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U.S. Embargo: Act of War Against Nicaragua



**FSLN Vows
'They Will
Never Bring
Us to
Our Knees'**

The Nicaraguan people, like these militia members who beat off a "contra" attack along the Honduran border, will also resist Washington's economic warfare.

Photo: Michael Baumann/IP

Speech by Fidel Castro
Women in the Cuban Revolution Today

**U.S. Rally Hails
Vietnam Victory**

**Report From Senegal:
Cracks in Neocolonial Bastion**

U.S. embargo: act of war against Nicaragua

By Cindy Jaquith
and Doug Jenness

The U.S. trade embargo against Nicaragua is an act of war. Above and beyond the economic damage it will do is the political meaning of the embargo.

It is now clear that the U.S. ruling class is united behind the perspective of overthrowing Nicaragua's workers and peasants government through direct U.S. military intervention. This is the course openly put forward by President Ronald Reagan at a news conference in February when he called for overturning the Sandinista government unless it would say "uncle" to U.S. demands. It is the approach agreed to by both Democratic and Republican politicians and is the underlying meaning of the "debate" in Congress over aid to the mercenary army known as the *contras*. The debate is not over *whether* to overthrow the Sandinistas, but over tactics and timing — how to limit the political price the U.S. government will pay internationally and at home.

In his May 1 executive order imposing the embargo, Reagan stated that "the policies and actions of the Government of Nicaragua constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States." Therefore, he continued, "I . . . declare a national emergency to deal with that threat."

The immediate measures include a ban on U.S. exports to Nicaragua and on Nicaraguan imports to the United States, as well as prohibiting the landing on U.S. territory of Nicaraguan ships and the Nicaraguan airline, Aeronica. These steps will hurt the Nicaraguan economy and are also clearly aimed at trying to slow down the trips by thousands of U.S. citizens.

But the declaration of the "national emergency" itself is the most important aspect of this new escalation of the war. It is designed to set the political framework for further steps leading to direct U.S. military intervention.

On May 2, the day after the embargo order was made, U.S. government officials announced they were preparing a joint communiqué with the Honduran government, pledging U.S. military forces will aid Honduras if it is "attacked" by Nicaraguan troops. On May 6, the State Department and the Pentagon announced that U.S. military "advisers" will begin training four companies of the Costa Rican Civil Guard. Again, the stated reason was preparation for alleged plans by Nicaragua to invade.

In both cases, the charge of Nicaraguan "aggression" is simply a cover for increasing the military buildup against the Sandinistas and laying the "legal" basis for an eventual U.S.

invasion of Nicaragua.

In the United States and several European countries, thousands of anti-intervention activists responded with immediate protests against the embargo.

As the U.S. government takes further steps, such as invoking a ban on travel to Nicaragua and eventually breaking off diplomatic relations, protests will increase.

Within Congress, however, the reaction to the embargo registers the bipartisan consensus for the rulers' course. No wing of the Democratic Party has challenged the declaration of the "national emergency." Many have hailed the economic sanctions, such as Congressman Stephen Solarz, who also happens to be leading the pack in demanding aid for the anti-Kampuchea counterrevolutionaries based in Thailand. Democratic House leader Thomas O'Neill, who claims he is for keeping U.S. troops out of Nicaragua, had only one complaint about the embargo, that it was "premature." A few liberal legislators lamented that the embargo will not "work" and will drive the Nicaraguan government closer to Moscow.

Contra aid 'debate'

The degree of bipartisan unity on the war reveals what was actually behind the so-called debate in Congress in April over aid to the *contras*. When the House of Representatives failed to adopt any of the bills for funding the terrorists, the capitalist media initially called it a defeat for Reagan and the *contras*. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Senator David Durenberger, Republican head of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, admitted this in a column printed in the April 28 *Washington Post*. Durenberger was one of the "opponents" of aiding the *contras*. His column was titled "It Wasn't a Vote Against the Contras."

"There was greater consensus in Congress about the need for action on Nicaragua than last week's vote on the president's request would indicate," Durenberger wrote. He explained that in the course of numerous discussions between senators and the White House "it became clear . . . that there existed a strong consensus on the nature of the Sandinista government and the potential threat it poses to U.S. interests."

In fact, contrary to reports hailing the "defeat" of Reagan's contra aid bill, the measure lost by only two votes in the House. More important, it was the liberal Democrats themselves who urged that economic sanctions be imposed.

The House Democrats barely waited for the ink to dry on the embargo order before putting contra aid back on their agenda. Suddenly,

with the embargo in place, they were ready to grant millions to the mercenaries. "There's a movement on our side to accommodate the lust members feel to strike out against Communism," declared Congressman William Alexander, Jr, a key Democratic leader. "[Daniel] Ortega's trip to Moscow triggered a reaction in the House and provides overwhelming support for the need to show the flag."

But the visit to Moscow by Ortega, Nicaragua's president, had nothing to do with Congress waving the flag. The bipartisan moves to step up the war would have taken place with or without that trip.

House Democrats and Republicans are putting together legislation to provide more than \$40 million to the *contras* under the guise of "humanitarian" assistance. Their only outstanding issue among the legislators is whether to channel it through the State Department or the CIA.

But whether or not Congress votes more aid, the *contras* continue to be well-supplied. According to a May 3 *New York Times* dispatch from Tegucigalpa, Honduras, the *contras* have recently acquired surface-to-air missiles, a major improvement in the weapons available to them.

Why the escalation

What is driving the U.S. rulers and their Democratic and Republican mouthpieces further toward direct military intervention are the continued advances of the Nicaraguan workers and peasants and the success of the Sandinista leadership in consolidating the gains of the six-year-old revolution.

This is most graphically seen in the utter failure of the *contras* to take and hold a single town inside Nicaragua after four years of trying and millions of dollars in U.S. aid. When the liberals in Congress complain about the *contras*, *this* is what really bothers them — their hired terrorists cannot establish a social base inside the country.

The Sandinistas are not only winning the war, but making gains in other arenas as well. Despite escalating U.S. sabotage of the economy, the country's workers and exploited peasants are advancing in confidence and organization in their battle against the Nicaraguan capitalists and big landowners. For example, in the recent coffee harvest the goal set by the government was surpassed by 2 percent. More than 55,000 tons of coffee were harvested, much of it by volunteers. Last year, the harvest was 60,000 tons. Major steps forward also have taken place in incorporating the Atlantic Coast's Miskitos and Blacks into the revolution and its leadership.

The U.S. escalation is in response to these victories, to the fact that in the face of war and economic and political pressures, the Nicaraguan working people and their leadership refuse to back down and are instead deepening the revolutionary process.

This is why the U.S. rulers are preparing for a major U.S. war, involving thousands of

troops from the start.

In this respect, the war against Nicaragua will be different from the way the war against Vietnam unfolded. In that war, Washington had a puppet government in the south upon which to base its invasion. The direct use of U.S. troops began with very small numbers and increased only gradually.

Invasion plans

But in Nicaragua, it is excluded that Washington can begin its invasion with only a few hundred or few thousand soldiers.

As shown by the fate of the contra invaders, Washington will not be able to send just a few troops in to back up a "provisional government" of mercenaries on Nicaraguan soil. They cannot even get their "provisional government" established. They will have to invade without a social base inside the country. They will be up against a battle-tested army and hundreds of thousands of armed militia members on farms, in factories, and in working-class and rural communities.

So when U.S. troops do go in, it will be in massive numbers. This explains the virtually permanent military maneuvers involving thousands of U.S. troops across the border in Honduras. This activity is not merely designed to try to intimidate the Nicaraguan government; its main objective is to *train* a U.S. invasion force as rapidly and thoroughly as possible in order to make such an invasion successful.

The Pentagon is worried about the capacity of the U.S. armed forces to carry out an effective war. In February it issued a report called "Lessons Learned," which criticized the coordination, intelligence, and other aspects of the 1983 invasion of Grenada. From the military standpoint this operation was a disaster. It took thousands of troops a whole week to overcome a leaderless, politically demobilized, and poorly armed group of Grenadian soldiers and several hundred Cuban construction workers. U.S. soldiers will confront quite a different opponent when they go into Nicaragua.

Two days after the White House announced the embargo, army officials disclosed that a major study has been initiated to determine the military actions necessary in the event U.S. combat troops go into Nicaragua. The representatives of the army brass told the *New York Times* that there had been difficulties in the U.S. military operations in Lebanon, Grenada, and Vietnam. "We didn't adapt too well to Vietnam," one officer said, "and we've got to do better next time."

The Nicaraguan government immediately responded to the U.S.-imposed embargo by utilizing every arena open to it to present its opposition. It sponsored a resolution in the United Nations Security Council demanding an immediate end to the trade boycott. Only the U.S. and Honduran representatives voted against it. Nicaragua plans to take the issue of U.S. economic sanctions to the world trade body GATT which is scheduled to meet May 29. And it is pressing ahead with its suit

against the United States government in the International Court of Justice.

As the war in Nicaragua deepens and the capitalist propaganda drive intensifies, many liberals, who were initially sympathetic to the revolution, are beginning to denounce the Sandinistas as uncompromising, "hard-line," and "heavy-handed."

Their complaints about Nicaragua go hand-in-hand with their rush to join the anti-Vietnam chorus. Many of these liberals, who took a formal position of opposing the war against Vietnam while it was in progress, now say they regret their involvement in the antiwar movement of that time.

This is all aimed at discouraging the new,

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young generation of working people and students who oppose the current war in Central America and want to do something about it.

This generation came out on the streets April 20 by the tens of thousands in the United States and Canada to protest the U.S. war in Central America. There was significant union participation, particularly by Black workers, in the protests. This will increase as the war and the attacks on workers and farmers at home step up. And U.S. soldiers, whether in the current "volunteer army" or a draftee army, will become an important part of the protests. Moreover, as the protests in Europe against the embargo show, this new antiwar movement will become international in scope. □

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Nicaragua stands up to U.S. embargo

Statement of FSLN National Directorate

[The following statement on the U.S. economic sanctions against Nicaragua was issued by the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and the revolutionary government of Nicaragua on May 4. The statement was read by Vice-president Sergio Ramírez in his capacity as acting head of state while President Daniel Ortega was out of the country.]

[The text is taken from the May 5 issue of the Managua daily *Barricada*. The translation from Spanish and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*; subheads are from the original.]

* * *

Today, May 4 — a date we Nicaraguans commemorate as the Day of National Dignity because on that day [in 1927] General Augusto C. Sandino decided to reject the ultimatum of the foreign invaders, who demanded that he surrender his weapons and renounce the struggle¹ — the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front and the revolutionary government of Nicaragua address our heroic people and the other honorable peoples and governments of the world.

The president of the United States, absurdly and disproportionately resorting to the emergency powers that federal law gives him to confront threats against the national security and internal stability of his immense and powerful country, has officially informed Nicaragua of his decision to apply a new series of economic sanctions, which include the total suspension of trade and air and sea transportation between the two countries.

The boycott decreed by President Reagan against our small and honorable country, besides being an order enacted through abuse of the very laws of the United States and against the norms and conventions governing the international judicial order and economic order, is also a premeditated step that puts the U.S. government on the road to direct military intervention against Nicaragua.

That is the only thing that can be inferred from the text of the official communication dated May 1, 1985, that the State Department delivered to the Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry. It stated that if Nicaragua does not comply with the conditions demanded in the note itself through concrete steps, the perspectives for a peaceful accord in Central America will di-



Michael Baumann/IP

SERGIO RAMÍREZ

minish. This means that if Nicaragua does not submit to the will of the United States, President Reagan claims the right to intervene militarily in Nicaragua and to declare total war against us.

A 'No' in the spirit of 1856, 1912, and 1927

Firmly united around the banners of their patriotic dignity and national sovereignty, the people of Nicaragua state before the conscience of the world their firmest, most unbreakable, and categorical rejection of this ultimatum, and do so with the same ardor and with the same faith with which the heroes of San Jacinto rejected the ultimatum in 1856; General Zeledón rejected the one in El Coyotepe in 1912; and General Sandino would reject the one on May 4, 1927.²

The Nicaraguan people will never negotiate away their dignity or compromise their principles. They will never betray their tradition of heroic struggle for independence — precisely because our sovereignty was forged in blood, challenging the foreign interference and the constant zeal to rule over us that other U.S. governments, at other times in our history, wanted to abusively force upon the Nicaraguan nation.

The prerequisites for lifting his sanctions,

which the president of the United States wants to impose on Nicaragua and which are contained in the May 1 notification, are nothing but the same old arrogant and arbitrary dictates aimed at subjugating our rights as a sovereign country through force and coercion. They want to dictate to us norms that are determined by the U.S. government itself to govern Nicaragua's internal political order, to regulate our international relations in line with their own judgments, and to work out for us the list of who our friends and enemies should be.

With the strength that justice gives us, and that right gives us, with our status as a moral power — because what we lack in material riches and in military resources we make up for in the unbreakable dignity of an entire people — we now say, as we have asserted our whole lives, that we will never tolerate foreign interference, and that we will never accept a cowardly peace.

The measures of economic aggression decreed by President Reagan, and others that he proposes announcing in the immediate future, will certainly be a source of new suffering, shortages, and limitations for our country; for our efforts to transform the society; for the development of a new economy that we want to base on the many-sided cooperation of Nicaraguans and that we continue to conceive of as a mixed economy: for the advancement of the agrarian reform, of agricultural production, of the functioning of industry, of the use of forest resources and mining and fishing activity, of the extension of educational and health services, of our determination to develop a just system of distribution.

Difficulties and problems of a new dimension will be added to those that have already accumulated in the country's social and economic life since President Reagan began his mercenary war against Nicaragua as soon as he took office in the United States, a war that has already caused so much destruction, desolation, and death, and so many orphans.

A blow to the entire Nicaraguan society

This new escalation of economic aggression is now directed with greater fury against all Nicaraguans, from all social sectors, from all classes, from all the productive forces. It is directed against the workers in the countryside, those in the city, the small and medium peasant landowners. It is directed against the cooperatives, the businessmen, the professional organizations. It is a blow against Nicaraguan society, against the nation. It is a blind reprisal against Nicaragua, against all its children, aimed at trying to destroy all our efforts, our dreams, our hopes.

1. In a letter dated May 4, 1927, U.S. Col. Henry Stimson wrote that in the civil war then going on in Nicaragua, "the forces of the United States will be authorized to accept the custody of the arms of those willing to surrender them, including the government, and to disarm forcibly those who will not do so."

2. In the battle of San Jacinto, a peasant army led by José Dolores Estrada defeated the first U.S. intervention, organized by William Walker in 1856.

Gen. Benjamín Zeledón led a revolt against U.S. backed dictator Adolfo Díaz. U.S. troops cornered Zeledón's army on a hilltop at El Coyotepe, killing Zeledón and hundreds of his soldiers.

But a country forged in the constant struggle for dignity and inspired by the strength of its revolution, cannot be dealt mortal blows. In the face of this new aggression, we Nicaraguans are going to draw on new energies and organize them. And we will learn many new lessons from this new period of testing in our history, so that we can continue going forward, advancing, and making transformations.

We will respond creatively. We will increase our firmness. We will draw resources from unflagging work, from our capacity to be more efficient and productive in daily productive labor, from eliminating waste and fighting against squander, from increasing our readiness to accept austerity, from distributing our resources better in order to produce and from sharing what is produced more justly and efficiently, from strengthening the people's mobilization for the war fronts with greater will and more courage, from converting the factories and work centers into real trenches.

We will know how to sow, harvest, and produce with greater determination and more discipline. Now more than ever, it is necessary to fulfill the tasks noted in the 12 points of the message from the National Directorate on May 1, Workers Day. [See following document.]

The FSLN, first in setting the example of devotion to work

We are going to find new markets for our export products, as we have already been doing, making progress in diversifying our foreign trade. We are going to rationalize our imports and seriously and creatively find substitutes for what is impossible to import. We will administer our limited resources with more zeal than ever.

And the Sandinista Front, its leadership, its activists and members, and the civil servants of the revolutionary government will be the first ranks in setting the example of unflagging dedication to work, and in austerity. It will be our own forces, the people's energy, that provide us with the responses and the solutions. This is a task for everyone, for all honorable Nicaraguans, for the whole nation.

Those who exclude themselves from this patriotic convocation, those who in this hour of testing pay closer hold to the voice of the aggressors than to the clamor of their own country that is under attack, will be abandoning their place, their post in the ranks of national dignity.

They want to destroy us because we are an example

Almost six years ago we began a revolutionary process in Nicaragua that has been an example for the poor peoples of the world and that has been heroically inscribed in the struggle for the democratic transformation of Latin America.

The government of the United States has been so intransigent in rejecting our revolution and has tried to destroy and annihilate it not because it represents any threat to their national

International protests hit embargo

Emergency demonstrations to protest the U.S. embargo of Nicaragua were held in at least 35 North American cities in the week following Washington's announcement of its new aggression. In Europe hundreds of thousands demonstrated against Reagan's visit, linking opposition to his actions in Central America to protests against NATO, nuclear missiles, and "Star Wars."

On May 7 and 8 more than 1,200 protesters were arrested for conducting sit-ins and blockades at federal government buildings in San Francisco, Denver, New York, Boston, and other U.S. cities. Thousands more marched and picketed. "Embargo South Africa, not Nicaragua" was a popular slogan at many of the demonstrations.

In New York, a rally sponsored by the Central America Solidarity Network, an umbrella organization of some 20 solidarity groups, was addressed by speakers from the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, African National Congress of South Africa, Puerto Rican Socialist Party, and other groups.

About 200 people protested outside the U.S. consulate in Toronto on May 3. The action was called by the Toronto Anti-intervention Coalition and Canadian Action for Nicaragua.

The largest anti-Reagan action in Europe

was in Madrid on May 5, the day before his arrival in Spain on a two-day state visit. Organizers estimated the crowd at 500,000, while hundreds of thousands more marched in Barcelona, Bilbao, Vitoria, and other cities.

A major demand of the Spanish demonstrations was "NATO, No! Bases out!" Three protesters climbed to the top of a 60-foot column supporting a statue of Christopher Columbus in Madrid's central plaza. When they unfurled a Sandinista flag, the crowd below broke into prolonged cheers.

Reagan was also met with protests in Portugal, West Germany, and France. While he addressed the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, about 30 members of the parliament walked out, dozens more heckled with shouts of "Nicaragua" and "Star Wars no," while at least 100 deputies silently held posters with similar slogans.

The May 10 issue of the *New York Times* carried an advertisement signed by Norwegian trade unions, church groups, political parties, solidarity groups, and individuals. It called for support for Nicaragua and urged the U.S. Congress to "immediately stop all aid to the counter-revolutionary groups in Nicaragua." The nearly 1,000 signatures on the ad had been collected in one week in late April.

security interests, nor because some East-West conflict is perhaps taking place in the Central American region.

Rather the U.S. government is doing so because through their example the triumphant people of Nicaragua — who with unsophisticated weapons defeated the Somozaist dictatorship, which was supported by the United States with the same intransigence now being used to try to destroy us — opened up a possibility for independence and a possibility for justice and change, which the imperial will of the Reagan administration rejects as contrary to its interests of dominating Latin America.

They want to subjugate the Sandinista revolution so they can subjugate Latin America. They want to undermine and they want to cut off the possibility of independence, of self-determination, of dignity for Latin America; and therefore they are also trying to use pressures and threats to break the will of its governments in order to isolate our revolution and kill the desire for Latin America's independence from the United States.

The United States' financial power is also being marshalled in an effort to make the Latin American countries submit. The unjust and immoral foreign debt that already weighs insupportably on the shoulders of our people is brandished as a threatening weapon of

blackmail and becomes a strategic piece in the great imperial conspiracy to destroy our very independence.

We are conscious of representing this example. We are not the strongest link on the continent. But precisely because we are carrying forward a national revolution in a weak and small country of this continent, we are indeed a vital link and we must therefore increase our forces and never yield, because that would mean yielding the historic possibility of Latin American independence, which is being tested with so much blood now in Nicaragua.

Call to the people of Latin America and the world

We call on the nations and the peoples of Latin America not to let the United States isolate Nicaragua so that it can hit us with impunity. To prepare this blow, they have militarily occupied Honduras and are building up their naval and land forces in the Central American region. They are building airports, arms depots, and fuel dumps, and are stockpiling tanks, armored cars, helicopters, and planes.

As never before, this is an hour of testing and challenge for the continent that we have jointly inherited from the heroes and leaders like Bolívar, like O'Higgins, like Artigas, like Morazán, like Martí, like Zapata, like San-

dino, like Torrijos,³ who wanted a Latin America that would not allow its dignity and strength to be stripped away.

Nicaragua has backed the peace efforts of the group of Contadora countries with such determination and enthusiasm because we have been sure that this is a diplomatic alternative with a Latin American essence. This is an alternative of our own, and precisely for this reason the U.S. government has been bent on contaminating it, obstructing it, and finally destroying it.

To the Latin American countries, to the whole international community, we reaffirm our desire for peace, our unshakeable conviction that the conflicts provoked in Central America by U.S. interference must find a peaceful and negotiated solution.

Once again we state our readiness to immediately sign the revised act of Contadora and to scrupulously comply with all the commitments contained in it. And this same willingness has led us to carry out initiatives like

3. Simón Bolívar (1783–1830), a leader of the South American independence struggle from Spain; Bernardo O'Higgins (1776–1842), a leader of the Chilean independence struggle; José Gervasio Artigas (1774–1850), leader of the struggle for Uruguay's independence; Francisco Morazán (1792–1842), a Honduran general and political leader; José Martí (1853–95), leader of the Cuban struggle for independence from Spain; Emiliano Zapata (1883–1919), a leader of the Mexican revolution; Omar Torrijos (1929–81), ruler of Panama at the time of the return of the Panama Canal.

the departure of 100 military advisers of Cuban nationality. Thus far we have not received any response to this gesture.

We make an appeal to these same countries and to all the countries of the international community to reject with all their energy the economic blockade that the president of the United States has decreed against Nicaragua and that heightens the interventionist escalation in Central America; and to respond by coming to the aid of our attacked country, supplying Nicaragua with the material resources that will help us to confront the blockade by the U.S. government, and will make them respect and value the norms of political and economic coexistence in the international order, which the U.S. government is flagrantly violating.

We call on the U.S. Congress and people to bring honor to the democratic postulates of their country by using all possible means to hold back the war escalation that President Reagan has been hell-bent on unleashing against Nicaragua; to not allow the abusive use of the United States' laws to attack a country like ours that wants simply to live and transform itself in peace and that does not want hostility, much less war, with any country.

They will not see us kneel

Using the force of reason, of laws, of international norms, now is the time to hold back the boot that is so blindly and unthinkingly trying to crush this people, trying to make us bow, to make us kneel. We will not bow, we

will not kneel.

Against force, whatever that force might be, we will counterpose reason and we will counterpose the right of weak peoples not to be subjugated with impunity. Right and reason belong to us. But firmly planted behind them stands our will, our will to struggle, our will to win, our will in arms — the arms that thousands of patriots are shouldering in our cities, in our neighborhoods, hamlets, production units, cooperatives, ravines, valleys, and border regions to defend the homeland that we have the right to, and the right to have a homeland, which no one will ever be able to deny us.

Lastly, we want to respond now with the voice of General Sandino, fighting at the head of his army of Nicaraguans and Latin Americans, of peons, peasants, herders, students, miners, artisans:

"I received your communication yesterday and I fully understand it. I will not surrender, and here I await you. I want a Free Homeland or Death."⁴ □

4. In a July 12, 1927, letter to Sandino, G.D. Hatfield, commanding officer of the U.S. Marines at Ocotal in Nicaragua wrote "I hereby offer you one more opportunity to surrender with honor. As you must undoubtedly know, we are prepared to attack your positions and make an end, once and for all, of your forces and yourself if you persist."

Hatfield warned Sandino that if he refused to surrender, "you will be proscribed and placed outside the law, hunted wherever you go and repudiated everywhere, awaiting an infamous death."

'They will never bring us to our knees'

FSLN May Day message to Nicaraguan workers

[The following May Day message from the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) to the workers of Nicaragua was presented on the national radio and television network by Bayardo Arce, one of the nine commanders of the revolution, on April 30. The text and subheads are taken from the May 1, 1985, issue of the Managua daily *Barricada*. The translation from Spanish by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Commemorating another anniversary of International Workers Day in our Free Nicaragua, the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front salutes the Nicaraguan working people, the workers and peasants, technicians, producers, administrative and service workers. It salutes our entire working people, who render unflagging homage to the Chicago martyrs* every day through their

* A reference to the four labor leaders hanged in Chicago in 1887, following a series of strikes in that city on May 1 the year before. — *IP*

defense of their sovereign, free, and hard-working homeland.

This is the sixth year that the Nicaraguan working class can commemorate its day without clandestine meetings and without fear of repression, although it does so with the same combativity as in former years. This time the combativity is seen in the firm defense of the new homeland and the people's power, which is attacked and threatened by the imperialist power on a daily basis.

In the context of the struggle, combat, and production for defense of the revolutionary gains in all arenas, the workers must give thought on this their day, to the challenge presented to their revolution.

When our people, led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front, accomplished the revolutionary triumph on July 19, 1979, we proposed:

- To fully regain national sovereignty and independence;
- To work to eradicate the causes of exploitation and misery in order to build a just society;

- To raise the material and spiritual living standards of our people; and

- To create a state in the service of the great working masses, one that expressed the nascent people's power.

The people take control of their destiny

Nicaragua could then offer friendship to and accept the friendship of all the peoples of the world and develop relations with all the governments that extended a friendly hand to us, whatever their political system.

Our peasants began to be masters of the land they worked, and the industrial and agricultural workers forcefully developed their trade union organizations, with full freedom to demand their rights and to be active participants, not only in the economic effort, but in the construction of the new society.

More than 500,000 Nicaraguans learned to read and write, and the student population in all fields and on all levels doubled as a result of the policy of free schooling.

The health services began to be extended as a right — and not as an act of charity — to the



Michael Baumann/IP

Garment workers cooperative in Bluefields, Nicaragua.

entire population.

Through the policies of subsidizing food and transportation, we began to guarantee access to basic necessities to all sectors of the population.

The workers, through their political vanguard, the Sandinista National Liberation Front, and through their trade union organizations, made their voices heard and put forward their special interests in the Council of State, the Agrarian Reform Council, and the consultative councils in the ministries and in many factories in order to take part in giving form to the new revolutionary state.

With the triumph of the Sandinista People's Revolution, there has been no important action carried out or even conceived of that did not have the active and conscious participation of the working people: the literacy campaign, the adult education, the people's health days, the agrarian reform, the organization and distribution of basic products.

And, of course, defense of this new Nicaragua of working people controlling their destiny.

They have not been able to destroy us

All arms to the people, incorporated in the Irregular Combat Battalions, the Reserve Infantry Brigades, the Sandinista People's Militias, the People's Vigilance, and the fighters of the Sandinista People's Army and the Ministry of the Interior — these are the most unflagging expression of the fact that the martyrdom in Chicago has been vindicated by the Nicaraguan workers.

But for this very reason, the external and internal forces of reaction have risen up against these aspirations and against the gains of the Nicaraguan workers.

In recent years, our people, our revolution, have heroically, valiantly confronted the brutal aggression that the Reagan administration has launched since its first days in office. Thousands of Somozaist [National] Guardsmen, armed with equipment and millions of dollars in resources channeled to them

by the CIA, have tried to carry out the imperialist orders to defeat, destroy our Sandinista People's Revolution.

We have suffered from financial blockades, diplomatic campaigns to isolate us. We suffered the mining of our ports and sabotage against delivery of fuel. Thousands of state, cooperative, and private means of production have been damaged or sabotaged. They have tried to sabotage the coffee harvests, to hurt the production of basic foods.

The settlements along the border, which are most accessible to the criminal action launched by the armed bands from CIA-organized bases outside our borders, have suffered a constant increase in kidnappings, persecution, terrorism, and mass murders. These have not spared women, old people, or children.

Together with the external aggression there has been sabotage and work to confuse people, which is carried out by those who would sell their country, those who lost some of their privileges, who, thanks to the revolution's generosity, freely carry out activity inside the country.

They hope that our people will not know where the present difficulties originate and who the aggressors are. They seek to confuse and discourage the people, to get them to believe that our difficulties are due to the revolution.

However, the desires and power of the imperialists, the whole criminal frenzy of their mercenary forces, and all the shameful complicity of their domestic lackeys have not achieved their objective.

Less than three months before the sixth anniversary of the revolution's triumph, the working people of Nicaragua are here, commemorating for the sixth time their International Workers Day.

They have not been able to destroy us. They have not forced our people to change their revolutionary path. Our struggle has turned into a banner for Latin America, a banner for the peoples of the Third World, and is a challenge to the conscience of all the peaceloving gov-

ernments that respect national dignity.

The imperialist diplomatic and political maneuvers have been defeated. Nicaragua and its revolution have not been isolated.

We have struggled and we continue to struggle for peace and for our rights, with flexibility, but with dignity and firmness.

We will continue defeating the aggression

The military aggression carried out through the mercenary forces has not achieved its objectives nor has it broken the people's morale. We have dealt political and military blows to the forces of the counterrevolution, and today the majority of their forces have turned back and taken refuge in their sanctuaries in the neighboring borders.

The mercenary aggression is being defeated, even though our fighting people have not yet deployed their entire ability to confront it. As we move to the sixth anniversary of the triumph of the revolution, we are proud of our people, of their heroism, and of their firmness. We have confidence in the future and are sure that we will be able to turn our dreams into reality. We are confident that the campaigns of lies will continue to be smashed by the strength of the revolutionary truth, and that despite the international crisis, the coercion, and the sabotage, we will be able to continue advancing the social and economic transformations and achieve greater gains for our people in education, health, production.

The defense of our ideals and our rights has brought with it a high cost in blood, in the people's standard of living, and in material destruction. The sole responsibility for this rests on the strategists of imperialism, their mercenaries, and their accomplices.

We must continue defeating the aggression, the threats, the coercion. This is the only thing that will restore to us the peace needed to ensure the people's rights. The only possible road is to continue forward in the all-sided battle against the aggression and its effects.

There is no doubt that the economic and material conditions of the country are extremely difficult and dramatic. But no step backward in the face of the imperialist aggressiveness would provide any solution.

Through our own effort, unleashing the human capabilities and human wealth of the revolution in all fronts of struggle, we will clear a path to the future in order to once again take up the march of gains that we began on July 19, 1979.

They will not make us kneel through hunger

To confront the crisis and the aggression, we have proposed a series of economic measures to our people. The fundamental aim of these measures is to bolster the support for national defense and to lay a firm base for a plan of agricultural and industrial production that confronts the population's basic needs. And at the same time we propose to fight against the disarray in the area of wages, the effects of inflation on the basic market basket, the shortages, the speculation, and the disorders in the market

that we have experienced in the past years, as well as against corruption.

The revolutionary government's decision, announced today, to carry out the new wage readjustment falls within the framework of this effort. The president of the republic [Daniel Ortega] is now on a trip to the socialist countries in search of concrete solidarity, as a complement to our own efforts. But at all times we must be clear that the fundamental thing is our own efforts.

It is difficult to solve these problems completely in the midst of an unequal and unjust war intermixed with an international economic crisis. It is, in fact, difficult to solve them, but our aim must be to confront them, keeping the interests of the people in mind above all else.

After defense, the economy is our most difficult front. While it is true that we have been scoring successes in the struggle on the military front, we have greater difficulties in 1985 in the economic sphere.

Our problems can even get worse. It is already public knowledge that the Reagan administration is proposing to carry out an economic blockade against Nicaragua by breaking trade relations with Nicaragua, which would mean closing its markets to our meat, shrimp, bananas, tobacco, sugar, and other export products. It means that we would not be allowed to buy any U.S. products, raw materials, spare parts.

They want to subjugate us through hunger. To bring us to our knees through economic difficulties. But they will never succeed. Sooner or later they will have to understand that this revolution of all our people fuses together all Nicaraguans with the workers and peasants, in the march that, as Sandino said, will go all the way. Our organized strength will bring us victory.

The Nicaraguan workers must place this first and foremost in the commemoration of their day, to redouble our efforts and to grow in the face of the challenges and difficulties.

12 tasks of the working class and people

The National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front proposes to the Nicaraguan people and particularly to all the workers on their day, that:

1. We must guarantee the defense of the revolution, which means the survival of the gains of the people and the only possibility to put into practice our best ideals, our future, and the future of our children.

2. We must support the call to Patriotic Military Service and the incorporation of all Nicaraguans into the Sandinista People's Militias.

3. We must mobilize, in patriotic unity, the energies of all the state, cooperative, small, medium, and large producers to produce food and export goods.

4. We must take more responsibility for the care of the children and family members of the compañeros mobilized for combat, and particularly for those of the compañeros who have fallen in defense of our homeland.

5. We must make special efforts in our work to take on the tasks of the compañeros who are mobilized.

6. We must push forward the training and incorporation of Nicaraguan women into the tasks of production so that in the workplaces they can take the place of the men who go off to combat.

7. We must give greater care to organizing the Revolutionary Vigilance and the Civil Defense in the work centers in order to prevent and neutralize the attempts at sabotage by the CIA and its mercenary forces.

8. We must push forward voluntary labor. We must make it our intention *to be on schedule in our work*, in order to lower the operating costs caused by payment for overtime.

9. We must raise the output of labor through better organization of the productive process, greater use of the work day, greater discipline; we must move ahead in establishing work norms, in correctly applying the wage scale, in the profitability of the enterprises, and labor emulation.

10. We must fulfill the production plans of the enterprises at the lowest production cost. We must save energy, avoid wasting inputs

and raw materials, and prevent the breakdown of machinery and equipment due to lack of care in maintenance.

11. We must guard the resources of the people. We must improve administration controls and step up vigilance against waste and embezzlement. We must keep the inventories of resources up to date in order not to increase the periods of shortage through lack of control over the resources that we have available.

12. We must make decisive progress in eliminating payment in kind and barter between the unions. Under the present conditions these practices foster a lack of supplies in the official distribution channels and contribute to speculation, to increasing inflation, and to the breakdown of the urban workers. These practices also give no thought to the peasants and agricultural workers who are selflessly laboring under war conditions to provide food to the whole nation. The entire people must be able to resist the imperialist aggression equally!

Every day we must continue to honor the cause of the workers through our struggle, our combat, and our production.

May Day must live in our efforts every day!

Long Live Free Nicaragua!

Long Live People's Power!

Argentina

Marchers oppose amnesty law

30,000 demand accounting of disappeared

[The following article is reprinted from the April 1-15 issue of *Mano de Obra*, an independent fortnightly featuring information on the labor movement in Argentina, published in Buenos Aires.

[The translation from Spanish is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

An event called by the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo was attended by some 30,000 people on March 21. The demonstrators marched from the Plaza Congreso along the Avenida de Mayo to the Plaza de Mayo with the theme of "give a hand to the disappeared."

The marchers were expressing their opposition to a possible amnesty law as well as their demand that there be an accounting of the disappeared and that those responsible for the kidnappings and murders be tried and punished. They also were expressing their repudiation of military coups, on another anniversary of the coup of March [24,] 1976.

The march also signified a severe questioning of official policy regarding human rights. It took place beneath more than 500,000 hands from 86 countries printed on leaflets issued by the Mothers, which were hung all along the Avenida de Mayo and also covered the two plazas.

At the end of the demonstration, Mrs. Hebe de Bonafini, the only speaker, responded to [Argentine President Raúl] Alfonsín's statement that he would need to have "celestial powers to give life" to the disappeared. She asked: "Who told him they are dead, who are the murderers, and how were they buried?"

Bonafini stated that "we don't want firing squads, the best punishment is 30 years in prison." She also referred to the judiciary, saying that it is so "slow and corrupt that it is unjust." She criticized Congress's confirmation in their posts of 90 percent of the trial judges, servile and corrupt judges who, "when we went to them because our children had been taken and tortured, kept quiet and placed themselves at the feet of the dictatorship.

"We are not against the judiciary, but rather against slow and corrupt justice and against the government's kid-glove treatment of those responsible for the genocide during the dictatorship and toward the authors of more than 300 attacks during the first year of democracy. They are the real destabilizers, not us or our demands."

She went on to state that she wants Argentina to always have constitutional governments, but governments that "carry out their promises." She said, "The only guarantee against a coup is mobilization." □

Rally hails Vietnam victory

'No more Vietnam wars in Central America'

By Will Reissner

NEW YORK — Exuberant chants of "Long Live Vietnam" and "No more Vietnam Wars" rang out here May 5 as 1,300 people attended a rally celebrating the 10th anniversary of Vietnam's 1975 victory over U.S. imperialism and its Saigon puppet-regime.

The meeting took place only days after the Reagan administration announced a trade embargo against Nicaragua, taking another big step toward a new Vietnam war in Central America.

The gathering, sponsored by a broad coalition of more than 75 organizations and individuals, took place in the midst of a propaganda barrage from the big-business media around the constantly-repeated theme that "Vietnam may have won the war but it lost the peace."

A small army of U.S. journalists went to Vietnam to report on the 10th anniversary of the war's end. Many of them had been posted in Saigon during the years when Washington ruled the roost in South Vietnam, and their reports alternated between hostile descriptions of the present Vietnam and bittersweet recollections of the facade of pre-1975 glitter erected with a mountain of U.S. dollars.

For weeks, people in the United States were subjected to a daily flood of reports on television and in newspapers focusing on Vietnam's poverty, on officials of the former Saigon regime still being held in camps, on the "plight of Amerasian children," on Vietnam's own "Vietnam war in Kampuchea," and on the fate of U.S. soldiers still "missing in action" in Southeast Asia.

At the same time, a parallel propaganda offensive took place aimed at rewriting the history of the U.S. antiwar movement. The millions of people who had marched to "Bring the Troops Home Now," were again portrayed as enemies of the U.S. soldiers who were drafted and sent to fight in Vietnam. Ceremonies were held around the country to "welcome home" the Vietnam veterans 10 years later.

Vietnam veteran speaks

In a moving speech to the May 5 gathering, Barry Romo of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War blasted the news media distortions of the past. The media, which did not report the truth of the war while it was going on, and the politicians, who supported the war and opposed benefits for veterans, are now "using the blood of guys who died and are rewriting history with it . . . so that our children and our younger brothers can fight in Central America," Romo stated.

Romo told the audience that May 5, the day

of the rally, has special significance for him. In 1968, Romo and his nephew, Bob, were in the same military unit in Vietnam. On May 5, 1968, his nephew, a steelworker drafted into the armed forces, was shot through the throat and drowned in his own blood.

"Bob's death," Romo stated, "is no more attributable to the North Vietnamese soldier who pulled the trigger, than it was to the Vietnamese people or the Vietnamese government. It was Lyndon Johnson, Robert MacNamara, and the rest of the U.S. policymakers who are the ones that pulled the trigger on the vets who died."

Media lied

David Dellinger, a prominent leader of the anti-Vietnam War movement, who had just returned from Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), described how the U.S. media distorted events he himself had attended.

One U.S. reporter, Dellinger explained, filed a story claiming that Vietnamese were forbidden to talk to foreigners. But Dellinger pointed out that he himself had walked the streets and had been engaged in dozens of conversations, often over food or beer.

"What I found" in Vietnam, Dellinger stated, "was the great gains being made in the lives of the poor, and the pride in their revolution. As in Nicaragua, the poor are making gains — gains in medical care, gains in education."

He added: "Of course they have problems. Of course they are poor. They were bombed back almost to the Stone Age and then embar-

goed and boycotted."

Noting that "some in the antiwar movement . . . have drifted away," Dellinger said to strong applause: "It's not our job to abandon the Vietnamese now. . . . Our job is to get the U.S. government off the backs of the people of Vietnam, Central America, South Africa, and the rest of the world."

Dellinger stated: "We have the slogan, 'No more Vietnams in Central America.' But we should add the slogan, 'No more Central Americas in Vietnam,' because the U.S. war against the Vietnamese people is continuing. He called for an end to U.S. backing of the "contras in Thailand and Kampuchea."

Laos' ambassador to the United Nations, Kithong Vongsay, echoed this point. Although Washington was defeated in Indochina, Vongsay told the crowd, it is keeping up its hostile activities against the three countries of Indochina — Laos, Kampuchea, and Vietnam. Washington's aim, he said, is to hold back the rebuilding process in those countries.

"The Laotian people, the Vietnamese people, and the Kampuchean people," he recalled, "fought shoulder to shoulder to regain independence" from French colonialism, the Japanese occupation during World War II, and U.S. imperialism.

"Three million tons of bombs were dropped on Laos, a country of only 4 million people," Ambassador Vongsay stressed. "We have to unite to see that there will be no more Indochina wars in the world." And "no more Central Americas in Indochina" either, he added.

April 30 belongs to humanity

The featured speaker and honored guest at the May 5 rally was Hoang Bich Son, Vietnam's ambassador to the United Nations. As he was introduced, chants of "Vietnam, Vietnam" broke out throughout the auditorium, and his arrival on stage provoked a standing ovation.

"April 30," said Ambassador Son, "does not



Vietnam's UN ambassador Hoang Bich Son (left) with press secretary and interpreter Tran Trong Khanh.

only belong to the Vietnamese people. It also belongs to the whole of progressive humanity and to all peace- and justice-loving people on this planet."

The war, he stated, "had disastrous consequences for the American people." But "it also warned the forces of war and intervention that future Vietnam wars will certainly lead to other April 30s."

Vietnam, Ambassador Son noted, owed much to the international support for its struggle. "April 30 was born of Vietnam's revolutionary heroism combined with the strength of the peoples' struggle for peace, justice, and social progress and the three revolutionary currents in the world: the socialist countries, the national liberation movements, and the working class."

"We Vietnamese greatly appreciate and are deeply indebted to our brothers, sisters, and friends all over the world, and especially those in the United States, for their whole-hearted support to our patriotic struggle and for their worthy contribution to the historic April 30th victory."

The Vietnamese diplomat, who had served as the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam's ambassador to Cuba during the U.S. intervention, noted the progress made since the end of the war.

"In the past decade," he said, "the Vietnamese people have succeeded in reunifying the country, overcoming the consequences of the war, raising production and achieving for the first time self-sufficiency in food production for Vietnam's 60 million population."

Much of the countryside, Ambassador Son noted, has returned "to its normal peaceful life; villages are doing well, schools, medical centers, and cultural centers are springing up ev-

erywhere in the country."

Nonetheless, the country faces "conditions that affect our ability to realize greater achievements," Son noted. "The destruction that resulted from several decades of wars cannot be surmounted overnight," he stated.

Vietnam has also had to contend with attacks by the Chinese regime as well as a number of natural catastrophes. Further complicating the country's recovery, he said, was "our own problem of economic mismanagement."

The Vietnamese ambassador stated that his people "have always regarded the American people as friends," and Vietnam "is willing to establish normal relations with the United States without preconditions. But the normalization of relations between the United States and Vietnam," he added; "should not be construed as a favor to be used to impose preconditions on Vietnam."

'Vietnam was victory for whole world'

Guadalupe González, representing the Revolutionary Democratic Front-Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FDR-FMLN) of El Salvador, received a standing ovation from the crowd when she was introduced.

The Salvadoran congratulated the "people of Vietnam and Indochina for guaranteeing one more victory for the people of the world."

"It was the victory of the Vietnamese people over the U.S." government, González added, "that made us think it was possible to win." The Vietnamese struggle also taught Salvadoreans a lesson about "courage, determination, and patience" needed to win the long hard struggle against U.S. intervention.

"The people of Vietnam have always given their solidarity to the people of El Salvador,

and we will return it," González stated.

ANC hails U.S. protests

Ahmad Qono of the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa greeted the audience with a clenched fist and the words "Amandla! Power!" The crowd responded with the chant "ANC, ANC."

"We are here," Qono stated, "to thank you for your contribution in bringing the war in Vietnam to an end. You are an important front in the struggle for peace in Vietnam and wherever people are struggling for their rights." The South African also expressed his confidence that the people of the United States will force Washington to withdraw from Nicaragua and El Salvador.

"The ANC," Qono noted, "has never lost sight of the fact that the major battle outside of South Africa itself is to be fought in the United States." Pointing to the wave of protests against U.S. complicity with the apartheid regime in South Africa, he added that "the oppressed people of South Africa, of Namibia, are greatly impressed today by what is taking place in the United States" and urged that demonstrations against Washington's support to Pretoria continue.

Another speaker was the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who had made an unsuccessful bid to be the Democratic Party's presidential candidate in 1984. Jackson has been speaking at events around the country, such as the large April 20 antiwar demonstration in Washington and farm protest actions, to urge activists to support his Rainbow Coalition, an electoral formation within the Democratic Party. That was a prominent theme of his speech to the Vietnam rally.

Jackson referred only very briefly to Vietnam itself. And when he did, it was contrary to the spirit of the rally as a whole, which was to celebrate the Vietnamese victory 10 years ago. "We cannot look back with any sense of joy as if a victory has occurred," Jackson said.

Jackson praised the role of the movement against the war in Vietnam and similar protests today against U.S. military intervention in Central America. In line with his goal of channeling such protest activity into support for the Democratic Party, he concluded by urging the audience not only to "keep on marching" but to "keep on voting."

Broad endorsement

The coalition sponsoring the rally included a broad range of political organizations, many of which had recently joined forces to build the April 20 demonstrations in Washington, D.C., and other cities against U.S. intervention in Nicaragua.

Among the sponsoring groups were the Socialist Workers Party, the Communist Party, the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, Women Strike for Peace, the War Resisters League, Mobilization for Survival, the New York Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, the Nicaragua Support Committee, the Black United Front of New York, the Association of Vietnamese in the United States,

Help us tell the truth about Vietnam

The 10th anniversary of the Vietnamese triumph over U.S. intervention occasioned a flood of reports from Vietnam in the big-business media. Hundreds of reporters and TV crews descended on Vietnam for the April 30 celebrations, far more foreign journalists than had visited that country in the entire 10 years since the end of the war.

But quantity does not necessarily bring with it quality. In fact, most reporters simply used Vietnam as a backdrop for stories slandering the Vietnamese revolution and exonerating Washington's role there.

Fortunately, readers of *Intercontinental Press* do not have to rely on *Time* or CBS television to learn about the gains of the Vietnamese revolution since 1975.

Last year we sent correspondents Diane Wang and Steve Clark to Southeast Asia for a fact-finding tour to Vietnam and Kampuchea. Their articles covered the accomplishments and challenges of the Indochinese revolutions in such areas as

health care, education, agricultural development, women's liberation, and international relations.

Their *IP* articles and others that appeared in the *Militant* are collected in the pamphlet *Report from Vietnam and Kampuchea*, published by Pathfinder Press.

And *IP* continues to be one of the few places one can read about the views of the Vietnamese and Kampuchean leaders themselves.

We need your help to continue to provide this unique coverage of Indochina and the rest of the world. This is because our income from subscriptions and newsstand sales simply cannot cover all our operating costs. We rely on contributions from our readers — the people *IP* is produced for — to help us make ends meet and continue to keep *IP* coming out.

Please send your contribution, of whatever size, to *Intercontinental Press*, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

the Frente Izquierda Dominicana, the National Lawyers Guild, the Peoples Anti-War Mobilization, the Antonio Maceo Brigade, Citizen Soldier, and the Committee in Solidarity with Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos.

A statement distributed at the rally and signed by 21 trade union activists in the New York area noted "In the face of the current campaign to rewrite history and glorify the U.S. war in Southeast Asia, we trade unionists affirm that the American people were correct

to oppose the intervention in Vietnam. We call on the United States to end its senseless policy toward the people of Vietnam, Nicaragua, and El Salvador."

The trade unionists added that "to the people of Vietnam we continue to offer our hand in friendship and pledge to continue the struggle for normalization of relations.

"We further pledge ourselves to continue our opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America." □

Vietnam meetings defy threats

Free speech campaign forces rightists to back down

By Steve Craine

The May 5 meeting in New York to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Vietnamese victory over U.S. intervention (see preceding article) was a big gain for the right to free speech. It was held in the face of a history of violent attacks by right-wing Vietnamese against supporters of the Vietnamese revolution. Its success helps isolate the rightists and will discourage future attacks on opponents of U.S. intervention in Southeast Asia and Central America.

The breadth of support for this meeting, its well-organized defense, and the widespread outcry against disruptions of 10th anniversary celebrations the previous week in San Jose, California, and St. Paul, Minnesota, put the right-wingers on the defensive. These measures prevented a repetition of the attacks that occurred against the 1982 and 1983 anniversary commemorations in New York.

Last year, three supporters of the Vietnamese revolution were gunned down in two separate incidents in the United States. Only one survived. In May, Pham Thi Luu was killed and her husband, Nguyen Van Luy, critically wounded in front of their San Francisco home. Luy was honorary president of the Association of Vietnamese in the United States. A few months later, Edward Cooperman, chairman of the U.S. Committee for Scientific Cooperation with Vietnam was assassinated by a right-wing Vietnamese student.

In recognition of the anniversary of the April 30, 1975, victory in Vietnam, a number of celebrations were held around the country in late April this year. At least two faced serious disruption attempts by right-wing Vietnamese goons. In St. Paul, 50 to 75 counterrevolutionaries marched up and down within 10 feet of the door of the Socialist Workers Party offices where a 10th anniversary rally was being held April 27. Smaller groups of right-wingers returned several times the next day to attempt to frighten people away from classes on Vietnam being given by Diane Wang, who had traveled to Vietnam and Kampuchea in 1984 as a reporter for *Intercontinental Press* and the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.

In San Jose, where the most serious recent disruption occurred, the swift and forceful response by defenders of democratic rights enabled the Socialist Bookstore to reopen May 4 after right-wing thugs forced its evacuation six days earlier.

On the weekend of April 27 and 28, gangs of as many as 200 Vietnamese rightists had surrounded the San Jose headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party, located in the same building as the bookstore, during an educational conference on the history of the Vietnam War and later during a membership meeting of the SWP branch. Police refused to disperse the thugs, who were trying to intimidate people from attending the meetings by chanting "Kill communists" and "Communists out of San Jose." The right-wingers pounded on the door of the bookstore, and a projectile crashed through one of the windows.

Instead of dispersing the threatening mob the San Jose police, when they finally responded, entered the bookstore, saying they needed to "investigate" what had happened. After evacuating the socialists from the building, the police escorted one of the Vietnamese thugs into the SWP's offices. Their excuse for this additional violation of the socialists' rights was that the goons refused to leave until they had proof that no "communists from Vietnam" were in the building.

On April 29 a broadly supported news conference was held outside the San Jose City Hall to protest the attacks and the inaction of the city police. Representatives of the Communist Party, Peace and Freedom Party, National Lawyers Guild, the Nihonmachi Outreach Committee (a Japanese-American civil rights group), and others joined the SWP in this protest.

Unions protest thug attacks

Protest statements from local trade union officials were also read at the news conference. Stephen Manginelli, vice-president of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 265, said in a letter to the mayor of San Jose, "This union must insist that you respond to the recent attack by right-wing Vietnamese against the Socialist

Bookstore. . . . The similarities that the union movement has experienced with thugs attacking free speech and assembly are very obvious."

The president of International Association of Machinists Local 565, Harry Adams, answered the argument that the attackers were merely exercising their freedom of speech. "The attempts to physically intimidate, harass, and attack people attending a Vietnam War program," he said, "far exceed the bounds of free speech and expression and instead enter the same corrupt and undemocratic territory that characterized the defeated South Vietnamese government."

Although smaller groups of Vietnamese rightists continued to gather outside the San Jose SWP headquarters throughout the week, by the weekend the socialists' campaign had put enough pressure on city officials that the cops were forced to keep the counterrevolutionaries across the street from the bookstore.

Bookstore reopens

The public reopening of the bookstore on May 4 was seen as a repudiation of the earlier attacks. Representatives of women's rights, antiwar, and community organizations, as well as local trade unions, participated in another news conference held there in defiance of the right-wing mob across the street.

Lynda Joyce, chairperson of the San Jose SWP, explained, "We are here today to open the socialist bookstore and to keep it open. We are going to exercise our democratic right to operate freely as a legal political party. . . . Ultrarightist thugs and their threats and intimidation will not stop us from getting out the truth about U.S. foreign policy."

Jody Calvert, coordinator of the South Bay chapter of the National Organization for Women, compared the attackers to the terrorists who bomb abortion clinics.

After a few hours, the 100 or so rightists across the street dispersed, realizing that their threats were having no effect.

Like the New York meeting, the final result in San Jose was a victory for free speech. Socialists in Boston, Washington, Pittsburgh, and at least seven other cities are planning to follow up on these victories by holding their own public meetings on the lessons of the Vietnam War.

An editorial in the May 10 issue of the *Militant* called for support to the campaign to defend free speech in San Jose and around the country. It noted the need to combine this defense of democratic rights with a clear answer to the "lies of the U.S. government and media against Vietnam."

Educational and teach-ins on the history of the Vietnam War and the movement against it, the editorial concluded, "are all the more important now, in light of attempts to silence opponents of U.S. foreign policy, the stepped-up anti-Vietnam campaign of the U.S. rulers, and the new, major escalation of the war in Central America, with the U.S. trade embargo slapped on Nicaragua." □

Activists from last French colonies meet

FLNKS leader: 'The proindependence forces must unite'

[A conference of proindependence forces from most of the remaining French colonies was held April 5-7 in Guadeloupe, a French-controlled island in the Caribbean Sea.

[Participants decided to set up an on-going liaison committee of proindependence forces in the French Overseas Territories and Departments. They will also jointly approach the United Nations to ask for reinclusion on the list of countries awaiting decolonization.

[The gathering was hosted by the People's Union for the Liberation of Guadeloupe (UPLG). Also attending were representatives of the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) of New Caledonia, the Movement for the Independence of Réunion (MIR), proindependence elected officials and the Union of Guianese Workers (UTG) from French Guiana, the National Council of People's Committees (CNCP) of Martinique and the Movement for the Independence of Martinique (MIM), and the Democratic Front of the Comoros Islands.

[The Comoros Islands, located in the Indian Ocean, were a French colony until 1975. At the time of independence, however, Paris retained control over one of the islands, Mayotte (also known as Mahoré).

[Organizations from French Polynesia were unable to send representatives.

[There were also delegations from several French organizations. Among them were the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR — French section of the Fourth International), the United Socialist Party (PSU), the Communist Party Marxist-Leninist, and the Union of Lawyers of France.

[French authorities prevented a number of international guests from attending the conference, either by denying them visas or by physically turning them back when they landed in Guadeloupe.

[But messages of support were received from the African National Congress of South Africa, the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) of Namibia, the parliamentary group of the Green Party of West Germany, the World Council of Churches, and other organizations.

[Several thousand people attended a public rally at the end of the conference.

[The following interview with Yann Celene Uregei, who is in charge of foreign relations for the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) of New Caledonia, took place while Uregei was attending the conference in Guadeloupe.

[The interview was conducted by Anne-Marie Contant, and was printed in the April 22 issue of *Afrique-Asie*, a fortnightly magazine

printed in Paris. The translation from French is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Question. Did you come here for reasons of solidarity or because the FLNKS feels that this conference can aid it in its struggle for independence?

Answer. For both reasons at the same time. If we are in solidarity together, we will all be more credible to the French government and especially to international public opinion.

The proof lies in the permanent secretariat that we are going to set up in Paris, which will allow us to coordinate our activities. But the existence of a united front of the DOM-TOMs [Overseas Departments and Territories] can also allow us, as the FLNKS, to take more radical positions. Now we feel that there is a potential for strong support that could help us if, after examining the draft law, we decide to break with the French government.

Q. But didn't you hesitate to come? The movements in the other DOM-TOMs do not have the same breadth as the FLNKS, and Paris might consider your presence as a provocation at a time when you are negotiating . . .

A. We gave some thought to this question. But we know that the electoral reform that goes along with the Pisani plan will not allow us to gain independence by referendum. Therefore, we thought we had better assure ourselves of the support of all the liberation movements.

In addition, we asked ourselves whether raising the question of the decolonization of all the DOM-TOMs at the United Nations would slow down the evolution of our case before that body. But there too we had the same answer: we must try everything, touch all bases, because we don't know anything about the future of New Caledonia.

Q. Do you think that real cooperation can exist between such different movements that are so geographically spread out?

A. I think so. In any case, for now, only the representatives of our organizations will work in Paris. And the problem that could hold back the creation of a common secretariat is a material, financial one.

Finally, we are working on a long-range basis. We really want this conference to lead to something besides a motion to adjourn.

Q. The conference is considering approaching the United Nations. However, that

Remnants of colonial empire

In the early 1950s, the French colonial empire stretched over more than 4.5 million square miles, an area 21 times the size of France itself. French colonies were found in Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the Pacific.

Since then, a wave of anticolonial struggles has forced Paris to relinquish most of its colonies, although it continues to maintain strong influence in many former possessions in Africa.

Today nine colonies are still directly ruled by France as Overseas Departments or Overseas Territories. They cover nearly 44,000 square miles, with more than 1.5 million inhabitants.

The remaining French colonies are:

Guadeloupe, in the Caribbean Sea, with 687 square miles and 328,000 inhabitants.

Guiana, on the South American mainland, with 32,252 square miles and 73,000 inhabitants.

Martinique, in the Caribbean, with 417 square miles and 329,000 inhabitants.

Mayotte, in the Indian Ocean, with 144 square miles and 53,000 inhabitants.

New Caledonia, in the Pacific, with 7,374 square miles and 146,000 inhabitants. With 53,000 European residents, making up 37 percent of the population, New Caledonia is the only remaining colony that has seen large-scale settlement from France.

Polynesia, in the Pacific, with 1,522 square miles and 148,000 inhabitants.

Réunion, in the Indian Ocean, with 969 square miles and 516,000 inhabitants.

St. Pierre and Miquelon, in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of the Canadian province of Newfoundland, with 93 square miles and 6,000 inhabitants. This is the only colony whose residents trace their roots back to France.

Wallis and Futuna, in the Pacific, with 212 square miles and 12,000 inhabitants. An equal number of Wallisians have migrated to New Caledonia in search of work.

body has already decided on several occasions not to receive the FLNKS . . .

A. You have to understand the situation. The majority of the members of the decolonization committee of the UN are favorable to the independence of Kanaky. The only stumbling block is the question of who will take the initiative to present the petition to the committee on our behalf.

In the Pacific region, two countries are now hesitant to do so. They are Australia and the Fiji Islands, which do not want to get into a sticky situation with France due to their economic relations with it.

At this point we are obliged to work on all the states of the Pacific Forum* as a whole in order to get them to decide to help us. We have been working on this for six years in vain. Today, Kanaky is no longer alone in calling for independence; all the French colonies are doing so. We are becoming a more credible force, which could succeed in convincing the Pacific Forum as well as the rest of the international organizations.

Q. Do you think that the conference can really accelerate developments, bring the day of independence closer?

A. Yes, I think so. But the proindependence forces in each country must unite. That is why I have put so much stress, from the podium, on the effectiveness of unity. The FLNKS is living proof of this.

Today the Kanaks must at all cost avoid the divisions that the Pisani plan could arouse. I say that if we are not sure of winning independence through that plan, it is better to find another strategy. At our last congress, we decided to continue negotiations while organizing the struggle at the grassroots in order to have a possible break with the French government.

Q. With all this experience, didn't you have the sense of being a "big brother" at this conference?

A. There are no big brothers and no little brothers, and we were there to help one another. Nevertheless, it is true that there have already been deaths in New Caledonia, and as a result of that there has been more of an impact on French public opinion. □

*The Pacific Forum includes Australia, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Samoa. — IP

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Workers wage massive fight in Denmark



Ny Tid

Beginning March 24 and continuing through most of April, hundreds of thousands of workers in Denmark carried out strikes, physical blockades at workplaces, and determined resistance to police attacks. The workers demanded a 35-hour work week and an 8 percent wage increase. The employers received the full backing of the government headed by Conservative People's Party leader Poul Schlüter, to break the strike. The parliament adopted a special strikebreaking law to force workers back to work. Schlüter's government remains intransigent, refusing to concede to the workers' demands.

Most Social Democratic leaders and many top union officials refused to back the strikes. Søren Søndergaard, editor of *Klassekampen*, newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party, Danish section of the Fourth International, in a speech April 3 about the strike, explained, "Regardless of how the struggle ends, it is not the same working class that will return to work as it was several weeks ago." He pointed out that workers have learned "something about workers power," but also that "the unions are not what they were originally built to be, namely fighting organizations to look out for the interests of their members." He called for a struggle to make the unions responsible to the membership.

Iceland bars U.S. nuclear warships

Iceland's foreign minister, Geir Hallgrímsson, reaffirmed April 17 that his government will not allow nuclear-armed warships in Icelandic ports or territorial waters. A member of the imperialist NATO alliance, Iceland also signed a separate military treaty with Washington in 1951 that provides that its government must approve any deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons on its territory.

The day after Hallgrímsson's announcement, which came in response to a question on the floor of parliament, he elaborated, "Our position is clear. No nuclear deployment of any sort may be made in or around Iceland. We do not want these weapons here."

The possible deployment of nuclear weapons in Iceland has been a subject of controversy since last December when a U.S. nuclear-weapons expert disclosed top secret Pentagon plans to move 48 atomic depth charges to a NATO base in Iceland in the event of a "crisis." The Pentagon arsenal includes 900 such antisubmarine bombs, each with about half the explosive power of the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima in 1945. Similar plans to place nuclear arms in Canada, Spain, the

Azores Islands, Portugal, Bermuda, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Diego Garcia were revealed at the same time.

This is not the first time Washington has made secret plans for military action in Iceland. In 1949 the National Security Council drew up a contingency plan for invading the island "in the event of emergency." According to a document dated July 29, 1949, such an "emergency" could include "an internal communist coup d'état." □

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Cracks in a bastion of neocolonialism

IMF austerity plan provokes strikes, political ferment

By Ernest Harsch

DAKAR — "Justice, liberty, democracy." Time and again, those words came to his lips as President Abdou Diouf addressed a conference of the Union of African Parliamentarians here in the Senegalese capital March 21.

"The parliamentary institution," Diouf proclaimed in the televised speech, "humanizes relations between those who govern and those who are governed, bringing greater justice and the protection of liberties."

But Diouf's fine words have nothing to do with the reality of Senegal today. For its 6 million people, there is no apparent social justice, let alone genuine liberties or democratic rights.

Inequality and injustice are quite evident here in Dakar. Its commercial district boasts many modern multistory buildings, well-stocked shops, broad avenues, and landscaped parks. Along the beach front just south of here are palatial homes surrounded by high stone walls and iron gates, with Mercedes and BMWs parked along the well-kept streets and guard dogs ready to growl at unwelcome visitors. Inside live government officials and wealthy Senegalese — as well as some of the many French expatriates who still hold high positions in this former French colony.

Not far away the "real" Dakar begins: Along Avenue Blaise Diagne and Avenue Émile Badiane — in the shadow of Dakar's Grand Mosque — are crowded African market stalls, and behind them narrow dirt paths winding between ramshackle shops and homes made of weathered wood and rusted corrugated iron sheeting. Children play in the dust, barefoot, in tattered clothes. Unemployed youths while away their time. Women walk along, carrying enormous loads. Older men sit beneath the trees, their prayer rugs at their sides. Piles of refuse collect in corners.

The same scene is repeated innumerable times as one travels outward toward the poor northern suburbs, seven, eight, or nine kilometers away from the city center.

On some side streets, even in central Dakar, homeless people have set up makeshift shelters of blankets and plastic sheeting. Some sleep out by the beaches, wrapped up against the cold night air. On virtually every street corner in the commercial district there are at least one or two beggars. During just one afternoon, this reporter saw four crippled children begging along Avenue Georges Pompidou, their legs deformed by rickets, an easily preventable nutritional disease.

In the countryside, conditions are much worse. What minimal social services may be available in Dakar are often totally absent in the villages, where some 70 percent of

Senegal's population lives.

Drought and poor harvests have brought famine to parts of the country, and many have sought to escape it by flocking to Dakar, which has doubled its population in 15 years to nearly 1.5 million people.

These famine conditions, combined with rising prices and massive unemployment, have led to a serious worsening of the poverty and misery that most Senegalese have long suffered from. It is the price they have to pay for their country's continued domination by French imperialism.

From colony to neocolony

First came the Portuguese slave traders, in the 15th century. Then, more than 300 years ago, it was the French colonialists who established a more permanent presence at St. Louis, at the mouth of the Senegal River some 140 kilometers north of here.

From there, the French spread out, particularly during the last decade of the 19th century, to subjugate not only the various indigenous societies of Senegal, but also of what was to become the French colonies of Upper Volta (Burkina), Mali, Dahomey (Benin), Guinea, Niger, Mauritania, and Ivory Coast.

Dakar became the administrative center for all of French West Africa, as these colonies were collectively known. From their base here, the French colonialists proceeded to plunder their newly conquered territories. Traditional leaders were deposed, peasants were conscripted for forced labor and military campaigns, and heavy taxes were imposed.

Following the rise of the independence struggle in Senegal — which included many hard-fought strikes in the 1940s and 1950s by the country's growing working class — Paris was forced to modify its forms of domination.

While finally conceding formal political independence, it sought to maintain an economic stranglehold over Senegal, as well as a continued direct military presence.

When Senegal gained its independence in 1960, a neocolonial regime was installed. It was headed by Léopold Sédar Senghor, a former Senegalese deputy in the French National Assembly who presented himself as an exponent of "African socialism."

Under Senghor and his successor, Abdou Diouf (who became president in 1981), the regime in Dakar has maintained extremely close economic, political, and military ties with Paris.

Today, more than 1,000 French troops remain in Senegal. While officially their main purpose is to "advise" and help train the Senegalese armed forces, they also use the French military base at Cap Vert as a staging area for interventions in other parts of the region. For example, French jets stationed in Senegal flew bombing missions against the Western Saharan independence fighters in 1977, and French forces intervening in Chad have used Senegal as a relay point.

The governments of both Senghor and Diouf have carefully tailored their foreign policy to conform to imperialist interests in Africa. Senghor in particular issued many anticommunist diatribes when he was in office. For many years he refused to recognize the government of Angola because of the Cuban role in defending Angola against South African attacks.

To a limited but significant extent, Senegalese troops have been used abroad to supplement imperialism's intervention forces. Senghor sent troops to Zaïre in 1978 to help prop up the dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko during a major uprising in Zaïre's Shaba Province. Diouf has provided troops to help bolster the proimperialist regime of Hissenè Habré in Chad. And in 1981 he sent the Senegalese army into Gambia, a small former British colony surrounded by Senegalese territory, to crush an uprising there. With Senegalese troops still occupying Gambia, Diouf pushed through an unequal "federation" of the two countries, known as Senegambia.

Parallel to its proimperialist foreign policy, the Senegalese regime has consistently acquiesced to continued imperialist economic domination over Senegal itself, particularly by French interests.

While the number of French citizens living in Senegal has fallen to less than half of the number in 1960, there are still some 18,600 today. Most are employed by the many French companies operating here or hold key positions in the government administration, economic



bodies, and state corporations. France remains Senegal's largest trading partner by far, the Senegalese currency is directly tied to the French franc, and each year the French government provides large loans and subsidies to the Senegalese budget.

In recent years, U.S. imperialism has also been moving into Senegal on a major scale. Numerous U.S. companies have opened operations here, and it is not uncommon to overhear U.S. accents in the central business district. The United States has become Senegal's second largest trading partner.

Alongside these imperialist interests, emigré Lebanese merchants play a major role in domestic trade.

While the Senegalese capitalist class itself is small, some of its members have managed to become quite wealthy. For example, Ndiouga Kebe, who was killed in an automobile accident last year, had holdings in housing, office buildings, hotels, a supermarket chain, agriculture, livestock, and banking. At the time of his death, his fortune was estimated at some US\$100 million, one of the largest in Africa.

'Democracy' and repression

As a cover for this neocolonial rule, the governing bourgeois party has long sought to wrap itself in a "socialist" mantle. Originally called the Senegalese Progressive Union, it renamed itself the Socialist Party (PS) in 1978, little more than a year after joining the Socialist International.

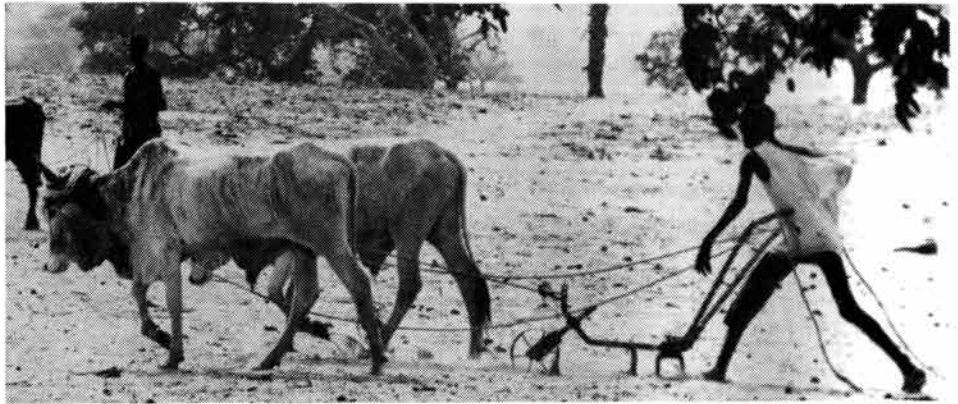
Since the late 1970s, the government has tolerated the emergence of various legal opposition parties, of which there are now more than a dozen. These include the Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS, the largest bourgeois opposition party), a number of smaller bourgeois formations, and several Stalinist and Maoist parties. They also include the Socialist Workers Organization (OST), the Senegalese section of the Fourth International.

The government points to the existence of these legal opposition parties as an example of its commitment to "democracy." In fact, however, the PS tolerates no real challenge to its rule.

Over the past 25 years, it has used all the resources of the state to keep itself in power. These include its monopoly of the mass media, large financial resources, and the ability to operate an extensive patronage system through its control over the allocation of government programs and jobs.

This control extends into the labor movement. Following the massive 1968 student and worker upsurge (inspired in part by the May-June 1968 revolt in France), the main trade union federation, the National Confederation of Senegalese Workers (CNTS), was directly tied to the governing party. Relying on the CNTS's entrenched class-collaborationist leadership, the PS has generally been able to keep the workers movement under firm control, despite the fact that the Senegalese unions are among the strongest in West Africa.

But in the final analysis, like all other neo-



Senegalese peasant. Famine and poverty are widespread in countryside.

colonial regimes, the PS government relies on physical force to maintain its rule. Police and troops have been sent against strikes and student protests, militant unions have been dissolved or denied recognition, and political activists have been arrested, beaten, and even killed.

Economic crisis

Government claims to the contrary, the quarter of a century since Senegal gained its formal independence has brought little economic development and few benefits to the laboring masses.

Senegal remains a very poor and underdeveloped country. Its per capita gross national product is just \$450 a year. And while that is several times larger than those of some other former French colonies in West Africa (such as Burkina or Mali), it is very unequally distributed. The poorest 20 percent of the population receives just 3.2 percent of the national income, while the top 5 percent receives 36.8 percent of the total income.

Some 70 percent of the population here lives on the land, most of them engaged in subsistence cultivation.

Diseases like malaria are widespread. There is only one doctor for every 16,000 inhabitants. The infant mortality rate is 158 for every 1,000 live births. And the average life expectancy is just 42 years.

Some 90 percent of the population cannot read or write, either in French or in the national languages.

Since the mid-1970s, the economic and social conditions in Senegal have been steadily worsening as a result of the impact of the world capitalist economic recession. This has been exacerbated by the economy's dependence on a single major export crop, peanuts (groundnuts), which has left it vulnerable to poor harvests and to the low price that peanuts fetch on the world market.

Agricultural production has been declining, in both peanuts and food crops. This is not only because of the drought, but also because of low producer prices. And government agricultural policies have also emphasized large, centrally directed projects, to the detriment of the small peasants who account for the vast bulk of

Senegal's agricultural produce. So now, each year the government must import some 400,000 tons of rice.

Senegal's foreign debt has risen to \$2 billion, and its interest payments alone now amount to 27 percent of its total export earnings.

Several Senegalese banks are on the verge of bankruptcy, and many businesses have been laying off workers. Between 1979 and 1982 alone, some 30,000 workers lost their jobs. This was accompanied by a new law adopted in 1980 that cut unemployment benefits to almost nothing. In late 1984 Minister for Employment Thierno Bâ admitted that unemployment was running at about 30 percent.

The IMF's bite

In an effort to "rescue" the economy, the Senegalese authorities turned to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In exchange for new loans and a rescheduling of debt repayments, the Diouf regime agreed to impose various austerity measures, claiming that the people of Senegal were "living beyond their means."

The prices of such staples as rice, cooking oil, and sugar have repeatedly been raised, as have bus fares. Plans are now under way to lay off some 5,000 more workers from state-run agricultural enterprises, and some state corporations are to be liquidated or put up for sale. Diouf has announced that beginning next year the government will no longer distribute seeds to peanut farmers; they will have to fend for themselves. Cutbacks have been made in various social services, such as health care.

In December 1984, Senegal signed a new 18-month loan agreement with the IMF, which included more of these same conditions. Most of the loan was earmarked not for productive investment, but simply to allow Senegal to pay back other outstanding loans to the IMF.

With the IMF and World Bank involvement has also come greater direct imperialist control over the economy and government. The current finance minister, Mamadou Touré, is a former IMF official. Jean Collin, a former French colonial administrator, is now the secretary-general of Diouf's presidential staff.

In an effort to make the austerity program

more palatable to the Senegalese people, Diouf unveiled a law against "illicit enrichment" that is supposed to put a check to corruption. And a few officials have been brought to account. For instance, the prefect of the department of Bambey, some 90 kilometers east of here, was recently dismissed for diverting relief aid destined for peasants affected by the drought.

But aside from prosecuting a few scapegoats, little has been done to implement this law. After all, many of those engaged in corruption hold leading positions in the party and state enterprises.

Wave of strikes

As the living conditions for working people have worsened, there have been more and more signs of popular discontent. These have taken many different forms.

The leadership of the main trade union federation, the CNTS, has made no response to Diouf's economic policies. But that has not prevented workers in various enterprises from going out on strike, often in very bitter disputes provoked by layoffs and other issues.

Since 1981, there have been strikes by women textile workers, by employees of the state electricity company, at the Taïba and Thiès phosphate mines, by health workers, by brewery workers, at the Richard Toll sugar refinery, and on the Diama and Manatali dam projects (the latter dam is actually in neighboring Mali, but employs several hundred Senegalese workers).

Police have been sent against strikers, such as those at the electricity enterprise and most recently at the Richard Toll sugar factory earlier this year.

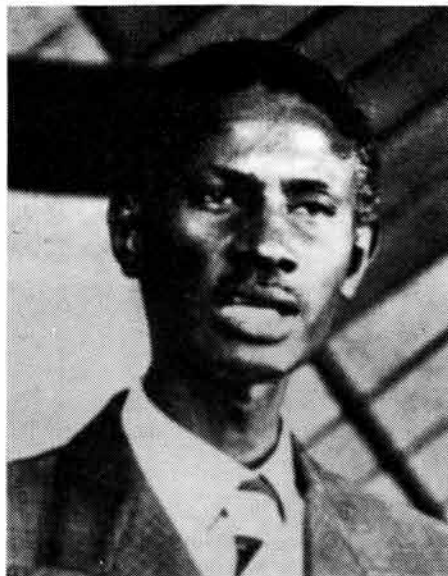
Despite the repression, a few strikes have scored victories. The Taïba and Thiès phosphate strikers, for example, in 1983 won the reinstatement of all laid-off workers. This came after a three-week strike that involved police attacks against the strikers and broad mobilizations by workers' wives and villagers in support of the strike.

This ferment within the working class has begun to be reflected, to a limited extent, within the trade unions themselves. A few of the more militant unions function outside the PS-controlled CNTS, and some have split from the federation in recent years. The growing pressures on the CNTS have also heightened the factional conflicts within the federation's leadership, in a few cases leading to physical clashes.

Unrest in the countryside

Since 1981, there have also been a number of grammar, high school, and university student strikes, some of which ended in police occupations of the schools. A strike by students at the University of Dakar last year was motivated by concern over rising unemployment and the inability of hundreds of graduates to find jobs.

In some areas, such as along the Senegal River Valley in the north and east, village associations have been organized to defend the



ABDOU DIOUF

interests of peasants. They have from time to time come into conflict with the regime because of its attempts to control what they grow through various state agricultural enterprises. Among those peasants who grow produce for the market, indebtedness has become a serious problem.

Much of the peasant resistance takes an unorganized form, however. In reaction to the low prices they receive for their peanuts and other crops, many are refusing to sell their produce to the state agencies, and are instead selling it for higher prices on the *circuits parallèles*, the black market.

A Jan. 21, 1985, declaration by the Socialist Workers Organization noted that "the peasants' refusal to sell their peanuts to the government . . . is an act of resistance against the plunder of the marabouts* and the miserably low price imposed by the government. Nevertheless, for this peasant resistance to be effective, it must have the support of the workers, first of all those in the [peanut] oil plants."

Members of the OST have been active in the peasant movement in a number of northern villages, such as Ndiayène, Fass, Simel, and Palmarin.

There has also been considerable ferment in the Casamance, the region in southern Senegal located between Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. The 500,000 people of the Casamance speak different languages than in the rest of the country. And while most Senegalese are Muslims, those in the south are mostly followers of local African religions (and some Christians). There has long been discrimination against the people of the Casamance by the government here in Dakar, leaving the region one of the most underdeveloped in the entire country (although its land is also the most fertile). Most administrators in the Casamance are Wolofs, from the north.

* The marabouts are Islamic religious figures, who often hold considerable political and economic power in the villages.

Since late 1982, there have been a number of demonstrations in Ziguinchor and other towns in the south to protest against this discrimination. At least one group has emerged that calls for the Casamance's independence from the rest of the country.

The Diouf regime has responded to this ferment with the most brutal repression. In December 1983, a peaceful march to the governor's residence in Ziguinchor was met by police gunfire and the massacre of scores of demonstrators. According to the official toll, 24 died, but the real figure may be four or five times higher.

In response to the repression, there have been ambushes of police patrols in the south, and the police now no longer venture outside the main towns.

Another reflection of the mounting discontent and frustrations in both the cities and the countryside has been the growing influence of radical Islamic currents among Senegalese Muslims. Figures like Muammar el-Qaddafi of Libya and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran have become quite popular.

The regime, which is clearly alarmed by this development, has responded in two ways. Diouf has sought to strengthen ties with the officially recognized Islamic religious leaders. He has at the same time cracked down on some of the more radical figures and has tried to smear them as agents of foreign powers. In 1984, the regime shut down the Iranian embassy here and expelled its diplomats, accusing them of funding "extremist" religious literature.

Activities of the OST

Though their actions are circumscribed by police harassment, bans on public meetings, and other restrictions, the various opposition parties have been able to take advantage of the current "democratic opening" to criticize the PS government's policies and to win adherents to their views.

Since its legalization in 1982, the Socialist Workers Organization has carried out numerous political initiatives, both on its own and in conjunction with other groups.

The OST publishes a mimeographed journal, *Combat Ouvrier*, which comes out several times a year and has an average run of from 3,000 to 4,000 copies. Because OST members are active in a number of different unions, *Combat Ouvrier* is able to feature detailed reports on strikes and other developments within the labor movement. This has made it especially popular among unionists.

During the February 1983 elections the OST supported the presidential candidacy of Majhemout Diop of the African Independence Party (PAI), one of several parties in the Senegalese workers movement. It called on workers to vote for Majhemout Diop as an expression of class independence, against the PS and other bourgeois parties.

Those elections were marked by considerable fraud on the part of the ruling PS. In reaction, 10 political parties, among them the

OST, organized a protest rally of 10,000 in Dakar in March 1983. The parties issued a joint declaration rejecting the election results and demanding new, democratic elections. It also called for an intensification of social and political struggles against the neocolonial regime, pledged to fight for democratic and trade union freedoms, and proclaimed the need for greater unity in struggle among all the democratic and anti-imperialist forces. A second rally that same month drew 20,000 participants.

But most of the parties refused to organize any ongoing campaigns around those points. The bourgeois opposition Senegalese Democratic Party, the largest of the groups, dropped many of its criticisms of the regime in response to a call by President Diouf for a "national union."

The OST, however, continued to speak out. In August 1983, when Diouf returned to Senegal following a visit to the United States and made a major speech calling for new austerity measures, the OST began distributing leaflets denouncing the speech just a few hours after it was given.

This was followed over the next few months by a series of public antiausterity meetings and rallies organized by the OST in the Dakar neighborhoods of Niaye Tioker, Médina, Baobabs, and Liberté V, as well as in the tiny village of Palmarin. The largest meeting, in Niaye Tioker, drew some 200 participants.

When the regime sent 200 troops to Chad to aid the Habré dictatorship in September 1984, *Combat Ouvrier* denounced this move. It demanded the withdrawal of the Senegalese troops from Chad, along with the withdrawal of French troops from Senegal, declaring that working people "cannot agree to Senegalese territory being used as a French military base for French imperialist policy."

'It is necessary to struggle'

Also in September 1984, the OST and six other opposition parties attempted to organize a public rally in Dakar against the Diouf regime's price hikes. Just a few hours before it was scheduled to begin, the authorities banned the meeting. As hundreds of people converged on the meeting site (unaware that it had been banned), special riot police moved in to break up the crowd. Several subsequent meetings were likewise banned.

The Jan. 21, 1985, OST declaration on the economic situation criticized the IMF-dictated austerity policies in detail. "The truth is that they will not touch the companies and the wealthy in the country," the OST declared. "Instead, they will bleed the workers and peasants. This is the social justice of the PS and its friends.

"Workers, peasants, youths, unemployed, this policy must be ended! Do not accept it any longer; do not stand with folded arms. It is necessary to struggle. That is the only road to salvation!"

Less than a week later, on January 27, eight

parties, including the OST, issued an appeal to working people to fight against the Diouf regime's price hikes, layoffs, and liquidation of state-run enterprises.

"This policy," the appeal declared, "serves the strategy of privatizing the national economy to the benefit of the multinationals. If the Abdou Diouf government succeeds in implementing this plan of national liquidation, hunger, poverty, and disease will become the daily, collective fate of Senegalese men and women."

"The signing parties," the appeal went on, "support the peasants' movement of resistance against the ridiculous price for peanuts and calls on them to strengthen their mobilization and their unity. They demand an end to the seizures of grains and threshing materials and condemn police victimization and brutality against the peasants."

Then on February 10 the eight parties held a major conference at the PAI headquarters in the Dakar neighborhood of Guédiawaye. The

conference was chaired by a member of the OST. The participants unanimously adopted a resolution calling for a mass campaign against the regime's austerity policies (see following document).

Most recently, on International Women's Day, March 8, the Women's Commission of the OST issued a leaflet pointing to the particularly severe impact that the austerity policies are having on Senegalese women. It demanded an immediate cancellation of the price hikes, jobs for women, an end to layoffs and plant closures, and wage increases pegged to rises in the cost of living.

"For the satisfaction of these demands," the leaflets said, "let us join the committees of struggle against the price hikes, let us set up neighborhood committees of housewives, let us mobilize our neighbors, let us organize protest meetings. If we mobilize, the government will have to cancel the price hikes.

"Women, let us raise our voices high and loud." □

DOCUMENTS

Resolution of Senegalese parties

For a campaign against price hikes and layoffs

[The following resolution was unanimously adopted by representatives of eight Senegalese opposition parties at a conference in Guédiawaye, a neighborhood of Dakar, on February 10. The parties were the And Jëf/ Revolutionary Movement for a New Democracy (AJ/MRDN), Democratic People's Movement (MDP), Senegalese People's Party (PPS), African Independence Party (PAI), Democratic League/Movement for the Party of Labor (LD/MPT), Communist Workers League (LCT), Democratic People's Union (UDP), and Socialist Workers Organization (OST, Senegalese section of the Fourth International).

[The text has been taken from the February issue of *Yaakaar*, the monthly newspaper of the MDP. The translation from the French is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

We, workers, housewives, unemployed, and youths, assembled this Sunday, Feb. 10, 1985, in Guédiawaye, adopt this resolution and jointly address it as an appeal to working people and all their organizations.

We have assembled to begin to collectively outline the ways and means through which working people can protect themselves against the policies of Abdou Diouf and the IMF, against the constant price hikes, the layoffs, the police violence, and the permanent attacks on our living and working conditions, as well as on our democratic rights.

We do not accept that — under the cover of "austerity," "adjustment," and "readjustment"

— Abdou Diouf and his government increase the cost of living, the unemployment, and the misery, with the aim of making us pay a US\$2 billion foreign debt that they have borrowed in our name and squandered for personal ends and for purposes of patronage.

We do not accept the violence of Abdou Diouf and his government, who want to keep us silent by sowing divisions and discord within our trade unions, by banning public meetings and rallies, by increasing the number of political and trade union prisoners, by stopping the distribution of declarations.

We have discussed all these questions.

We have concluded that unity is our only weapon against Abdou Diouf and his plans for misery. And we also know that the question of unity is a central preoccupation of working people today.

Along this course, conscious of loyally interpreting the will of those who could not attend our meeting:

We congratulate ourselves for the unity realized in this conference through the presence of eight political parties and several trade union organizations.

We commit these organizations to maintain and strengthen unity, and we solemnly declare that no differences will prevail over the unanimous will of the working people to unite to sweep away Abdou Diouf's government and his destructive plans.

Therefore, as a result of our democratic discussion, we are deciding to:

1. Launch a petition to President Abdou

Diouf for the cancellation of the price increases and a halt to the layoffs.

2. Appeal for massive signatures to the petition.

3. Request the first group of signers to transform themselves into an ongoing body to

lead the struggle until the demands contained in this petition have been attained.

4. Appeal to everyone, in the factories, neighborhoods, villages, and schools, to hold general assemblies of unity to constitute committees of struggle against the price hikes and

layoffs, so that the conditions may be rapidly created to put an end to Abdou Diouf and his government before they destroy our country.

5. Support the workers of SAFCOP [a fish-packing enterprise] in their struggle against the closure of their plant. □

Burkina

Revolution pursues own foreign policy

Paris no longer calls the tune

By Ernest Harsch

OUAGADOUGOU — Shortly after seizing power in August 1983, the National Council of the Revolution (CNR) decided to rename one of the main streets here in Burkina's capital. They called it Avenue Nelson Mandela, in honor of the imprisoned leader of South Africa's liberation movement, the African National Congress.

So when Pik Botha, the foreign minister of the racist South African regime, paid a visit to Paris in early February, the Burkinabè leadership could not remain silent. President Thomas Sankara fired off a protest telegram to French president François Mitterrand.

"Receiving Pik Botha," Sankara declared, "means strengthening apartheid and adding more days, months, and years to the suffering of Nelson Mandela, the symbol of freedom for the oppressed Black people of South Africa. Receiving Pik Botha adds to the moral misery of millions of men, women, and children. Receiving Pik Botha is an official way of supporting and legitimizing the most odious crime in the world. . . ."

Before the August 1983 revolution, such an official protest against this country's former colonial ruler would have been virtually unthinkable. Though Burkina (then called Upper Volta) had been formally independent since 1960, its foreign policy was in fact dictated from the French embassy, conveniently located right next to the presidential palace.

The CNR came into power as part of a mass upsurge against such French interference and domination, a domination that has kept Burkina one of the poorest countries in the world. Despite the pressures facing the new leadership — including Burkina's continued need for French economic assistance — it has sought to chart an independent, anti-imperialist course.

This has involved promoting the formation of mass organizations like the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) and mobilizing the population to carry through agrarian reform and economic development projects.

It has also involved important foreign policy initiatives: establishing new political and economic ties with other countries, including with the workers states; opposing acts of imperialist

aggression around the world; and extending solidarity to liberation struggles in the Middle East, Western Sahara, Central America, and southern Africa.

Currently, there is a display in the lobby of the Hotel Independence in support of the liberation movements in South Africa and Namibia, organized by Movorap, a solidarity organization set up shortly after the August 1983 revolution.

French military maneuvers

The authorities in Paris have not been happy about this shift. Nor has Washington. Both imperialist powers have sought to apply pressure on Burkina to alter its course.

In part, this has involved withholding some much-needed economic assistance. The U.S. government, for example, flatly rejected a request from Burkina for technical assistance to artificially induce rainfall, so as to combat the effects of the drought.

There have also been more direct threats and pressures. Shortly after the CNR came to power, the French authorities insisted that Professor Joseph Ki-Zerbo, an exiled opponent of the revolution, be brought into the government. When seven people were later executed here for involvement in a reactionary coup plot linked to Ki-Zerbo, several French cabinet ministers and officials of the governing French Socialist Party made loud protests.

In late November 1984, large-scale military "exercises" were staged in neighboring Ivory Coast, long a bastion of French neocolonialism in West Africa.

Though such exercises have taken place in Ivory Coast before, these were the largest since a military pact between Paris and the Ivorian regime was signed in 1962. The maneuvers involved 2,000 French and 3,000 Ivorian troops, as well as French jet fighters, helicopter gunships, and other aircraft. They were held along the Comoé River, which forms part of the border between Ivory Coast and Burkina. French ambassador Michel Dupuch said at the time, "We want to practice the crossing of rivers."

The Burkinabè government did not directly comment on these maneuvers and repeated its continued interest in maintaining cordial rela-

tions with Paris. Any conflicts, it stressed, should be resolved through negotiations.

Such talks have continued, and Burkina has succeeded in obtaining important French loans and other economic assistance. In December 1984, for example, the two governments signed a US\$11 million agreement to assist the construction of the Kompienga hydroelectric dam.

French companies continue to operate in Burkina as well. But following a November meeting between Minister of Trade Alain Koeffe and French businessmen in Ouagadougou, the government radio reported that the "National Council of the Revolution has issued a warning to French businessmen operating in Burkina Faso . . . that the CNR will no longer maintain privileged relations with them." It said that this was in response to a "veiled boycott" by these businessmen of certain important economic projects.

Several weeks later, the CNR announced that it was not attending the annual summit conference of the French government and representatives of former French (and Belgian) colonies in Africa. Relations between Africa and the rest of the world, a CNR statement said, should not be on the basis of whether African governments happen to use the French language, but on their common economic and political interests. "Our aim is to have the political courage to openly break with an old tradition," the CNR said.

New ties

Since the beginning of the revolution, new political, economic, and cultural relations have been forged with a wide variety of countries.

Economic assistance agreements have been concluded with several imperialist powers other than France. Recently, the government of the Netherlands agreed to provide some \$60 million for agricultural development, and earlier agreements were signed with Japan and Canada (though recently relations with Canada have been strained by the Canadian government's decision to close down its embassy in Ouagadougou).

Political and economic relations have been expanded with a number of workers states. Chinese aid was instrumental in the construc-

tion of a \$14 million stadium here in Ouagadougou. And following a visit by Sankara to China in November, Peking agreed to provide a \$20 million loan for agricultural development. It is an interest-free loan, repayable over a 10-year period beginning in 1995.

North Korean aid has gone into agriculture, construction, mining, and other sectors. Some two dozen Cuban medical personnel were sent here, and Cuban assistance has been provided in agriculture, economic planning, stockbreeding, transportation, education, and dam construction. Burkina has received some Soviet agricultural equipment, as well as other assistance.

At the end of December, on the 26th anniversary of the Cuban revolution, Sankara sent a message to Cuban president Fidel Castro (whom he had met during a visit to Cuba in October). "The Burkinabè people, like all freedom- and peace-loving people," Sankara said, "join the Cuban people in celebrating this joyous occasion, which, in the eyes of the progressive world, recalls the crushing defeat inflicted on international imperialism and its outposts" by the triumph of the Cuban revolution.

On March 12, Sankara sent a condolence message to Moscow on the occasion of Soviet party leader Konstantin Chernenko's death. It stated that "the rich experience of the people of the USSR, fatherland of the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917, remains a precious gain for all revolutionary people in the world."

The CNR has likewise strengthened ties with numerous African governments, in particular those that are in conflict with im-

perialism (as in Libya, Ghana, Benin, Congo, and Mozambique). Relations are particularly close with Ghana, where a massive anti-imperialist upsurge has been underway for the past three years.

Some of Burkina's foreign relations have provided a focus for imperialist smear campaigns. Answering such charges in early March, Sankara said, "People accuse us of being the pawn of Libya, Cuba, the USSR, and Algeria." But he reaffirmed that "the Burkinabè revolution is not an imported revolution."

In addition to relations on the governmental level, Burkina's CDRs have tried to establish direct collaboration with the peoples of neighboring countries. The CDRs of Burkina and Ghana have already undertaken some joint projects. When the construction of the new railway from Ouagadougou to Tambao in the north was begun in February, Burkina's CDRs appealed to youth from Mali, Niger, and Ivory Coast to help in the construction.

The Burkinabè revolution is also having an impact among political activists and revolutionaries from other African countries, and has provided sanctuary to some exiles (for example, from Chad and Zaïre).

One sign of Burkina's growing prestige and influence in West Africa was the selection in October 1984 of Sankara as the new chairperson of the West African Economic Community (CEAO), which groups Burkina, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Mauritania, and Senegal. Several former CEAO officials, who have been accused of massive embezzlement and corruption, are to be tried in Ouagadougou, the head-

quarters of the regional organization.

The upsurge in Burkina is being followed especially closely by the estimated 1.5 million Burkinabè migrants who live and work in neighboring Ivory Coast. The Ouagadougou weekly *Carrefour Africain* periodically lists financial contributions from them.

This accounts, in part, for the Ivorian regime's nervousness about developments in Burkina and its eagerness to host joint military exercises with French troops. The government there also allows counterrevolutionary Burkinabè groups to operate from Ivorian territory.

The CNR has sought to improve relations with the Ivorian regime of Félix Houphouët-Boigny. But last year plans for a visit by Sankara to Ivory Coast fell through when President Houphouët-Boigny refused to grant Sankara's request to visit Abidjan, the largest city, in order to mingle with the Ivorian "laboring classes" and the Burkinabè workers concentrated there.

The visit was rescheduled for this February. Just 18 hours before Sankara's arrival in the Ivorian capital of Yamoussoukro, a bomb planted in his hotel suite exploded prematurely. The visit nevertheless went ahead as planned.

Although the fact that the meeting between Sankara and Houphouët-Boigny took place at all was an important diplomatic gain for the CNR, the popular reaction to Sankara's visit was also significant. Thousands of Ivorians and Burkinabè held a spontaneous demonstration in Yamoussoukro to greet him, chanting "Akwaba Sankara!" (Welcome Sankara!). □

'We're the heirs of all revolutions'

Interview with Burkina's foreign minister Basile Guissou

[The following is an interview with Basile Guissou, the minister of foreign relations and cooperation of the West African country of Burkina. It was obtained by Ernest Harsch on March 12 in Ouagadougou, Burkina's capital. Originally conducted in French, the interview has been translated by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Question. How do you see the Burkinabè revolution within the context of the African revolution today, and in fact within the context of the world revolution?

Answer. That's a very broad question. We think simply that we're the heirs of all the revolutionary struggles that have taken place on this continent and elsewhere.

And from this point of view we've also contributed to humanity. The Burkinabè revolution must also bring its specific features, its particularities, to the efforts of progressive humanity to discover better conditions of life for people and better relations between people. So

we think that we're a part of all the revolutions of the past, present, and future.

As the comrade president [Thomas Sankara] said at the United Nations, Burkina Faso concerns itself wherever someone gets slapped in the face because of the color of his skin, or because of his position in society, or simply because of the ignorance in which he has been kept. We're in solidarity with all those who are suffering throughout the world: the minorities, the artists, the journalists, the musicians.

Everywhere that people are suffering from a lack of freedom, from a lack of the most elementary rights, from hunger that is being used as a weapon, whether in Africa or elsewhere, we are in solidarity. And we think that our revolution is also being made for them.

This, briefly, is the basic meaning of our revolution, which seeks to be a revolution open to all African peoples, to all the peoples of the world, with whom we are ready to share this experience. Our guiding line has a humanist revolutionary orientation, which

considers that wherever in Africa or elsewhere people are suffering, Burkina Faso concerns itself and must take a position.

Q. Which governments and liberation movements in Africa do you feel the closest to?

A. We have very good relations with all the neighboring countries and we intend to strengthen them.

You know that President Sankara's first trip after the August 4 [1983] revolution was to a neighbor, Mali. That was to try to smooth over the problems that existed over the question of the border. A communiqué was signed in which the two countries agreed to submit a dossier to the International Court of Justice at The Hague and to continue discussions at a bilateral level in order to find a peaceful solution to the problem. And we're following this procedure right now.

With Niger we set up a joint commission less than a month ago.

We have said, and we repeat, that our revo-

lution is not an exportable product and we don't want to compel other peoples to choose the road that Burkina Faso has chosen. Every people has the regime of its choosing and our duty is to respect their choice.

From this point of view, we are partisans of peaceful coexistence and friendship with all our neighboring countries, whatever their structure. We consider ourselves close to all the peoples. We don't have to substitute ourselves for these peoples, to choose their governments for them. That's not the aim of our revolution, and it never will be.

Of course, we are close to the liberation movements in southern Africa, such as the ANC [African National Congress of South Africa] and SWAPO [South West Africa People's Organisation of Namibia], which are fighting in practice against the South African racists. We are close to our European and American brothers who are pouring into the streets, who are protesting and risking arrest to denounce apartheid, to call for sanctions, and to demand the application of the United Nations resolutions.

We are close to all the struggles for peace, equality, and freedom and against racism, racial segregation in all its forms, and Zionism.

Q. More specifically, what are your relations with Ghana?

A. Of course, we have close relations with Ghana, as we do with Benin. We think that the two revolutions in Ghana and Benin are sister revolutions. We have frequent contacts and we work together on all the basic questions of Africa within the framework of the Organization of African Unity. Our political positions on the international scene are very close.

Q. In the bourgeois press in the United States, and also with the U.S. government, there's a certain coolness, if not hostility, toward the Burkinabè revolution. Are you concerned about this, and how do you try to counteract that kind of stance?

A. Yes, we're aware that since Aug. 4, 1983, from the beginning of the revolution in Burkina Faso, the press and international organs have conducted many negative campaigns against us. They're supported by certain circles that are hostile toward us.

But we have the necessary patience to explain ourselves. You know that the president went to the United Nations to deliver a message, which you heard, pointing out that we refuse, first of all, to be categorized, to be catalogued, to be presented as pawns of Peter or Paul, as satellites of anyone.

We undertook our revolutionary anti-imperialist process to free the consciousness of our people, to get them to take hold of their destiny, to ease the pressures and free our people's genius, to get them to create their own future.

We have a society that was for a long time kept in ignorance, in hunger, in mysticism, and in structures that were at times medieval.



Thomas Sankara (right) with Ghana's leader, Jerry Rawlings. Relations between two countries have been greatly strengthened.

Our task is to democratize the countryside, to modernize our country. That's the main goal of this revolution. That's what we've set ourselves to do.

We haven't made the revolution against a country or against some peoples, but for our people, to benefit our people. So we think that with time, our efforts to explain ourselves and the results of the People's Development Program that we are carrying out in practice will help even the most skeptical ones to see us at work. As they say, one knows the mason by his work.

We have democratic tasks, we have the task of modernizing our country so that everyone can quench their thirst, satisfy their hunger, dress decently, and have access to education. We're fighting the drought and the advance of the desert, which is gaining 7 kilometers a year in the Sahel. Right now, we're receiving people from neighboring countries. In solidarity, we must receive them, harbor them, and nourish them.

We're struggling to free the Sahel, even though we have not, unfortunately, received enough aid or foreign contributions. But we believe that with our own efforts we can do the utmost and that this will bring a better understanding on the part of those who hold a negative attitude toward us.

Regarding certain big countries, we know that there are suspicions of us. The newspapers speak against us, but we are counterattacking and meeting friends, like you, who relate what we're doing here. They come here, form their own opinions, and we count on them to present a true image of this country, a country that isn't looking blindly for irresponsible confrontations, with whom I don't know.

It's true that as an independent and sovereign country, our territory belongs to us. If there's no attack on our revolution, we have

no reason to come into conflict with any country.

The programs that we will carry out will little by little lead to the disappearance of all the prejudices. And we will be accepted as we are: revolutionaries who want to make a revolution in their country and for their people. We have enough to do here without seeking to harm others.

We know that we don't just have friends, but we strive to explain ourselves, to bring understanding, and to show that we refuse to be catalogued. It may seem that in the world today one cannot be nonaligned. Yet we think that it's possible to be revolutionary and nonaligned and defend a just cause, without being aligned by force.

Q. The Nicaraguan revolution is also being carried out for the people of Nicaragua, but the U.S. government is today waging a war against the revolution, against the people of Nicaragua and of El Salvador. What has been your response to this conflict in Central America?

A. In his message to the United Nations, President Thomas Sankara was very clear on this question. He said that Burkina Faso is not indifferent to the fate of peoples and rejects interventions by foreign troops against countries and peoples. In the same manner, he denounced the intervention of foreign troops in Grenada and the intervention of foreign troops in Afghanistan.

We say that the Nicaraguan people are a sovereign people who have made their choice and are accountable for it. We gave our position regarding the efforts of the Contadora group to find a peaceful solution that will benefit the peoples of Latin America. We recalled that the Nicaraguan government, through Pres-

ident Daniel Ortega, issued an appeal from the podium of the United Nations for peace and reconciliation. We follow and support the current efforts of the Nicaraguan government for a lasting peace in this region of the world.

In all cases, we reject any military intervention and dictates that aim to subjugate peoples by force, against their will. This is a position of principle that we have, and we always express ourselves in defense of the freedom of peoples to choose their own political and economic system.

Q. What kind of relations do you have today with the French government and with the French Socialist Party?

A. I went to Paris not long ago and we discussed new cooperation accords that we are drafting. They will be signed, perhaps at the end of this month or the beginning of April.

At first, we had many difficulties in getting ourselves understood. Today, one can say that the climate is very calm and we're talking in a spirit of mutual responsibility. We're not seeking to place the blame for the past history between our two countries on the French party. We say simply that this history is changing, that it's evolving, and that if the French party takes that into account there's no reason that we cannot promote a new type of relationship. It's in that sense that we're working.

The French minister of cooperation, Christian Nucci, has come here three times. We've had very fruitful discussions. He invited me to Paris. I went and the different problems that they raised are being solved. We hope that we can open the way toward a new kind of cooperation between Burkina and France.

We don't despair. Indeed, we've been able to meet the French Socialist Party and the Communist Party, the left, with which we haven't always had the necessary understanding. We talked. We've invited the secretary of the Socialist Party, and he should be coming to Burkina soon. We're continuing the discussions and we think it's possible to be understood.

We don't think our relations are worse than those with other countries. They could be better, and we're working to achieve that.

Q. What kind of assistance do you get from the Soviet Union, Cuba, China, and other countries?

A. We said in our Discourse on Political Orientation* that we want our people to learn to rely on their own forces, above all. That's a basic principle. So we don't wait for anything from anyone. No one will come to develop Burkina Faso in place of its own people.

This means that the relations with the Soviet Union, China, France, the United States, and other countries of the world are governed above all by our need to show these countries that we want to overcome our condition of bare

*A major programmatic speech given by President Sankara on Oct. 2, 1983. For the text of the speech, see the Jan. 21, 1985, *Intercontinental Press*.

survival, that we're making all necessary efforts. Alongside what we provide with our efforts, we'll see who our friends are by the aid they provide to allow us to overcome the need for aid.

From this point of view, we don't have any particular expectations and we don't ask for any particular attention from this or that country. We ask for aid and support from all the countries of the world, without exception, all those who want to work with us while respecting our sovereignty and independence. We're

Canada

25,000 defend right to strike

Quebec public workers march against antiunion bill

By Michel Dugré

[The following article is reprinted from the May 6 issue of *Socialist Voice*, a fortnightly newspaper published in Montreal that reflects the views of the Revolutionary Workers League, Canadian section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

MONTREAL — The largest demonstration in Canada since the mass mobilizations that shook British Columbia two years ago took place in Quebec City on April 20.

Some 25,000 demonstrators turned out, responding to the call of the Coalition for the Right to Negotiate. The coalition is composed of 19 union organizations representing more than 365,000 public sector workers. It is calling on the Quebec government to withdraw pending legislation that would, in effect, abolish the right to strike in health facilities and restrict it considerably in other social services.

"For the right to negotiate" and "For quality public services" were the main slogans heard on the demonstration. Participants also stressed that the government attacks hit women the hardest. Women make up two-thirds of the coalition's members.

The action was impressive for its unity, especially given that the Quebec union movement is divided between three main union federations and united action is infrequent. All the union organizations were present, including several industrial unions. Striking shipbuilding workers from Marine Industries in Sorel, Quebec, as well as workers from the struck explosives plant, Expro, in Valleyfield, Quebec, were present.

During the last public sector negotiations, the industrial unions stood aside from the struggle thereby helping to contribute to the isolation of the public sector unions.

Members of the RAJ — the Autonomous Youth Regroupment — were also present, distributing a specially prepared leaflet.

ready to open our arms to them. We haven't built a Chinese wall by saying that we want aid from this country and not from some other.

In the endeavors that we're undertaking, there is room for every country in the implementation of the People's Development Program. In carrying out the five-year plan that we will initiate after the People's Development Program, a year from now, we will solicit aid from all friendly countries. We'll see in practice what concrete actions each of them undertakes. □

In addressing the rally, three spokespeople from the Coalition attacked the conservative politics of Prime Minister [Brian] Mulroney, Quebec Premier René Lévesque, and Quebec Liberal Leader Robert Bourassa. They also made the point that the war against Nicaragua is a product of these same policies, underlining that workers here have common interests with the people of Nicaragua.

Three days after the action, the Lévesque government gave an unequivocal response to the demonstrators, by bringing down a budget designed to lessen the tax burden for employers but raise taxes for workers. The message of Quebec Finance Minister Yves Duhaime was that the hopes and gains dating from Quebec's Quiet Revolution — when Québécois made important advances in modernizing health care and other social services — were a thing of the past.

The attacks against Quebec's public sector workers are not the only attacks taking place today in Canada. But the Eaton's strike in Ontario, the strike at Marine Industries in Sorel, the tenacious struggle in English Canada to establish abortion clinics all testify that resistance, too, exists.

Now more than ever, mobilizations and solidarity are the order of the day. □

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Papandreou breaks with Caramanlis

Washington concerned about dumping of rightist president

**By Sissy Vovou and
Alexandra Topping**

ATHENS — In a sudden political shift, Greek prime minister Andreas Papandreou, head of the ruling Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), ended his collaboration with the country's president, Constantine Caramanlis of the right-wing New Democracy Party (NDP).

Papandreou's break with Caramanlis came on March 9 only a week before parliament was to elect a new president.

One day after Papandreou announced that PASOK would not support Caramanlis' reelection, Caramanlis resigned as president.

PASOK has had a majority in parliament since 1981. Although elected on a program that sounds more radical than that of other social democratic formations in Europe, since coming to power PASOK has shown itself to be socialist in name only and has reneged on all its major campaign promises.

The Papandreou government has not, for example, closed the U.S. military bases in Greece. Nor has it pulled Greece out of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the European Economic Community, although these were prominent themes in its 1981 campaign.

Powers of president

The PASOK government had also refused to proceed with its promise to revise the reactionary 1975 constitution.

The 1975 constitution gives extraordinary powers to the president, who is elected by the vote of two-thirds of the members of parliament rather than by the general population.

The president can, for example, unilaterally suspend civil liberties "if there is an external or internal danger" and can place the country in a "state of siege" without consent of parliament.

The president can also dissolve the elected government if he decides there is "disharmony" between the parliamentary majority and the popular will. He can appoint anyone he chooses to be prime minister, whether that person is a member of parliament or not.

Under the 1975 constitution, the president is also empowered to call elections and special referenda, and can block implementation of laws or decrees simply by refusing to sign them.

In its four years in power, the Papandreou government had maintained close relations with President Caramanlis, despite the president's history of repression of the workers movement.

In fact, Caramanlis' presence in office gave Papandreou a ready-made excuse for not carrying out PASOK's campaign promises, despite

the fact that in 1981 PASOK won 172 of the 300 seats in parliament and the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), which looks to Moscow for political direction, won another 13. This gave the two officially pro-socialist parties 62 percent of the seats.

Papandreou argued that the socialist "change" promised during the 1981 campaign had to come in "careful" steps. He repeatedly implied that his government could not implement radical measures because Caramanlis, as president, could block them.

NDP sets sights

As 1985 began, the New Democracy Party was eagerly awaiting the presidential election in March and the parliamentary election scheduled for October (later moved forward to June).

Caramanlis, with the support of his own party and PASOK, seemed a sure bet to be reelected by parliament.

The rightist NDP also hoped to increase its representation in parliament after the parliamentary elections.

In the 1984 elections for the European Community Parliament, the NDP had seen its share of the vote rise to 38 percent from the 36 percent it received in the 1981 Greek elections. PASOK's share of the vote, meanwhile, had declined from 48 percent to 42 percent.

The NDP expected that PASOK's share would continue to decline as its attempts to administer the capitalist economic crisis led it to carry out further measures opposed by the masses of workers and farmers. The most conservative among those voters who had supported PASOK in 1981, were already beginning to return to the NDP fold, as seen by the results of the 1984 Euro-elections.

Although the NDP had no expectation of winning a majority in the 1985 parliamentary elections, it hoped that with the reelection of Caramanlis and greater representation in parliament, the stage would be set for an NDP return to power several years down the road as PASOK's popularity declined. At some point, Caramanlis could use his presidential powers to the NDP's benefit.

As the vote for president approached, the NDP strategy seemed on the verge of success. Top PASOK and government officials were openly urging Caramanlis' reelection, and Papandreou himself argued that keeping the NDP leader in the presidency was the guarantee of political normalcy.

Opposition to support for Caramanlis within PASOK was stifled as PASOK members expressing that view were expelled from the party.

The KKE had, since mid-1984, been halfheartedly calling for revising the 1975 constitution and stated that its members of parliament would not vote for Caramanlis' reelection. But the party did nothing to organize a struggle around the presidential election.

The Communist Party-Interior, a group that is part of the so-called Eurocommunist current, also formally opposed Caramanlis' presidency. But its daily paper contained articles advocating acceptance of Caramanlis' candidacy in the name of maintaining "normalcy."

Rumblings among masses

While on the surface it appeared that Caramanlis would have smooth sailing in his reelection, something was stirring below.

The most militant sectors of the working class had become disgusted by PASOK's inability to solve the pressing social and economic problems. Unemployment affects 10 percent of the work force. The inflation rate is more than 20 percent, and workers are suffering a decline in real wages. The income of farmers is also dropping.

Among the most politically active layers of the masses, there was also great dissatisfaction with PASOK's betrayal of its anti-imperialist campaign promises.

In addition, Constantine Caramanlis himself came to personify the power of the bourgeoisie in Greek society and the alliance with the other NATO powers.

There is very deep-rooted political hatred against Caramanlis. He was the architect of the police state erected after the victory of the right in the 1944-49 civil war, which brought with it repression of the workers movement, suppression of democratic rights, and the imprisonment, persecution, torture, and exile of thousands of left-wing militants.

Caramanlis was also prime minister during what is known as the "black eight years" between 1955 and 1963. He was again prime minister from 1974 to 1980 and was the inspirer of the reactionary constitution of 1975.

As the parliamentary vote for president approached, there was growing opposition in PASOK's left wing to the leadership's support for the reelection of Caramanlis. This reflected a more general dissatisfaction within the population, which was not translated into action but was very widely expressed.

Only two weeks before his decision to oppose Caramanlis' reelection, Papandreou had removed the whole leadership of a provincial PASOK body for resisting what was then the official PASOK line of support for Caramanlis.

But after meeting with his closest col-

laborators on the night of March 8, Papandreou dropped his bombshell. At the March 9 meeting of the PASOK central committee, Papandreou announced he would not back Caramanlis for reelection and would press for changes in the 1975 constitution.

The announcement that PASOK would not support Caramanlis stunned the country. The news came as pro-PASOK dailies were already preparing their latest arguments in favor of Caramanlis and the right-wing dailies were celebrating his certain reelection.

Papandreou proposed that PASOK support Supreme Court judge Christos Sartzetakis.

Sartzetakis has been a well-known figure in Greece since 1964, when he played the crucial role in prosecuting the murderers of Grigoris Lambrakis, a left-wing member of parliament who was assassinated in public in 1963 by paramilitary thugs. (This case was the basis for the movie *Z*.)

The murder of Lambrakis led to a big protest movement that toppled Caramanlis' government a few months later.

Sartzetakis himself was imprisoned and tortured under the military dictatorship that ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974.

The prime minister's nomination of Sartzetakis was unanimously and enthusiastically adopted and received a standing ovation from the PASOK central committee members.

Until the meeting began, the central committee members, with only two exceptions, had stated their readiness to accept Caramanlis. With the support of deputies from PASOK, the KKE, and independents, Sartzetakis was elected president of Greece on March 20.

For Papandreou the relationship with Caramanlis had positive and negative aspects. The fact that Caramanlis could neutralize or even depose the PASOK government with the powers given him under the constitution made Papandreou uneasy.

But as long as Caramanlis was president, the right wing remained relatively quiet because its power was guaranteed. Political conflict was kept within the legal and constitutional framework.

Caramanlis' position also reassured Greece's trans-Atlantic "protectors" about PASOK's intentions. U.S. ruling circles knew that as long as PASOK collaborated with Caramanlis, there was a limit to how far the Greek "socialists" would push their statements into action.

Washington placed great importance on this collaboration and was clearly upset when it was terminated by Papandreou. The reason lies in the widespread hostility among Greek workers and farmers to the U.S. role in setting up the brutal military dictatorship of 1967-74.

Washington clearly does not trust PASOK, which was founded in 1974 with a radical program, and which grew on the basis of its militant opposition to the right wing in general and Caramanlis in particular.

When the Greek dictatorship fell in July 1974, Caramanlis returned to Greece from France and took over as prime minister under conditions of an explosive rise in the mass

movement. He said of this period: "I created a state out of the chaos I found."

This may be true. But the radicalization of the masses who had struggled against the military dictatorship and their heightened expectations for change created a dangerous situation for the Greek bourgeoisie and U.S. imperialism, one they did not trust PASOK to control.

Furthermore, Washington and the Greek bourgeoisie remain worried about the KKE. Until the 1967 military coup, the pro-Moscow Communist Party was very strong. Today part of its support has been absorbed into PASOK. But given the volatile history of the Greek class struggle, the KKE's strength could revive. And there is no guarantee that the KKE could hold a future explosion within the bounds of its own class-collaborationist policies.

These factors made the bourgeoisie look to the Caramanlis-Papandreou collaboration as a necessary guarantee of capitalist order.

All the major political formations are now looking to the parliamentary elections in June as the next test of strength.

The right-wing NDP has favored the earlier elections, believing it will gain from the sudden turn in the situation. NDP president Constantine Mitsotakis has set the campaign themes by charging that the election of Sartzetakis was invalid and by claiming that without Caramanlis in the presidency there is nothing to stop the imposition of "authoritarian," left-wing rule in Greece.

The pro-Moscow KKE hopes that its support for the presidency of Sartzetakis will lead to increased parliamentary representation. In addition, it hopes that the fact that Papandreou needed the votes of the KKE deputies to gain the three-quarters majority needed to elect Sartzetakis will encourage him to include KKE members in the new government, although this seems unlikely at this time.

Finally, the PASOK, which took the initiative of moving the elections forward, also believes it can cash in on its seeming shift to the left and mobilize its revitalized supporters, thus retaining its parliamentary majority and winning a new four-year term in government. □

STATEMENT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Solidarity with British miners

International campaign for victimized strikers

[The following statement was adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International at its April 25 meeting.]

* * *

After a year of heroic strike action the British miners were forced back to work. Their strike, the longest mass strike in the history of any imperialist country, inspired working people around the world with its determined intransigence against capitalist policies of unemployment and austerity.

But the cost to the miners and their families was high. Two miners were killed on the picket lines; 11,000 were arrested by the police; over 700 miners have been sacked as a result of their participation in the strike; and nearly 100 miners are serving prison sentences. Hundreds of other miners will appear before the courts in the next months. Already severe jail sentences of up to five years have been inflicted, such as that of Terry French of the Kent miners. Even harsher punishment awaits some strikers.

However, those found guilty face not only jail sentences but also a lifetime of unemployment. Those sentenced in the courts have been automatically sacked by the coal industry employers. They are also denied state benefits on the pretext that they are still on strike. Demands for an amnesty have been rejected, and instead the sackings are being made part of a

campaign to weaken the organization of their union.

There is now a need for an international campaign of solidarity to demand an amnesty from the British government for the sacked and imprisoned miners and to raise funds for their families.

The enormous solidarity that the strike received internationally marked the identification of millions of workers with the miners' struggle. Now the same energy must go into the urgent defense of the victims of that struggle.

The goal of the British state and the coal employers is not solely to victimize militant miners. If this campaign of vengeance is not prevented the political result will be intimidation of workers in Britain and internationally from fighting in a determined way to save their jobs. Victory against this wave of victimization would help in a significant way to roll back management's attacks against the National Union of Mineworkers.

The miners' strike was a strike for the whole international working class. The defense of those victimized is a fight to defend all workers, including those millions who will, in the years to come, emulate the British miners' courage, combativity, and determination.

No victimization!
Amnesty!

Reactionary campaign hits gay rights bill

Led by racists, union-busters, opponents of abortion

By Eileen Morgan

[The following article is reprinted from the April 26 issue of *Socialist Action*, a fortnightly newspaper published in Auckland, New Zealand, that reflects the views of the Socialist Action League, New Zealand section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

A massive public debate has broken out in New Zealand around the Homosexual Law Reform Bill introduced into parliament by Labour MP Fran Wilde. The issues involved are being discussed out in workplaces, schools, churches, at public meetings, and through the letters columns of newspapers.

At the heart of this debate is a major political challenge being posed by the forces of reaction in this society to all supporters of social progress. This is what the campaign to get a million signatures for a petition against the bill represents. At the head of this campaign stand Labour MP Geoff Braybrooke and National Party MPs Norm Jones and Graeme Lee, along with some prominent businessmen and church groups.

Growing opposition

These right-wing bigots have encountered growing opposition over recent weeks, however, as supporters of the bill mobilise against their campaign. Counter-protests against the public activities organised by the right wingers have taken place in a number of different parts of the country.

In particular, the protests which led to the early closure of public rallies against the bill in Wellington and Auckland involved hundreds of people, making them the biggest gay rights demonstrations ever held in New Zealand.

The Homosexual Law Reform bill is a straightforward piece of legislation. It simply puts homosexuals and heterosexuals on exactly the same basis in the eyes of the law. Sexual acts between consenting males over the age of 16 are decriminalised. Males under 16 are given exactly the same protection from sexual exploitation as are females below the same age.

As well, gay men and lesbians are given greater protection against discrimination by employers, landlords, and others on the basis of their sexual orientation, by the extension of the provisions of the Human Rights Commission Act to cover them.

The success or failure of the right-wing campaign against the bill is not an issue that concerns only gays. The campaign's aim is to prevent an extension of democratic rights and to drive back social progress. As such, it poses

a big challenge to the interests of working people as a whole.

The right-wing drive against the reform bill is part of a broader assault on all human rights. It is not taking place in a vacuum. Rather, it is being spurred on by a general offensive of the ruling capitalist class in this country against the living standards and democratic rights of all working people. And it is the capitalist rulers who, while not taking direct responsibility for leading the anti-gay campaign, will be the ones to benefit if it is successful.

Right-wing bigots

In order to carry through this offensive, the ruling class must reduce working people's expectations, narrow the scope of our rights, and eventually strip the working class of the democratic rights we most need to organise and defend ourselves.

A look at the groups and individuals organising the campaign makes this clear. Most of these anti-gay bigots would just as readily carry signs against women's rights, in support of Anzus [Australia, New Zealand, United States military pact] and New Zealand's other imperialist military alliances, in support of "voluntary" unionism, and the All Black tour of South Africa,* or against Pacific Island immigration to New Zealand.

Norm Jones, for example, is known for his outspoken support for Anzus and for his hostility to — among others — unions and the anti-apartheid movement. On a 1983 visit to South Africa with former National Party MPs Pat Hunt (now a leader of the pro-tour group Spir) and Bob Bell, Jones told the *Cape Times*: "Education isn't everything — we've got educated Maoris in New Zealand who still dance around chanting 'Kill the white man.'"

Oppose women's rights

One issue that unites all these right wingers is their opposition to women's rights — particularly the right to safe, legal abortion.

The evangelical churches which have organised many of the public meetings also played a major role in organising the campaign against ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. They helped organise the contingents of right-wing women who disrupted the open women's forums organised by the Labour government late last year.

Jones, Braybrooke, and Lee are all promi-

* Opponents of apartheid have campaigned against the tour of New Zealand's national rugby team, called the All Blacks, to South Africa. — IP

nent opponents of abortion rights. So are the Society for the Promotion of Community Standards, the Salvation Army, the Catholic church, and Concerned Christians (the organisers of the pickets outside Auckland abortion clinics throughout much of 1984).

Des Dalgety, who chaired the April 15 Wellington Town Hall anti-gay meeting, is a former president of the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child. (As well, he is a big-business lawyer, whose clients include the former prime minister, Sir Robert Muldoon, and was a Muldoon appointee to the board of Air New Zealand.)

Big opportunity

The right wingers have not picked on the issue of homosexual law reform to launch an offensive because of deeply-held moral principles. They have done so because, by making use of the deeply-held anti-gay prejudices which exist, they think they can win.

This is not only a challenge to the labour movement, but also a big opportunity to deal these forces a blow. In this context, the passing of the Homosexual Law Reform Bill would not only be an important step forward for gays, but would advance the class struggle as a whole.

To turn back and defeat this right-wing campaign, however, a strong response from working people and their organisations is necessary. So far, however, the trade union movement and its leadership has been silent on the issue despite the fact that the anti-gay rights petition is being widely circulated through factories and other workplaces.

The union movement needs to take up the fight against the right-wing's campaign to defeat the reform bill. In the process, it must explain what is at stake for working people as a whole in this battle.

Extend rights

It must explain that workers and their organisations have a vital stake in combating all forms of discrimination and oppression. This process must include constantly struggling to broaden the scope of democratic rights.

Any extension of democratic rights strengthens the working class. For example, the idea that we have a right to our own private lives, that the state has no business poking around in our bedrooms, benefits not only gays; it benefits all working people. Similarly, anything that undermines the ability of the police to harass or terrorise any oppressed group strengthens the working class.

And dealing a blow to the right wing on this issue will also make it easier to defeat them on other issues.

In order to explain this clearly, it is also necessary to confront the reactionary myths promoted by the anti-gay bigots — for example, that homosexuality is “perverted,” that it “threatens the whole fabric of society,” or that homosexuals are child molesters.

Divide and rule

These lies are like claims that a woman's place is in the home under the domination of her husband, or that whites are superior to Maoris or Pacific Islanders. They are tools of the ruling class to divide workers among themselves. As such, they need to be firmly rejected by all working people.

The anti-gay bigots have been dealt an unexpected blow by the way in which public protests against their campaign have developed. It is important that these protests continue and

reach out to others for support. Above all, they need to be visible, in order to demonstrate that the bigots do not have it all their own way and that support for gay rights exists in New Zealand.

Supporters of gay rights in the unions should actively support and participate in these protests, as well as seeking to involve their unions in them. As well, the labour movement as a whole should demand that the parliamentary caucus of the Labour Party vote *as a party* in support of the bill, rather than hiding behind a so-called “conscience” vote.

At the same time, by confronting the right-wing defenders of capitalist rule head on, supporters of gay rights are providing a militant example of the way forward for the working class as a whole in order to advance its needs and interests. □

Supporters of bill mobilize

By Alec Campbell

[The following is excerpted from an article that appeared in the April 26 issue of *Socialist Action*, a fortnightly newspaper published in Auckland, New Zealand, that reflects the views of the Socialist Action League, New Zealand section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

Supporters of gay rights are mobilising as never before to oppose the campaign against the Homosexual Law Reform Bill which has been launched by some of the country's most right-wing figures and organisations.

The right-wing campaign, which was initiated by Labour MP Geoff Braybrooke and National Party MPs Norm Jones and Graeme Lee, has been highly public. A petition has been launched and distributed through shopping centres, workplaces, schools, hospitals, and door-to-door. The anti-bill campaigners aim to get a million signatures before its closing date on May 1. The Salvation Army and a group called Catholics United for the Faith have played a major role in the distribution of the petition.

The three MPs have also been conducting a national speaking tour. These meetings have been organised by the evangelical churches or by groups such as the Society for the Promotion of Community Standards.

In response to this right-wing campaign, counter-protests organised by supporters of the reform bill have been equally public. In several centres, for example, there have been pickets outside Salvation Army and Catholic church services.

In Wellington, flying pickets of 20 or more pro-bill activists have been speaking out against the street stalls set up to canvass signatures for the right-wing petition. The gay rights activists explain to passers-by what the Homosexual Law Reform Bill sets out to do,

and expose the lies being told to promote the petition.

Supporters of gay rights have also turned out in large numbers at the public meetings being held for Jones, Braybrooke, Lee, and other right-wing opponents of the reform bill. On April 15, for example, a public meeting at Wellington Town Hall was brought to an early close by vocal protests against the reactionary garbage from the speakers' platform. About half of the audience of more than 1,200 people were supporters of gay rights.

On April 14 a televised debate was held between supporters and opponents of the Homosexual Law Reform Bill at Otago Boys High School. Speakers in favour of the bill included its sponsor, Labour MP Fran Wilde, gay activist Dr. Ian Scott, and trade unionist Chris Trotter. Speakers against included Geoff Braybrooke and John Kennedy, the editor of the Catholic weekly *The Tablet*.

Following the debate, two-thirds of the audience of nearly 500 voted in favour of the reform bill.

The counter-mobilisation against the right-wing campaign has scored a number of other successes. For example, Geoff Braybrooke has announced that he is pulling out of the national speaking tour. And an anti-bill meeting organised for April 22 by the Wanganui branch of the Salvation Army was cancelled.

Supporters of gay rights are continuing to mobilise to win support for the reform bill. Gay Pride Week has been reactivated, and brought forward a month to late May. There are public meetings planned, and a rally and march during Gay Pride Week. Stickers, leaflets and badges have also been produced. □

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10 AND 20 YEARS AGO

Intercontinental Press

Africa Asia Europe Oceania The Americas

May 26, 1975

On May 17 a significant blow was delivered to racist forces in the United States as about 15,000 persons from throughout the country mobilized in the streets of Boston to demand desegregation of the public-school system.

A popular slogan on the march was: “Twenty-one years is long enough!” — a reference to the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision outlawing racial segregation of the schools. The 1954 decision, saying that segregated schools were inherently unequal, helped give momentum to the civil rights movement in the 1960s. This movement began in the South, where segregation of schools and other public facilities was enforced by law.

In the late 1960s some concessions were won in the form of court-ordered plans to break down the de facto segregation of the schools. Since Blacks were generally segregated into separate neighborhoods, the only way to desegregate the schools was through transporting children in buses.

Over the past several years, many Democratic and Republican party politicians have been waging a campaign against busing for school desegregation. The antibusing drive is part of an offensive aimed at beating back the gains that have been made by the Black struggle for equal rights. With the deepening of the economic crisis, this drive has intensified.

In Boston this racist offensive has taken its most vicious form, with the mobilization of right-wing gangs of whites to terrorize Black children being bused into schools in the white areas.

WORLD OUTLOOK

PERSPECTIVE MONDIALE

(Predecessor of *Intercontinental Press*)

May 21, 1965

Mexico City saw its biggest demonstration in years when 20,000 demonstrators, mostly students accompanied by faculties and secondary-school teachers, poured through the center of the city in a bitter protest against the U.S. occupation of Santo Domingo and U.S. aggression in Vietnam.

At the head of the parade a single man marched carrying a Dominican flag. Sample slogans among the sea of placards and banners following him read: “Johnson: History Will Call You Assassin!” “Today Vietnam and Santo Domingo, Tomorrow Mexico!” “Yankees Remember the Alamo!” “Let Us Be Active Today, Not Radioactive Tomorrow!” The slogan, “Yankees, Go Home!” could be seen everywhere. A huge banner carried but two eloquent words, “Yankees Murderers!”

Women in Cuban revolution today

Part one of Fidel Castro's speech to Federation of Cuban Women

[The following is the first half of a speech by Cuban president Fidel Castro at the close of the Fourth Congress of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), March 8.

[In the second part of the speech, which we will print in our next issue, Castro discussed the role of the FMC in education, child-rearing, and defense of the revolution, as well as the economic and social crisis facing other Latin American countries.

[The text of this speech is taken from the March 24 issue of the English-language *Granma Weekly Review*, published by the Cuban Communist Party. Bracketed material is by *IP*.]

* * *

Distinguished Guest Delegations;
Comrades All:

The program has been intense in terms of what has been done and what still remains to do; (APPLAUSE) the time has been scarce for both organizing ideas and for expressing them. Therefore, I am going to try to synthesize and be as brief as possible. (APPLAUSE)

My impression, which is shared by many comrades, is that a great Congress has been held. (APPLAUSE) I even heard some comments that surprised me, (LAUGHTER) such as the one made by Comrade Fernández who told me: "There's a great deal of expectation." It must be the second surprise within a period of a few hours (LAUGHTER) because I already mentioned how someone else told me: "At the bus stop there are a lot of men wondering how far all this is going to go." (LAUGHTER)

And now, there is expectation. I don't know if it's positive or negative, although they added that they had a very good impression of the Congress. I don't know if the men are as surprised as I am, or if the women are as hopeful as I am. (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE)

Well, these could be alarmist speculations, because on questioning further, they told me: "No, there's nothing new at the front, every-

Our young women are more prepared, more educated, and more revolutionary . . .

thing's peaceful; no male insurrection has occurred in the country," (LAUGHTER) and there is no reason to think that or for special expectations. The population has been receiving information on everything that has been discussed.

They asked me, "Shall we put it on television?" And I recommended, "Don't put me on television when I'm talking among family within the Congress," and I thought I'd freed myself from worry, if things had been explained absolutely clearly. Oh, but when I read the newspaper I saw that almost everything I said was there, (LAUGHTER) and the worst part was that there was precisely almost everything, because one prefers, in such situations, all or nothing, because even one single word can mean something, have some significance. And especially when the editors — who are definitely not bad — include more ideas than the international editors who have neither the time nor the space.

But some problems are so delicate and complex that when they take out a phrase or three words, I myself doubt what I said (APPLAUSE) when I read it in the newspaper. This is not in any way a criticism of the reporters, who have definitely worked very hard. But some complex topics were discussed here, right? The issue of the fathers' right to be with their hospitalized children, things like that; problems in the discriminatory application of moral parameters and bourgeois vestiges.

It could be said perhaps that morality is not only bourgeois, that there are some concepts that come from the era of slavery, from antiquity, the

Middle Ages, and then the bourgeoisie. There are some principles that always have permanent value and each society adds something or removes something from what we could call the vestiges, and the ways of applying the concepts may be discriminatory and unequal.

Now, we said that these rather complex, very interesting topics which have been discussed — I don't know if this is the cause of the expectation or of the alarm, whatever it might be called, right? — have been dealt with deeply and thoroughly discussed. I think that the correct conclusions have been drawn and that there's nothing at all earthshaking here. The most earthshaking thing happened on January 1, 1959, (APPLAUSE) when the revolution triumphed. Everything else that followed stems from the triumph of that Revolution, spelled with a capital R and without quotes. (LAUGHTER)

The work of the last five-year period, since the 3rd Congress, has been analyzed. The progress is really significant and is reflected in the Report. It can be said that there's been a leap in quality in this regard, as in many other aspects of the revolution. As the Report shows, the organization has grown by 400,000 new members, and it has especially grown among our young women, who are more prepared, more educated, and more revolutionary. We've attained the figure of 2,764,000 or so members, as is reported.

I don't know why Manolo Ortega left out in one fell swoop 14,000 FMC members. (LAUGHTER) because he spoke of 2,750,000. He possibly left out 14,000 or so of the new members who have joined, and without diminishing the merit of those who are less new — as one delegate said — for they are clearly those who are more experienced. I think that all of us are aware of that.

It has grown in quality and in organization. Eighty-three and a fraction percent of Cuban women between 14 and 65 years of age. I don't understand these cutoff points well. That percentage is going to decrease as women live longer and the number of people over 65 in good health increases. In the future you will probably introduce some changes and not deny membership to many retired women or housewives who are perfectly capable of lending their services in the organization.

The cadres' level of preparation has grown in the political sphere as well as in general instruction and the figure is high. Almost 70 percent of the cadres already have a high school education, and four percent have a college education. I expect that these figures will continue to rise.

The work of these five years can be especially measured by the results in all fields. It can be concretely seen that the things which were proposed in the 3rd Congress have been fulfilled and it can even be said that they have been surpassed.

Regarding the problem of women's incorporation into the work force, I recall the worries expressed during the 3rd Congress, given that we didn't know for sure how much the economy was going to grow due to the international economic difficulties that were looming, if we would have enough work for a growing number of women, and even if we ought to emphasize this or not, taking into account the needs, if the situation of young men without work was going to emerge.

Nevertheless, reality has turned out differently. The period during which women's incorporation into the work force grew the most was this one, in all the years of the revolution. The figures appear in the Main Report and demonstrate how 590,000 were employed outside the home at the time of the 2nd Congress, and how it was around 800,000 at the time of the 3rd Congress. It grew by more than 200,000, but it was not so large given that we have seen an increase of more than 300,000 additional women incorporated into the labor force in this last period.

There are two figures: the figure given in the Report, taken some time ago, of 1,100,000 women currently working in the production and service sectors, and the one given by Comrade [Roberto] Veiga [secretary-

general of Cuban Workers Confederation (CTC)] of 1,142,000, which is up-to-date. In other words, 342,000 women have been incorporated into the work force in the last five years.

This has tremendous significance if we consider what was recalled here many times, when it was said that at the beginning the prejudices were such, the situation of inequality was such that it was necessary to make an effort and an entire campaign for the incorporation of women into the work force. This is reflected by the fact that at the triumph of the revolution only 12 percent of the workers were women.

Of course there were many women who wanted to work and had no job at that time and also when that demand was satisfied, we confronted

342,000 women have been incorporated into the work force in the past five years . . .

yet another problem: the difficulties, the prejudices, even the lack of possibilities for women's incorporation into the work force.

At that time there were not the many boarding schools where more than 500,000 junior and senior high school students study today, or the semi-boarding schools attended by more than 400,000 children. Neither did we have the more than 800 day-care centers that we have today. And there were also prejudices; many people, or many families, or many husbands had to be persuaded so that women could join the work force.

If we analyze the fact that today we have more than 37 percent of the labor force composed of women, you can see the progress. Given figures such as this, you wonder what other Latin American countries have more than 37 percent of the labor force made up of women. I don't mean the number of women involved in brothels or certain other jobs which are more or less the same, in bars or other places where there really is no respect or consideration for women, as in other countries.

It reflects a considerable advance, but not only the women working in stores, trade, and other activities which do not require high-level preparation, but also women massively employed in public health, but not in activities which require little preparation, but also thousands and thousands of women working as doctors on higher levels, as nurses with a high educational level, or in laboratories or other areas.

Not just women employed in the field of education, not simply those working in elementary education who have an education past high school, but also teachers in junior high schools, senior high schools, technical institutes, and other kinds of schools, but also in the higher educational levels, where 43 percent of our university professors are women and the same can be said of research centers.

But what's basic is that women are not only those employed in these two areas, but also, as the Report indicates, a growing percentage of women are employed in the most diverse productive activities: in factories, not only as workers but also as high-level technicians, and not only in the textile industry, but also in the machine and many other industries such as the sugar industry which, during other times, were considered the patrimony and the exclusive activities of men.

And figures such as 20 percent or more were already cited for factories such as the machine industry of Santa Clara, or the Moa

More than 50 percent of the students in our universities are women . . .

[nickel processing] complexes, as well as the growing incorporation of women into other activities, not only as technicians, but also as skilled workers, including, for example, construction.

This advance is also reflected by the fact that 53.8 percent of the country's technicians are women, and the advance in this field actually comprises a strategic success, guaranteed by the fact that more than 50 percent of the regular students in our universities are women, that is, they have not only increased in number and percentage, but also in terms of the quality of the work they undertake. This explains, for example, the yearly growth even in relation to the increase in men's jobs.

Here is some data. In 1980, the increase in men's jobs was 0.3 per-



Black Scholar

Woman worker in consumer goods factory in Santa Clara, Cuba.

cent. This would be somewhat logical if the proportion of men working were much greater; 10,000 as part of two million is not the same as 10,000 as part of one million. In the first case, 10,000 signifies a growth of 0.5 percent, and in the second, a growth of 1 percent. Nevertheless, the figures are noteworthy, because during the same year, 1980, the increase in the female labor force was 5.4 percent. In 1981, the increase in the male work force was 2.8 percent, and in the women's, 8.2 percent.

In 1982, the men's increase was 4.7 percent; the women's, 8.3. In 1983, the men's was 5.3 percent and the women's 8.3. In 1984, the men's was 3.2 and the women's 5.7. It's logical that as the number of working women continues to approach the number of working men, these figures tend to even up. It should be taken into account that a considerable number of men work in the country's defense and security branches, although I do not think that it markedly alters the figure. Necessity has obliged us to employ a large number of men in these activities.

A growing number of women are also being incorporated, but, in essence, the total number of men involved in defense and security activities would not basically alter the figures concerning the number of women participating in these activities fundamental for the country. This truly constitutes a revolution in our society and, I think, in Latin American societies.

So many years had to go by in order to achieve this! So many centuries! So many millennia! And it has been the fruit of 26 years of Rev-

olution, spelled with a capital R and without quotes.

A great deal has been achieved in so many fields, in the activities our women are engaged in now, in the respect and admiration they enjoy in our society, in the respectful manner in which women are treated in our country, where certain concepts have been overcome and marginalization has been overcome and dishonorable, indecent activities the capitalist society in our country imposed on women in order to give them a job or provide them with some means of livelihood are a thing of the past.

Still, we are perfectly aware of the fact that we haven't yet achieved complete victory. As we have said on other occasions, one of the most difficult goals, one of the most difficult, prolonged, and longest-range

One of the most difficult tasks the revolution must take on has to do with discrimination against women . . .

tasks the revolution must take on has to do with discrimination against women, which still exists in a certain measure in our society for diverse causes — some subjective and other objective — which we still haven't been able to overcome.

This matter was discussed at length in the Congress. Practically a whole day was devoted to the question of women's access to work, to the difficulties that still exist in relation to various forms of discrimination, and questions having to do with promotion.

I think that we can get an idea of the scope of a revolution when we can say that in this period there was the largest incorporation of women into the work force, an increase of about 50 percent, from 800,000 to 1,142,000, an increase of between 40 and 50 percent. If the arithmetic and math I learned in school in my time — doubtlessly not as good as what is being taught now — does not deceive me, 800,000 when compared to 342,000 is over 40 percent in only five years.

And yet we spent a whole day discussing these problems. This shows that we are dealing with our difficulties practically to the last details.

For example, every time some form of discrimination is made evident, it isn't the number of cases of discrimination that irritates us; a single case would suffice to irritate us. I'm sure this is not a common occurrence, and I think that in most of our country those men and women with posts of responsibility do follow the policy outlined by the Party. However, regardless of the fact that this is not a common occurrence, if a single case of discrimination exists we must combat it.

Attention was drawn here to a number of cases in which a man and a woman with similar skills applied for the same job and the man was preferred over the woman without the question of capability being taken into account, or simply because one of the applicants was a woman or maybe because of concern over the possibility of pregnancy and the inevitable absence from work on certain occasions. This type of incident rightfully irritates us.

There are still other cases which are an even greater source of irritation, for example, when two women apply for the same job and one of them is preferred over the other one because of personal interest or because of her looks. (APPLAUSE) This reminds us somewhat of some disgraceful practices typical of a capitalist society, and I don't think that a real revolutionary, a conscientious human being, would ever allow himself to be motivated by such criteria.

The matter of evaluations was also discussed at length, and we heard Comrade Veiga tell us all about the measures that are being taken in that direction and the efforts that are being made to eradicate the criteria on which unfairly — we might even say inconsiderately, because certain factors are not taken into account — the evaluation of women in work centers is based. I believe that we will also overcome these difficulties.

In this context, the Congress also dealt with objective problems that lead to the women bearing the bulk of certain responsibilities related to the home, the family, and the children, despite the provisions of the Family Code, which are not strictly juridical but rather, in the main, of a political and moral character and have borne fruit especially among the younger generation.

But there are real and objective circumstances, such as the fact that in

certain institutions — in this case it had to do with the hospitals and also the day-care centers in relation to the children's adaptation period — where fathers are restricted from engaging in certain activities, such as being able to stay with a sick child during a period of hospitalization or other similar circumstances. Examples were given of fathers whose wives were carrying out internationalist missions or were ill or had some problem that prevented them from accompanying the child in the hospital and yet the fathers could not stay with their children because it was prohibited by the children's hospital.

Also brought up were other problems having to do with companions for a person in the hospital when men were obliged to carry out this function. This does not mean that every sick person must have someone to stay with him while in the hospital. Generally speaking, an adult has no need for a hospital companion but he can have people visit him. A child is a different case, a child is much more in need of a companion, and the presence of the mother or a specific relative can contribute to the care and recovery.

Our hospital system had already taken a great step forward in this regard, and this was demonstrated at the time of the dengue epidemic, when all the children's hospitals were filled to capacity. We wouldn't have had nurses to take care of those children and above all with the same love and care that a mother gives as a round-the-clock nurse.

It was a step forward, yet there were many cases in which the mother was not able to accompany the sick child, and I repeat, having someone to stay with those children was much more important than with adults. Adults have visitors, but there are cases when they do need someone with them, contributing to the treatment and to the patient's state of mind. But men were forbidden to act as companions.

All these questions were discussed, objective factors were analyzed including the characteristics of men and women. Not everybody was in agreement in this regard. The doctors said they were afraid that men's behavior would not be the same. It's not surprising, if we take into account the education they received and that of a specific society for quite a long time.

However, all the problems, all the objective possibilities were discussed that would enable us to introduce this practice in an organized fashion in our pediatric hospitals, analyzing hospital by hospital or in those maternity hospitals with the adequate facilities. For one of the greatest problems was created by the large wards of the old hospitals we inherited. We don't have such problems in the new hospitals. It was much easier to discuss this problem in relation to the Hermanos Ameijeiras Hospital, given the type of hospital, with small rooms for one or two persons.

All these factors were taken into account. We heard what the Ministry and some doctors had to say, and it was decided in principle to start im-

If a single case of discrimination exists we must combat it . . .

plementing this system first in the pediatric hospitals and later in the others following a thorough study.

It's likely that we'll meet with all the hospital directors to discuss the matter in depth, all the possibilities, what we should do and how we should do it. We'll listen to everyone's opinion, the way we did when we had problems in the schools of medicine and we met with the professors. On one occasion we met right here in this theater with thousands of professors of medicine to discuss important questions related to the teaching of medicine.

We will do this the right way, without creating problems of disorganization or of any kind in our hospitals. But we must study the possibility of putting this policy into practice, and this would do away with a regulation that in many cases creates difficulties for a person, whether sick or healthy, who has a relative in the hospital. Since the prohibition was absolute, there have been many cases when they were difficult to deal with.

Now not only the difficult cases will have this option but rather in every case the couple will make the decision as to which one of the two will assume the responsibility. Only the family can have the last word in



George Johnson/IP

A young pioneer.

this regard, for this cannot be administered or applied in any other way.

The State Committee on Labor, Wages, and Social Security expressed its concern that this might lead to breaches of discipline or pretexts to be absent from work. The response was that this should not be a limiting factor, that we have much better means to do political work to combat absenteeism than resorting to a prohibition which, on the one hand, discriminated against men — who perhaps had won the right to this privilege — and on the other, constituted an obstacle for the promotion of women and to their incorporation into the work force.

These are all new problems. Several years ago, the opinion was that not even the mother should be with the child. Progress was made and the new ideas caught on — for which I believe we owe a great deal to the younger generation — the problem was tackled correctly and it's going to have a correct solution. This is also applicable in the case of the day-care centers, as I've already said, and in other activities in which concepts, habits, or factors that can block the application of a specific policy were contributing to discrimination and limiting the women's possibilities for advancement.

Also discussed were the moral standards I've already referred to, having to do with the appraisal of men's and women's behavior. It isn't a case of having the women adopt the men's bad habits, lack of a sense of discipline or whatever they are called; if a habit is to be adopted it should be the best, not the worst.

As I explained — although it was not mentioned in the papers — we weren't trying to establish any codes of moral conduct. In fact, I said that socialism still hadn't made any efforts to establish a code of morals in this fashion. I believe that the revolution gives rise to new values, new ideas, more humane and more solidary principles and I don't know if some day someone will decide to include them in a code.

I believe that we should draw the best values from society and from man as well. Those are the values we must disseminate and extend, above all the values of solidarity, the struggle against selfishness, the struggle against irrational tendencies human beings may harbor.

Every society is based on specific values, but one thing that cannot be allowed is the application of certain standards and values for the men and others for the women. I don't know whether this was the cause of the rumors at the bus stops or the expectation that Fernández was talking about. I don't believe it is and, in any case, we'd have to find out how old the rumormongers are. (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE)

A number of questions having to do with the promotion of women were discussed and attention was drawn to some progress that had been

We must disseminate and extend above all the values of solidarity, the struggle against selfishness . . .

made in that direction in some fields. It was also pointed out — and not for the first time, either — that over 50 percent — I think over 60 percent — of the leadership cadres in the Federation of Students in Intermediate Education are women, that the figure in the Federation of University Students is 48 percent, and that later on the same percentage of leadership posts was not reflected in the work centers.

It was mentioned that in the trade union sector a large number of women hold posts with great responsibility. However, this is nothing new. In this sector as well as in others, especially at the grass-roots level, the level is 47 percent, a substantial figure considering that in the labor force the men outnumber the women by a wide margin. We said that 37 percent of the workers are women, and this means that 63 percent of the labor force is male.

In this respect, in an analysis of the causes that may limit promotion, it was found out that sometimes this is due to various causes, among them objective problems such as those we mentioned before: the enormous burden women must bear when they are workers and have to accompany their children, their mothers, or their grandmothers when they are hospitalized, plus do the shopping, take the family clothes to the dry cleaners and even to the laundromat. By the way, the number of laundromats has increased and they are considered a great help to women.

Ah, and why do we say they are a great help to women? Because they are the ones who still have to go the laundry, the dry cleaners, and the laundromats and, quite likely, they also do the cooking and the shopping. This is why we discussed here the improvement of services, the repairs of TV sets, radios, and washing machines. Attention was drawn to the improvements that had been achieved in these services and they were seen as helping lighten the women's load.

But the reason why they help the women is because it's the women who still bear the brunt of the work.

I don't know how women scientists and women doctors manage to do so many things. I imagine they are pretty busy. I guess they do these

One thing that cannot be allowed is the application of certain standards for men and others for women . . .

chores as well, there's nothing dishonorable in doing them. But I wonder if this growing force of women technicians could also help men understand that they should cooperate in these activities. (APPLAUSE)

We said it was this enormous load that makes promoting women more difficult. There is also the prejudice as to whether women are capable of holding leadership posts. It goes without saying that the struggle is against the subjective factors, for practically all the trouble is due to subjective factors, and against all the vestiges of machismo we have inherited. I don't want to hold any specific country responsible, but I believe we have inherited something from the Arabs and the Spaniards, given

that the Arabs were in Spain for about 800 years and the Spaniards were here for about 400 years.

Of course, we have our cultural heritage; blood ties, cultural ties and so forth. I'm not criticizing. I'm dealing with history, which is not the same thing. I have no intention to offend anybody and I have due respect for every country's customs and beliefs.

I repeat, we respect the customs and beliefs of every country, but we live in a different country, in different times, with different ideas and concepts and in the midst of a revolution. Although this question of machismo is not limited to Latin America or the Arab countries. There's plenty of machismo and a lot of discrimination against women in the Western capitalist countries. Suffice it to read the reports published by the press.

Only yesterday we were talking about what is happening in the United States and other Western countries, where women are paid half the wages the men are paid for doing the same job. This is a generalized

I believe the men in our country have shown some progress in overcoming their prejudices . . .

phenomenon, because some of these problems do not stem from religious concepts or national ideas or customs. They are the result of a system of capitalist exploitation, which sees to it that women are exploited to the limit.

What's more, this system does not exploit only the women and discriminates against them. Often it also exploits children and makes them the victims of discrimination.

So we have to struggle against such realities and such discriminatory concepts. We must go on educating, creating an awareness not just among the men but also — and I would dare to say above all — among the women. (APPLAUSE)

I believe the men in our country have shown some progress in overcoming their prejudices and in this connection, when it comes to prejudices against women, they may have even progressed more than the women, given the fact that many women still think or believe that such and such a task can be better handled by a man, that such and such a job can be better done by a man, because men do not have to give birth, or bear a child, as the head of the Güines hospital put it.

And here, looking at Nicolás Guillén [one of Cuba's foremost poets], I don't know whether it would be more poetic to say "give birth" to or "bear a child." (LAUGHTER) Anyway, a poet would say "bear a child" or "bring a new being into the world with the first light of dawn," etc. (LAUGHTER) The head of the Güines hospital would say that the woman bore a child in a pool of water; (LAUGHTER) but don't think I'm talking about a swimming pool, it's rather a new technique of childbirth which hasn't yet been generalized but it's in an experimental phase. It's considered superior, and with this technique babies are born in water — here's our hope to win some future Olympic medals in swimming! (APPLAUSE)

That for such reasons — men being unable to carry out that natural, social, whatever you want to call it, function — a man is better suited for certain things because men do not get pregnant. (LAUGHTER) and so will not be needing maternity leave, a period to take care of the baby, and for these reasons and others he won't have to be at the hospital with the child because that's prohibited.

And there are some women who, naturally, based on certain objective realities are reasoning things out that way. We must, on the one hand, gradually lift the irrational prohibitions, while introducing additional facilities for women, because that also counts, particularly in the face of old concepts and customs.

But there you are, the day-care center is as useful for the father as it is for the mother, more so when the father also shares the responsibilities, if they don't have a day-care center he will have to stay home with the child. Some material development is still needed, but there are subjective elements that we must struggle against, fight against.

Actually, it's admirable, because based on the fact that a large part of

the burden still falls on women, it's notable that there's a growing number of women who, despite this reality, work, distinguish themselves, fulfill their duties! It's a fact.

So, what are we now seeing, yes, what are we seeing now? In the junior and senior high schools we see that in actual practice the girls have better grades than the boys, they're more disciplined, they study harder.

In selecting the students for the Finlay contingent of medical students we find that we've had to resort to quotas, because if we go strictly by their school records, two out of every three applicants would be women. (APPLAUSE) And for the sake of convenience we try to have a similar number of young men and women — for different jobs, for different missions, even considering the possibility of marriage between medical students in which case the family wouldn't have to be split up when they go on an internationalist mission.

Also, we do not only depend on overcoming our prejudices, because on some internationalist missions or countries where these missions are carried out, we must also bear in mind the mentality that prevails in the country where these missions are carried out — and we cannot believe that just because we have overcome some of our prejudices the rest of the world has also overcome such prejudices. As a result, we have had to resort to quotas to achieve more or less half women and half men.

But there's also a limit in their records. No one can have marks below 90 points, and as a result generally 52 percent women and 48 percent men are selected, because in many provinces there aren't enough men with 90 points, and since we will not violate the principle of not accepting anyone with less than 90, we have to increase the number of women. (APPLAUSE) On occasions, the minimum of the girls being admitted is 91 or 92; in some provinces it is difficult to gain admittance with 93, for they have better records.

We have been analyzing the labor figures. Between 1980 and 1984, of every ten persons who stopped working seven were men and three women. Over 96 percent of the women stayed on the job during the period, higher than the percentage of men during the last period. I asked Veiga and the figure of 85 percent of women who complied with the emulation program is higher than the percentage of men. (APPLAUSE)

In the militia the women are more punctual and more disciplined than the men. (APPLAUSE)

And so it goes with many other activities; in reality, women's social behavior is far better than the men's. Then, what factors are there that can prevent or can serve to explain the few promotions of women?

I say that the prejudices in men and to a large degree in women must both be struggled against.

Now, such realities do exist, but we simply can't wait for them to be overcome so that women may be promoted, or else wait for women to be promoted so that they change some of their concepts or prejudices. One

In reality, women's social behavior is far better than the men's . . .

problem mentioned was that on many occasions a woman was about to be promoted and that same woman said, "No, because I have such and such tasks," or else other women comrades said to her, "No, don't take that responsibility for such and such a reason."

It is true that those objective factors we were talking about do exist. The difficulties involved in that are made even worse by the development of a certain mentality, as in the case of a woman nominated to the office of People's Power delegate who does not wish to be elected in spite of her qualifications and the fact that she had been nominated.

Some of these factors or of these prejudices on the part of women, coupled with the prejudices on the part of men, plus the objective factors, all serve to explain why only 11 percent of circumscription delegates [to local bodies of People's Power] are women.

The masses nominate their delegates in an absolutely free manner and elect them in an absolutely free manner — for those delegates who constitute the basis of People's Power in the municipality, in the province, in the nation, are not nominated by the Party. They're nominated in an absolutely free manner and without the participation of the Party, by the

neighbors in each circumscription and elected by them.

And yet, only 11 percent of the circumscription delegates are women. When it comes to provincial delegates, the proportion of women is somewhat higher and in the National Assembly the figure is 22 percent. Of course, the work on the National Assembly is rather different.

All of this ought to give us a clear idea that there are still objective factors and subjective factors which make the promotion of women difficult, and since the talent, revolutionary capabilities, spirit, and sense of responsibility of our women are proven, it is the duty of our society, our revolution, our Party, and our state to wage a resolute struggle in order to gradually overcome such difficulties. And this is precisely what the most discussed points during the Congress were about.

Of course, the Report reflected many other things: the important work the FMC does in the health field, the different health promotion campaigns it is involved in, the work of more than 58,000 health volunteers. This has contributed considerably to improving our health indices, the reduction of mortality in the first year of life, between the ages of one and five, between five and 16, the longer life expectancy, the early detection of cancer, all of which have helped save many lives.

This is very important now and it will continue to be so in coming years in our efforts to further improve the indices which can and should be improved. The infant mortality rate is down to 15 per 1,000

The prejudices in men and to a large degree in women must both be struggled against . . .

live births. It is one of the lowest, we are among the top 15 countries in the world; but we must keep on working to cut down the rate if only by fractions. I'm sure we'll do it but we'll have to make a special effort this year.

We had raised the need for all provinces . . . because three provinces had a rate of less than 13: City of Havana, Matanzas, and Camagüey, while others had higher figures: 17 or 18. The eastern provinces have the highest rate. Just yesterday I received the data for this year, and this year, up to February 26, unfortunately the rate has been higher, about 1.6 or 1.7 points higher, although in some provinces the rate declined and in others it increased. In particular, there was an increase in City of Havana due to a high incidence of acute respiratory problems.

We must go into this further and see what factors — whether there's

a new virus, the weather — what objective factors and what subjective factors could have contributed to the increase. We must go into this because having begun the year with problems, we run the risk of not reducing the rate this year and even ending up with a slightly higher rate.

The Party, People's Power must delve into the issue; no index can be neglected, especially this one which is so important. We must really see what can and should be done, but I think we must intensify our effort

We must intensify our effort where all health services are concerned . . .

where all health services are concerned. The women, the Federation, have fought a consistent battle on this front. I think the country's success is in large measure due not just to the work of the doctors and the health organization but also to that of the mass organizations.

There is something which has a bearing on the mortality rate and also on the health of women, and that is the problem of early or premature motherhood which is undoubtedly an issue that requires the country and especially the Federation to make a particular effort.

There are cases in all provinces but especially in the eastern ones and the mountain regions, with very early marriages and women giving birth very young, in adolescence, who have not reached full development. The experts say that this causes great risks to the woman's health and can lead to a number of different problems for the mother, with a wide range of consequences as a result of adolescent pregnancy and motherhood.

I think we must make known this information: in what ways women can be affected by adolescent pregnancy, and also the fact that it affects the child, not just in terms of the mortality rate, in view of the circumstances of pregnancy in mothers who do not yet have the required physical condition to sustain pregnancy and delivery, together with lack of experience.

Thus, the number of deaths increases, but that's not all; the incidence of illnesses of various kinds increases, such as those known as congenital diseases, including those of a mental nature caused by oxygen deficiency, etc. That is, there is a threat to both mother and child of a physical and mental nature.

Realizing this, we must give more publicity and develop awareness of the issue in order to reduce and then overcome the factors leading to adolescent motherhood.

[To be continued.]

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Peasants in Isfahan win demand

Fought for more equitable ration coupons

By Ali Sahand

The Iranian peasants, who played an important role in the overthrow of the shah in 1979, have been staunch defenders of the revolution since, particularly on the battlefield against the imperialist-inspired Iraqi war.

In defending the revolution from imperialist attack, they have also put forward their own demands. Some recent events in Isfahan province illustrate the problems facing the peasantry and their efforts to improve their situation.

The events need to be seen in the context of the revolution as a whole and of the Iraqi war. They are also interconnected with the struggles of urban workers. Many peasants who live close to cities also hold urban factory jobs. At the same time, a number of city workers live in the villages, because the cost of urban housing is very high.

The Iranian peasants have participated in the war effort in massive numbers. Villages have their own units of the *basesej*, the volunteer military corps. So many young peasants have died in the war that each village has its own "Flower Garden of Martyrs," where those who have fallen are buried.

Life under shah

To understand why the peasants are willing to die to defend the revolution, it is necessary to look back at what life was like for them under the shah. Before the 1979 revolution, each village was nominally ruled by a government representative, but in fact it was run by a big landlord or a *khan*, a local chief beholden to the big landowners. The peasants either worked directly for a landlord or, if they worked their own land, they still had to give a portion of their produce to the landlord. Otherwise, armed thugs paid by the landlord would beat them up or kill them.

In many villages, peasants were humiliated by the rule that a bride had to spend the first night after her wedding with the *khan*.

Illiteracy in the rural areas was well over 90 percent. Infant mortality was also very high.

The shah neglected development of the countryside and the needs of poor peasants. He turned large amounts of land into cash-crop production. He ruined agriculture, transforming Iran from a country self-sufficient in food to one dependent on food imports from imperialist-owned companies.

Added to this was the fact of racial discrimination. The majority of Iranians from oppressed nationalities live in the countryside.

When Iranians rose up in 1979 to overthrow the shah, it was a revolution in the villages as well as in the cities. Peasants moved to overthrow their local *khans*. The landlords' thugs and rural police were disarmed. Village coun-

cils were elected, and remain the local governing bodies today.

In many villages the peasants divided up the land of the big landowners who fled because of the revolution. The lands of *khans* were also taken over. The peasants were not given legal ownership of this land, however. Yet few returning landlords have dared show up in the villages to claim their land. They know the peasants will not give it up easily.

Through the *Jihad-e Sazandegi*, the reconstruction crusade of young people from the cities, schools, health centers, and hospitals were built in the villages.

When the Iraqi invasion began almost five years ago, the peasants correctly saw this as an attempt to return the old rule of the landlords and its degrading effects. Thus they joined the defense effort in massive numbers.

Peasant demands

At the same time, the peasants have pressed the government for two basic demands: 1. legalization of the ownership of the expropriated land which peasants are now working; and 2. an increase in the amount of the national budget going to credit, loans, equipment, and other things needed by the peasants.

Better-off peasants have been more successful in getting loans and tractors at government-set prices, which are lower than those on the black market. There has been some debate on the issue of rural aid in Iran's parliament, with some members criticizing the proposed new national budget for its lack of attention to the countryside.

Peasants have also objected to aspects of the country's rationing program. This was put into effect five years ago by the government when the war began and when hoarding and speculation in food sent prices sky high.

Ration coupons distributed in the villages are different from those in the cities. More supplies have been available in the urban areas, and some peasants have argued that they should get the same kind of coupons as city residents.

In early 1985, about 300 representatives of village councils met in a seminar near Isfahan to discuss the question of land and of more government aid. The meeting also pledged to continue support to the war fronts.

In February, peasants in the village of Dehno, a few miles outside Isfahan, waged a battle over ration coupons. They asked the state government to give them the same coupons as those distributed in Isfahan. They thought this would enable them to obtain more food. With their rural coupons they had not re-

ceived enough food, or even the amount supposedly guaranteed by their coupons. They knew more food was available in the city.

In Isfahan, an important strike had been won a few months earlier by construction workers at the big steel plant. (See May 13, 1985, *Intercontinental Press*.) Dehno villagers, who have lost about 200 young men (out of a population of 6,000) in the war, felt that since they struggled too, they could not be branded counterrevolutionaries by anyone.

The peasants reached the conclusion that talking with government officials in Isfahan would not get them anywhere, so they decided to talk a different language.

Highway occupied

On the morning of February 2, Dehno men, women, and children held a sit-in on the highway to demand city ration cards. Members of the village *basesej* unit participated and made sure the occupation was carried out in an orderly manner.

A huge traffic jam resulted as cars and trucks could not get through. Police and Revolutionary Guard units tried but were unable to reopen the road. The peasants told them a representative of the government would have to come speak with them.

The occupation lasted for 24 hours. The protesters ended their sit-in after the governor of Isfahan province told them their demand would be granted.

The protest was big news in the city of Isfahan. Many factory workers spoke of the sit-in with great sympathy. Many felt that the victory of the construction workers' strike had encouraged the people of Dehno to take their action. □

Israeli court slaps wrists of anti-Arab terrorists

Three anti-Arab terrorists were handed light sentences by the Jerusalem district court April 18 after arranging a deal with the prosecutors. They admitted to a number of charges in exchange for the state dropping other more serious accusations.

Dan Be'eri, who received the longest prison term — three years — had been convicted of conspiring to blow up the Dome of the Rock mosque in Jerusalem.

The other two defendants got sentences of 25 to 30 months for membership in a terrorist organization, illegal possession of arms, and stealing weapons from the Israeli army. The 10 months they have already spent in prison will count as part of their sentences.

The trial of 18 other members of the anti-Arab underground is still in progress. They are accused of various illegal acts including planning and carrying out a 1983 armed attack on the Islamic College in Hebron that killed three and wounded 33 and the attempted bombing of five Arab buses in Jerusalem in 1984.