dying along the way. African societies were undermined, and entire areas were largely depopulated. Communities were frequently deprived of their most productive members, and agricultural production suffered as a consequence. In some areas, because of the loss of the bulk of all young males, women were compelled to perform almost all agricultural labor (a pattern that persists in a number of African countries today).

In addition, cheap European goods flooded into Africa in payment for the slaves, undermining indigenous textile, metalware, and other trades, and thus further weakening the local economies.

Following the abolition of the slave trade in the 19th century, the emerging imperialist powers of Europe continued to expand their markets in Africa. While developing extractive mining industries, they also transformed the nature of agricultural production in many regions by imposing the production of cash crops. These crops were destined for export to Europe and North America, to service those countries' domestic needs.

Colonial settlers and trading companies seized millions of acres of the best land for cotton, rubber, palm oil, coffee, tea, sugar, and other plantations.

African peasants were likewise compelled — through armed force, compulsory taxes, and the pressures of the market — to shift from food cultivation to the production of such cash crops. Since they no longer grew their own food, they had to buy it from elsewhere, with the earnings from the sale of their export crops. The most productive sectors of the African peasantry thus became tied into the world capitalist market — and made dependent on it.

While the European colonial powers finally relinquished their direct political rule over Africa and turned the reins of government over to African neocolonial regimes, the economic relations established under colonialism remained largely intact.

Capitalist market and production relations continued to develop in Africa. The continent's economies became increasingly dependent on the imperialist powers and ever more vulnerable to the fluctuations of the world capitalist market.

This is especially true for those countries where only one or two cash crops account for most of their export earnings. In Ethiopia, for example, coffee comprises 69% of the value of all exports, while in Burundi it is 93% and Rwanda, 71%. Cotton accounts for 80% of the export earnings of Chad and 65% of the Sudan's. For Ghana, cocoa accounts for 61%

and for Equatorial Guinea, 66% (with coffee taking another 24%). In Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, groundnuts (peanuts) make up 90% and 60% respectively. Some 68% of Mauritius' export earnings come from sugar, as do 54% of Swaziland's.

Not only do the prices these countries receive for their export crops fluctuate wildly, but they are low in comparison to the costs of imported manufactured goods and oil. And the terms of trade are turning increasingly to their disadvantage.

With the exception of South Africa, where the extreme oppression and exploitation of the Black majority has made possible a significant degree of capitalist industrialization, the continent remains largely poor and underdeveloped.

This is particularly true in the countryside. Most peasants remain engaged in subsistence — or below-subsistence — agriculture, using the most primitive tools and with few resources or social amenities. According to the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organization, just 1.9 percent of Africa's arable land was under irrigation as of 1980. Hand tools were by far the main farming implements. Tractors and machinery (used overwhelmingly in the cash-crop sector) are involved in only 2 percent of all agricultural labor, and draught animals in just 13 percent. Back-breaking human labor makes up the remaining 85 percent.

Under such conditions, it is not surprising that agricultural production has stagnated. And with the steady rise in population, this has actually meant a *decline* in food production in relation to the continent's real needs.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region of the world where per capita food production has fallen over the past two decades. In 1980, it was 15 percent below the level of the early 1970s and 20 percent below that of the early 1960s.

As a result, more and more food had to be bought from abroad. Over the past 10 years, the amount of food imported by African countries has nearly tripled. Reflecting the rising costs of such imports, however, they have had to pay five times as much for them. But with the disastrous impact on Africa of the world capitalist economic recession since the early 1970s, they have had even fewer funds with which to purchase food to feed their hungry populations.

The prices these countries receive for the exported minerals and cash crops have fallen even further, while their foreign debts have skyrocketed. Between 1970 and 1982, sub-Saharan Africa's foreign debts increased by nearly 10 times, from \$5.7 billion to \$51.3 billion. By 1984, the interest and other debt servicing payments had climbed to some \$10 billion a year. This has eaten up more than a quarter of these countries' already meager export earnings.

In this context, the onset of the most recent drought was a burden that Africa's weakest economies simply could not bear. Hundreds of thousands who were already living at the brink



Refugees from the famine gather at relief camp in Korem, Ethiopia.

of starvation were pushed over the edge.

The imperialists, of course, have sought to cover up the real reasons for this famine.

In Ethiopia, they have been especially loud in their denunciations of the regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam, claiming that the policies it has followed since the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974 are responsible for the famine in that country.

Famine and revolution

In fact, it is a result of Ethiopia's continued poverty. Like other African countries, Ethiopia came under imperialist domination, though it largely escaped direct colonial rule (except for several years of Italian occupation before and during World War II). The Italian, British, and U.S. imperialists forged a close alliance with the most backward sectors of Ethiopian society: the monarchy, Coptic church hierarchy, and landed nobility.

The semifeudal relations maintained by this alliance held back the country's economic development. The nobility and church owned 55 percent of all land. The peasants, who worked under serf-like conditions, were forced to turn over to the feudal landowners some 60-70 percent of their crops. The vast bulk of the peasantry constantly lived in hunger, and the land was often overcultivated, leading to its depletion and erosion.

In 1973, a severe drought triggered massive famine. By the beginning of 1974, a quarter of a million Ethiopians had starved to death, while Emperor Haile Selassie and other landowners raked in great profits by hoarding scarce food stocks to drive up prices, diverting international relief aid, and engaging in all sorts of corrupt practices.

Angered by the regime's response to the famine, the oppressed and exploited masses of Ethiopia rose up in rebellion. The peasants took back their land, the nobility was overthrown, and the monarchy was abolished. The new government, which was composed of a sector of the junior officer corps, proclaimed one of the most radical land reforms ever undertaken on the African continent. It nationalized the few imperialist economic holdings that had been established in Ethiopia

and closed down the U.S. military facilities. It established ties with the Soviet Union, Cuba, and other workers states.

The radical and anti-imperialist stance of the Mengistu regime earned it Washington's hostility. The U.S. imperialists cut off economic assistance (including food aid) and repeatedly tried to overthrow the new government. This culminated, in 1977-78, with the U.S.-instigated Somali invasion of Ethiopia, an invasion that was turned back with the aid of thousands of Cuban internationalist fighters.

While the revolution and the land reform freed the peasantry from the exploitation of the old aristocracy, significant improvements in living conditions and agricultural production could not be accomplished overnight. Ethiopia remained an extremely poor country, with very little industry, few roads and railways, and only the most minimal resources for economic development. While some state farms were established, they still account for just 4 percent of all cultivated land and 6 percent of total crop production. The vast bulk of the peasantry remains involved in subsistence agriculture, and the peasants on only 1 percent of the cultivated farmland have been organized into production cooperatives.

The Ethiopian government has for years explained that peasants there can produce only 6.2 million tons of grain a year, 1 million less than the country needs.

At the same time, in the northern provinces of Eritrea and Tigre, the army has been waging an ongoing war against local guerrilla groups that reject the central government's authority. In Eritrea in particular, this has been a long-standing conflict; for decades now, the Eritrean people have been fighting for independence from Ethiopian rule. The Mengistu regime's rejection of the Eritreans' national demands and its attempts to forcibly suppress their struggle have prolonged the war, further disrupting agricultural production in those regions.

By late 1982, the effects of this warfare and the generally low level of agricultural development were combined with the onset of yet another severe drought. Famine loomed once

again.

Unlike the previous Selassie regime, which sought to cover up the extent of the 1973-74 famine, the current government was prompt in raising an international alarm. The official Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) repeatedly appealed for international food assistance.

But Washington, the other imperialist powers, and the major international relief organizations largely ignored these appeals. Rev. Charles Elliott, a British relief official, recently charged that the U.S. and British governments had intentionally delayed large-scale relief assistance to Ethiopia out of political opposition to the government there. They hoped, according to Elliott, that a widespread famine would trigger the government's overthrow.

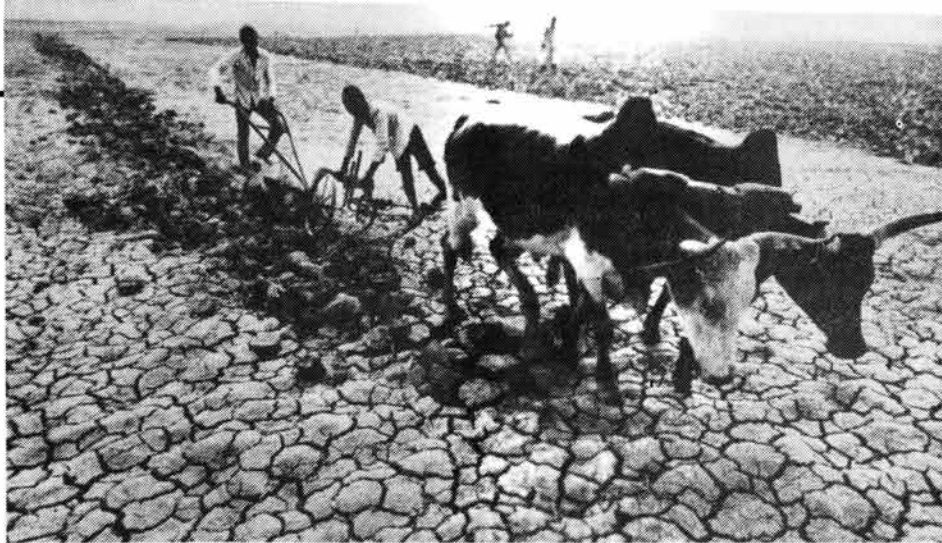
This cold and calculated crime — which has already taken hundreds of thousands of lives in Ethiopia — exposes the hypocrisy of the imperialists' current expressions of concern for the plight of Africa's famine victims.

After the famine in Ethiopia had already reached disastrous proportions and finally received widespread press coverage, some international relief aid began to arrive, including from the United States. The U.S. authorities now hail this as a "humanitarian" gesture. But what has been sent and pledged is a piddling amount compared with what the U.S. and Western European governments are capable of giving.

Just as the relief aid was earlier withheld for political reasons, now that some is being sent it is accompanied by a constant imperialist propaganda campaign. U.S. officials have accused the Ethiopian government of corruption, of diverting relief aid to feed the Ethiopian army, and of withholding assistance from areas of Eritrea and Tigre controlled by the guerrilla forces.

It is true that the aid channeled through the Ethiopian government's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission generally does not reach the rebel-controlled areas. That is because the RRC, like other government institutions, does not function there. However, other international relief assistance reaches some of those areas of Eritrea and Tigre, channeled unofficially through neighboring Sudan. That aid is also being used by the imperialists for political purposes, as part of their effort to discredit the Ethiopian government, as well as to try to curry some political influence with the Eritrean and Tigrean groups.

According to a report by Allan Hoben on the Ethiopia famine relief efforts in the January 21 New York weekly *New Republic*, "In early December, the R.R.C. appeared to be fully committed to facilitating the relief effort. Reports of inefficiency, obstructionism, and the diversion of relief supplies were not borne out by the observations of the leaders of Ethiopian and international relief efforts. Although some are worried about [Ethiopian government] interference, no one complained publicly, nor did anyone privately report diversion of international aid for political purposes."



Peasants in Mali try to till parched soil.

When Ethiopian officials answered such charges by pointing to the responsibility of the U.S. and Western European imperialists for the conditions that led to the famine, the head of the U.S. Agency for International Development arrogantly quipped that this was "a classic example of biting the hand that feeds you."

Apartheid's deadly plague

Mozambique, where some 100,000 starved to death in 1983-84, is again on the verge of a major famine. The number of people affected by the drought there has risen to 2.5 million, out of a total population of some 14 million. Mozambique is in desperate need of international relief aid. Some has been arriving, but not enough.

While some Mozambicans continue to die in the more remote areas of the country, a repetition of last year's tragedy has thus far been avoided. But that does not mean that there is no suffering. "People here have stopped dying," a doctor at a relief center near the port of Vilanculos said, "but they still have very serious malnutrition. Most of the children have some brain damage because they have gone too long with malnutrition."

Besides the drought, the other major factor in last year's famine and in the current famine conditions is the war being waged against the Mozambican government and people by rebel bands organized and armed by the racist apartheid regime in neighboring South Africa. Thousands of terrorists and saboteurs, who call themselves the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo), operate throughout much of the countryside.

Despite the signing of an accord between the Mozambican and South African governments in March 1984, in which the South African authorities pledged to halt their backing to the Renamo bands, the war has continued.

Transportation has been greatly disrupted; no road or rail line outside of the main cities is safe from mining or ambushes. This has made it extremely difficult to distribute the relief aid or to transport food from those areas not affected by the drought to those where it is needed.

The Renamo bands, moreover, have

specialized in attacking rural communities, destroying grain stocks, killing and mutilating villagers, and burning schools and health clinics. These terrorist attacks have driven many farmers from their land, further reducing agricultural production.

The immediate aim of this South African-backed war — which Washington fully supports — is to force the Mozambican government to make some concessions to imperialism and to further reduce its support for the African National Congress, the main liberation movement in South Africa.

While tacitly backing this South African war, Washington is now adopting a humanitarian guise by providing some modest amounts of relief assistance to Mozambique, a carrot to supplement Pretoria's stick. But if the U.S. rulers find it necessary to allow thousands more Mozambicans to starve to death in order to break or overthrow the Mozambican government, they are fully prepared to do so.

Angola, while not as hard hit by the drought as Mozambique, is also beginning to suffer some of the same problems, for the same reasons.

Ever since Angola won its independence from Portuguese colonial rule in 1975, it has been the target of constant South African aggression. There have been numerous invasions of southern and central Angola by South African troops, the most serious of which, in 1975-76, was stopped with the assistance of tens of thousands of Cuban troops. The Cubans remain in Angola today, to help defend it from the continued South African attacks.

In addition to sending in its own troops, Pretoria is backing the antigovernment guerrilla forces of Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Like the Renamo gangs in Mozambique, UNITA has concentrated on attacking villages, transportation links, and other essential economic facilities. It has also burned crops and destroyed food stocks and distribution points.

A decade ago, the fertile plains of Huambo province in central Angola produced so much grain that Angola was a net exporter of food. Today, Huambo cannot even feed its own

population, and tens of thousands survive only thanks to regular shipments of relief aid.

"Most of the countryside is now abandoned," explained Fernando Mercelino, the head of the Institute of Agronomical Research in Huambo. "The bandits rob or burn the harvests, and many of the peasants have to flee to the city for safety."

In Angola, too, Washington supports the apartheid regime's aggression. UNITA leaders have visited Washington several times, and U.S. administration officials have often hailed the UNITA terrorists as "freedom fighters."

In South Africa itself, hunger is a daily reality for millions of Blacks. This is despite the fact that South Africa is the continent's largest food producer and generally exports grain.

Under the racist system of apartheid, about half of the entire Black population is forced to live in the isolated and impoverished Bantustans, which make up just 13 percent of South Africa's total land area. The Bantustans are grossly overcrowded, lack some of the most basic infrastructure, and have the least fertile land in the country. Only 8 percent of rural Blacks are able to farm at a subsistence level. The rest cannot grow enough to live on and must rely on the wages of relatives working in the cities or on relief aid — when it is available.

According to relief workers in South Africa, some 2.9 million Blacks under the age of 15 suffer from malnutrition. Between 35,000 and 50,000 children die each year of illnesses related to or aggravated by dietary deficiencies.

The limits of 'aid'

The African countries that are now affected by drought and famine need prompt shipments of international food aid if millions are to be saved from starvation in the coming months. So far, they have not gotten anything close to what they need.

The imperialist powers — whose centuries-long plunder and domination of the continent has set the stage for the famine — bear the greatest responsibility for providing this food aid. The U.S. government alone could easily purchase the necessary amount of grain from U.S. farmers, at fair prices, and distribute it free to all those who need it. With the \$2.5 billion it spent last year on the MX missile alone, for example, it would have been possible to finance the total amount of African wheat imports in 1979.

Such aid, moreover, must be provided without any political strings attached. That is not the case today. Not only do the imperialist powers give only a small fraction of what is needed and what they are capable of giving, but they use the current food relief programs as political weapons. They often withhold it from those governments that defy imperialist dictates, and provide it to those regimes that bow before Washington and the former colonial powers. They use it to pressure and blackmail.

When the government of Burkina (formerly Upper Volta) requested U.S. assistance to artificially induce rainfall in that drought-affected

country, Washington refused. It did so out of hostility to the new radical government headed by President Thomas Sankara, which came to power on the crest of a revolutionary upsurge. In late 1984, the U.S. authorities warned that further U.S. economic assistance to Burkina would be contingent on whether its representative to the United Nations voted in line with U.S. policies.

Such political considerations are common. Referring to a U.S. congressional move to approve \$90 million in emergency food aid for Africa in early 1984, a report from the Sahel region in the London *Economist* commented, "Priority will go to countries like Mali, where a once-socialist military regime is pursuing free market economics under the guidance of the International Monetary Fund."

In President Reagan's January 3 address, he proposed the launching of a "Food for Progress" program under which food aid would be funneled to those countries where agriculture is based on "market principles" and "private sector involvement" — that is, cut-throat capitalism.

Within the recipient countries themselves, this kind of international aid does very little to benefit the poorest and most exploited sectors of the population.

Given the corrupt and neocolonial character of most African governments, large amounts of food aid never reach those who need it the most. It is hoarded, smuggled to other countries, or diverted to the "free" market, at prices that most people cannot afford and where profiteers can greatly enrich themselves.

Since the last Sahel famine of the early 1970s, numerous agricultural "development" projects have been launched in the region, financed by international relief organizations, the World Bank, and other imperialist-domi-



A victim of imperialist greed.

nated institutions. For the most part, they have sharpened social inequalities in the region, displaced more farmers and herders, and increased those countries' dependence on imperialist financial and technological assistance.

A report issued in early 1984 by Nigel Twose, an official of the British relief organization Oxfam, sharply criticized the general emphasis of these aid projects on boosting cash-crop production. Despite the \$7.45 billion in aid that has been disbursed in the Sahel over the past 10 years, the report said, food production had scarcely increased, nomadic practices had been undermined, and the poor received little benefit.

"The majority of the Sahel's farmers are not involved in export crop production," the report pointed out, "but little attention has been paid to the development of the food crop sector in the Sahel. Almost all of the Sahel's cereal production comes from rainfed agriculture, but just 16 per cent of the billions of dollars poured in after 1975 was directed towards rainfed food crops."

Moreover, such large-scale projects, designed to further production for export, have often led to overfarming and soil exhaustion, contributing to the yearly loss of millions of acres of forests and arable land in Africa. This is one of the factors behind the Sahara Desert's steady march southward through the Sahel.

'The cure must be political'

Speaking for a country that has itself been the object of various "aid" programs, Burkina's President Thomas Sankara declared in a speech before the United Nations General Assembly on Oct. 4, 1984, "It is easy to see why the indignation of the peoples is easily transformed into rebellion and revolution in the face of the crumbs tossed to them in the ignominious form of some aid, to which utterly humiliating conditions are sometimes attached."

Citing a study of aid to the Sahel, Sankara agreed that this was "only aid for survival. . . . This outside aid was designed only for the continued development of the unproductive sectors, imposing intolerable burdens on our small budgets, completely disrupting our countryside, creating deficits in our trade balance and, in fact, speeding up our indebtedness."

After noting the legacy of poverty, disease, and illiteracy left to his country by a century of French colonial domination, Sankara pointed to the heart of the problem. "The source of the evil was political," he said, "and so the only cure must be a political one."

As long as the underlying social and political conditions that have bred the current famine exist, Africa will be plagued by hunger and starvation. Millions more will die, victims of capitalist greed.

The sole effective program to combat famine is to struggle against imperialist oppression. That is the root of the continent's misery. □

Rightist saboteurs brought to trial

Washington aids counterrevolutionary exile groups

By Will Reissner

The government of Vietnam has offered to release all the inmates in its "reeducation camps" if Washington agrees to let them enter the United States and guarantees that they will not be allowed to organize activities against the Vietnamese government following their release.

Most of the prisoners, estimated to number 10,000, are former officials of the Saigon government that collapsed in 1975 or were officers in its armed forces.

Hanoi's insistence that the released prisoners not be allowed to form armed groups and infiltrate back into Vietnam is based on its experiences with rightist exile groups already functioning in France, the United States, and other countries with large Vietnamese exile populations.

There is growing evidence that the Reagan administration is stepping up its support for armed Vietnamese counterrevolutionary groups. The Heritage Foundation, a right-wing "think tank" with close ties to the Reagan administration, proposed just such a course in its "Mandate for Leadership II" report published December 7. Former national security adviser Richard Allen, now a fellow at the Heritage Foundation, boasted that the report "will have a significant impact" on administration policy.

The Heritage Foundation proposed increased U.S. government support for paramilitary forces operating against nine governments, including those of Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos.

Rightist exiles in United States

In recent years, right-wing Vietnamese exile groups have grown increasingly bold in their activities within the United States, where they have intimidated and murdered supporters of the Vietnamese government and raised funds for armed actions against Vietnam itself.

Former South Vietnamese Navy admiral Hoang Co Minh, for example, has been traveling around the United States raising funds for his National United Front for the Liberation of Vietnam, which he claims has repeatedly infiltrated guerrillas into Vietnam to carry out sabotage.

A group calling itself the Vietnamese Organization to Exterminate the Communists and Restore the Nation has claimed responsibility for murdering in the United States several Vietnamese who support the government of their homeland.

Former South Vietnamese naval commandos, known as the "frogmen," have also spread terror and intimidation in Vietnamese communities within the United States.

The Vietnamese government's insistence that released prisoners not be permitted to form armed groups and infiltrate back into Vietnam was underscored by evidence presented at a Dec. 14-18, 1984, trial in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) in which 21 members of an exile group based in Paris were found guilty of attempting to establish armed sabotage groups inside Vietnam.

Evidence presented at the trial revealed that close links exist between the Vietnamese counterrevolutionaries and the armed forces of Thailand, the Chinese government, and the U.S. embassy in Bangkok.

The 21 defendants, members of the United Front of Patriotic Forces for the Liberation of Vietnam (FUFPLV), were convicted of treason and espionage. Three were executed, two had death sentences commuted to life imprisonment, three others were given life sentences, and 13 were sentenced to periods of imprisonment ranging from 8 to 20 years. Charges against five other defendants were dropped.

Reacting in Paris to the news of the sentences, FUFPLV leader Le Quoc Tuy acknowledged that "the Communists discovered several of our arms caches and knew that we were preparing an offensive for Saigon for 1985" (*Le Monde*, Dec. 29, 1984).

Evidence presented in the trial indicates that the group had planned attacks on the Cho Quan power station in Ho Chi Minh City, the Nha Be fuel depot, and Tan Son Nhat airport. Other targets in Ho Chi Minh City were to be the Soviet and French consulates, the municipal theater, and international hotels.

The group had also planned to kidnap or murder officials of the French consulate and French specialists working in Vietnam in hopes of fomenting political difficulties between the French and Vietnamese governments and attracting international attention.

Infiltration, arms smuggling

Most of those sentenced in the December trial were former officers in the Saigon armed forces. One was a priest in the Cao Dai religion.

The leader of the FUFPLV group inside Vietnam was Mai Van Hanh, a French citizen who had been a pilot in the South Vietnamese air force. Hanh confessed to having entered Vietnam surreptitiously three times. On two trips he transported Chinese-supplied weapons from arms depots in Thailand, and on one occasion he brought in large quantities of counterfeit Vietnamese currency.

Hanh also testified that he had accompanied

FUFPLV leader Le Quoc Tuy to Peking on four occasions to meet with Han Nienlung, then deputy foreign minister of China, regarding their plans for carrying out armed actions inside Vietnam. Tuy, according to Hanh's testimony, went to Peking seven times in all.

Chinese authorities gave Hanh \$50,000 in U.S. currency and promised another \$500,000 to finance the FUFPLV's activities.

Hanh, whose death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, was arrested in Vietnam in September 1984, before his group could carry out its planned attacks.

Another defendant sentenced to death, Tran Van Ba, had been chairman of the Vietnamese Students Association in France. Ba, also arrested in September 1984, reported that his contact at the U.S. embassy in Bangkok had been Donald B. Coleman, and he admitted having entered Vietnam 10 times to smuggle more than 73 tons of weapons as well as counterfeit money into the country from Thailand.

According to Ba, Thai soldiers loaded the weapons onto ships, which were then escorted by Thai river patrol boats until they reached international waters.

The court also heard testimony that Thai army Lieutenant General Chavalit personally provided one of the defendants with false travel documents and identification papers and authorized his admittance to "refugee camps" in Thailand for the purpose of recruiting Vietnamese exiles to join the commando group.

While many of the groups were infiltrated into Vietnam by ship, others were transported overland from Thailand through Kampuchea.

Tran Ngoc Minh, for example, led a group of 23 men who infiltrated into Vietnam on Nov. 17, 1980. The group, which had received two months training from the Thai armed forces, was transported by Thai army intelligence vehicles to a camp of the Khmer Rouge, Kampuchean counterrevolutionary guerrillas based along the Thai-Kampuchean border.

With the help of the Khmer Rouge, the group made its way to Vietnam. There they attempted to establish a base camp in the Tra Vinh-Soc Trang area, from which to sabotage economic targets and kidnap and assassinate leaders of production collectives.

In all, between January 1981 and September 1984, the FUFPLV organized 10 infiltrations into Vietnam by sea and land, bringing in more than 100 agents and large quantities of weapons, ammunition, explosives, and communications equipment. They hoped to gain new recruits inside the country by linking up with former officers of the South Vietnamese army still in Vietnam and raiding reeducation camps to free inmates.

The Vietnamese government reports that 119 members of the group have been captured. Further trials are expected in coming months.

Another group of former Saigon officers was tried by a court in Song Be province, north of Ho Chi Minh City, in December. According to a December 26 report from the Vietnam News Agency, 19 former officers were convicted of conspiring to overthrow the government. All were already inmates in a reeducation camp, where they had organized an underground group with the aim of breaking out and beginning armed struggle.

The leader of the group, former Saigon army ranger Huynh Ngoc Hiep, had been sentenced to eight years imprisonment in 1979 for membership in an organization called the Front of Militias for National Restoration. Following the trial, Hiep and two other leaders of the group were executed, two more were given life sentences, and 14 received sentences of 4 to 18 years in prison.

When U.S. Congressman G.V. Montgomery visited Hanoi in early December, he reported that the Vietnamese authorities were

anxious to release the camp inmates. But, he added, they also "expressed a strong fear that the prisoners, if released, would independently or with the support of the United States conduct anti-Vietnamese activity both in America and Indochina."

Montgomery replied that any inmates brought to the United States would be subject to the U.S. Neutrality Act, which makes it a crime to conspire on U.S. soil against a government with which the United States is not at war.

The Vietnamese authorities could hardly have been reassured by this reply, given the long history of counterrevolutionary Cuban and Vietnamese groups operating with impunity from the United States. They are also aware of the Reagan administration's creation of an army of Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries composed in the main of former soldiers of the ousted dictator Anastasio Somoza.

Thus far, the U.S. government has refused to provide any guarantee that released inmates from Vietnam would be prevented from engaging in similar counterrevolutionary activities. □

United States

New attacks on abortion clinics

Terrorists get green light from government

By Martin Koppel

[The following article appeared in the February 4 issue of *Perspectiva Mundial*, a revolutionary socialist fortnightly published in New York City. The translation from the Spanish is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Terrorists opposed to women's right to abortion launched a new round of bomb attacks against women's clinics during the last week of 1984. Since 1982, this reactionary campaign of violence has successfully destroyed a total of 30 clinics that perform legal abortions and has been responsible for more than 300 acts of vandalism.

Since December 25, it has been impossible to get a legal abortion in Pensacola, Florida. On that day, three bombs went off within minutes of each other, destroying one abortion clinic and two gynecological clinics that also offered abortions.

The Pensacola clinic — the Ladies Center — was completely gutted. The Ladies Center had moved to its present location after its old office was destroyed in a bombing last June.

One worker at the clinic pointed out, "These attacks don't only impact on abortion rights, but on the right of women to contraception and simple health care."

The two men and two women arrested for the bombings have admitted to them, claiming that they had received "the call of god." One of

them, Matthew Goldsby, explained that he had simply chosen the "quickest route possible to stop abortion."

Other opponents of abortion rights have taken their distance from the bombings but claim the actions of the bombers and arsonists are understandable. "I can't condone violence at all," said one member of Christians Against Abortion, "but I know that not another baby will be murdered where those bombings are going on."

Only a few days after the Florida bombings, as New Years Day began, a powerful bomb exploded at the Hillcrest Women's Surgi-Center in southeast Washington, D.C. The roof of the clinic and one of its walls were destroyed. The force of the blast shattered nearly 250 windows in nearby apartments. It was sheer luck that no one was injured.

This was the seventh bombing of a women's health clinic or abortion-related facility in the Washington, D.C., area since February 1984. It was the fourth one to occur in the last few weeks.

Two bombs went off in women's clinics in Rockville and Wheaton, Maryland, on December 19; and another one in Suitland, Maryland, on November 24.

"We are outraged and angry," said Joanna Cannon, spokeswoman for the Hillcrest Clinic. "We exist here legally and those who choose to express their opinions with bomb-

ings are criminal and wrong." She also said that the clinic would reopen soon.

Rosann Wisman, executive director of Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, said, "Abortion is legal. The service is available as an individual right and individual choice. Bombers are keeping people from exercising that right."

A man identifying himself as a member of the "Army of God — East Coast Division," a violent anti-abortion-rights group, called the *Washington Times* to claim responsibility for the bombing. "The bombings will not stop," he warned, as a threat to all those who perform legal abortions.

For its part, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said December 4 that the bombings are neither terrorist acts nor acts against the government. Therefore it relegated jurisdiction to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF).

The BATF, which is now "investigating" the bombings, delivered a warning to abortion clinic operators that they should anticipate a new wave of violence on January 22, the 12th anniversary of the legalization of abortion. No warning was given to the violent opponents of abortion rights, nor was any mention made of measures that would be taken to prevent the attacks. In fact, the government continues to insist that there is no conspiracy behind the bombings.

The government's position amounts to nothing more than a green light to those who carry out the real terrorist attacks against women in this country. Far from defending the legal right to abortion, the government is leading a fierce campaign against this right. This attack by the ruling class is being carried out by the Democratic Party as well as the Republican Party, by liberals as well as conservatives, by Protestant religious fundamentalists as well as the Catholic church hierarchy.

The goal of the campaign is to make abortion illegal. This explains why the government refuses to stop the attacks, and why the bombers are able to act with such impunity.

Supporters of women's rights across the country are organizing different activities — including meetings, picket lines, and vigils — to protest the attacks. Despite the threats, activities are planned for January 22.* On that day in 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that abortion is a woman's right. This was the most far-reaching advance won by women's rights fighters in decades. The ruling made it a law that women have the right to decide whether or not to bear children, as well as when and when not to have them.

The right of a woman to control her own body is the most basic of rights and a precondition for full equality. This is why attacks against the right to abortion are not just directed against women, but against the working class as a whole. □

* On January 22 supporters of abortion rights held modest demonstrations in many of the major cities across the country. — IP

Mass protests against price hikes

Wide anger over IMF-imposed austerity measures

By Ernest Harsch

In the largest mass demonstrations since Prime Minister Edward Seaga came to power in 1980 with Washington's backing, thousands of Jamaicans poured into the streets of Kingston and other towns January 15 to protest an abrupt hike of 21 percent in the price of gasoline and cooking fuel.

Coming on the heels of other price hikes, massive layoffs, and cuts in social services, Seaga's latest austerity move threw a spark into the simmering frustration and anger of Jamaican working people. Protesting crowds sang the words of a popular calypso song, "capitalism gone mad."

While spontaneous demonstrations erupted in various parts of the island over the two days of protests, the largest were in the capital itself. With a population of some 800,000 — out of Jamaica's total population of 2.3 million — Kingston was virtually paralyzed.

Barricades and roadblocks

Demonstrators erected roadblocks and barricades on streets throughout the city, using overturned cars, burning tires, trees, telephone poles, and whatever else they could lay their hands on. Some of the roadblocks were defended by crowds numbering in the hundreds. Some protesters were armed and exchanged gunfire with police units.

The right-wing *Gleaner* newspaper, which generally supports the government's policies, reported the "militant presence of women out there organising the road blocks and taking charge."

Wealthy motorists were blocked from traveling, or were charged "tolls" to get through the roadblocks. At least three government ministers got a direct taste of the demonstrators' anger. Construction Minister Bruce Golding was stopped at one roadblock by several hundred people; heavily armed police rushed in to rescue him. Minister of Industry and Commerce Douglas Vaz had to speed away from another roadblock when his car was bombarded with bottles and other missiles. Minister of Education Mavis Gilmour's car was stoned and shot at, despite the fact that she had a police escort.

Because of barricades on the road between Kingston and the international airport, a visiting U.S. vice admiral and the president of the Coca Cola company had to be specially shuttled by helicopter to catch flights out of the country.

Armed clashes between demonstrators and police took place in numerous parts of the city, including near Vale Royal, Seaga's official residence.

Seven people were killed during the protests, most of them shot to death by the police.

The demonstrations were largely spontaneous, though activists of the opposition People's National Party (PNP) of former Prime Minister Michael Manley took part in the roadblocks. Yet the opposition to Seaga's anti-working-class measures was so broad that members of his own Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) also participated in the protests. In one instance, protesters from Tivoli Gardens, generally a stronghold of support for the JLP, traded gunfire with police. However, other JLP members, organized into thug units, attacked demonstrators.

Outside Kingston, roadblocks were erected along the northern coastal road connecting the resort towns of Negril, Montego Bay, Ocho Rios, and Port Antonio. There were also protests in various rural areas.

As in previous popular rebellions in Jamaican history, peasants and agricultural workers vented their anger by setting fire to large sugar cane plantations. Thousands of tons of sugar cane were burned at the Frome, Holland, Monymusk, Bernard Lodge/Innswood, and Grays Inn estates.

Carl Stone, a leading columnist and pollster for the *Gleaner*, commented after the protests had ended that they were "overwhelmingly popular" in character. Most of the participants, he observed, were "unemployed young people from poor areas for whom the protests became a means of expressing their class anger at a system they feel has passed them by."

For these young people, as for many other Jamaicans, the economic policies followed by the Seaga regime have been especially severe.

Although the previous government of Michael Manley was also compelled to follow some austerity measures demanded by the International Monetary Fund in exchange for IMF loans and credits, Seaga has gone much further.

Thousands of public sector workers have been laid off since he came to power, 4,000 of them in 1984 alone. Another 2,200 are scheduled to be thrown out of work by March. This has only worsened the already high unemployment rate, which officially stands at some 25 percent, but in reality is closer to 40 percent (according to a *Gleaner* poll).

Social services have been allowed to deteriorate, many price controls have been scrapped, and the Jamaican dollar has been repeatedly devalued. Even before the latest fuel price hikes, the inflation rate was about 40 percent. Food staples such as rice, vegetables, chicken, and milk have risen between 30 and 75 percent. Water bills have climbed 60 percent.

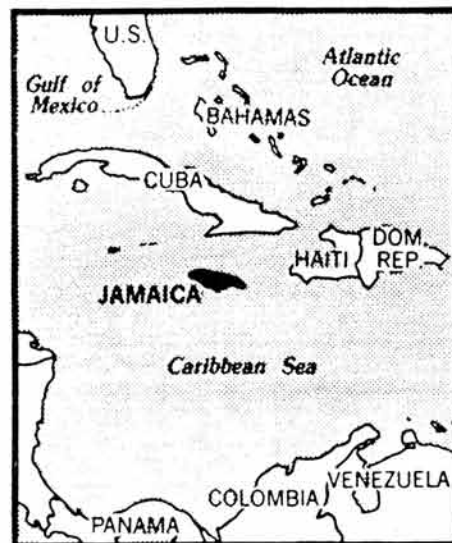
The minimum wage is just 30 cents an hour, and more than half the population has an income of less than US\$8 a week.

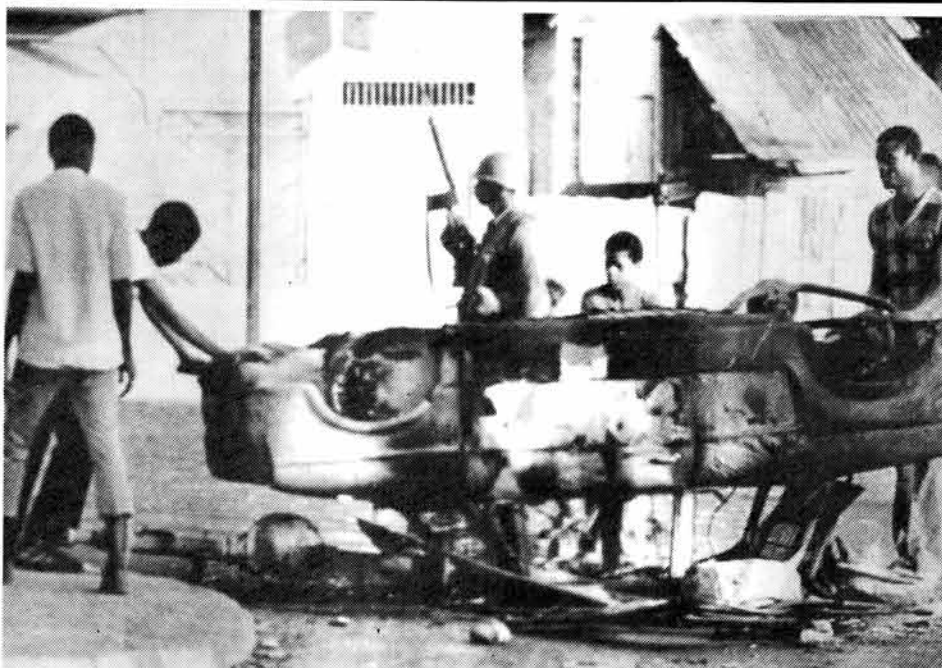
Though Seaga claims the austerity measures are necessary to improve the economy's overall performance, that has not happened, even by capitalist standards.

Jamaican businessmen have shown little inclination to invest in productive enterprises, preferring instead to engage in speculation and spend the country's foreign exchange on luxury imports. Many small businesses, moreover, have gone under.

Bauxite exports — one of Jamaica's main sources of income — have been hard hit by the world capitalist recession. Reduced demand, a fall in bauxite prices, and the development of more competitive sources of bauxite in other countries have cut Jamaica's exports by one-third.

Introduced under British colonial rule, the sugar industry has long provided the bulk of Jamaica's agricultural exports. Seaga, however, has sought to reprivatize many of the government-owned sugar estates and to re-





Aftermath of demonstrations in Kingston.

place others with less labor-intensive banana plantations. But the banana industry, too, has been badly hit by low world prices and the high cost of materials and equipment. "1984 was the most disastrous year for the banana industry of Jamaica," declared Richard Jackson, the chairman of the Banana Company of Jamaica, at a banana growers' meeting just a few days after the fuel price protests.

All this has happened despite massive borrowing from the IMF and World Bank and large infusions of U.S. economic aid (Jamaica is now the third largest recipient of U.S. aid in the Western Hemisphere). Rather than reviving production, all this has accomplished is to push up Jamaica's foreign debt to some \$2.8 billion. Payments on that debt now eat up 40 percent of the country's foreign exchange earnings.

When Seaga came to power in the 1980 elections, he promised economic "deliverance." For the masses of Jamaican workers and farmers, all he has delivered is greater poverty and increased dependence on imperialism.

'Away with Seaga'

In this context, Manley's opposition PNP intervened in the fuel price protests in an effort to strengthen the party's political position.

In a statement issued on behalf of the PNP on January 15, Manley solidarized with the "popular protest," while stressing that it should be "peaceful and legitimate." He said, "The people of Jamaica have reached the limit of their capacity to endure hardships and suffer in silence. If the country is to be spared, now is the time for Seaga to go."

For the PNP, this has meant calling for new elections, as reflected in some of the slogans painted on walls during the protests, such as

"Away with Seaga, elections now." According to recent opinion polls, the PNP presently has the support of 38 percent of the voters and the JLP just 26 percent, with 34 percent undecided.

Constitutionally, new elections do not have to be called until January 1989. In the last ones, held in December 1983, the PNP boycotted the polls, charging electoral manipulation and the disenfranchisement of some 180,000 young voters.

On January 16, Manley issued another statement, in which he called for an end to the protests, "the point having been made so resolutely." He warned, however, "More demonstrations are inevitable if the government continues to impose intolerable burdens with callous disregard for the plight of the poor."

He also called on the government to immediately freeze all prices, stop the devaluations of the Jamaican dollar, halt layoffs, and open a "meaningful dialogue" with consumers, trade unions, business groups, and other sectors of the population.

The much smaller Workers Party of Jamaica (WPI), which looks to Moscow for political orientation, also backed the demonstrations. In a press release, it noted that its members and supporters were taking part in the roadblocks to "maintain the people's protest." WPI members were reported painting slogans calling for "Elections now." Like the PNP, the WPI praised the "restraint" of the police in dealing with the protests.

Just a 'hiccup'?

Seaga responded to the protests by digging in his heels.

With the help of the *Gleaner* and other pro-JLP media, the government went on a propaganda campaign to present the protests as cal-

culated efforts by the PNP and WPI to politically embarrass the government and to "sabotage recovery," as Seaga declared in parliament on January 15.

The government refused outright to lower the fuel prices. In fact, on January 20, it announced that bus fares in the Kingston area were being raised by an average of 22 percent.

And in answer to the PNP's election demand, Seaga said that the government had no intention of calling elections "at this time."

Visiting New York City on January 31 to reassure U.S. creditors and investors, Seaga sought to minimize the protests. "There were no riots," Seaga maintained in an interview with a local television reporter. "The two days in which demonstrations took place are to be regarded as a hiccup, nothing more."

Whether or not Washington accepts this sanguine view, it is determined to maintain its backing to the Seaga regime. "What's happened this week won't affect how we look at Jamaica," a State Department official told a reporter for *Newsweek*. Washington has thus far pledged to provide Seaga with \$140 million in aid this year.

For the U.S. imperialists, much is at stake. Acting through the CIA and other agencies, they had intervened heavily in Jamaica to destabilize the previous Manley government and to help Seaga win the 1980 elections. Their opposition to Manley was based largely on his government's friendly ties with revolutionary Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada under Maurice Bishop's leadership.

Seaga, in contrast, has been a key backer of U.S. imperialist interests in the region, going to the extent of providing hundreds of Jamaican troops to take part in the U.S. invasion of Grenada in October 1983. Seaga is currently organizing an anticommunist international youth conference for Kingston this April.

The fuel price protests, however, show the depth of the antigovernment sentiment in Jamaica today and the political problems that imperialism faces in trying to maintain a stable capitalist government there.

This was evident as well in the immediate wake of the price protests, as other struggles continued to erupt.

In Manchester, farmers who had lost use of government-owned land that was being sold off to private interests demanded that they be given land. The Frome sugar factory, the largest on the island, has been hit by protests of cane cutters demanding severance pay following the government's dissolution of their cooperative. Air Jamaica was paralyzed by a brief work stoppage. And water workers in St. Catherine and Clarendon struck to press for higher wages and benefits, a strike that involved not only members of the PNP-affiliated union, but also those of the JLP's union. Minister of Construction Bruce Golding charged that the strike was "calculated to destabilise the community" and ordered the army to intervene. □

Government defeated at polls

Washington pleased by results

By Will Reissner

The December 14 election victory of the proimperialist United Democratic Party (UDP) in Belize was welcome news for the U.S. government.

The key issue that led to the defeat of outgoing Prime Minister George Price's People's United Party government was the Central American country's growing economic problems. But the new government, led by Manuel Esquivel, will certainly be more favorable toward Washington's Central American policies.

Price, who had never lost an election before, led the government since the beginning of self-rule in Belize in 1964, when the country was still the colony called British Honduras. His party's three-decade-long leadership of the movement for independence culminated with the end of more than a century of British colonial rule in 1981. London, however, continues to maintain a garrison of some 1,800 troops in Belize, as well as jet aircraft and helicopters.

Guatemalan threats

The British troops are ostensibly in Belize to protect against invasion from neighboring Guatemala. For decades successive Guatemalan governments have claimed sovereignty over Belize.

Although neither Guatemala nor colonial Spain ever exercised effective jurisdiction over Belize, Guatemalan governments have argued that, as the rightful "inheritor" of Spain's colonial empire in the region, Guatemala has a legitimate claim to Belize.

During the 1970s, Guatemalan interest in Belize was heightened by the strong possibility that northern Belize may contain important oil deposits.

In 1977, the Guatemalan regime openly threatened to invade Belize if that country gained its independence from Britain. Two years later, the Guatemalan military built a road right up to the Belizean border.

Under these threats, Price agreed to the continued stationing of British troops in Belize. But his government also tried to rally support for Belizean independence and opposition to Guatemalan territorial claims by expanding its contacts with other governments in the region and with the members of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries.

Price's foreign policy

Price established cordial relations with the Sandinista government of Nicaragua, attending the celebration of the first anniversary of the victory of the Sandinista revolution. A number of Belizean teachers went to Nicaragua's English-speaking Atlantic Coast region to help with that country's 1980 literacy campaign.



Price also developed warm relations with Maurice Bishop's government in Grenada, and the Belizean leader spoke out against the U.S. invasion of that Caribbean island.

The Price government was on record in opposition to U.S. intervention in El Salvador's civil war, and maintained contact with Cuba.

At the same time, Price attempted to maintain cordial relations with Washington and welcomed U.S. military instructors and equipment for Belize's small Defense Force.

Belize's foreign policy, Price stated, was based on "non-alignment, with a special relationship with the USA."

But Washington had little confidence in the Price government, especially in the context of the deepening U.S. war against the Central American revolutions. It preferred a government that was more reliable, from Washington's perspective.

The United Democratic Party, which took 21 of the 28 seats in Belize's parliament, had campaigned for more foreign investment in Belize and less government control of the economy. In addition, the UDP, which had strongly opposed independence from Britain, charged that Price had not been doing enough to make sure that London maintains its troops in the country.

Although the UDP was able to capitalize on discontent with Belize's economic problems, its program is unlikely to solve those problems.

Hard times

Belize is a small, sparsely populated country, with fewer than 150,000 people in an area of some 8,800 square miles. It emerged from British rule with almost no industry and little infrastructure. Even in Belize City, the country's commercial center with 40,000 residents, most roads are still unpaved and electrical ser-

vice is, in the government's own words, "unreliable."

The country's economy is dependent on the earnings of the sugar, banana, and citrus industries; on money sent home by some 50,000 Belizeans who have gone abroad, most to the United States, to seek a better standard of living; and on the spending of the British military garrison.

But earnings from the sugar industry, which provides more than half of Belize's foreign exchange earnings, have plummeted as sugar prices on the world capitalist market dropped from US\$0.40 per pound in 1980 to about \$0.07 in 1984.

Income from banana sales has also been adversely affected by the steady decline in the exchange rate of the British pound, the currency in which most banana transactions take place. In 1980, the British pound was worth \$2.45. Today it is barely worth \$1.10.

In addition, the country's earnings have suffered from the financial crisis in neighboring Mexico and the huge devaluations of the Mexican peso. The drop in Mexican use of Belizean ports and the decline in reexport trade between the two countries has cost Belize some \$25 million since 1982, a huge loss for a country whose annual gross national product totals about \$175 million.

London's spending on the 1,800 British troops in Belize amounts to nearly 10 percent of Belize's gross national product.

Also a Caribbean country

Belize is as much a Caribbean as a Central American country and shares many common traits with other former British colonies in the Caribbean.

English-speaking Blacks make up about half of Belize's population. They are the descendants of slaves brought in by the British to log the colony's forests. While still the largest single nationality, the relative weight of English-speaking Blacks in the population is declining. The bulk of the 50,000 Belizean emigrants have come from this segment of the population.

About 40 percent of all Belizeans now speak Spanish as their native language, although most speak English as well. The Spanish-speaking segment of the population is growing in absolute as well as relative terms as large numbers of immigrants enter Belize from other parts of Central America.

During the election campaign Esquivel had vowed to stem the flow of refugees, particularly from El Salvador, if elected. □

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A class and national struggle

Interview with Belfast chairperson of Sinn Féin

[The following interview is with Joe Austin, Belfast chairperson of Sinn Féin, the political organization that supports the armed struggle of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). It was conducted in Belfast in late December by Redmond O'Neill from the British socialist weekly *Socialist Action*, with the participation of Dick McBride and Malik Miah of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party.

[The text of the interview is reprinted from the Dec. 21, 1984, issue of *Socialist Action*. The footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Question. What are the aims of Sinn Féin?

Answer. The short- and long-term aims of Belfast Sinn Féin are to expose British imperialism and all of its ramifications in Ireland and to plot an alternative course in the establishment of a 32-county democratic socialist republic of Ireland.

Having said that, it isn't going to happen next week or even next year. There are a number of substantial problems which we have to get over — not least the British physical presence.

But the British occupation of Ireland isn't only British troops. It is controlled through the colonial set-up in the North and the neo-colonial set-up in the South.

We have the coming together with British imperialism of the tweedle-dum parties in the South — Finn Gael and Fianna Fail — supported in a pathetic fashion by the so-called Irish Labor Party.

It needs to be made clear to people, irrespective of the colour of the flag they fly over the GPO [General Post Office] in Dublin, these parties are part of the collaboration with British economic, political, and military occupation. They are part of the conspiracy against the Irish people.

People very easily identify the enemy as the British soldier on the street because of his paraphernalia: his uniform, his guns, and the armoured cars and tanks.

But the politicisation has to spill over from that to identify the class enemy in order to understand that the struggle is not simply against the British military presence, or even the British political presence, but also against the economic presence that the political imperialism of the Brits will leave in their wake.

We are not struggling for geographical liberation to be again exploited by capitalists so that you remove the Brits and replace them with something apparently different but not so different at the end of the day.

So we have to link together all of the struggles from the women's struggle, through the



British troops on patrol in Belfast.

unemployment struggle through the whole social, economic, and political struggle to the national struggle. They are all part of one struggle.

James Connolly¹ explained that in 1916. It's not something that has been discovered last week. It's true to say that at different stages over the last ten years Sinn Féin has been on and off that track. The problem is that national sovereignty and working-class rights are two sides of the same coin.

Historically in the republican movement there have been three main components in ascendancy: you've had the militarists, you've had the constitutional republicans, and you've had the revolutionary republicans.

When the first of these were in the leadership, Sinn Féin was a militaristic organisation to which the working class, who were not involved in throwing the bombs, could not relate.

The constitutional republicans presented constitutional arguments to imperialism, which actually did not work, and the working class had no faith in them.

It is only with the revolutionary republican leadership that the movement is beginning to

1. James Connolly (1868–1916) was a founder of the Irish Socialist Republican Party and a leading trade unionist. Connolly was a leader of the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin against British rule. After the British crushed the uprising, Connolly, severely wounded and suffering from gangrene, was propped up in a chair and shot by a British firing squad.

understand that working-class struggles are part of the national struggle — and to see that in fact they are two sides of the same coin.

Q. What is the place of support of the armed struggle in Sinn Féin's political strategy?

A. The armed struggle and the electoral intervention are part of the same struggle. The armed struggle is not sacrosanct. It is part of the overall struggle. It has no greater place than any other component part of the struggle.

If the armed struggle causes problems, which it has done on occasion, then we'd have to be very honest and say "that attack or that operation was wrong." This is not a question of affecting election results. An action is wrong if people cannot relate to it. For example, it's wrong if it's a backward step like Harrods — we condemned the Harrods attack.²

Q. Sinn Féin has been able to win well over 100,000 votes in elections in the six counties in the North of Ireland. This demonstrates very clearly that you have mass popular support. But it is obviously not enough to defeat British imperialism. What is Sinn Féin's strategy for developing the struggle in the twenty-six counties in the South after the immense impact of the [1981] hunger strike?

A. There is no doubt that the current and past British administrations need the active collaboration of the Free State,³ certainly in terms of having a semi-effective security policy. But, more importantly, that collaboration is necessary in terms of confusing English working-class opinion about the British presence in Ireland: "here you have reasonable people like [Irish Prime Minister] Garret Fitzgerald, and everyone agrees that things in Ireland would be OK if the IRA would go away." That type of argument does succeed in confusing English people about Ireland.

The campaign around the H-block hunger strikers had a very big response in the South. But this was mainly the result of the suffering of the prisoners, the intensity of the campaign, and of its demands, which were very reasonable demands. That is not the same as support for the struggle or for Sinn Féin. It was support for the demands of the prisoners.

We were not able to capitalise in the wake of the hunger strike primarily because the Sinn

2. A car bomb exploded outside Harrods department store in London on Dec. 17, 1983, killing five people and wounding more than 90. The following day, the Irish Republican Army issued a statement saying that the bombing had been unauthorized and regretting the civilian casualties.

3. Under a Dec. 6, 1921 treaty with Britain, the southern 26 counties became a "Free State" within the British Commonwealth while the six counties of the north remained in British hands. Under the 1948 Republic of Ireland Act, the remaining association with the Commonwealth was ended. Republicans often refer to the 26-county government as the "Free State" to underscore the continuing partition of Ireland and the subservience of the Irish government to London.

Féin organisation in the South had seen itself basically as a support group for the struggle in the North. They were hypnotised by events in the North.

But the struggle in Ireland is not a Northern-based struggle. The struggle in Ireland has a number of different facets. But key to the whole liberation of the country is the social and economic struggle that has to take place in the South.

It is necessary, firstly, to begin the fightback in terms of working-class rights and, linked to that, to begin to expose the role that's played by the Free State Parties — primarily Fine Gael and Fianna Fail — in the [British] physical and geographical occupation of the North of Ireland, and in the economic and political occupation of Ireland as a whole. That struggle obviously employs different tactics to the struggle in the North. But it is just as important.

You don't have to be a political guru to understand that when the crisis comes with Brit departure, the class and capitalist interests will come together and try to form an administration for the whole of Ireland which maintains their status quo. For example the Unionists,⁴ who today oppose any relationship with the South, will gravitate towards similar people representing similar class interests. That's happening already — perhaps not on the floor of [the British parliament at] Westminster or the [Northern Ireland] Assembly — but it's happening.

Capitalism in Ireland orientates towards British capitalism because Irish capitalists see British capitalism and the forces it can muster, in terms of troops and administration, as being their guarantee. When James Prior⁵ says he's frightened of a Cuba-style Republic on England's doorstep, he's not only frightened on behalf of English capitalism, he's frightened on behalf of Irish capitalism as well.

So we need to get out and weaken those classes now. Sinn Féin has a part to play in that. But we recognise that Sinn Féin are not going to be *the* revolutionary party in isolation from other forces in the South.

Q. On what class or classes does Sinn Féin base its struggle?

A. The working class and small farmers. Our policies will not be appreciated by the large ranchers. The long-term resolution of the conflict in Ireland has got to be based on a Socialist Republic, and obviously the people who are going to subscribe to it, fight for it, and perhaps even die for it are the politicised sections of the working class.

Q. What is the policy of Sinn Féin towards the labour movement in the 26 counties. For example there is a debate taking place in unions like the Transport and General Work-

4. Supporters of Northern Ireland's continued "union" with Britain.

5. The British government's secretary of state for Northern Ireland until his resignation in 1984.



Irish Prime Minister Garret FitzGerald with Thatcher.

ers Union on relations with the Irish Labour Party. What is Sinn Féin's attitude to this?

A. In Ireland we don't have a labour movement. We don't even have a bad labour movement. What we have is a very, very small Free State Labour Party, which is currently in coalition with Fine Gael — an ultraconservative right-wing party. A small section of the trade union movement is affiliated to this Labour Party and a smaller still section vote for it.

In the [June 14, 1984, European Economic Community] election Sinn Féin won over 50,000 more votes than this so-called Labour Party. We contested an election in Dublin Central, and despite all of the restrictions on Sinn Féin, our candidate beat the Labour Party into fifth place.

Again, two months ago in the Gaeltacht — that is the Irish-speaking area — we again beat the Labour Party into third place.

The reality is that the Labour Party is a *Labour* Party in name only. Its politics, its programme, its whole orientation is towards the capitalist interests in Fianna Fail and Fine Gael and it has shared office with both of these parties. For example, the Abortion amendment campaign and its conspiracy against women in the South,⁶ was instigated by sections of the Labour Party leadership along with Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. The Labour Party is part of the government which presides over the second-highest unemployment rate in Europe. The Labour Party supports the repressive actions of that government.

All of this cannot go unheeded by the trade union movement. It is not a question of us saying the unions should or should not be affiliated to the Labour Party. The reality of it is that when there are questions of oppression — and we'll leave aside national oppression for the moment — but when there is institutionalised oppression the trade union

6. In a Sept. 7, 1983, referendum, an amendment was passed in the 26 counties making a ban on abortion part of the constitution. Abortion had already been illegal in the 26 counties.

movement cannot be neutral.

The trade union movement in the South is trying to be neutral. As [British miner's union president] Arthur Scargill is demonstrating fairly courageously, the defence of your members does not begin and end when they clock on and off. The defence of your members means the defence of your members, and the trade union movement by affiliating to the Labour Party are abdicating that responsibility.

We are for disaffiliation from the Irish Labour Party. But it's not a matter of us having the audacity to say the trade unions should disassociate themselves from the so-called Labour Party and associate with Sinn Féin. That isn't the question that is posed.

The question is: "when will the bastion of working-class rights that the trade union movement is supposed to be exert its right and its responsibility to defend its members?"

We are not mobilising as an alternative to the labour movement. We are mobilising to try to force the broader movement into a position where it has to defend its members' rights and come into confrontation with the state.

The difficulty is that because the trade union movement has been a safety valve for capitalism in the South and because it appears unable to defend workers' rights, large numbers of workers only join because of their job and not to defend working-class interests. That's what is happening in England as well.

You see a whole drift of support away from the trade union movement, and of course, once that support begins to drift, capitalist attacks begin. That's what has happened in England and that's also what is happening in the South.

Q. How do you see creating a political alternative to the politics of the Labour Party in the South?

A. Sections of the Labour Party will have to be replaced by Sinn Féin. Other sections that have a contribution to make, for example the struggle for women's rights in the South, will replace other sections. The Labour Party will be replaced by a number of different things.

There is need for politicised sections of the trade union movement to raise the standard of struggle within their own organisations. Connolly was against the division between "the political wing" — the Labour Party — and the trade union activity. He argued the trade union movement is a political animal and trade union members are politically involved in the class struggle.

Now what's happened here is that political activity has been virtually prohibited in the trade unions — trade union leaders argue that the political struggle is reserved for the political wing because it does not occur on the shop floor.

What we are advocating is that the trade union movement is not allowed to become an organisation of observers or by-standers. The trade union movement has a major role to play in the reconquest of Ireland. It has a major role to play in the defence of working-class rights. It has a major role to play in the struggle against repression. They have to do this not because Sinn Féin is saying you've got to do it, but because it is their responsibility to their members.

The trade unions are part of the liberation vehicle. So we need to say to people, both internally in Sinn Féin and externally, that irrespective of how weak the trade union movement has become, it is their vehicle — that's where you should be, that's where the struggle has to be fought. It's having some limited success.

But the conditions for work in the trade unions are quite different between Ireland and England. In England it is acceptable to organise on a left/right basis in the unions. The people on the receiving end of left organisation — I mean the bureaucrats — may not be raising their hands and clapping about it, but there's nothing they can do about it.

In the South you have the cry of "republican, conspiratorial infiltration," and sections of the working class can be convinced by that that the conspiracy is not against the leadership but against the membership of the union.

Nonetheless there have been some remarkable situations recently like the election of Phil Flynn, former Vice President of Sinn Féin, to general secretary of the white collar union in spite of a campaign organised by the Minister of Labour and Special Branch⁷ against him as a "member of the IRA." A campaign in which the government stated it would no longer negotiate with the union if Phil were elected. In spite of all their efforts Phil Flynn won the election virtually unopposed.

There is now a very small organisation called Trade Unionists for National Consciousness. We aim not only to expose Labour collaboration in the system, but also to politicise the rank-and-file membership and whatever leadership can be found, into the beginning of the fightback. You see the fightback isn't only about the Brits in Ireland. It is also to arm trade union members to understand that their leadership is part of the conspiracy against them, and

7. The political police.

that they should have leadership that reflects their interests, reflects their wishes and will fight for them.

In the overall struggle in the South, Sinn Féin is not going to be *the* force. But we will be part of a grouping of people and lend our support to organisations like Concerned Parents Against Drug Abuse in Dublin and support strike struggles like the sit-in by workers at Rank Flour Mill.

Q. What is the place of electoral activity in Sinn Féin's strategy and activity?

A. Limited electoral intervention makes it possible to challenge the Brit presentation that the IRA, for instance, are a small terrorist group with no support. 100,000-plus votes make that ridiculous. But, of course, 100,000 votes don't affect [British Prime Minister Margaret] Thatcher or force withdrawal. They're not a substitute for armed resistance, street politics, and organising correctly in the local areas.

There is a debate about our election tactics in the South. We stand in Council elections North and South and take our seats.

In Westminster, which is the English parliament, there is an oath of allegiance which MPs have to take. We don't take seats in Westminster. There is also an oath of allegiance for seats in the Free State parliament — Leinster House — and we don't take seats there either.

But the difference is that irrespective of how we see Leinster House, most Southerners do not see it as a foreign parliament like Westminster. They see it as their parliament. They might not like it. They might disagree with its political philosophy, but even those who see themselves as republicans generally see Leinster House as their parliament. So the abstentionism we operate in the North will not work in the South.

The argument is therefore that if Sinn Féin is to play a part in replacing the collaborationist parties in the South, it has to enter Leinster House. That's the platform they have to use.

I don't say I agree with the argument, but there's some point to it. For example the majority of the present coalition government is so small that one Sinn Féin TD [member of parliament] would tip the parliamentary balance against the government. One Sinn Féin TD would result in stopping cross-border collaboration, extradition of republican prisoners, tomorrow. That is the sort of discussion going on.

We will be standing 100–150 candidates — in the May local elections — in the North and 140–170 in the council elections two weeks later in the South.

The Brits and Free State government have responded to our success with repression. In the South this has taken the form of many years of the ban from Free State radio and TV, and in terms of elections we cannot even put the name of our party on the ballot paper.

In the North, where well over 100,000 people voted for Sinn Féin, Sinn Féin representatives are not allowed to meet government

ministers. The Free State government has mimicked this in the South. What is involved in this is not the attitude to Sinn Féin. What's involved is the political disenfranchisement of large sections of Irish people which will ultimately backfire on both the Brits and the Free State administration.

Q. What impact has the British miners' strike had in the North?

A. Firstly, we give complete and unequivocal support to the miners. The nationalist population in the North may not understand all the ins and outs, but they see miners getting battered by the police every morning on TV, and they view anyone that's involved in struggle as comrades.

At the top of the list for financial support to the miners are the nationalist areas in the North. Myself, I spoke with the NUM [National Union of Mineworkers] at the GLC [Greater London Council] antiracist rally in London. Our attitude is complete support and, at the same time, care to do nothing which helps the British state to attack the miners, by criminalising their strike or Scargill.

Q. At the [Nov. 18–19, 1984] Anglo-Irish Summit Thatcher dismissed all of the proposals from the New Ireland Forum⁸ on the future of Ireland. What is Sinn Féin's alternative to these proposals?

A. The national question can only be resolved when the British administration acknowledge self-determination for the Irish people. You can't dilute that. There can't be an internal solution to the conflict whilst the Brits are still here. We have to secure self-determination for the Irish people and then negotiate departure.

We did previously advocate a federal solution which has now been dropped in favour of massive decentralisation of power in terms of local councils and affiliation of those to a thirty-two county parliament.

But the struggle does not end when the Brits leave Ireland. The struggle ends when you have the establishment of a socialist Republic. The guarantee for the success of that struggle, North and South, does not lie with the quantity of weapons the IRA has, or the number of British soldiers that are killed.

The guarantee for the success of that struggle has its foundations in the politicisation and strength of the progressive sections of the working class. Yes, just as in 1921 there will be a counterrevolution when the Brits depart, either physically or politically, and how do you withstand that counterrevolution? You withstand it by the politicisation of the working class — which takes place now. □

8. A body made up of representatives of Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, and the Labour Party from the 26 counties and the Social Democratic and Labour Party from the six counties. Its aim was to undercut growing support for Sinn Féin by showing that these parties had a peaceful solution to reunify the country. The Forum's May 2, 1984, report was categorically rejected by Thatcher.

Regime steps up repression

Seeks to silence opposition, crush Tamil struggle

By Upali Cooray

[The following article is reprinted from the January 14 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a fortnightly review published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

[In June 1984 the author and 17 others were arrested at the Sinhala-Tamil Friendship House in Balangoda and charged with holding an illegal meeting. After widespread protests, the Sri Lankan government was forced to drop its charges against the 18.]

* * *

On November 29 the UNP-led [United National Party] government of Mr. J. R. Jayewardene of Sri Lanka clamped down on all democratic rights and reduced the Northern and Eastern provinces to virtual prison camps.* Some of the measures adopted by the UNP government are reminiscent of the barbaric Nazi decrees.

For instance, every household in the Northern and Eastern provinces must furnish a list of its occupants to the police and no other person is permitted to stay in the house without the written permission of the police. No person may use a vehicle or even a bicycle without the consent (in the form of a permit from the police) of the government.

A wide stretch of land extending right round the coast of the Northern province and a part of the Eastern province (one hundred metres inland and one hundred metres out in the sea) has been declared a prohibited zone and no person, including fishermen, may enter or remain in this zone for whatever reason.

No person is permitted to travel except between the hours of 6 a.m. and 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. Even this is meaningless since the government has imposed a curfew that extends up to 60 hours. For instance on December 10, the government declared a curfew in the Northern province which was to be lifted at 6 a.m. on Thursday, December 13. Prior to that the government declared a 42-hour curfew in the North.

The national security minister announcing these measures in parliament stated that Tamils in Jaffna [the major city in the north] should take a holiday in other parts of the country and that would assist the government to determine who is innocent. This statement was flashed on the front page of the government-owned press. The message was clear. The government was going to terrorise the people of Jaffna by indis-

* The Tamil people, who comprise about 18 percent of the country's population, are concentrated in the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka.—IP

criminate attacks on the Tamil people.

One of the new measures announced makes every houseowner in the vicinity of a place where a bomb explodes vicariously liable for the explosion. This is, in fact, an attempt to justify what the army personnel had been doing all this time — shooting people in the vicinity of every bomb that had exploded in the North and the East.

All these measures were justified on the grounds that the government had received "reliable information" that the terrorist groups were planning to drive the security forces from the North by December 31, and to declare a State of Eelam (Tamil state) by January 14, 1985. As the Indian government very aptly put it, the government was working itself up into a war psychosis — or more precisely, the government was whipping up a war hysteria amongst the Sinhala-speaking people.

Opposition parties silent

The main bourgeois party in the opposition, the SLFP [Sri Lanka Freedom Party] swallowed this bait hook, line, and sinker. They went overboard and stated that in this hour of national crisis every one should close ranks and stand with the government. They were only sorry that even in this hour of "crisis" the government was trying to score points and was not seeking to unite all forces to safeguard the nation!

The LSSP [Lanka Sama Samaja Party] was silent, and no one knew what it felt about this fantastic hoax. In any event, they were not prepared to even discuss with other left organisations the question of issuing a statement condemning these repressive measures.

The Communist Party became unusually tame; even in their daily paper, *Aththa*, the CP began to concentrate its fire on marginal issues. To its credit, the SLMP [Sri Lanka Mahajana Party] — the breakaway group of the SLFP — led by Mr. Vijaya Kumaranatunga (son-in-law of Mrs. [Sirimavo] Bandaranaike [head of the SLFP]) criticised these measures and asked the government to offer realistic terms to the Tamil-speaking people so that a peaceful solution could be worked out to the national question.

Even before these measures were actually put into effect the army was shooting people indiscriminately. The new measures, obviously, strengthened the hand of the army and encouraged their lawlessness. With the result that the army went on the rampage in Mannar again killing over 85 innocent civilians. This was just one example of countless such acts of brutal repression all over the North.

At the same time Tamil youths were being

arrested all over the country. Some of these people have since gone missing. Others have died whilst "trying to escape from the custody of the army." Although most of the people arrested have since been released, they suffered all types of indignities — from insults to brutal attacks — whilst in police and army custody. Thousands of others are being held in custody, and no one knows what will happen to them.

The attacks launched by some Tamil militants on the Sinhala settlers in the Doolar and Ken Farms (between Mullativ and Vavuniya) and the similar assaults on two fishing camps have created an excellent propaganda weapon for the government. They have been able to raise a hue and cry about these attacks whilst covering up all the atrocities committed by the army. It has also galvanised Sinhala opinion behind the government and made it extremely difficult for the critics of the government to expose its fraudulent claims about an invasion.

The LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) had apparently claimed responsibility for these attacks and other Eelam organisations, notably the PLOTE (Peoples Liberation Organisation for Tamil Eelam) had apparently criticised these attacks. Since the vast majority of Sinhala people do not know the distinction between the various Eelam groups and depend solely on the chauvinist mainstream media for information, the idea that the Eelamists are bent on destroying the Sinhala nation will now be reinforced, because they see the attempt to set up an Eelam state as the first step in a well-



Sinhalese troops.

planned conspiracy to make the whole of Sri Lanka a colony of Tamil Nadu [in India].

The national security minister as well as the newly appointed media committee, headed by Mr. Wickrema Weerasooriya (brother-in-law of Mr. Gamini Dissanayake and a member of the family that owns FINCO, the company that gets a large slice of government contracts), have also sought to slander the left in Sri Lanka through propaganda which seeks to link the "terrorists in the North with the extremists in the South."

This poster depicts a "Tamil terrorist," a person that looks like Rohan Wijeweera, the leader of the JVP (People's Liberation Front, which was banned in 1983 for reasons unknown), and a Russian bear. The purpose of the poster is to create the idea that the Tamil "terrorists" are working hand in hand with the leftists in the South and all this is a big plot hatched by the Russians. Even if people did not believe that the JVP was not connected with the Eelamists (and, in fact, the JVP had always adopted a chauvinist line in relation to the Eelam demand), the impression created in the minds of many Sinhala people will be of people lurking around in Sinhala areas in the South who are supporting the Tamil "terrorists."

This also makes it difficult for leftist and liberal organisations to voice any criticism of the repressive policies of the government. Anyone who dares to do so will not only be branded as a friend of the Eelamists and, "traitor" to the Sinhala and the Sri Lankan nation-state, but also subjected to repression themselves.

Subversive literature

Already a large number of Sinhala youth, suspected of being leftists, have been arrested and detained by the police. On December 4 a friend of mine, Redley Silva, an executive committee member of the Bank Employees Union, visited my house with a woman activist friend to have a drink and supper. On his way back home he was arrested at the bus stop; the police were concerned about the copy of the *New Statesman* [a liberal British magazine] he had with him, which they considered as subversive literature.

They took him to the Wellawatte police station, questioned him, and then took him to his house. They collected a few more books and newspapers, including a copy of *Labour Law Handbook No 1*, which I had published. Redley had no subversive literature with him — all he had was a copy of Roget's *Thesaurus* (which the cops thought was a guerrilla handbook) and a copy of a press release issued by the MIRJE (Movement for Inter-racial Justice and Equality).

Throughout the period he was held in custody different officers made a variety of accusations — all of which were based on the idea that he was a friend of the Tamil Tigers and a man who was aiding and abetting the "terrorists." Redley was lucky because we were able to get a lot of lawyers to intervene and ascertain what "crime" he had committed.

Clearly the police had nothing against him, and they had to release him the following day. But they were trying to pin something on him. But the harassment did not stop there. A day after his release the CID (plainclothes police) paid a visit to grill him, and the following day he found the same CID man trailing him.

3 a.m. police visit

That was not all. On December 8 at 3 a.m. I had a visit from the police. I was woken up by a rude noise to find five policemen — four constables and one subinspector — armed to the teeth standing outside my door. They said they wanted to search the house. I knew that there was very little point arguing with people who did not know the difference between Roget's *Thesaurus* and a guerrilla manual. They searched the house looking for Tamils and explosives; one has become as, or even more, dangerous as the other!

Unfortunately for the cops and fortunately for me there were no Tamils and they were convinced that I had no explosives either. Both friends in the house were "pure" Sinhalese! So they left after obtaining a statement from me.

Obviously these cops did not know why they had been sent to my house. They had been directed by others, on the pretext that there were Tigers lurking under my bed. People like me must be harassed and hounded out for one simple reason: because as members of the MIRJE we have opposed the idea of a military solution to the national question and we have

time and again called for a peaceful political solution. We have demanded an end to bloodshed and immediate negotiations with all parties concerned. Today a call for a peaceful solution is, in the eyes of the government, tantamount to a call to support Tamil Eelam!

Simultaneously with house-to-house searches and identity card checks, as well as large-scale arrests of ordinary innocent citizens, the government is setting up vigilante groups in all areas, ostensibly to safeguard the nation and the economy. Almost all these vigilante organisations are made up of UNP supporters and often local UNP thugs. These people, in liaison with the police, could effectively suppress all opposition in this locality on the pretext that they were a "risk to national security" or that they "were sabotaging the economy." This is by far the most dangerous of developments.

The plan to set up a fascist infrastructure was probably the rationale for whipping up war hysteria. Through this gigantic hoax the government would be able to establish information-gathering and a propaganda apparatus as well as a local gestapo on the pretext that the whole country is facing a grave crisis of an invasion by 4,000 Eelamists who may attack any part of the island to achieve their aim.

If the government succeeds, the very people in the opposition who supported these new repressive measures will become victims of state repression. Then it would be too late to do much about it. □

DOCUMENTS

Canadian socialists greet PLO

Message by Revolutionary Workers League

[The following message, dated January 1, was sent to the Palestine Liberation Organization by the Revolutionary Workers League, Canadian section of the Fourth International, and signed by RWL Executive Secretary Steve Penner. It is reprinted from the January 14 issue of *Socialist Voice*, the RWL's fortnightly paper published in Montreal.]

* * *

Yassir Arafat,
Chairman,
Palestine Liberation Organization

Dear comrades:

We in the Revolutionary Workers League extend our warmest revolutionary greetings on the 20th anniversary of the Palestine Liberation Organization. For 20 long years the PLO has stood in the forefront of the oppressed and dispossessed peoples of the world fighting against imperialism, racism, and Zionism, for national liberation and social justice.

We have followed with great interest reports

on the successful 17th session of the Palestine National Council held in November in Amman, Jordan. In the wake of the brutal U.S.-backed Israeli invasion and occupation of Lebanon and imperialist inspired pressures designed to undermine the unity of the PLO and the authority of its leadership, the PNC meeting was an important reaffirmation of the enduring strength of the Palestinian struggle and of its sole, legitimate leadership in the PLO.

We salute the continuing struggle of your people for self-determination, for the right to return to your homeland, and for the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

We also extend our heartfelt sympathy and solidarity at the recent murder of your comrade, Fahd Qawasmeh.

Long live the courageous fighters in Gaza and on the West Bank!

Long live the struggle of the heroic Palestinian people!

Long live the PLO!

Keeping alive Grenada's legacy

Workers respond to 'Maurice Bishop Speaks'

By Etuale Sua-Filo

AUCKLAND — In 1984, socialists in New Zealand launched a nationwide campaign to promote the book *Maurice Bishop Speaks, the Grenada Revolution 1979-1983*, a collection of the late Grenadian prime minister's speeches published in New York by Pathfinder Press.*

The promotion of this book was part of an international effort by supporters of the Grenada revolution, including in Grenada itself, to keep alive the political legacy of the workers and farmers government of Grenada.

The campaign to promote the book in New Zealand was carried out by Pilot Books (the New Zealand distributor of Pathfinder Books), the Socialist Action League (New Zealand section of the Fourth International), and the Young Socialists.

Besides explaining the gains of the Grenada revolution, the campaign also aimed to educate working people in New Zealand about the efforts of the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions, and of the revolutionary fighters of Guatemala and El Salvador, to continue the shining example of what the workers and farmers of Grenada achieved during the four and a half years of the revolution.

Pilot Books' overriding aim was to help build and deepen solidarity with the revolutions in Central America through circulating Bishop's speeches.

Focus on unions

A target to sell 150 copies of the book in 1984 was set. The response to the book surpassed expectations, and by the end of the year 251 copies had been sold. One hundred of this total were sold through a five-week intensive effort in October and November, in working-class communities and at factories throughout New Zealand.

The book was also sold through advertisements in *Socialist Action* offering a combined subscription with *Intercontinental Press*, through Socialist Action League branch bookstores, and through commercial bookshops.

Substantial numbers of *Maurice Bishop Speaks* were also sold at various antiwar conferences throughout the year, including 17 copies at a conference against the Australian-New Zealand-U.S. military alliance (ANZUS). Filipino and Fijian activists visiting New Zealand were among the most enthusiastic buyers of the book.

* *Maurice Bishop Speaks*, edited by Bruce Marcus and Michael Taber, is available from Pathfinder Press, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014, for \$6.95 plus \$0.75 for postage.

The intensive five-week campaign in October and November was a joint project of Pilot Books and local Latin America solidarity committees. Pilot aimed to focus on the industrial unions and the most exploited sections of the New Zealand working class, Maori, Pacific island, and women workers, as well as rural workers and working farmers.

To prepare for the campaign, the Young Socialists held weekly educational classes for YS members and coworkers on selected speeches from the book. These classes included ones on "Women Step Forward" and "In the Spirit of Butler" (about the role of trade unions under a workers and farmers government).

To best help promote the book, Pilot purchased a film on Grenada, "The Future Coming Towards Us." Made immediately prior to the overthrow of the revolution, the film gives a good depiction of how Grenadian working people were advancing in all spheres of economic, social, and political life.

On the tour, Pilot Books also used a video interview with Don Rojas, a leader of the revolution and former press secretary of Maurice Bishop.

The five-week campaign involved public meetings in 18 cities and rural towns. Five meetings at freezing works (meat packing plants) and six house meetings were also held, attended by workers mostly from the Food and Chemical Workers Union.

Maoris and Pacific islanders

The campaign was also taken to unemployed and rural workers who organized meetings in Maori maraes (tribal meeting grounds), unemployed rights centers, and provincial towns. The response of these workers to the film, and to the Grenada revolution, was enthusiastic. This was especially felt among Maori, Pacific island, and women workers.

Many of the Pacific island workers compared the problems faced by islands such as Grenada, exploited by imperialism in the Caribbean, with the small island nations they themselves came from. They understood more how New Zealand and Australian imperialism exploit their own countries. At a meeting of mostly Pacific island car workers in Wellington, a worker from the island of Niue commented, "I agree with socialism, because it will give Pacific islanders rights like it did in Grenada." He bought a copy of the book.

Two of those attending a public meeting in Invercargill, in the extreme south of New Zealand, were working farmers. One of them explained how a lot of farmers in the area were going to the wall financially. He bought a copy of the book to find out how farmers in Grenada

had been involved in the revolution and how agriculture had been organized there.

The film was shown in workers' camps at the Alliance and Ocean Beach freezing works and to workers on a government relief work project at Invercargill's Murihiki marae. One of the young workers at the marae asked where the film had been shown on the tour. "I can see why you are concentrating on Maori and Pacific island workers," he said, "because it makes them understand what needs to be done in this country for them to get any justice."

In Dunedin, the Pilot Books promotion team went to the local office of Corso (an international aid organization), where a group of Maori and Pacific island women who worked there bought \$75 worth of literature on the revolutions in Central America. Later they brought some of their friends along to the public meeting and purchased the bulk of the literature that was sold there.

Maoris condemned invasion

Maori activist Paul Barcham, speaking at the public meeting in the Manawatu region as part of the promotional tour, drew the lesson from Grenada that "no revolution is safe until imperialism is defeated." He noted that two Maori political organizations, Mana Motuhake and Te Kotahitanga had condemned the U.S. invasion of Grenada. "That was a recognition that a defeat for any revolution is a defeat for all the oppressed around the world," he explained.

In the Manawatu region, the film, *Maurice Bishop Speaks*, and other literature was taken to three freezing works, where lunchtime meetings were held in the plant cafeterias. At one of these (Feilding), about 20 workers, mostly young Maoris, gave up their lunch break to watch the 50-minute film. "Can we do something like that in this country?" one worker asked after it had finished.

A highlight of the tour in the Auckland region was a visit to Maori rights leader Eva Rickard at her home in Raglan. A group of government relief workers working on Maori land that had been won back after a long struggle led by Rickard saw the film there. Eva Rickard commented as she watched the film, "The women are running everything there!" A lively two-hour discussion about the parallels between Grenada and New Zealand followed the film.

The intensive promotional effort for this book has finished, but socialists will continue to use *Maurice Bishop Speaks* to explain what working people can achieve when they hold governmental power, and to educate workers about what is at stake in Central America and the Caribbean today.

The promotion campaign got its most serious response from workers, particularly from the most exploited section. This is testimony to who will be the most serious and enthusiastic fighters in the struggle to take New Zealand workers and farmers on the same path that Maurice Bishop and the people of Grenada took on March 13, 1979. □