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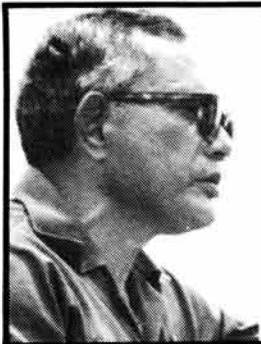
LEBANON

New Slaughter of Palestinians

Attacks by Amal Aid
U.S., Israeli Imperialism



Mourning the victims of assault on Palestinian refugee camps.



'The Revolution Is the People'

Speech by FSLN's Tomás Borge to
Sandinista Defense Committees

Ghana

Masses Strive to
Throw Off Imperialism

Special Feature:

World War II and
the Colonial Nations

New 'pope plot' revelations

By Will Reissner

Could Mehmet Ali Agca — the Turkish ultrarightist gunman now serving a life sentence for shooting Pope John Paul II in May 1981 — really be Jesus Christ reincarnated, as he has repeatedly claimed in recent weeks in an Italian court?

Was Agca's attempt to kill the pope really connected with papal suppression of the third message from Our Lady of Fatima to three Portuguese peasant children in 1917?

Here is what Agca told the court on May 28: "The attempt on the pope's life is connected with the third secret of the madonna of Fatima. I am Jesus Christ reincarnated. Days are numbered for this generation. No one, neither Americans nor Soviets, will be saved. There will be destruction.

"Remember that the pope came to see me in my cell [in December 1983]. I have spoken with the invisible God who showed me in a vision the crucifixion, the resurrection and the ascension. The pope did not say to me 'How?', he said to me 'When?' The pope also said that the meeting with me had been excellent."

This is the same Mehmet Ali Agca whose unsubstantiated statements have provided the only evidence of a supposed Bulgarian and Soviet plot to kill the pope.

Agca's claims to be Jesus Christ reincarnated are not new. A Vatican weekly, for example, reported on them last December. Yet until the trial began, the big-business press around the world studiously ignored such statements, while giving front-page coverage to every Agca claim that there was a "Bulgarian connection."

Agca's bizarre behavior in the trial that opened May 27 is the latest tawdry chapter in a crude, three-year-long slander campaign. The trial illustrates how low the imperialist rulers will stoop to pick up any brush to tar the Soviet Union and its allies.

On trial in addition to Agca are four other Turkish ultrarightists, two Bulgarian diplomats, and a Bulgarian airline clerk. They are charged with having conspired with Agca to assassinate the pope.

Agca's dealings with the other Turks have been extensively documented. But there has never been one shred of evidence to link Agca to the three Bulgarians. The Italian government's case against the Bulgarians rests entirely on Agca's earlier statements that the Bulgarian secret service paid him to shoot the pope and that these three Bulgarians organized the assassination attempt.

Not one witness has ever been found to confirm any of the numerous meetings in restaurants that Agca claims he had with the Bulgarians.

No trace has ever been found of the 3 million West German marks (then worth US\$1.2

million) that Agca claims the Bulgarians paid him.

During the trial, Agca has freely admitted that he "invented" parts of his story about the Bulgarians and has declined to substantiate his other claims.

Even before the trial began, the Italian prosecutor, who built his case entirely on Agca's claims, acknowledged that the Turk is a "despicable mercenary."

As the trial has proceeded, Agca has provided spectators with a daily dose of theatrics. At the start of one courtroom break he announced "I am going to talk with God." At another point he stated he would not testify until he received a signal from the Vatican. On another occasion he cheerfully told the judge, "I can say with certainty that the political and financial center of world terrorism is the Soviet Union."

Through it all, Agca basks in the attention he gets in the courtroom. Michael Dobbs reported in the June 9 *Washington Post*, "He has clearly enjoyed the limelight throughout the trial and occasionally speaks directly to the television cameras rather than to the judges.

"Egged on by American television crews to 'say something to us in English, Ali,' Agca has responded with a ritual, 'I am Jesus Christ.'"

Frequently, Agca glances around to the courtroom spectators to relish their reactions to his latest bombshell.

At one point when spectators in the court erupted in laughter at Agca's latest antics, the presiding judge remarked: "There's not much to laugh about but there is something to cry about."

Giuseppe Consolo, an Italian lawyer representing one of the Bulgarians on trial, commented that "these kinds of remarks [by Agca] do not surprise me in the least. Agca has always been like this. What surprises me is that Italian justice authorities have taken this man seriously for the past three years."

A columnist for the Turin daily *La Stampa*, describing Agca as "a person without scruples," added it is not easy now for our justice system to redirect a trial that has been so polluted and to restore credibility and authority to it."

Yet from the very beginning of the "Bulgarian connection" case, the Italian judiciary's aim has not been to seek the truth. Its goal has been to slander Bulgaria and the Soviet Union.

The case presented by the Italian prosecutor closely followed the hypothesis laid out by Claire Sterling, a Rome-based "journalist" with well-known ties to the Central Intelligence Agency. Sterling claimed that the shooting of the Polish pope had been organized by the Bulgarian secret service on behalf of the Soviet KGB to cripple the Solidarity trade union movement in Poland.

Interestingly, Agca's first mention of any Bulgarian involvement came only after agents of the Italian secret services — the SIDE and SISME — met with him in prison. According to reports in the Italian press, they offered to reduce his life sentence to 10 years if he cooperated with them.

But the "Bulgarian connection" theory, which coincided with the Reagan administration's campaign to paint the Soviet Union as the "focus of evil," falls apart as soon as the particulars are examined.

Agca had first threatened to kill Pope John Paul II during the pope's 1979 visit to Turkey. This death threat was made more than one year before the Solidarity trade union in Poland was organized.

And Agca claims he began working with the Bulgarian secret service to kill the pope in July 1980, one month before the Gdansk shipyard strikes gave birth to Solidarity.

If you believe Agca, the Bulgarian secret agents made no attempt to limit the number of people Agca could implicate if he was caught and told everything he knew.

He claims he met with all three Bulgarians at least a dozen times, sometimes in their own homes with their families present, while the assassination was being planned.

If you believe Agca, on the day of the shooting all three Bulgarians went with him to St. Peter's Square, where the assassination attempt took place, and stayed until one hour before the shooting.

Then after Agca was arrested, the three Bulgarians conveniently stayed in Italy for more than a year, waiting for Agca to break down and implicate them.

When Agca first told his story, he said he knew the Bulgarians only by "code names." The Italian authorities then helpfully showed Agca pictures of 56 Bulgarians in Italy, and let Agca pick three. This method insured that anyone Agca picked would be a Bulgarian.

Although convenient, the method also had its drawbacks. For example, Agca described Sergei Antonov as having a mustache during the plotting. Antonov indeed had a mustache in the picture Agca was shown, but he grew it only after Agca was already serving his life sentence.

Agca now admits that much of the evidence he provided actually had been gleaned from reading newspapers and watching television in his prison cell.

Yet Italian authorities are sticking with their star witness. State Prosecutor Antonio Marini says Agca's claims to be Jesus Christ do not affect his credibility. Marini admits only that "when [Agca] talks about things that are happening in heaven, it is impossible for us to know or not whether he is reliable." □

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Washington sponsors 'contra international'

By Steve Craine

Counterrevolutionary terrorists from four countries, with assistance from the United States and South Africa, met June 1-2 to form an anticommunist and proimperialist alliance they are calling the "Democratic International." A message read to the gathering from U.S. President Ronald Reagan hailed the group, stating that its goals "are our goals."

The conference of "Armed Movements Fighting Against Soviet Expansionism" was hosted in South African-controlled southern Angola by Jonas Savimbi, whose National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) has fought against the Angolan government since that country won independence from Portugal in 1975. UNITA has received direct assistance from the South African government and army and covert aid from the U.S. CIA, despite a 1975 congressional ban on any such aid.

Also attending the conference were Adolfo Calero, head of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN), the largest of Washington's mercenary *contra* groups fighting against Nicaragua; Ghulam Wardak, a U.S.-based spokesman for Islamic Unity of Afghanistan Mujahedeen, a CIA-supported group fighting against the Soviet-aided government of Afghanistan; and Pa Kao Her, a representative of the reactionary Ethnic Liberation Organization of Laos.

Other armed right-wing organizations were invited but said they could not attend. These included the South African-supported Mozambique National Resistance, an unnamed counterrevolutionary Cuban group, and fighters against the Kampuchean government.

Son Sann, whose Khmer Peoples' National Liberation Front is allied with former Kampuchean dictator Pol Pot, sent a "solidarity" message to the conference.

There can be no doubt that this "contra international" is a creature of imperialism. Conference participants, along with a bevy of reporters and some right-wing white South African students, were ferried to Savimbi's "provisional capital" in the small town of Jamba by a South African charter airline flying out of Johannesburg.

Organizing (and presumably funding) the affair was U.S. millionaire Lewis Lehrman, head of Citizens for America, which has lobbied in Washington for more U.S. assistance to Nicaraguan *contras*. Lehrman brought with him a letter from his personal friend Ronald Reagan.

"Around the world," Reagan's message to the group said, "we see people joining together to . . . free their nations from outside domination and an alien ideology. It is a global trend and one of the most hopeful of our times."

Lehrman told reporters that the "central clearinghouse" for the new counterrevolutionary alliance will be in Washington, D.C.

The terrorist alliance stated it will "cooperate" in resisting "Soviet colonialism." So far, the organizers said, their coalition does not involve exchanges of troops, arms, or funds. But, said Calero, "As time goes by, we will definitely implement many ways to cooperate with each other, which will be made known at the appropriate time."

Most of those in the alliance already have a

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far better source of funding than any cooperative agreement among them could produce. The rightist guerrillas in Afghanistan have officially received at least \$250 million from Washington, while Nicaraguan *contra* fighters have gotten about \$80 million from their sponsor.

Immediate projects proposed for the "Democratic International" include lobbying the U.S. Congress for a package of aid for all the anticommunist groups and to repeal the 1975 ban on aid to UNITA. □

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New slaughter of Palestinians

Attacks by Amal aid U.S., Israeli imperialism

By Steve Craine

The brutal siege of three Palestinian camps in the southern outskirts of Beirut, which began May 19, is a terrible blow to the Palestinian people and their struggle to regain their homeland. In the first three weeks of the attacks, which show no sign of abating, hundreds were killed and thousands more injured or left homeless.

The fact that the bloody assault is being carried out by Lebanese, mainly members of the Amal militia based among the oppressed Shiite Muslims, does not make its impact any less reactionary than if the troops of Israeli imperialism or its allies were leading the charge.

In fact, the Amal militia, which is now attacking Palestinian civilians with the help of a section of the Lebanese Army, made a major contribution to forcing Israeli troops to retreat from Lebanese territory this year. Earlier the largely Shiite militia provided a big portion of the fighters who resisted the occupation of so-called peace-keeping forces from the U.S., French, Italian, and British armies.

Nonetheless, Amal's present actions can be nothing but an aid to Israeli and U.S. imperialist aims in the region. Its attack fits right in with the principal goal of the Israeli invasion and three-year occupation of Lebanon — to destroy the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the leadership of the Palestinian national struggle and as an inspiration for oppressed Arab peoples throughout the Middle East.

The Syrian government of President Hafez al-Assad also hopes to benefit from a weakening of the PLO in Lebanon. It continues its policy of subordinating the struggle against Israel to building its influence as a regional power. Amal spokesmen have indicated that the Syrian regime encouraged it to attack the Palestinian camps.

Struggle for the camps

The current fighting began at the Sabra refugee camp, a permanent shantytown of shacks and small cement-block houses just inside Beirut's southern borders. Amal militiamen have maintained checkpoints around Sabra and several other Palestinian camps in Lebanon since February 1984. They have customarily searched residents entering the camps to control the passage of arms. Palestinians suspected of being PLO fighters have often been held for questioning by the militiamen.

But on the night of May 19, when one Palestinian returned from such a detention visibly beaten, an argument erupted and quickly escalated into a gun battle.

The fighting spread to the Shatila and Burj

el-Barajneh camps and some surrounding neighborhoods with large numbers of Palestinian residents. Sabra and Shatila were the site of a bloody massacre by followers of President Amin Gemayel's Phalange Party in September 1982, following the assassination of Gemayel's brother, Bashir. The Israeli Army occupied the area at that time and allowed the massacre to take place.

Washington Post correspondent Julie Flint wrote that after one week of Amal's assault, "Sabra looks much as it did after three months of Israeli bombardments in 1982."

Unlike the 1982 surprise massacre, the Palestinians have been able to face their attackers and defend themselves. Both sides in the current fighting have shelled each other's positions with artillery as well as fighting in the streets with small arms.

Amal and its supporters in the Lebanese Army's Sixth Brigade, which is also mainly made up of Shiites, have used flame-throwers, tanks, and bulldozers to level whole sections of the camps. After less than three weeks of fighting, sources close to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees reported that more than half the houses in Sabra were unsafe to live in and that most of the rest had suffered damage as well. At least 500 people have been killed, and about half the camps' population has fled.

The brutality of the anti-Palestinian assault was indicated by the repeated incidents of wounded Palestinians being taken from hospital wards and finished off by Amal gunmen. In one case, 25 injured people were taken from Gaza Hospital in Sabra and executed. Amal units have also blocked Red Cross ambulances from entering the camps to remove the wounded.

On May 27 the *New York Times* reported that one hospital morgue was so full that bodies were being suspended from the ceiling and a refrigerated truck was parked outside to accommodate the overflow. Of the more than 50 corpses stacked in the truck, the *Times* said, "many had what appeared to be bullet wounds in the head inflicted at close range."

Amal's fight for hegemony

Leaders of Amal have said that their purpose in attacking the Palestinians is to deny the PLO a base in Lebanon from which it could attack Israel. This, they say, is the only way to prevent reprisals by the Israeli army or a repetition of the June 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

Amal's president Nabih Berri, who is also a minister in the imperialist-imposed government of Lebanon, cited fear of such reprisals as

his motivation for attacking the Palestinian camps. Speaking at a May 21 press conference, Berri stated, "We will not permit a return to the situation which existed before 1982" in the southern part of the country. He charged that the Palestinians in the Beirut camps were preparing for a "theatrical return to the south." Ever since the Israeli pullout began, Amal has tried to prevent Palestinians from moving from the Beirut area into southern Lebanon.

Berri is, in fact, concerned about the return of the PLO to southern Lebanon, but not only because it could provide an excuse for a new Israeli invasion. He is also worried about any challenge to his own authority over that region.

Southern Lebanon has the greatest concentration of Shiites, who are the base of the Amal militia and of Berri's political power. Although the Shiites are now the largest single religious group in Lebanon, their influence in the central government has been limited by a constitutional system, imposed by imperialism after World War II, that reserves the most important government posts for Christians and Sunni Muslims.

Berri, a capitalist politician functioning in this framework, has used the Amal militia as the primary base for his political career. Since most PLO fighters were expelled from the country by the Israeli invasion in 1982 and a Syrian-backed armed revolt in PLO ranks in 1983, Amal has grown into the largest military force in southern Lebanon, outmanning even the official Lebanese Army there. Before 1982 the presence of the PLO in southern Lebanon limited the power of Amal and the importance of Berri as a political figure on the national scene.

Berri has demagogically tried to exploit differences within the PLO to give his reactionary actions a radical-sounding image. An Amal statement on May 22 called the Palestinians fighting for their camps "suspicious groups subservient to the United States." The statement continued, "The Amal movement was forced to storm the espionage cells in the Sabra and Shatila camps to purge them of [PLO leader Yassir] Arafat supporters with capitulationist ideas."

But the real extent of Berri's "support" for the Palestinian struggle to regain their homeland was obvious from his May 21 remark that if the Palestinians wanted to fight Israel they would have to do it from other borders.

Amal's ally, the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), has also attempted to blame Arafat and the PLO for the current fighting. The PSP, which is based among Lebanon's Druse people, is officially neutral and some of its

armed units have given tactical assistance to the Palestinians. But PSP leader Walid Jumblatt's May 22 proposal for a "peace" settlement would have required the Palestinian fighters to surrender all their arms to allies of Amal in exchange for verbal promises that Amal had no intention of storming the camps.

PSP leaders have stated that since the fighting began "the alliance between the PSP and the Amal movement... with the complete cohesion of Damascus, is a continuous and solid alliance."

Israeli trap

In citing fear of Israeli reprisals as justification for brutalizing Palestinian refugees, Amal and its Syrian and Lebanese allies fall into a trap that has been carefully prepared by Israeli propaganda and military action.

Since Tel Aviv began withdrawing its occupation army in January under the continuing pressure of massive resistance in southern Lebanon, government officials have repeatedly warned that they reserve the "right" to return in force for any reason, including to punish the local people for real or fabricated attacks on Israel. During the withdrawal, the Israeli Army declared an "iron fist" policy against the civilian population of southern Lebanon.

The three-phase Israeli retreat was officially completed on June 6, the third anniversary of the invasion. After this date, however, while no complete units of the Israeli Army remain in the country, numerous "advisers" are still operating on Lebanese soil, with no timetable for their removal.

Part of the Israeli strategy is to coerce Lebanese by one means or another into policing the area of Lebanon that borders Israel — what Tel Aviv calls the "security belt." The South Lebanon Army, which operates in the "security belt," is funded and organized by the Israeli military and is one important part of this strategy.

And now Israeli propaganda and the brutality of the three years' occupation have convinced some Shiite leaders that Israel must be appeased by controlling the actions of the Palestinians.

As the third and final stage of the pullout was announced in Tel Aviv, Yitzak Rabin, Israel's war minister, explained how his government would blackmail the people of southern Lebanon. "We have not asked the residents of the security belt to defend the state of Israel," he told a news conference. "However, they know that if terrorist actions start up again, they will be the first to suffer; they will be forced to leave their homes and villages. If they want their lives to return to normal, they must see to it that hostile elements — intending to attack Israel — are not allowed into their villages."

Damascus encourages Amal

Like Israeli imperialism, the Syrian government has a long history of interference in Lebanese and Palestinian politics. Since the



A wounded victim of attack on Palestinians at Sabra camp.

civil war of 1975, it has maintained a sizable army on Lebanese soil — currently some 30,000 troops, mainly in the north and in the Bekaa Valley in the east.

Over the past two years, Syrian President Assad has aided opponents of the Arafat leadership of the PLO, including a faction in Arafat's Fatah organization that, under the leadership of Abu Musa, took up arms against their comrades in 1983 leading to the second expulsion of Arafat's forces from Lebanon in December. Damascus has become the headquarters for anti-Arafat factions, and Assad is suspected of having intervened to prevent their participation in a meeting of the Palestine National Council last year.

An official of Amal told the *Christian Science Monitor* how Assad's concern about the PLO's increasing influence in Lebanon led to the attacks on Palestinians in the Beirut camps. "Arafat was getting stronger and stronger, and buying everyone in town," he said. "The Abu Musa group couldn't do the job, so the Syrians pushed us to do it. It's part of the Pax Syriana for Lebanon."

Although Damascus could intervene to stop the massacre in the refugee camps, it has not lifted a finger to stop the slaughter.

Both the Syrian and Lebanese governments rejected a PLO call for a special meeting of the Arab League Council to discuss the situation. Gemayel, Berri, Jumblatt, and other Lebanese figures have all traveled to Damascus, however, to hold private consultations with Assad and his aides concerning the crisis.

When President Gemayel visited the Syrian capital for two days in late May, he appealed for help from the Syrian Army in enforcing order for his government. Syrian troops "could form a strong force capable of implementing such a plan in cooperation with the legitimate Lebanese Army," he told reporters in Damascus. A leading Lebanese daily reported that Assad was considering this request for an expanded role for his armies throughout Lebanon.

The stance of the Syrian government was

underlined June 3 when PLO sources reported that 700 Palestinians had been arrested by Syrian police for demonstrating in Damascus against "the massacre of their brothers in Beirut's camps."

PLO factions fight together

In response to Amal's attacks, nearly all tendencies in the Palestinian movement have closed ranks to defend the camps. Many of the PLO factions that have been campaigning to oust Yassir Arafat from the leadership and have received support from the Damascus regime have united with Arafat supporters under Amal's guns.

Palestinian fighters in the besieged camps interviewed for the *Washington Post* confirmed that the effect of the attack, at least in the camps, was to reunify rival factions. "We are all Palestinian, surrounded by one enemy," one fighter told the *Post*. "All the differences between the... factions have been erased."

Official statements from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) both declared their support for a united struggle against Amal. Both these member organizations of the PLO boycotted the last meeting of the Palestine National Council, held in Jordan in November 1984. Their differences with the Arafat leadership were deepening and they were becoming more closely allied with the Syrian regime since that time. The PFLP recently joined the National Salvation Front (NSF), the Syrian-sponsored coalition of groups opposed to the PLO majority.

Other PLO factions that have been allied with Damascus even longer, including the Fatah breakaway group of Abu Musa that was responsible for escalating differences to the point of armed clashes, have joined with supporters of the PLO majority in the camps. The only PLO tendency that has not condemned the Amal action is Saiqa, which has always taken its orders directly from the Syrian government and military.

Statements by some of the Damascus-based

PLO factions have directly criticized the Syrian government for its complicity in the slaughter. Omar Qatish, a spokesperson for the National Salvation Front, told an Algiers press conference that the Assad regime was supporting Amal.

The deputy secretary-general of the Palestine Liberation Front, which is not a member of the NSF but has been in conflict with Arafat, stated that the Syrians hoped to disarm the PLO under the slogan of opposing Arafat. He also charged that the Syrian government intended to help disarm the Palestinians as part of a deal with the Israeli and U.S. governments, who would then give Assad a free hand in Lebanon.

The fighting in Beirut seems to have shaken

another of Assad's allies in the Arab world. Libyan leader Muammar el-Qaddafi had participated along with Assad in maneuvers designed to sabotage the 1984 meeting of the Palestine National Council. His verbal attacks on Arafat have exceeded anything the Syrian president has ever said. Nevertheless, Qaddafi was impelled to come out clearly against Assad's latest attack on the PLO.

On May 21 Arafat expressed his thanks for a message sent by Qaddafi calling for support to the embattled Palestinians. Later Libyan government statements protested "signs of an attempt to end Lebanon's role as an arena for the struggle against the Zionist enemy." A commentary on Tripoli radio May 23 stated that Amal is "waging a dirty sectarian war. . . . It is

impossible to reconcile Amal's statement that it is hostile to Zionism while it shells the Palestinian camps in Lebanon and slaughters the Palestinian heroes, women, and old people."

The government of Iran publicly declared its opposition to Amal's campaign against the Palestinian camps. Leaders of Amal have in the past sought to identify their movement with the Iranian revolution.

Palestinians in many cities around the world have protested the attacks on the Beirut refugee camps. Supporters of the National Salvation Front held a demonstration in front of the Lebanese embassy in Washington, D.C., to "denounce the atrocities currently being waged by Amal and the Lebanese Army against the Palestinian people in the camps of Beirut." □

Sri Lanka

Regime unveils new repressive laws

Crackdown on Tamil struggle spurs worker protests

By Steve Craine

President Junius Jayewardene has taken a new step in an increasingly severe crackdown on the democratic rights of the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka. His latest proposal, made to the ruling United National Party (UNP) parliamentary caucus on May 24, will establish special martial-law courts to deal with cases of alleged "terrorism" and to combat what the president called "a breakdown in law and order."

The plan will also make every member of parliament directly responsible for the "security" of his or her own district. MPs will have the power to set up local armed units to help carry this out.

The Tamils, comprising 18 percent of Sri Lanka's population, are concentrated in the Northern and Eastern provinces. Years of official discrimination and legal and extralegal violence by the Sinhalese majority have led to growing support in the Tamil community for the demand for a separate state. Some separatist organizations have developed guerrilla units to defend themselves against the central government's occupation army.

Green light for vigilantes

Since the only Tamil party elected to parliament has been boycotting that body since August 1983, giving increased security powers to members of parliament is transparently biased in favor of the Sinhalese. The Tamil United Liberation Front has not participated in parliament since it refused to take an oath disavowing support for separatism.

Jayewardene made it clear his plan will amount to a green light for Sinhalese vigilantism: "My people are saying: 'The terrorist comes and shoots us and then goes off. We have no arms. We have nothing. So give us

arms.'"

As the president described it, the martial law provisions are intended to speed up the judicial process. "Think of those fellows who killed the pilgrims at Anuradhapura," he said, referring to a May 14 attack on a Buddhist shrine, which the government claims was carried out by Tamil separatists. "Supposing they are caught, are they going to have a month or two months, or three months or two years of inquiry? I'm not going to hang them straightaway. But some court will inquire into this outside the normal law."

The incident at Anuradhapura 10 days earlier, in which as many as 150 people were killed had been seized upon by rightist Sinhalese, including some Buddhist monks, to press the government to take further measures against the guerrillas and the Tamil population as a whole.

According to police reports, the Anuradhapura raid began early on the morning of May 14 when about 25 Tamils commandeered a bus in the coastal town of Puttalam and drove 50 miles to Anuradhapura, killing three people along the way. On reaching Anuradhapura, they are said to have shot randomly at people in the bus station and marketplace, switched buses, and headed out of the town, stopping at a temple (considered the most important Buddhist shrine in Sri Lanka), where many more people were killed. Not a single shot was fired in return by Sri Lankan police during this attack.

Later they allegedly attacked a police station in a neighboring town and killed several employees of the Wilpattu game sanctuary, before disappearing into the park's jungles.

Most of the major armed Tamil separatist

groups condemned the killings and dissociated themselves from it.

The Tamils' struggle for civil rights and against racist violence has won the support of several trade unions representing both Tamil and Sinhalese workers.

On March 21 a one-hour work stoppage was held in the Northern Province, despite military repression. Some 150,000 workers participated in the action to condemn army brutality. Some members of the UNP-controlled union joined the strike. The Joint Trade Union Committee, made up of 13 union bodies, which organized the walk-out, had sent a letter to President Jayewardene in December 1984 demanding settlement of the national question on the basis of the right of self-determination for the Tamil people of the Northern and Eastern provinces and the release of all those arrested by the armed forces.

On May Day, the Ceylon Mercantile Union and the Workers' Party of Ceylon held a rally in the capital city of Colombo. Slogans and signs at the rally condemned the government's repression in the Northern and Eastern provinces and demanded restoration of democratic rights throughout the country.

Jayewardene's May 24 martial-law plan follows a long series of repressive measures by the United National Party government. In late November 1984, Jayewardene decreed that every household in the Northern and Eastern provinces would have to furnish police with a list of all its occupants and that no one else would be allowed to stay in the house without explicit permission from the police.

Furthermore, he declared virtually the entire coastline of the two provinces to be a prohibited zone — from 100 meters off shore to 100 meters inland. This move effectively ended the

chief source of livelihood for some 25,000 Tamil fishermen and their families in villages all along the coast.

The government said it was trying to prevent unauthorized travel to and from India across the narrow Palk Strait. Most of the Tamil guerrilla groups have training camps and public offices in the southern India state of Tamil Nadu, where there is widespread sympathy for the Tamil struggle in Sri Lanka.

Jayewardene took his longstanding demand that Indian authorities shut down the Tamil bases to a June 2-3 meeting with Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The Sri Lankan president said he would consider negotiating with Tamil leaders only if the guerrilla groups agreed to disarm.

The Colombo government has also stepped up a program of building armed encampments for Sinhalese settlers in predominantly Tamil areas. As many as 30,000 people may be settled this year in the Wannai area of Northern Province. The original Tamil occupants have been forcibly evicted to make way for these new settlements.

Militarization of Northern Province

An occupation force of about 3,000 government troops is now permanently stationed near Jaffna, the major city in Northern Province. There is, in effect, little local civil authority left in the Jaffna area. Instead, the army exercises its own rule there. In the past nine years, Sri Lanka's military budget has multiplied at least 10 fold. From 1982 to 1984 alone it jumped from \$45 million to \$200 million.

Immediately after the Anuradhapura killings, Jayewardene called for a further boost in military spending.

Atrocities by soldiers are commonplace, and, although the government often claims they are the result of unauthorized individual actions, it does little to prevent them. In an incident just a few days before the attack on Anuradhapura, more than 70 Tamils were killed in the fishing village of Velvetthurai, including some 25 who were herded into a community center into which soldiers then threw hand grenades.

Mary Anne Weaver, writing in the February 8 *Christian Science Monitor*, described the results of the army's occupation on Mannar Island, in the Palk Strait.

"For three miles from the village of Pesalai to Talaimannar, the dense and twisted groves of palmyra and coconut palms resemble Vietnam's defoliated villages after saturation with napalm," she wrote. Mannar community leaders told Weaver the army had burned and cut down the trees to deny cover to guerrillas allegedly infiltrating from India.

"They say that the Sri Lankan Army, engaged in a harsh and often arbitrary campaign of terror here in the north, is intent on transforming Mannar Island into a huge sand dune."

While the government used the Anuradhapura killings to push through new martial law powers, direct reprisals against innocent

Tamils were more immediate.

The day after the attack, six Sri Lankan navy sailors hacked to death more than 40 Tamils on a ferry boat traveling between two islands near Jaffna, at the northern tip of the island.

On May 17, in Anuradhapura, a soldier opened fire on about 25 Tamils waiting to be evacuated to the north. The soldier, described by the army officials as having gone "berserk"

over the killings three days before, killed 6 and wounded 16 before he himself was shot by an officer. The same day soldiers in Kalmunai, on the eastern coast, seized 23 Tamils, forced them to dig a ditch, and then killed them, throwing the bodies in the ditch.

President Jayewardene's latest proposals can be expected to further encourage such brutality against the Tamil population. □

Australia

Vietnam celebrations attacked

Right-wingers fail to halt 10th anniversary meetings

By Nita Keig

SYDNEY — Several recent meetings held to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the liberation of South Vietnam were targets of violent demonstrations by right-wing members of the Vietnamese community in Australia.

On April 30 approximately 60 people viewing the Cuban film *79 Springs of Ho Chi Minh* in a church hall here were besieged by some 250 Vietnamese chanting, "Kill Communists!" Bricks and paint bombs were hurled, smashing every window of the hall. Those attending the function, organized by the Committee Against Repression in the Pacific and Asia (CARPA), were only able to leave the hall under heavy police escort.

Three days later, a reunion of anti-Vietnam War activists sponsored by the Communist Party of Australia at the union hall of the Waterside Workers' Federation came under a similar attack. On this occasion, the rightists attacked the hall early in the evening before most of the 200 guests had arrived. Again, windows were broken, and a variety of lethal weapons were wielded before those in the hall were able to repulse the attackers. A retired waterside worker was stabbed in the hand and required stitches to his head after being hit with a brick. A member of the defense guard for the meeting also suffered a knife wound to the hand.

Reinforcements to the initially limited police presence finally drove the 200 demonstrators to the other side of the road where they remained, chanting slogans, for the duration of the meeting. Despite this, the function was a success, with those attending hearing several speakers pay tribute to the long and heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people and stress the significance of the movement of solidarity that grew up in Australia and throughout the world.

A representative of the Vietnamese embassy also addressed the meeting and stressed his government's desire for free and peaceful relations with countries such as Australia while Vietnam works to reconstruct and develop itself after the devastating impact of decades of war and foreign occupation.

On May 4 in Melbourne, several hundred right-wing Vietnamese demonstrated outside a dinner organized by the Australia-Vietnam Society and attended by approximately 300 people.

Given the extremely violent character of all these demonstrations, including calls in local Vietnamese newspapers to "exterminate Communists" organizing the anniversary meetings, police intervention was noticeably restrained. Only four arrests were made at the first Sydney meeting and one at the second, despite the fact that a large number of the demonstrators were carrying, and using, a variety of offensive weapons from slingshots to knives.

The failure of the Australian government to ensure that people are adequately protected from the violence of right-wing Vietnamese here has drawn sharp criticism from Vietnamese government representatives in recent months. They are angry, for example, that Australian police have been incapable or unwilling to prosecute right-wing thugs responsible for physical attacks on Vietnamese students currently studying in Canberra on United Nations training grants.

In another incident earlier this year, a delegation from Vietnam, led by Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach, was surrounded by right-wing Vietnamese who later attacked the car in which the delegation was traveling.

Australian Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs Chris Hurford, recently returned from a visit to Indochina, was quoted in the May 11 *Sydney Morning Herald* as saying that the Vietnamese foreign minister had "aggressively" expressed his disapproval of the recent violent protests by right-wing Vietnamese in Australia.

Hurford said he had stressed that his government was in no way sympathetic to the demonstrations. He also said that the demonstrations were threatening the family reunion immigration program whereby Vietnamese living in Australia could sponsor the immigration of other family members. This would not be possible, Hurford pointed out, without the cooperation and goodwill of the Vietnamese government. □

Racist settlers rampage against Kanaks

As French government moves to reinforce military presence

By Andy Jarvis

[The following article is reprinted from the May 24 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.]

* * *

Right-wing white settlers in New Caledonia have stepped up the level of racist terror directed against the Kanak independence struggle. They have been emboldened by the decisions of the French government, announced in April, which made clear France's intention to maintain its political and military presence in New Caledonia and uphold the interests of the French settler community.

White settlers went on a rampage on May 8, attacking Kanaks in New Caledonia's capital, Nouméa. One Kanak — 20-year-old Celestin Zongo — was shot dead, and up to 100 others were injured in the racist attack.

According to news reports, the violence broke out when about 150 Kanaks gathered in Coconut Plaza, Nouméa's main square. The Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) had originally called a demonstration in Nouméa for May 8 to protest against the planned construction of a major French military base in New Caledonia. The protest was postponed for a month after the French authorities banned it under the state of emergency decree that came into effect on January 12.

Right-wing violence

The main French settler party, Rally for Caledonia in the Republic (RPCR), had threatened to physically "prevent" the FLNKS demonstration from going ahead, and appealed to its supporters for a big turn-out at official ceremonies on May 8 to mark the 40th anniversary of the end of World War Two in Europe, as a display of solidarity with France.

The 150 Kanaks (reported to be members of Palika, a party aligned with the FLNKS) who gathered in Coconut Plaza on May 8 were attacked by the police. About 1,000 RPCR supporters then joined in the attack, surrounding the Kanaks and stoning them.

The Kanaks withdrew to the FLNKS headquarters in the working-class suburb of Mont-ravel, where about 1,000 Kanaks massed behind barricades to stop the rampaging settlers entering the area. Running clashes between the two sides broke out.

The white settlers used automatic weapons and shotguns in the attack, firing on the

FLNKS headquarters. In addition to Zongo, who was killed in the shooting, many others were wounded, including several children.

Among those taking part in the right-wing rampage were RPCR leader Jacques Lafleur and the mayor of Nouméa, Roger Laroque.

Bomb attacks

Five days later, on May 13, right-wingers carried out a spate of bomb attacks directed against Kanaks and their supporters. Three bombs were exploded in Nouméa and one in the Kanak stronghold of Thio.

The most serious attack was against a Kanak high school. The Nouméa boarding school is attended by 120 Kanak students from the Loyalty islands and the east coast region. The pupils were in class at the time of the bomb attack, and a number were injured in the blast.

The purpose of this right-wing violence is to intimidate supporters of Kanak independence and to aid the French government to enforce the continuation of French rule over New Caledonia — including beefing up France's military presence.

Although the majority of the French settler community in New Caledonia are politically hostile to the French Socialist Party and the Mitterrand government, the settlers and the French imperialists have common interests in

New Caledonia and share a common goal in seeking to defeat the Kanak independence struggle.

Mitterrand government

Since coming to office in 1981, the Socialist Party government in France has betrayed its previous promises to the Kanak independence movement and has continually sought to reassure New Caledonia's white settlers that it will act to preserve their dominant economic and political status in the colony.

The French government's latest pronouncement on New Caledonia was decided on at a cabinet meeting on April 25 and announced in a television address by Prime Minister Laurent Fabius. The plan is based on proposals drawn up by the French government's special envoy in New Caledonia, Edgard Pisani, who left for Paris in late March. Pisani said the final decision on his proposals was to be made by President [François] Mitterrand.

New plan

Key proposals in the adopted plan include:

- A referendum on "independence" for New Caledonia "in association with France," that was scheduled to be held in September, has been postponed until the end of 1987.

FLNKS leader Susanna Ounei tours Canada

Susanna Ounei, the official representative of the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) in New Zealand and an activist in the liberation struggle in New Caledonia since 1969, arrived in Canada in late May for the beginning of a month-long visit to that country.

After a brief stop in Vancouver, she went on to Halifax to attend an international women's conference.

Ounei is then scheduled to participate in several events in Montreal, including a youth demonstration on June 15 and an anti-apartheid demonstration on June 16, the ninth anniversary of the massive South African student rebellions of 1976. A public meeting for Ounei is being planned for June 22 in Montreal, and the following week she will stop briefly in Toronto before leaving Canada for an international women's conference in Nairobi, Kenya.

A pamphlet on the Kanak struggle by Susanna Ounei has just appeared in New Zealand, published jointly by the Labour

Publishing Cooperative Society and by the New Zealand Association for International Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (Corso).

Entitled *For Kanak Independence: The Fight Against French Rule in New Caledonia*, the 17-page pamphlet includes an article by Ounei describing the background and history of the Kanak independence struggle, a tribute by her to Eloi Machoro (a FLNKS leader murdered by French troops in January), and the charter of the FLNKS.

In the United States, a copy can be obtained by sending US\$1.00, plus \$0.50 for postage and handling, to: Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014.

In New Zealand, send NZ\$1.00 to Pilot Books, P.O. Box 8730, Auckland; or to Corso, P.O. Box 9716, Wellington.

In Australia, send A\$1.00 to New International Publications, P.O., Box 37, Leichhardt, N.S.W. 2040.

- The colony is to be divided into four separate administrative zones, each with its own legislative council. The members of these councils, in turn, will combine to constitute a territorial congress which will replace the present Territorial Assembly (New Caledonia's colonial parliament). Elections for the four regional councils have been set down to take place in August.

- The French military presence in New Caledonia is to be increased "in order to provide lasting assurance of" France's "strategic interests in that part of the world." This includes upgrading the air base runway at Tontouta, north of Nouméa, to accommodate Jaguar fighter planes; enlarging Nouméa's port to accommodate nuclear warships and submarines; and expanding the Pouv army camp at the northern end of the main island to allow for a 50 percent increase in permanent troop strength in the colony.

Racist arrogance

Reflecting the racist arrogance of the French imperialists, Prime Minister Fabius is reported as saying that the proposed plan provides a framework under which the Kanak population can "acquire administrative experience."

The draft law on New Caledonia drawn up by the French cabinet is to be submitted to the French parliament in June after New Caledonia's Territorial Assembly government has presented its views on the plan. Only the RPCR is represented in the Assembly. The FLNKS boycotted the elections held last November 18, and the LKS (Kanak Socialist Liberation — a small Kanak party), which held six seats, walked out of the Assembly following the May 8 settler rampage in Nouméa.

The growing belligerence of the RPCR was reflected at a conference it held in Nouméa on April 28. About 1,500 party members gathered under a huge French tricolour (the French flag) and sang their party's anthem "Forever French." The party's leader in the Territorial Assembly, Dick Ukeiwe, said they had reached the "ultimate phase" of the struggle and called on RPCR supporters to prepare for a "fight to the end" against Kanak independence.

FLNKS response

The FLNKS is to decide its response to the French government's new plan at a conference on May 25-26.

FLNKS leader Jean-Marie Tjibaou, who was visiting Algeria at the time of the announcement, pointed out that national elections due to be held in France next year could produce a change in government and yet a further change in French plans for New Caledonia. The right-wing parties in France have displayed even greater hostility to Kanak independence.

Tjibaou compared the Kanak struggle today with the Algerian independence movement in the 1950s, saying: "We are facing the same colonial enemy that has learned nothing from the

lessons of history.

"French colonialists of the right or left remain nationalists with the same conception of a supreme, imperial France as the centre of the world."

Military base

Work is already underway in New Caledonia on the French government's plan to turn its military facilities there into a permanent major base. French Minister of Defence Charles Hernu, who made a symbolic two-day visit to New Caledonia in May, says the cost of the project will be over \$NZ90 million [about US\$40 million]. Hernu arrived in Nouméa on May 10 on board the nuclear-powered attack submarine the *Rubis*, which was dispatched to New Caledonia from France in early April.

There are several sides to the French military build-up in New Caledonia:

- It signals France's commitment to defending the interests of the Nouméa-based French settler community, regardless of other political changes.

- It is aimed at preserving French imperialism's own continued access to the important wealth of the region — both the nickel deposits and other minerals in New Caledonia itself, and the large surrounding mineral-rich ocean seabed.

- It is part of the imperialist military build-up underway in the Pacific Ocean, involving the United States, France, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand.

Pacific build-up

The U.S. government has been calling on its allies to play a greater military role in the Pacific region, and a recent commitment to this effect was signed between the French and U.S. governments.

France is second only to the U.S. in its

global military network, with 66 bases in 11 countries. Its proposed base in New Caledonia will be larger than the present size of its other Pacific base in French Polynesia.

It will become a major staging post for France's rapid deployment force in the region. Transport planes and 25 Jaguar strike jets are to be posted there. And by enabling nuclear warships and submarines to be stationed in Nouméa, France's naval presence in the Pacific (currently 26 vessels) will be boosted considerably.

French President Mitterrand says that his government intends to implement these military plans regardless of the outcome of any future referendum in New Caledonia.

New Zealand response

New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange has criticised France's planned military build-up in New Caledonia as "totally unacceptable." However, his standpoint is not the interests of the Kanak people, but how he perceives New Zealand imperialism's own interests and ambitions in the region.

Lange told an April 29 press conference that France was "misjudging how welcome it is in our part of the world" and that the proposed military complex was contrary to "our interests" in the South Pacific.

Some statements by peace groups, emphasising opposition to the nuclear presence in New Caledonia, have also reflected a similar narrow, nationalist outlook.

A different perspective was put forward by the FLNKS representative in New Zealand, Susanna Ounei. "It's not enough just to denounce the military build-up," she told the May 2 *Auckland Star*. What is needed is for the New Zealand government to recognise the FLNKS and to support the Kanak independence movement. □

'It takes money to get the truth'

For *Intercontinental Press* to continue providing its unique coverage of news and discussions in the worldwide fight for socialism and against imperialist oppression, we need the support of all our readers. Unlike the big-business news magazines, we get no revenue from advertisers.

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This year our fund-raising efforts have gotten a lift from the Socialist Publication Fund, which is also raising money for Pathfinder Press; the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*; *Perspectiva Mundial*, a Spanish-language fortnightly; and the theoretical magazine *New International*.

At a recent rally for the fund in New

York City, Joachim Mark, a Grenadian community activist in New York well known for his defense of the Grenada revolution, stated, "If you want to read the truth about what's happening in Nicaragua, or to the miners in England, or as far away as New Zealand or Australia, you have to turn to *Intercontinental Press*, the *Militant*, or Pathfinder Press."

He explained, "It takes money to put out these papers and to keep this system of publications alive and well and kicking. Without them it would be extremely difficult to get the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

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350,000 workers celebrate May Day

Strikes, union organizing, political opposition on rise

By Russell Johnson

[The following two articles appeared in the May 24 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.]

* * *

More than 350,000 workers joined this year's May Day marches and rallies organised by the KMU (Kilusang Mayo Uno — May 1 Movement) in Manila and major provincial centres across the Philippines, according to the Tokyo-based Resource Centre for Pacific Concerns (RCPC) News Service.

In Manila, the press service reported, 60,000 workers converged from seven assembly points across the metropolitan area for a rally at Liwasang Bonifacio. They protested against the anti-labour laws of the Marcos dictatorship and growing United States interference in the economic and political life of the Philippines. The march was joined by 100 foreign delegates to an international solidarity conference being held in Ilagan City on the main island of Luzon.

Other large marches were reported in the Bataan Export Processing Zone in Central Luzon (20,000), in Bacolod City on the island of Negros (30,000), and Davao on Mindanao (15,000).

The marches and rallies took place despite the denial of march permits, arrests of union activists, and other harassment from the Marcos regime. RCPC News Service reported that three farmers were murdered by the military on their way to the march in Central Luzon.

Union upsurge

The May Day demonstrations come on the crest of an upsurge in militant union strikes. According to the April 1985 issue of the *Filipino Workers' Times*, the Philippines Ministry of Labour and Employment released figures showing an all-time record of 282 strikes in 1984, involving twice as many workers as in the previous years.

Despite intensifying repression this trend has continued into 1985, the *Times* reports, with as many as 65 strikes, involving 18,000 workers, in the first 10 weeks of the year. Already, seven striking workers or their supporters have died this year in attacks on picketlines by police and company goons — the latest being killed outside a Manila factory on May 6.

At the centre of the May Day actions, especially on the island of Negros, were the workers of the sugar mills and plantations organised

in the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW).

The Philippine sugar industry, 60 percent of which is concentrated in the province of Negros Occidental, has been devastated by the slump in world sugar prices and by domestic corruption.

The April 18 *Far Eastern Economic Review* explained that the Philippine sugar industry grew dramatically in the 1960s through supplying the United States market under a guaranteed quota system after Washington instituted an embargo on importing sugar from revolutionary Cuba.

When this quota system ended in 1974, sugar was selling on the world market for 65 U.S. cents per pound. Today that price has fallen to below four U.S. cents, or less than one-third of the Philippine production cost, according to the *Review*.

On top of this, opposition politicians charge that Roberto Benedicto, a Marcos crony who heads the Philippines sugar marketing authority, has been using imported sugar to profiteer and force down sugar prices (and payments to sugar planters) on the domestic market.

Bosses' offensive

The plantation and sugar mill owners are attempting to place the burden of this crisis on the sugar workers, through slashing wages and laying off tens of thousands of plantation and mill workers. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* reports that, "Most planters now pay their workers on a piece-rate basis to cut costs, so workers get only a third of the otherwise mandatory P32 (U.S.\$1.73) daily wage for agricultural workers."

And the *Filipino Workers' Times* reports that more than 200,000 sugar workers are expected to be idled for the next six to eight months until the new milling season starts.

The plantation owners have also sought to use terrorism to undercut union organisation in the plantations and mills. KMU leader Calito Rallistan, while visiting New Zealand in May, gave *Socialist Action* the example of a National Federation of Sugar Workers organiser who was murdered after he began to organise the union among his co-workers on a plantation on Negros. "He was pinpointed by the plantation's owner. Up to now his head has not been found. He was beheaded. This happened also on a plantation on Mindanao."

It is in this context that the sugar workers' federation organised 30,000 sugar workers for a May Day march on Bacolod City, in Negros. The May 3 *New Zealand Herald* reported that the sugar workers marched into Bacolod

"chanting anti-government slogans" on May 2, after camping overnight outside the city when the authorities denied them a permit to hold a rally on May 1.

The National Federation of Sugar Workers plays a central role in the KMU on a national level. Its president, Roberto Ortaliz, was elected the new secretary-general of the KMU at the March 9-10, 1985, KMU special congress. He replaced Crispin Beltran, who had been detained by Marcos for more than two years until he escaped and went underground in late 1984.

At the congress it was announced that the KMU membership now exceeds 500,000, making it the second-largest trade union federation after the pro-Marcos Trade Union Congress of the Philippines.

Mindanao 'people's strike'

On the southern island of Mindanao, where one-third of Marcos' armed forces are deployed against the guerrilla fighters of the Moro National Liberation Front and the New People's Army, the May Day action spilled over into a two-day "welgang bayan" (people's strike), according to the RCPC News Service.

The strike was in protest against the effects of the economic crisis on working people, and demanding the demilitarisation of Mindanao. It involved industrial and transport strikes, barricades, demonstrations, and a student-teacher boycott, and paralysed all economic activity, according to the news service.

The Marcos regime responded to the "welgang bayan" with predictable violence. The RCPC reported that two people were killed, 14 arrested, and four injured by army patrols.

New opposition front

According to RCPC, the Mindanao strike was called by Bayan-Mindanao, the local component of a newly-formed anti-Marcos coalition which has the goal of "dismantling" the Marcos dictatorship.

The Bayan includes in its leadership the most prominent bourgeois opposition figures that have been associated with the "parliament of the streets" (the extra-parliamentary mass protest campaign against the Marcos dictatorship) and leaders of the KMU and other popular organisations. It is also supported by the underground Communist Party of the Philippines.

The RCPC News Service reported that more than 1,000 delegates attended the Bayan's launching congress, held on May 4-5. Former senators Lorenzo Tanada and Jose Diokno were elected chairman and president respectively.

tively, while KMU president Rolando Olalia and Butz Aquino, the brother of the assassinated opposition leader Benigno Aquino, were elected to the national leadership.

The Bayan is expected to contest the local body elections scheduled for 1986. This is in contrast to the boycott of the May 1984 elections to the national parliament, which was led by the forces making up the Bayan.

The Bayan congress approved a "general programme of action calling for removal of

U.S. bases" and abrogation of military treaties with Washington and Tokyo, according to the news service.

The RCPC also confirmed reports that Marcos' most long-standing political prisoner, Satur Ocampo, escaped on May 5 after being escorted to the National Press Club to vote in their elections. A former journalist accused of being a leader of the Communist Party of the Philippines, Ocampo had been under arrest since January 1976. □

KMU leader tours New Zealand

Thanks Federation of Labour for support

By Russell Johnson

A national councillor of the Philippines Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU — May 1 Movement) union federation received a standing ovation when he addressed the Federation of Labour's [FOL — New Zealand's national trade union federation] annual conference in May, calling for stronger solidarity ties between Filipino and New Zealand workers.

"We have been fortunate to host members of your federation in recent years, among them Ken Findlay and Ray Potroz from the Meat Workers Union, Peter Cullen from the Hotel Workers Federation, and recently, Peter Cranney from the Cleaners Union," Calito Rallistan told the conference.

"The participation of these delegates has been of great assistance in strengthening links between the Kilusang Mayo Uno and the New Zealand Federation of Labour."

The Filipino unionist thanked the FOL for the resolution adopted at its 1984 conference in support of the KMU and the Filipino people's struggle against the Marcos dictatorship.

This resolution gives support to the KMU "as the genuine, militant, and nationalist trade union organisation in the Philippines," and calls on the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to condemn the rival Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) as "merely a tool of the Marcos dictatorship to help suppress the wages and conditions of the Filipino workers and murder those who resist." Both the FOL and the TUCP are affiliated to the ICFTU.

"The Filipino working class will never forget this expression of solidarity on your part at a time when we needed it most," Rallistan continued. "We look to this conference for greater solidarity and commitment, and we are hopeful of concrete steps in support of this resolution."

"The Filipino workers' struggle is at a critical point today. There is increasing support from the United States government for the Marcos regime. This support has emboldened the regime to launch more repressive attacks against the Filipino people and the workers. During the first three months of this year alone, six workers have been murdered on the picket-line. . . .

"Unionists arrested and detained two or

more years ago are still languishing in jail despite having remained unconvicted of the charges filed against them The people and the toiling masses continue to live in unprecedented poverty as a result of the worst economic crisis that has ever hit the country since World War Two. . . ."

Rallistan explained that this repression has only acted to intensify the anti-dictatorial struggles of the Filipino people, to the point that they have "significantly shaken the very foundation of the ruling power." This, in turn, he emphasised, has led to a situation where "the Filipino people are now being threatened with U.S. intervention not unlike that which occurred in Vietnam in the 1960s. . . ."

"We call on you not only to support the KMU's campaign to stop trade union repression in the Philippines and to release all jailed trade unionists. We especially seek your support in preventing the United States government from further intervening in Philippine affairs."

Rallistan explained that his visit to New Zealand is part of a broader effort by the KMU to gain greater international recognition "as the genuine voice of the Filipino working class."

This effort made important progress in 1984, with the KMU winning official recognition from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the Confederazione Generale Italiano Lavoratori of Italy, and the Australian Congress of Trade Unions, as well as the New Zealand FOL.

The Marcos-backed TUCP, as part of its efforts to reverse the growing international recognition of the KMU, is trying to pressure the FOL to reverse its 1984 policy.

In response to a letter from the TUCP president, Democrito Mendoza, the FOL National Council recommended to the conference that the FOL send a fact-finding mission to the Philippines in July or August "for the purpose of meeting representatives of the various trade union centres and making a report back to the FOL."

Since addressing the FOL conference, the Filipino union leader has also spoken to a number of local trades councils, to union delegates in Otago/Southland freezing works, and to meetings sponsored by support groups. □

10 AND 20 YEARS AGO

Intercontinental Press

June 16, 1975

Washington's worldwide and domestic secret intelligence apparatus costs the American taxpayers about \$25 billion a year — close to 8 percent of the federal government budget — Tad Szulc reports in an article on "Kissinger's Secret Empire."

Most of this \$25 billion Washington spends on military and diplomatic spying, says Szulc, "is artfully hidden under innocent-sounding line items in the federal budget." An example is the billions spent on satellite reconnaissance.

Another is the National Security Agency, "the Pentagon-linked electronic intelligence organization that covers the world with its 125,000 employees and a \$11 billion annual budget. . . ." The NSA selectively monitors and transcribes each day "uncounted thousands of international telephone calls between the U.S. and foreign points."

In addition to these overseas operations one of the most important — and until recently least known — aspects of Washington's intelligence operation is the extensive surveillance of American citizens within the United States itself.

WORLD OUTLOOK

PERSPECTIVE MONDIALE

(Predecessor of Intercontinental Press)

June 11, 1965

On June 8 the American people were informed by Robert J. McCloskey, press officer of the U.S. State Department, that they were in a shooting war on the Asian mainland. It was not exactly news, since the whole world has known it for some time and the protests have been growing in volume and energy, including protests from wide sectors of the American people.

This, however, marks the end of the series of lying pretenses about American troops being in Vietnam solely as "advisers," as offering "logistic" support, as only "defending" themselves from "attack," as only engaged in "reprisals." McCloskey revealed that orders have been sent to the American commanders in Saigon that "American forces would be available for combat support together with Vietnamese forces as and when necessary."

Some 51,000 American troops are now in Vietnam, with thousands on the way. Within a few weeks it is expected that the figure will be between 75,000 and 100,000. Estimates of the eventual number range between 250,000 and 500,000.

World War II and the colonial nations

Imperialist aims never included freedom from colonial oppression

By Will Reissner

It was the morning of VE Day, May 8, 1945. The Nazi regime in Germany had surrendered the previous night. World War II had ended in Europe.

Throughout France preparations were under way for jubilant celebrations of the "Liberation." Five years of defeat and German imperialist occupation were over.

On the morning of May 8, 1945, liberation was also on the minds of Muslim residents of Sétif, a market town in the French colony of Algeria. They were preparing for a mass march, not to celebrate but rather to demand Algeria's liberation.

Some 8,000 marchers gathered in Sétif, carrying banners proclaiming "For the Liberation of the People, Long Live Free and Independent Algeria!" and "Free Messali," a reference to the forced exile of Algerian nationalist Messali Hadj.

French authorities opened fire on the demonstration. A young Algerian fell, mortally wounded. Other marchers responded by attacking the police.

As news of the fighting in Sétif spread to outlying areas, there were confrontations between Europeans and Algerians.

Massacre at Sétif

The French army, including large contingents of colonial troops from the Senegalese Rifles, mercilessly crushed the Algerian protests. More than 40 villages were bombed by U.S.-made Douglas dive bombers. The naval cruiser *Duguay-Trouin* pounded the countryside with its long-range guns.

European settlers carried out massacres of Algerians. French mobs stormed rural jails, lynching Algerian prisoners. In one village, 219 Algerians were gunned down.

In the aftermath of the Sétif demonstration, some 45,000 Algerians were killed (the French authorities claim the toll was 15,000). European casualties totaled 103.

The massacre in the Sétif region was no aberration. Rather it reflected the determination of all the victorious colonialist powers to hold on to or reestablish control over their colonial empires.

But Sétif also showed the burning desire of the colonized peoples around the world to win their national independence, to make sure that the end of the war that was supposedly fought for "democracy" did not bring a return to the prewar colonial "business as usual."

Massacres like the one in Sétif were repeated around the globe in the months that followed. In fact, while the killing of Algerians around Sétif was still going on, French troops were carrying out massacres in Syria as well.

Some 10,000 troops from France and 20,000 from French colonies in Africa had been landed in Syria and Lebanon in mid-May to try to reimpose French colonial rule over those countries.

French troops fired on crowds in Hama, Aleppo, Tripoli, and Beirut. Then on May 29, 1945, the French bombed and shelled the city of Damascus.

A June 1, 1945, dispatch from the United Press reported that eyewitnesses to the bombing of Damascus said "the French bombardment of the city was worse than anything they had seen in the western desert or on the Anzio beachhead" in Italy during World War II.

Syrian authorities claimed that 3,000 to 4,000 people were killed in the French attacks.

Restoring colonies in Asia

Similar scenes were repeated in the Far East following Japan's surrender in August 1945.

VJ day marked the end of the war against Japanese imperialism and the start of attempts by the victorious imperialist powers in Europe to reestablish their colonial empires in Asia.

In fact, following the Japanese government's surrender, the Allies kept 500,000 Japanese troops armed throughout Southeast Asia to keep order until the colonial powers could return and reassert their control.

Whenever necessary, Washington and London provided their weaker colonialist partners with substantial help in returning to their colonies.

British troops, many of their colonial soldiers from India, rushed to "French Indochina" to prevent the Vietnamese, Laotian, and Kampuchean people from taking advantage of the collapse of Japanese control to establish independent states.

Similarly, British troops — again including many Indian soldiers — were sent to Indonesia, then known as the "Netherlands East Indies," to pave the way for the return of Dutch colonial rule over 67 million Indonesians.

While London provided the troops, Washington furnished transport for the returning colonial armies. In many cases, ships assigned to bring U.S. soldiers home from Asia were diverted for use as transports for the French and Dutch troops, causing an uproar in the United States.

The New York newspaper *PM* reported on Nov. 12, 1945: "Victory ships Taos and Pauchog left Marseilles on October 31, each carrying more than 1,000 [French] troops to Indochina. The crewmen of the Taos signed on in New York with the understanding that they were to proceed to India to bring American troops home. Upon their arrival [in Marseilles]

they learned they were also to be used to carry French troops to the Orient.

"Prior to the sailing of the Taos and the Pauchog, three other Victory ships left for French Indochina carrying French troops."

An Associated Press dispatch on Dec. 30, 1945, described some of the U.S. government's contribution to the reestablishment of Dutch rule in Indonesia. "Two thousand American-trained and equipped Dutch marines arrived off Batavia [Indonesia] today. Trained at Quantico, Va., Camp Lejeune, N.C., and Camp Pendleton, Calif., and fully supplied with American equipment, the marines are considered among the finest troops in the Netherlands armed forces."

A letter from a bitter U.S. soldier, read into the *Congressional Record* on Dec. 3, 1945, asked: "Is our Navy to be used for ferrying supplies to the Dutch in Java or for getting our troops home? . . . [W]hen a group of ships carrying United States troops are stopped at Hollandia ["Dutch" New Guinea], the troops ordered off, and supplies for Java put aboard, then it is time to call a halt."*

British troops had first landed in Indonesia in September 1945 to hold the islands until the arrival of the Dutch. But they met with strong resistance from Indonesian nationalists who had already declared an independent republic.

In November 1945, Indonesian nationalists fought a lopsided battle against British troops for three weeks in the Surabaya region, standing up to shelling by British warships and aerial bombing.

*U.S. soldiers in Europe and Asia were angered by reports that Washington was using scarce transport ships to ferry Dutch and French troops to Indochina and the Netherlands East Indies rather than to bring U.S. troops home.

In December 1945 and January 1946, mass demonstrations of U.S. GIs took place in Asia, the South Pacific, and Europe demanding that they be brought home.

On Dec. 25, 1945, in Manila, 4,000 U.S. soldiers marched with banners demanding "We Want Ships." On Jan. 7, 1946, more than 10,000 soldiers staged a demonstration in Manila. The same day, 2,000 GIs held a mass meeting at Camp Boston in France demanding an acceleration in European demobilization.

On January 8, 6,000 soldiers on the island of Saipan protested, and on Guam, 3,500 enlisted men held a hunger strike. The following day, 18,000 soldiers held two huge protest meetings on Guam.

Demonstrations also took place in Rheims and Paris, France; Frankfurt, Germany; Calcutta, India; and Honolulu.

The massive protests led to a speed-up in bringing U.S. soldiers home and dealt a blow to Washington's plan to use them to help put down colonial revolts.

Tens of thousands of Indonesians were killed or wounded by the returning colonialists.

In putting down the nationalist rising, 50,000 Dutch troops were joined by 100,000 British troops. Washington provided more than 400 U.S. ships to transport the Dutch troops and to deliver U.S. military equipment to them.

Restoring colonialists in Indochina

In Vietnam, French and British troops worked together to overturn the republic that had been established by the August 1945 revolution and to reestablish French colonial rule.

On Sept. 22 and 23, 1945, 1,400 French troops who had just been released from a Japanese prisoner of war camp joined with 2,800 British-led Gurkha soldiers from Nepal to drive the nationalist forces out of Saigon.

British officers also took command of Japanese troops still in Vietnam after Japan's surrender, and used them to suppress the Vietnamese people.

With Washington's help, some 35,000 newly-arrived French troops, commanded by Gen. Jean Leclerc, began the bloody "pacification" of southern Vietnam. Leclerc had been a hero of Charles de Gaulle's "Free French" forces who fought on the side of the Allies during World War II.

As the number of French troops in Vietnam grew, the "pacification" campaign was extended to northern Vietnam.

On Nov. 23, 1945, the French warship *Dumont d'Urville* shelled the port of Haiphong in northern Vietnam, killing 20,000 residents. The French stoutly claimed that "only" 6,000 Vietnamese lost their lives in the shelling.

Opening shots in a new war

The massacres at Sétif, Damascus, Surabaya, and Haiphong were only the opening shots in a new war waged by the victorious imperialist powers to resubjugate their colonial possessions.

In the years that followed, the British, French, and Dutch colonialists, with backing from Washington, waged full-scale colonial wars against their subjects in Indonesia, Vietnam, Kenya, Malaya, Madagascar, Algeria, South Yemen, and elsewhere to try to hold on to their colonial empires.

In the United States, President Franklin Roosevelt had described the U.S. war effort as a struggle for the "Four Freedoms" — freedom of religion, freedom of speech and expression, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.

But Allied war aims had never included freedom from colonial oppression for the hundreds of millions of subjects of the British, French, Dutch, and Belgian colonial empires.

In a Nov. 2, 1942, letter to Gen. Henri Giraud of Charles de Gaulle's "Free French" forces, U.S. Ambassador Robert Murphy wrote:

I am in a position to assure you that the restoration of France, in all her independence, in all her grandeur and in all the area which she possessed before



French troops round up Vietnamese nationalists in Saigon in late 1945, following protests against reestablishment of French colonial rule.

the War, in Europe as overseas, is one of the aims of the United States.

It is well understood that French sovereignty should be reestablished as soon as possible over all territories, Metropolitan as well as colonial, over which the French flag waved in 1939.

In the years that followed World War II, millions of people were killed struggling against the imperialists who were trying to hold on to their empires. In Algeria alone, it is estimated that one million Algerians lost their lives in the 1954-62 fight for independence from France.

Despite the repression, within two decades of the war's end, hundreds of millions of people in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East won their national independence.

'Colonials' conscripted for war effort

It is ironic that the postwar surge of demands for colonial independence was fueled in part by the huge, usually unwilling, contributions the colonies had made to the war effort of their masters.

Millions of colonial subjects saw action in the armies of their rulers during World War II. Most went unwillingly. But some accepted the Allied claim that the war was a struggle for freedom and against fascism. And they hoped to share in that freedom once the war was won.

Ahmed Ben Bella fit into that second category. Ben Bella, who was to lead the Algerian struggle for independence and who became the country's first president, served in the French army during World War II.

Ben Bella later recalled a wartime conversation he had with his commanding officer, a Frenchman. "He knew," stated Ben Bella, "that I was anti-fascist and that the struggle against Nazi Germany meant something to me. Could we not forget our differences in the fight against a common enemy? This made sense to

me," Ben Bella noted, "and without any hesitation I promised Captain de Villaucourt not to stir up the men."

As a noncommissioned officer in the Algerian Rifles and then in the Moroccan Rifles, Ben Bella was decorated for bravery in the heavy fighting against German troops the whole length of the Italian peninsula.

Ben Bella, still in the French army, was stationed at Oudja, in Morocco, when word of the killings at Sétif reached him. He recalled:

I was profoundly shocked by the fierce repressive measures which followed the rising. According to the evidence, it was quite clear that, when the war was over, colonialism was not going to cede anything to the Algerians, and that rule by fear would prevail.

I was meditating on this bitter lesson, when my chiefs suggested that I should stay on in the French army. They would send me to an officers' training college; with my good service record, I would very soon become a second lieutenant. I refused the offer. . . . I felt as though the decision had been made for me. The retaliations at Sétif had created an unbridgeable gulf between the two communities.

Ben Bella was not unique, either in his service in the French military or in his horror at the brutality of postwar French colonial policy.

His oldest brother had fought in World War I in the French Army's Algerian Rifles, was seriously wounded, and died shortly after being returned to France. Another brother was drafted into the French military in 1939, developed tuberculosis there, and died the same year.

This experience was repeated in Muslim families throughout "French" North Africa.

Ben Bella's angry reaction to the Sétif massacres was shared by most of his generation. In 1961, while the Algerian war for independence was still in full swing, Edward Behr noted that

"every one of the 'new wave' of Algerian nationalists prominent in the National Liberation Front today traces his revolutionary determination back to May 1945."

Millions of colonial subjects fought

In addition to the North Africans who fought in the French army, subjects of the other colonial powers were also mobilized for the war.

In fact, many of the battlefield deeds usually attributed to "British" or "French" troops were in fact the work of Indians, West Africans, Algerians, and Moroccans dragooned into the fight.

In the course of World War II, more than 2 million Indian troops fought in the British

army in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

Two divisions of Indian troops played a key role in the British capture of Eritrea from the Italians in 1941.

British-commanded Indian troops also took part in the fighting in Syria and Lebanon that led to the transfer of those French colonies from the control of the pro-German Vichy French government to the control of Charles de Gaulle's London-based "Free French" forces.

When the Japanese armed forces captured Malaya from the British in December 1941, many Indians were among the defeated "British" troops. Large numbers of Indians were also part of the 90,000-man "British" garrison in Singapore that surrendered to the Japanese

forces in February 1942.

Indian divisions were a key component in the British attempt to defend their colony in Burma against the Japanese advance. And Indian soldiers suffered heavy casualties in the subsequent recapture of Burma from the Japanese.

Fighting alongside the Indian soldiers on the Burma front were 30,000 African troops whom the British shipped to Burma to fight the Japanese.

In all, nearly 400,000 soldiers from Britain's African colonies took part in the fighting in World War II.

The largest contingent — 176,000 troops — came from British West Africa, particularly the Gold Coast.

In East Africa, the British colonialists raised 75,000 troops in Kenya and 55,000 in Uganda.

Some 80,000 Black troops were recruited in South Africa. Of these, 45,000 were sent to fight the Italian army in Ethiopia and the Vichy French in Madagascar.

Both factions of French colonialists — those who supported the pro-German government at Vichy and those who supported de Gaulle's forces — recruited heavily among Africans in France's colonial empire.

In June 1940, at the time of the French surrender to Hitler, there were 63,000 soldiers of the Senegalese Rifles in France. Of those, 24,000 did not survive to see the armistice in 1945. (The Senegalese Rifles, despite their name, were recruited throughout French West Africa, not just from Senegal.)

In 1943, 60,000 soldiers from French West Africa were sent to North Africa to participate in the military operations taking place there.

At one point, nearly half of de Gaulle's "Free French" troops were Africans from the colonies. Black African troops took part in the liberation of France itself.

Washington, too, used troops from its colonies in the war effort. Some 65,000 troops from Puerto Rico, organized in the 65th Infantry Regiment, took part in World War II.

In the U.S. colony of the Philippines, which was captured by Japanese troops between December 1941 and May 1942, some U.S. officers remained behind to organize Philippine guerrilla groups to harass the Japanese occupation forces.

For their part, the Japanese imperialists mobilized their colonies to contribute to the war effort. Hundreds of thousands of Koreans were drafted to fight in the Japanese armed forces and to work in mines, factories, and military bases. The same pattern was followed in the Japanese colony of Taiwan.

The Japanese government also armed some 90,000 Indian troops, recruited from among Indians in the British Army who had been captured in Burma and from Indian communities in Singapore and other parts of Southeast Asia, to fight the British in Burma and, the Japanese government hoped, later in India itself. □

Making colonies pay for war

During World War II, the British rulers piled up an enormous financial debt to their colonies and semicolonies. Britain continued to purchase products from the colonies, but had little to sell them in return. Therefore, London decreed that the money the colonies earned from their sales to Britain had to be deposited in British banks for the duration of the war.

During the course of the war, Britain's liabilities rose to over £3 billion [US\$12 billion at the exchange rate in effect until 1949]. Of this total, more than £1.1 billion [\$4.4 billion] represented blocked payments to India (and what is now Pakistan), and more than £400 million [\$1.6 billion] was owed to Egypt and the Sudan.

Argentina, which was a British colony in all but name when the war began, also accumulated huge blocked currency reserves in British banks during the war as a result of sales of beef and other products to Britain.

When the war ended, the colonies and semicolonies demanded that these accounts be unblocked so they could withdraw their money from London. The British government in turn pressed the colonies to write off their balances as their contribution to the imperialist war effort. Not surprisingly, none agreed.

Argentina, under the nationalist government of Gen. Juan Perón which took power in 1943, used its huge reserves at the end of World War II to buy out British holdings in Argentina.

But the colonies that were under direct British rule could not do that. Instead, London established procedures that forced the remaining colonies to keep their surpluses in London and to build those surpluses ever higher in the decade following the war's end.

The heart of the system was the establishment of monopoly marketing boards for colonial exports. These marketing boards bought produce from the local producers at prices far below world market levels and

then sold the products on the international market. The boards pocketed the difference, investing the surplus in British government securities, which until 1950 paid only 0.5 percent interest.

This amounted to huge forced loans from the colonies to the British government to finance Britain's recovery from the war. In the decade after the end of the war, colonial deposits in London jumped by more than £500 million.

The colonies were also forced to turn over to the British government most of the dollars they earned through sales of colonial products in non-British markets. London used those dollars to purchase U.S. capital goods to rebuild British industry. As much as 80 percent of the dollars earned by the colonies' products were turned over to London.

While the financial plunder of the British colonies was the most sophisticated method of forcing the colonies to share the cost of the war effort of their "mother countries," it was by no means the only method.

In the Belgian and French colonies of Africa, the colonial governments resorted to the imposition of large-scale forced labor to boost production of food crops and other products needed for the war effort.

Given the record of plunder and pillage, it is small wonder that Joseph Kahoun would write in the May 9, 1985, issue of the Burkina (formerly Upper Volta) daily *Sidwaya*: "What did Africa really win in this war for which it lost many lives and underwent enormous sacrifices so that the victory of the 'mother country' might become a reality? The word 'drained' best expresses the reality of the daily experience of the continent between 1939 and 1945.

"The taking of men, the drain of minerals and agricultural products to certain countries involved in the war, the forced labor — that is how these years of war could be summarized for many Africans."

Half a million workers strike

Demand higher wages, union freedoms

By Ernest Harsch

Brazil has been swept by a massive wave of militant labor strikes since late April, involving some half a million workers, particularly in the heavily industrialized region around São Paulo.

The strike wave began just as José Sarney became Brazil's first civilian president since 1964. One of the Brazilian ruling class's motivations for opting for civilian rule after two decades of military dictatorship was the hope that it would help diffuse the mounting labor and political ferment that the generals were no longer able to contain. By drawing the main bourgeois opposition parties into the government, they also sought to use those parties' political influence to conclude a "social pact" with the unions, in which the workers would restrain their wage demands in face of austerity policies demanded by the International Monetary Fund.

That has clearly not happened. The workers have downed their tools, and in some cases occupied their factories, to fight for higher wages, shorter working hours, and union rights. They are doing so as a continuation of the struggles they originally launched under the former military regime.

Police attacks

By May Day, there were already some 40 different strikes under way in the country. These and later strikes included airline workers, post office employees, bus and subway drivers and conductors, teachers, railway workers, electricity workers, metalworkers in São Paulo's auto and auto parts plants, and migrant cane cutters on sugar estates in the São Paulo region.

Though most such strikes are still illegal under the former military regime's antistrike legislation, the Sarney government has thus far not invoked those laws. To do so would undercut its claims that it is bringing "democracy" to Brazil.

Nevertheless, selective repression has been used against some of the strikes.

Military police personnel have been used to disperse picket lines of striking bus drivers and conductors and to protect scab drivers. This led to clashes with the police and the arrest of 136 strikers.

In late May, police attacked pickets of striking migrant workers in Ribeirão Preto in northern São Paulo state, injuring 20 and arresting more than 50. According to union sources, this strike involved some 100,000 sugarcane cutters and orange pickers. In Pitangueiras, police broke up pickets that had blocked the city exits to halt the transport of scabs. The military police antiriot force also took over all the roads

leading to Serrana and attacked any groups of striking migrant workers who resisted.

Metalworkers strike

The most persistent strike has been by some 200,000 metalworkers employed in São Paulo's auto and auto parts plants. This sector of the Brazilian working class has been one of the most militant. It launched some of the first major strikes under the military regime in the late 1970s and provided an important impetus for the formation of the Workers Party (PT) and the 11.5-million-member United Workers Federation (CUT), an independent, class-struggle union federation.

The metalworkers have been on strike since mid-April, demanding a reduction in the workweek from 48 hours to 40 hours and salary increases every three months instead of twice a year. (This latter demand is in response to Brazil's astronomical inflation rate, which reached 223 percent in 1984.) The auto companies, however, have resisted these demands.

At a large May Day rally at the Praça da Sé in São Paulo, Jair Meneguelli, the president of the CUT and a leader of the metalworkers, stated that these actions and the May Day rally could be the starting point for a general strike this year.

Five days later, at a metalworkers assembly involving 10,000 unionists at the São Bernardo do Campo stadium, the workers decided to intensify their action by occupying factories. This was followed by occupations of plants by metalworkers in São Caetano do Sul.

Some of the strikes have been settled, with modest gains for the workers. The sugarcane workers' strike ended after a week with the signing of a statewide collective agreement affecting some 300,000 cane cutters and related workers.

The airline workers, railway workers, and others also went back after winning wage increases.

In a nationwide address on the eve of May Day, President Sarney announced a doubling of the minimum wage. But it is still a meager \$60 a month.

Slander campaign

Besides using direct repression against some strikes, the authorities have launched a major smear campaign against the strikers. Government officials and media commentaries have frequently blamed the strikes on "infiltrators" and "agitators" ostensibly seeking to undermine the new "democratic" civilian government. São Paulo State Governor Franco Montoro, for instance, claimed that "rightist agitators" who want to return [to power] and leftist agitators who want chaos" were behind

the strike wave.

In particular, bourgeois newspapers have accused PT leader Luís Inácio de Silva, known as "Lula," (who is also a leader of the metalworkers), of seeking to "exploit" the strike for political purposes. Industries and Commerce Minister Roberto Gusmão charged, "The strikes have been fanned. Not only by the PT, but by all the parties with a leftist, and even revolutionary, ideology, who want to use the movement as a platform."

An article in the May issue of *Em Tempo*, a monthly that supports the PT, responded to Gusmão's accusation: "This is a complete falsification. It is not the PT that is making the strikes. It is the strikes that have made the PT."

Besides Gusmão, there have been other government ministers who have been unhappy with the way the strikes have been handled, arguing for a greater use of repression to bring them to an end. Communications Minister Antônio Magalhães openly called for the outlawing of the postal workers strike. That strike was subsequently broken when 28 union leaders were fired and the government moved to hire scabs to replace the strikers.

'Truncheon still works miracles'

In mid-May, Gen. Octávio Medeiros, a former minister and head of Military Intelligence, urged his civilian colleagues to crack down on the strikes, stating that "the truncheon is no saint but it still works miracles."

At the same time these strikes have been unfolding, the PT and CUT have continued to demand greater democratic rights, such as the right to strike and direct elections for the president. (Sarney was initially chosen as vice-president by an Electoral College, then became president when Tancredo Neves, also chosen by the college, died before he was ever sworn in. Sarney and other bourgeois political figures have been stalling on the question of when direct elections for a new president would be held.)

In late April, PT leader Lula called for setting a date for direct elections and full trade-union rights, including the right to strike.

On May 6, while introducing a one-hour PT program on a national television and radio network, Lula declared, "We are struggling for a direct balloting system for the election of mayors in the capitals. We are struggling for the convocation of a national constituent assembly."

The PT's main concern, he said, centered on social questions. "We are being hit by unemployment and land and housing shortages." The PT, he said, has proposals "on new labor laws, on labor union freedoms and on the right to strike. Without these things, Brazil will not be a democratic country." □

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Masses strive to throw off imperialism

Revolutionary struggle spurred by poverty, oppression

By Ernest Harsch

More than a quarter of a century ago, in 1957, Ghana became the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to win its independence from European colonial rule. Yet today, genuine independence remains as elusive as ever.

In the words of Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings, the chairman of Ghana's governing Provisional National Defence Council, what Ghana achieved was little more than "flag and national anthem independence."

It is to transform that fiction into a reality that the people of Ghana have been struggling

This is the first of three articles on the anti-imperialist upsurge in Ghana, based in part on material collected during a visit to that country in early March. The subsequent articles will look at the imperialist attacks and pressures against Ghana and the government's economic and foreign policies.

on a massive scale for the past three years, ever since a group of anti-imperialist and left-wing soldiers and political activists led by Rawlings seized power on Dec. 31, 1981, overthrowing a corrupt, neocolonial regime.

To an unprecedented extent, workers, farmers, youths, soldiers, tradespeople, women, and other sectors of the Ghanaian population have been mobilizing to lift off the heavy weight of continued imperialist oppression that keeps them poor and their country underdeveloped.

Intolerable conditions

The depth and militancy of this upsurge testifies to how intolerable conditions have become for Ghana's laboring people, the *moborowa* ("those in a sorry state"). Their suffering is acute.

Even in Accra, Ghana's capital of some 1 million, the poverty is striking. Most houses are small, rundown, and unpainted. In Nima, one of the poorer districts, some 60 percent of the households live in just one room. Most young children play in the streets barefoot. Open sewage ditches, canals, and large piles of garbage and refuse along the roadsides provide fertile breeding grounds for disease.

Workers' real wages today are far less than they were a decade ago. Real incomes in general are about one-fifth of what they were in 1971. Though the inflation rate has dipped over the past year, it is still high. In the crowded and bustling central Makola market, as well as in the many smaller markets and at roadside stalls, prices are often several times higher than the legally set limit; the black mar-

ket is prevalent.

The most difficult conditions of all are in the countryside, where some 70 percent of Ghana's 12 million people live. Even along the coastal highway, which is a more developed region, it is common to see mud and thatch peasant huts. Primary school classes may be conducted outdoors, under a tree. Health care, sewage, running water, and other facilities are rare. While the infant mortality rate in the towns is about 63 for every 1,000 live births, in the rural areas it is a staggering 234.

Nationally, there is just one doctor for every 15,000 people. As of 1981, the daily per capita calorie consumption in Ghana was 1,995, compared with more than 3,000 in the United States and Britain, and less even than in neighboring Burkina, which in most other respects is poorer than Ghana. Average life expectancy is just 55 years.

Although education has been free since the government of Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president, the school system has deteriorated considerably since then. Fully 40 percent of primary school age children are not in school; of the 2.2 million children who are, only some 130,000 make it to the secondary grades.

Economy run down

Before Nkrumah was overthrown in 1966 in a CIA-sponsored coup, Ghana was one of the most industrialized countries of West Africa, as the result of an industrial development program initiated by his government.

But the various proimperialist regimes that

succeeded Nkrumah reversed that policy. Many uncompleted state-run projects were simply abandoned, and foreign technicians working on them were expelled. Other state enterprises were allowed to run down, or were plundered. Some of the most profitable were sold off to private interests, mostly imperialist firms.

It is common today to see half-finished buildings, their exposed steel girders rusted out and their mortar and cement cracked and broken from years of exposure. The country's infrastructure — the roads, railways, bridges, communications, and power system — have likewise been allowed to deteriorate. The decay in Accra is everywhere.

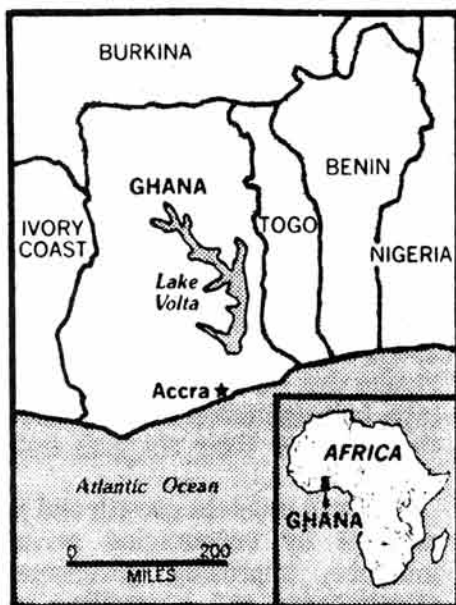
Those factories that are open are generally operating at 10 to 20 percent of their capacity. This is not only because of the physical deterioration, but also because of Ghana's severe economic crisis and its inability to import enough raw materials and spare parts to keep the factories going.

Agriculture has likewise declined. Cocoa production — Ghana's main export crop — has fallen considerably since its peak in the mid-1960s, due to low prices on the world market and insufficient government investment in agriculture. On some former state farms, tractors have been left idle for years and are now little more than junk. Hundreds of sacks of rotten rice have been found, abandoned in government storehouses since Nkrumah's time.

While large tracts of Ghana's fertile land stand idle, the country must each year import tens of millions of dollars worth of food.

The partial dismantling of the state sector of the economy opened the way for greater direct imperialist economic influence. Attracted by a more favorable "investment climate" following Nkrumah's overthrow, more foreign corporations set up operations. For example, Lonrho, a British firm, took over the management of the formerly state-run Ashanti Goldfields Corp. Other imperialist companies which had important interests in Ghana even under Nkrumah's government acquired an even more dominant position. Barclays and Standard banks, Unilever, Kaiser aluminum, Total oil, and other U.S. and West European firms have important stakes in Ghana.

Besides serving imperialism's interests, the reactionary regimes that governed after Nkrumah's overthrow likewise catered to Ghana's own exploiting *ebetiye*, ("the well-positioned"): the merchants, businessmen, capitalist cocoa farmers, land speculators, and corrupt state officials and management person-



nel who benefit from their alliance with imperialist interests. While most Ghanaians are poor, these elements have grown quite rich since the country gained its "independence."

Although these Ghanaians have made considerable money, this has not brought any increase in the economy's productive capacities. Their dealings have largely been of a commercial nature: currency transactions, trading in scarce goods for quick profits, smuggling, and the like.

At the same time, much of this activity is illegal, even according to the laws of the neocolonial regimes. Because of the heavy influence of the colonial trading companies under British rule, only a very small and feeble capitalist class was able to emerge. It was then further restricted by the policies of the Nkrumah government, which favored state-owned industry. The only way that many of those aspiring to accumulate capital could do so was through embezzlement from state coffers, bribery to secure lucrative contracts, market speculation and real estate dealings, favors from relatives or acquaintances in top government or military posts, tax evasion, or outright theft. All these corrupt practices are known in Ghana as *kalabule* ("keep it quiet").

June 4 and December 31

After the defeat of 1966, it took a while for the Ghanaian masses to recover. But their deteriorating living conditions, the repression and arbitrary rule of a succession of military regimes, the blatant corruption and exploitation, the authorities' subservience to imperialist dictates — all provoked new ferment and struggles. By the mid- to late 1970s, strikes, student protests, and other actions became increasingly common.

On June 4, 1979, this popular discontent found expression in a rebellion by junior officers and rank-and-file soldiers that overthrew the proimperialist regime of Gen. Fred Akuffo. An Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) was brought to power, composed of elected representatives of the military's ranks and junior officers. It was headed by Rawlings, who was being court-martialed for an earlier coup attempt at the time of the takeover.

Rawlings was known for his anti-imperialist views and his opposition to the corrupt senior officer corps. So when news of his takeover spread, large support demonstrations of students, workers, and others filled the streets.

Elections for a hand-over to civilian rule had been previously scheduled, however. Given the widespread distrust of military rule, the AFRC pledged to respect the results of that election and to cede power four months later. But first, Rawlings declared, it was necessary to conduct a "housecleaning exercise," to purge the country of the most corrupt officials. "Justice which had been denied the Ghanaian workers," he said, "will have to take place."

Eight top officers were promptly tried and executed before public firing squads. They included three former heads of state, Akuffo,



Ernest Harsch/IP

Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings at March 6, 1985, Independence Day celebrations in Accra (flanked by Education Secretary Joyce Aryee and parade marshal Hesse Asiedu-Gyedu).

Gen. Ignatius Acheampong, and Gen. A.A. Afrifa, one of those who overthrew Nkrumah. Special tribunals tried and sentenced to prison scores of other officers, civilian officials, and businessmen for engaging in *kalabule*. Price controls were also imposed.

These determined actions — against a sector of society that was especially hated — won the AFRC and Rawlings tremendous popular support.

The civilian regime of Hilla Limann's bourgeois People's National Party (PNP), which took office in September 1979, quickly reverted to the old practices. *Kalabule* again became rampant, and leaders of the PNP were among the quickest to line their pockets. In the meantime, conditions for the masses deteriorated further.

While the Limann regime quietly released many of those jailed by the AFRC, it launched a campaign of slander against Rawlings and other AFRC members. Military Intelligence agents tried to assassinate Capt. Kojo Tsikata, one of Rawlings' closest collaborators.

Rawlings and the activists around him drew some political lessons from the experience of the Limann regime. Rawlings was, he later admitted, "slightly naïve" in 1979. "I just assumed and always did that oppression, or suppression, was an accidental human error. Now I know better. It was nothing but a deliberate

and organised affair."

Broader sectors of the population, who previously tended to equate repression and corruption with military rule, also learned that a civilian bourgeois regime could be just as bad.

Given the radicalization that was opened up by Rawlings's June 4 takeover, the Limann regime remained politically weak. It could not stop a new wave of labor strikes from sweeping the country, nor prevent students from condemning its proimperialist policies. Despite the repression, left-wing and anti-imperialist political organizations began to emerge, among them the June Fourth Movement, which was most closely aligned with Rawlings.

Rawlings himself continued to be politically active, drawing large crowds wherever he spoke. He retained strong support among the ranks of the armed forces. The senior officer corps failed in its efforts to reimpose military discipline.

Finally, on Dec. 31, 1981, Rawlings led a second seizure of power, dubbed "Operation Holy War." Once again, it was spearheaded by junior officers and rank-and-file soldiers, and enjoyed the direct backing of most of Ghana's left-wing and anti-imperialist organizations.

It also won immediate popular support. On Jan. 2, 1982, thousands of people, mostly workers and students, demonstrated in Accra

in support of Rawlings' new Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC).

Less than a week later, on January 8, nearly half a million workers and farmers from throughout the country converged on Accra for a similar show of support.

'A national democratic revolution'

From the first days of the PNDC, the leadership around Rawlings made it clear that its second seizure of power had a more ambitious and long-term goal than the June 4, 1979, action. To achieve genuine independence and to improve the conditions of the Ghanaian masses, they said, it was necessary to initiate a popular revolutionary struggle.

"This is not a coup," Rawlings maintained in his first speech on December 31. "I ask for nothing less than a revolution — something that will transform the social and economic order of this country."

According to the preamble of the PNDC's May 1982 policy guidelines, the process initiated on December 31 is a "national democratic revolution" that is "anti-imperialist, anti-neocolonialist and aiming at instituting popular democracy." Noting that the state machinery imposed by imperialism is "inherently undemocratic," it said that this revolution "aims at ensuring that power is exercised by the people organised from the grassroots. This implies a revolutionary transformation of the existing institutions to respond readily to the will of the people."

In one of his first speeches, Rawlings pledged that efforts would be made to improve the living conditions of the Ghanaian people. "This is a democratic revolution," he said, "to assure for our people the basic conditions of their survival. Their right to eat and feed their families, to be clothed, to attend to their health needs through the provision of basic medical facilities, the right to education for their children so that what they themselves have not been able to attain, their children can work to it."

Repeating one of the themes of the June 4 action, Rawlings proclaimed a "holy war" against corruption and against the "brazen injustices committed by political racketeers and parasites."

In an interview in the Sept. 10, 1982, Cuban weekly *Bohemia*, Rawlings explained, "There are social groups that have lived at the expense of the working masses' sufferings and hardships and that have an interest in maintaining these relations of exploitation. They are today the enemies of the revolution."

To overcome both the resistance of imperialism and of its allies within Ghana, Rawlings and other leaders have called on the Ghanaian people to themselves mobilize, and not to expect the national leadership to initiate everything. To that end, they have urged the population to form and join popular bodies called People's Defence Committees (PDCs). (Since late 1984, they have been known as Committees for the Defence of the Revolution.)



Rally shortly after Dec. 31, 1981, seizure of power by Rawlings' PNDC.

"In the towns, in the villages, in all our factories, offices, and work places, in our barracks, we have an immediate task for these committees — that of defending this revolution and ensuring the exposure of saboteurs," Rawlings declared in his December 31 speech. "These defence committees are to defend the democratic rights of the people and expose corruption and anything which can undermine the revolution."

Rawlings and other leaders often pay tribute to Kwame Nkrumah and explain that they are trying to continue the struggle that he led two decades ago. At the same time, they refer to some of the shortcomings of the anti-imperialist struggle in that period, such as the low level of mass mobilization and the extent of corruption within the leadership of Nkrumah's party. They are discussing the lessons of Nkrumah's defeat, so as to avoid a similar fate.

Question of power unresolved

The coming to power of the PNDC has been accompanied by the most massive and sustained popular mobilizations in the country's history, surpassing even the upsurge of the late 1940s and early 1950s that paved the way for the attainment of independence.

During the first months of 1982, there were demonstrations, rallies, and marches in virtually every major city and town, as well as in many of the smaller towns and villages. These involved most sectors of the population: workers, farmers, students, tradespeople, soldiers, fishermen, women, and others. The PDCs soon had hundreds of thousands of activists.

The extent of these mobilizations reflected the depth of popular aspirations for progressive change and for freedom from the imperialist yoke.

Despite the scope of this upsurge, the process that began on Dec. 31, 1981, has yet to attain its basic goals. There have been advances since then, but also many unsurmounted difficulties and some setbacks. Given Ghana's poverty and extreme economic crisis, as well as the tenacious resistance of the well-entrenched Ghanaian exploiting strata, few immediate material gains have been won by the Ghanaian masses.

The revolutionary process unleashed more

than three years ago still entails a bitter and difficult struggle. It is an unfinished process, full of contradictions, that remains particularly vulnerable.

"The question of power has not yet been resolved," Yaw Akrasi-Sarpong, a member of the PNDC's Secretariat, told a group of North American activists (this correspondent among them) in early March. "The enemies of the revolution have become even more determined in their opposition."

A similar point was made in an interview in late 1984 by Yao Graham, at that time the coordinator of the National Defence Committee, which headed the PDCs on a national scale. He stated that the December 31 takeover had not "settled the question of power decisively," though it "had made an important contribution to the development of popular power" through the establishment of the PDCs.

Purges and trials

Much of the old neocolonial state apparatus remains in place, an apparatus that was set up to protect the interests of imperialism and its local allies.

Nevertheless, some key pillars of that state have been shattered and others severely shaken and undermined. The privileges and prerogatives of Ghana's exploiters have been under continual assault.

One of the first acts of the PNDC was to dissolve the main political institutions of the Limann regime, in particular the bourgeois parliament and the Council of State. Limann's PNP, as well as all other bourgeois and reactionary political parties, were banned. Many of their leaders were detained and held for investigation of past crimes and abuses.

The army, which had already gone through considerable political upheaval since the June 4 revolt, was subjected to further turmoil. The top officer corps was purged of the most corrupt and proimperialist figures, in particular the *sikafo amba ntem* ("new rich"), who had used their positions of authority to purchase large farms, acquire import licenses to facilitate their black market dealings, or gain posts in state or private corporations.

While the military chain of command was

formally left intact, it has constantly been called into question by the political radicalization among the ranks, who are overwhelmingly of working-class and peasant origin. The establishment of soldiers' defense committees similar to the PDCs and the institution of "durbars" (general discussions open to all ranks) have provided ordinary soldiers a much greater voice than in the past. This has caused disquiet in the officer corps.

Despite these changes, the relations between the army and civilians continue to be a source of some friction. The often arbitrary functioning of some soldiers and officers reflects their training as part of a neocolonial repressive force standing apart from — and against — the rest of the population. There have been clashes involving indisciplined troops, as well as outright attacks on political activists and working people by those in the army who are hostile to the unfolding revolutionary struggle or who see their possession of a uniform as a license for personal advancement.

The PNDC has severely punished soldiers engaged in such actions and has taken other measures to limit them. Over the past year, after much hesitation, the first steps have been taken to set up at least some units of a separate popular militia, trained and organized by the defense committees.

The bureaucracy and civil service have also been purged to an extent. This has especially affected the top management personnel of state-owned enterprises, many of whom used their positions to illegally amass wealth. Yet the civil service as a whole remains a basically conservative institution. Besides widespread inefficiency and incompetence — a legacy of Ghana's underdevelopment — many civil servants and administrative personnel have resisted the adoption of progressive policies and have even sabotaged the implementation of decisions made by the national leadership.

The changes made in the judicial system have been among the most sweeping. As a brochure published by the official Information Services Department pointed out, the old court system "benefitted the corrupt, the cheats and the parasites who were milking the country's resources. As a result of their social status, connections and class interests, the members of the judiciary created two standards in the administration of justice — one for the poor and one for the rich."

In an effort to bypass the old courts and bring speedy justice to those engaged in corrupt and blatantly exploitative practices, new public tribunals were established, to which workers, farmers, soldiers, professionals, and others were appointed. When the PNDC first came to power, all bank accounts of 50,000 cedis* or more were frozen pending investigations. Thousands of businessmen, merchants, state officials, professionals, and others were

grilled about their sources of income. Those involved in irregularities were taken before the tribunals, which sentenced the guilty to prison terms, fines, confiscation of their property, and occasionally death. These tribunals have already tried several thousand cases nationally.

This May 25, for example, a businessman and two officials of the Ghana Commercial Bank were executed for their part in a \$1.24 million bank fraud scheme.

These anticorruption efforts have spread much concern among Ghana's wealthy precisely because so many of them have been involved in illegal business dealings.

These policies of the PNDC have made kalabule practices much more risky. But given the extent of corruption in Ghana, the problem has been far from overcome. It flows from the capitalist nature of Ghana's economy.

Price controls

During its first few months in office, the PNDC sought, in a similar fashion, to tackle some of the more exploitative practices of traders, businessmen, and landlords and to bring a measure of immediate relief to the population.

To counter the impact of Ghana's exceptionally high inflation rate, strict price controls were set for essential consumer goods, especially food. Students, workers, and troops monitored prices in the markets, and merchants violating the price controls were brought before the public tribunals.

Raids were carried out against storehouses where scarce goods had been hoarded by big traders to drive up prices. Joint patrols of border guards and activists of the PDCs were set up to check the massive smuggling of cocoa and food crops across the borders.

Urban landlords were ordered to drastically reduce rents, in some regions by up to 50 percent.

Steps were also taken to reduce taxi and bus fares, school fees, and the costs of medical care. Workers who had earlier been fired from their jobs in state-run enterprises for engaging in protests and strikes were reinstated.

But these initial measures of the PNDC were largely of a stop-gap nature. Their limits soon became apparent.

It proved impossible to *decree* a reduction in prices, while the market was dominated entirely by private traders. Despite the measures against hoarding, many merchants retaliated against the price controls by simply withholding their goods from the market and causing worse scarcities.

These early measures to alleviate the suffering of the masses also came up against the overall crisis of the Ghanaian economy, the worst in its entire history. In a situation of declining industrial and agricultural production, of a growing trade deficit, of large foreign debts, and of a considerable degree of dependency on the world capitalist economy, it soon became clear to many political activists that the living conditions of the masses could not be improved overnight.

As in most of Africa, the revolutionary struggle in Ghana faces many objective difficulties and weaknesses.

Not the least of them is the degree of direct imperialist oppression and exploitation. Since 1821, when the British colonialists first established their jurisdiction over the trading centers of what was then called the Gold Coast, Ghana has been subjected to the demands of the world capitalist economy, primarily as a supplier of raw materials. Despite the development of some industry (textiles, steel, aluminum processing, glass, radio assembly, and others), Ghana's economy remains largely agrarian, with cocoa and cocoa products accounting for two-thirds of all export earnings. This has left it exceptionally vulnerable to the decline in the price of cocoa on the world market.

Capitalist market relations have penetrated the Ghanaian countryside more than in many other African countries. By the time independence was won in 1957, some 85 percent of the population was involved to some extent in the money economy (though subsistence agriculture continues to play an important role). This greater dependence on cash incomes means that most Ghanaians feel much more directly the effects of inflation, low cocoa prices, and other economic difficulties.

At the same time, those class forces that have the greatest interest and stake in the struggle against imperialist domination remain relatively weak.

There are nearly a million wage workers and salaried employees in Ghana, out of a total population of more than 12 million. In Africa, this is a significant percentage. But it does not tell the whole story.

A big portion of this work force is composed of agricultural laborers, many of whom are migrant workers employed on a seasonal basis. This makes their organization difficult.

Though there are some sectors of the industrial working class that have a longer history in Ghana (in the ports, mines, and railways), many urban wage earners have only recently become workers. It is not uncommon for them to retain strong social and family ties in the villages. If they cannot find jobs, many have the option of returning to the villages, where they often retain rights to farm communally owned land. A large number also engage in petty trade.

Despite the growth of market relations in the countryside, many cultural and social features of traditional tribal society survive. This influences the way farm laborers, small peasants, and also urban workers think and act. Many still look to their village chiefs for direction, and many tend to identify more with their own tribal, language, or family grouping than with others of their class. (There are some 75 different languages and dialects in Ghana.)

'No revolutionary organization'

On top of these objective social and economic difficulties, the political leadership of the anti-imperialist process is extremely thin.

When Rawlings and his comrades seized

* At that time the cedi was officially valued at US\$0.36, though its actual value was far lower. The current exchange rate is 1 cedi = \$0.019.

power in December 1981, they had no national political organization. None exists in Ghana today.

There were a number of small left-wing and anti-imperialist groups: the June Fourth Movement, New Democratic Movement, Kwame Nkrumah Revolutionary Guards, People's Revolutionary League of Ghana, and others. They came largely out of the student movement, had few roots in the working class or peasantry, and had little political influence among the masses of Ghanaians.

They were, moreover, sharply divided among themselves. Several attempts were made to unite them, but those efforts failed. Ultraleft and adventurist political positions and actions by some of their leaders and activists only served to further isolate them from the population. Over the past three and a half years, these left-wing groups have failed to grow, and some have virtually disappeared from the scene.

The absence of a national organization that could discuss political perspectives and give a more focused direction to the unfolding struggle in Ghana is a problem that the leadership around Rawlings is aware of and concerned about.

In a discussion with myself and other members of the North American delegation that visited Ghana in March, Kojo Tsikata, the special adviser to the PNDC, commented, "It is true that there is no national revolutionary organization. And it is clear that it is very difficult to promote a revolutionary process without such an organization. We are very clear about that."

At the moment, there are no visible prospects for overcoming the problem.

Another important factor influencing the struggle in Ghana has been the way the Limann regime was overthrown and the PNDC brought to power. This has had a bearing on the level of political consciousness among the population as a whole, and the extent to which they identify with and are ready to actively participate in the struggle.

"We emerged in this process as a military conspiracy, supported by various small progressive circles," Tsikata explained. "It's not a revolution which has come about through a guerrilla movement. It's not a revolution which has come about as a result of a mass movement or as a result of work by a revolutionary party working underground. It has its own peculiar characteristics."

All these difficulties and shortcomings affect the immediate possibilities for the struggle in Ghana, as well as its pace.

The very composition of the PNDC and the cabinet that it has set up reflects the struggle's current stage, with all its strengths and weaknesses.

These bodies are politically broad. They include revolutionaries, as well as those who think that gradual reform can bring about significant change. Some figures consider them-

selves Marxists, others not.

The image that the PNDC and its cabinet seek to project is that of a nationalist government, representing the national interests of all Ghanaians against imperialist oppression. For example, the current PNDC includes, besides Rawlings: Ebo Tawiah, a former dockworkers' leader; Susanna Alhassan, a former official in Nkrumah's government; D.F. Annan, a former judge; Aana Enin, a former manager of the State Fishing Corp; and Alhaji Mahama Id-risu, a former leader of one of the banned bourgeois parties. Kojo Tsikata, who has been special adviser to the PNDC since May 1982, was involved in guerrilla training for freedom fighters from other African countries during Nkrumah's government and after Nkrumah's overthrow fought with the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). Previously, the PNDC included a general, a priest, a former student leader, and a tribal chief who was also a farmer.

The cabinet's composition reflects a comparable range of social strata, as well as a broad variety of political views.

As the struggle has unfolded since December 1981, the pressures of different class interests have been felt within these leading bodies, generating rifts, conflicts, and an especially high turnover of membership. Of the original PNDC set up on Dec. 31, 1981, only Rawlings is left. And there are just a handful of cabinet secretaries who have held posts from the beginning.

Mass organizations

Without the benefit of a national political organization, the revolutionaries in the leadership of Ghana's anti-imperialist upsurge have relied above all on the People's Defence Committees to move the process forward.

Despite some problems of organization, perspective, and political consciousness within the PDCs, their formation and development has been the single most important gain for the Ghanaian masses. They have served to draw

ordinary Ghanaians into active political life more than ever before.

It is not known how many members the committees have today. There may well be several million. According to Yaw Akraasi-Sarpong, a former PNDC coordinator for the defense committees, some 400,000 of them may be considered "active, militant, core members."

The committees are organized in villages, factories, offices, markets, schools, military units, and urban neighborhoods. Each one comprises from 40 to 100 people and elects four leaders for one-year terms. Local CDRs are then represented on higher coordinating bodies at the district and regional levels.

According to a government booklet, membership in the committees "remains open to all persons who are prepared to uphold and defend the basic objectives of the ongoing revolutionary process and who have a proven record of patriotism, integrity and democratic practice."

The committees carry out a wide range of activities, from organizing political and cultural events to undertaking economic development projects. In urban areas they help in the distribution of essential goods, enforce government price controls, repair roads, and clean up neighborhoods. In the villages and rural areas they organize literacy classes and provide assistance to farmers.

The defense committees in the workplaces have been especially militant. They have fought against abuses and profiteering by management personnel, in both privately owned and state-run enterprises, and have mobilized support for the PNDC's progressive policies.

To a lesser extent, other mass organizations have emerged or have become radicalized by the upsurge.

The National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS), which had played an important role in mobilizing student opposition to the repressive and proimperialist policies of previous regimes, quickly declared its support for the Dec. 31, 1981, action. Its leadership at that



Ernest Harsch/IP

Billboard in Accra calling on people to support the mass-based neighborhood and workplace defense committees.

time actively organized the NUGS membership to participate in various programs. They helped set up a Students Task Force, for example, which moved cocoa from isolated rural farms to the main ports. The most militant student activists left the NUGS, however, to concentrate on building other organizations and campaigns; so by late 1982 a new, right-wing leadership was able to take control of the organization.

Women have organized themselves into a number of different bodies. Besides local groups, there are two national organizations, the Federation of Ghanaian Women and the 31 December Women's Movement.

There are local farmers' organizations, including marketing and credit cooperatives. But most represent the interests of the better-off farmers, including the wealthier cocoa farmers. The more oppressed and exploited layers of the peasantry have been drawn into activity primarily through the village defense committees, on a modest scale thus far.

Since the overthrow of the Limann regime, the 460,000-member Trades Union Congress (TUC) has gone through some important changes.

For decades, the TUC and its 17 member unions have been saddled with bureaucratic, class-collaborationist leaderships that did not represent the interests of the workers.

Within weeks of the PNDC's coming to power, however, union members began to mobilize for the ouster of these leaders. They held demonstrations to demand the resignation of the top TUC officials and on the eve of May Day stormed and occupied the TUC's headquarters.

Some officials resigned, and others were simply booted out of office. New ad hoc leaderships, more reflective of the sentiment among the ranks, took over.

Rawlings hailed this development in a 1982 May Day speech. At a large rally in Accra that same day, E.K. Aboagye, the leader of the insurgent unionists (and now national chairman of the Public Utility Service Workers Union), stated, "The revolution has created the possibility for an alliance of all revolutionary, progressive, democratic and patriotic people to unite to pull our nation out of its present state of advanced decay and degeneration."

But problems in the unions persist. The large administrative staffs of the TUC and the individual unions remain bureaucratized and tend to dampen workers' initiative. At the same time, the most militant workers often direct their energies more toward building the defense committees, leading to a low level of participation in union activities. When new union elections were held in early 1983, a few of the ousted leaders were able to make a comeback.

Despite such difficulties, a new spirit of militancy has taken root among working people in Ghana. This is especially evident in industrial centers like Tema, some 25 kilometers west of Accra, where about half of Ghana's industry is concentrated.

An early example of this came in June 1982, when workers in Tema staged a massive demonstration to protest a decision by the U.S.-owned Valco Aluminum Co. (a subsidiary of Kaiser) to cut production by 20 percent. Pointing to similar production cutbacks by imperialist firms in Chile and Jamaica that facilitated the toppling of the Allende and Manley governments in those countries, the workers declared that Valco's decision was a "naked political challenge to the PNDC and the people of Ghana."

Carrying placards declaring, "Down with imperialism!" they marched to Accra, where they presented copies of their resolution to the Valco management and the U.S. ambassador.

It has been militant actions like that one, in the context of a deep and ongoing mobilization of broad sectors of the Ghanaian population, that have alarmed the imperialists and the reactionary forces within Ghana. They have no intention of allowing this revolutionary struggle to succeed.

[Next: *The revolution struggles to survive.*]

Northern Ireland

Nationalists gain in local vote

Sinn Féin elects 59 local councillors

By Will Reissner

Members of Sinn Féin, the political organization in solidarity with the Irish Republican Army, won seats on 17 of the 26 local government councils in British-ruled Northern Ireland on May 15. In all, 59 Sinn Féin candidates were elected.

The vote for Sinn Féin, said the organization's publicity director, Danny Morrison, refutes "the British lie which states that the resistance and struggle in Ireland has no popular mandate." In 1922 the British partitioned Ireland, keeping control over six counties of the north.

Britain's secretary of state for Northern Ireland, Douglas Hurd, made it known on election day that no Sinn Féin members would be received by British authorities, even when they are part of official delegations from the elected councils.

The British government's boycott pledge was repeated two days later by the government's minister in charge of prisons, Nicholas Scott, who stated that he and his colleagues would have no dealings with Sinn Féin councillors as long as they support "what they call the armed struggle."

The harassment of the newly elected councillors went beyond snubs. On May 16 and 17, four newly-elected Sinn Féin representatives were arrested and charged with various offenses by the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

In its election manifesto, Sinn Féin stated it was running "so that nationalists who have suffered so long under British and unionist [supporters of union with Britain] misrule will have strong decisive representation at the local level."

The platform added: "Sinn Féin stands in this election with an unambiguous manifesto supporting the rights of the people of Ireland to rule themselves, free of British interference. We consider the struggle for national liberation to be just. If there were no British arms in Ireland, Ireland would be at peace and would be governed by elected Irish representatives."

A vote for Sinn Féin, the platform added, is "a vote in favour of effective representation, Irish independence and real peace in Ireland."

The results reflect the growth and consolidation of support for Sinn Féin within Northern Ireland's oppressed Catholic population since the 1981 hunger strike in which 10 Irish nationalists starved to death in the British prison at Long Kesh.

In the prorepublican areas of Belfast, Cookstown, Dungannon, Fermanagh, Magherafelt, Omagh, and Strabane, Sinn Féin ran well ahead of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), a nationalist party that opposes armed struggle and has the support of the Irish government. The SDLP won 101 seats in all.

The SDLP ran ahead of Sinn Féin in the city of Derry, winning 15 seats to Sinn Féin's 5. Derry is the home base of SDLP leader John Hume.

Derry Sinn Féin councillor Gerry Doherty took his seat in the city hall building he had once been convicted of blowing up.

In districts where Sinn Féin fielded candidates, it averaged 41.6 percent of the nationalist vote. In Belfast, where seven Sinn Féin members were elected to the city council, its candidates received 52 percent of the nationalist vote.

On May 28, Sinn Féin councillor Seamus Kerr was elected chairperson of the Omagh District Council, the first time the organization has headed a local council since the 1920s.

When Kerr began his opening speech as council chairman in Gaelic, pro-British residents seated in the public galleries began screaming epithets such as "Shut up you Fenian bastard!" and "You want your throat cut, Kerr, you Fenian bastard." The Fenians were an Irish nationalist organization active in the second half of the 19th century.

Sinn Féin has announced it will also contest the local government elections to be held in the formally independent 26-counties of the south on June 20. □

Building a revolutionary party

Interview with a leader of the Socialist Workers Organization

[The following is an interview with Bélo, a leader of the Socialist Workers Organization (OST), Senegalese section of the Fourth International. It was obtained by Ernest Harsch on March 19 in Dakar, the capital of Senegal. Originally conducted in French, it has been translated by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Question. For several years now, the government of Abdou Diouf has been conducting an austerity policy dictated by the International Monetary Fund. What are its main aspects, and what has been its impact on working people here in Senegal?

Answer. Basically, it involves revising the social programs, which, in oppressed countries like this one, were already virtually nonexistent: health care, education, and the few other social gains that there were. There is an attempt to reduce the already weak participation of the state in these social sectors.

The austerity policies are also seen in the reduction of jobs. The employment level is already very weak, with only 4 percent of the population in Senegal being workers. Thus, with 6 million people, there are 210,000 workers, both male and female.

The government is trying to cut the number of government workers, who are the largest portion of the work force. It's making it easier for companies to lay off workers. At the beginning of the economic crisis, in 1977, it passed a law that allows the capitalists to lay off workers at will, without much trouble.

In terms of women, their primary role in society is generally in the family. Even though they are largely excluded from the work force, they feel the impact of the government's austerity programs very directly. They feel decline in the purchasing power of the workers in their families when they go to the markets, when they prepare the meals, as they try to maintain the household.

There is also a certain inflation that the state itself is responsible for. Since the beginning of the economic crisis and the imposition in 1979 of the economic "recovery" plan, the state has been moving away from subsidies on the prices of basic necessities. With the elimination of subsidies, for example, the price of rice has gone up nearly 100 percent. Since rice is the basic food in Senegal, this causes serious harm to the family budget.

The austerity policy is also seen in an increase in the kind and number of taxes affecting the peasants. And there is state usury, involving a surcharge on certain products, essentials like sugar, bread, and gasoline.

The youth also suffer harshly, including the

section of the youth who have been able to get an education. There are about 1,000 students who have reached the master's level at the university but are unemployed, who have been turned into vendors by the IMF's programs. These youth suffer from a crisis of perspective, and have no hope of getting jobs.

We also have a number of petty bourgeois urban layers, such as taxi drivers, who up until now were not having as hard a time as were the workers and peasants. But this year they have begun to suffer very sharply from the government's austerity policy. They are hamstrung, for example, by the surcharge on gasoline. And that is one of the orientations of the IMF.

The petty bourgeois sectors, who were demanding a larger share of the national budget, run up against policies that are based on the overall interests of the capitalist class, and that are tied to the credit-tightening policies of the banks.

Q. Is the so-called political opening of recent years — such as the legalization of opposition parties — tied to the efforts of the bourgeois government to impose this austerity policy?

A. The government, imperialism, and its agents in the media have called this a "democratic opening" and cited Senegal as a unique example of "democracy" in Africa. But from the beginning we analyzed it differently.

This process took place in two stages. The first was in 1975. There was a small political opening that legalized only four parties. It was a test to see if democracy could work here in the form in which imperialism and the Senegalese bourgeoisie wanted it.

After five years, by 1980, I think the test was positive from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie and imperialism. The legal openings that were permitted could not be used, either by the legal opposition or the underground opposition, to develop substantial enough forms of struggle for working people. This made it possible to organize tailor-made elections. It enabled [former president Léopold Sédar] Senghor to be elected in 1978 and made it possible for the Socialist Party to retain power in the legislative elections, and to win the municipal elections.

But what were imperialism and the bourgeoisie looking to gain from the political opening in Senegal?

It came at a time when capitalism was hit by the worst crisis in its history in Senegal. It also came at a time when the mass movement, which had been smashed with the defeat of the 1968 general strike, was beginning to revive.

As a result of the drought, there were very tough, spontaneous strikes, by the fishermen, the railway workers, and others.

The single trade union federation, the CNTS [National Confederation of Senegalese Workers], which is tied to the bourgeois Socialist Party, went through a crisis. This led to the formation of another federation, the UTLS [Free Workers Union of Senegal], which is the organized expression of the reconstruction of the mass movement.

So we saw the democratic opening as part of a contradictory situation. On the one hand, the bourgeoisie wanted the parties to be legalized, to use that legalization to reinforce the stability of the neocolonial institutions. On the other hand there was the mass movement, which did not wait for the austerity policies to take effect in order to act, to begin to revive, to rebuild the unions, to mobilize once again through strikes, and so on.

With the intensification of the capitalist economic crisis, by 1980 the bourgeoisie and imperialism realized that they could no longer carry out the austerity policy as they had before. In that context, Senghor left in 1980, and was replaced by his prime minister, Abdou Diouf.

Abdou Diouf took office to continue what Senghor had begun in 1975, to go through with the application of the austerity measures. But Diouf claimed his hands were "clean." He took no responsibility for the past crisis in Senegal and differentiated himself from the policies of his predecessor. He gave a clearer political content to the stability of the neocolonial institutions. He appealed for "national unity." He said that he would recognize all the parties.

The reason for legalizing the parties was tied to this theme of "national unity." It's not a democracy. It fits into the framework of an imperialist redeployment that is trying, in order to safeguard its interests in this country, to respond to the demands of the class struggle at a given point in Senegal's history.

It was not a desire or a struggle by the masses that won the demand for recognition of their parties and trade unions. It was the bourgeoisie that tried to politically respond before the mass movement made this demand, to legalize the parties and try to bring them into the sphere of class collaboration. This, in imperialism's view, was the only way to get social peace, to avoid class struggles and confrontations, as Abdou Diouf started implementing the austerity policy.

In the beginning, this plan touched off a crisis within the opposition parties. The forces of bourgeois nationalism, of the proimperialist bourgeoisie, crystallized around this project.

But in the end the plan did not work out.

One of the clearest signs of this failure was the elections of February 1983. The parties that had already worked out a pledge of "national unity" were disappointed by the fraud of these elections. They thought they would have representation in the National Assembly. But there was massive fraud. Abdou Diouf had betrayed what seemed like a pledge.

These elections short-circuited the process of "national unity," since some still very conservative sectors of the bourgeoisie organized this fraud. They rejected the idea that the sectors favoring the opposition could be represented in the National Assembly.

Since then, a current has emerged within the bourgeoisie that says there are too many political parties in Senegal, too many trade unions, too many union struggles in the workplace. This is a very hard-line current, we might even say fascist-like, that's beginning to appear publicly. It's expressed through a newspaper called *Convention*.

With the fraud of the 1983 elections, the rank-and-file activists — not the leaders — pressed these parties to break with the "national unity" policy. For us that was fundamental. We campaigned against "national unity." We campaigned against the illusion that the masses had won democracy, explaining that it was a maneuver on the part of imperialism.

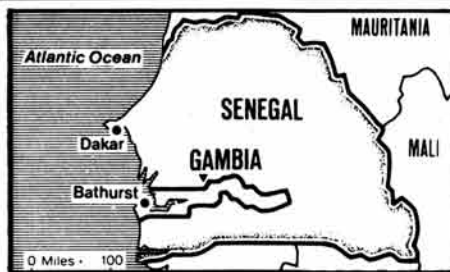
We never at any time thought that democracy was possible in the oppressed countries. Even in the advanced capitalist countries real democracy does not exist. It is irreconcilable with a monopoly in the means of production. All the more so here, where the bourgeoisie does not have that monopoly in the means of production, but is dependent on imperialism in that regard. "Democracy" is a function of the interests and the stakes that country represents for imperialism.

From this point of view, the political opening is a political response accompanying the economic austerity measures, within the framework of the capitalist crisis in Senegal.

Q. Several weeks ago, eight opposition parties, among them the OST, issued a joint declaration against the government's austerity policies. What is the significance of this joint initiative?

A. First of all, it's necessary to look back. After the February 1983 elections, the opposition parties met to put forward five points that reflected the concerns of the masses and also represented a defense of democratic rights in our country. On March 7 [1983], for example, 20,000 people participated in a meeting called by 11 parties, and on March 19 some 25,000 people turned out.

But after these agreements [to struggle for democratic rights] were reached, they were blocked. One party, a bourgeois party, resumed negotiations with the government. This caused a certain demobilization. And the Stalinists also put up obstacles to pursuing this struggle. The very fact that the meetings had



taken place was a gain that needed to be defended, and a struggle needed to be waged to consolidate the demands. But the hopes of March 7 and 19 were dashed by the betrayals of the bourgeois organizations and the opportunist hesitations of the Stalinists.

Q. By the Stalinists, do you mean the PIT [Party of Independence and Labor]?

A. No, the PIT was not inside this coalition. It's the grouping that is the closest to Moscow.

There was the PAI [African Independence Party] of Majhemout Diop, with whom we had a joint candidacy in the elections. There was the Democratic League [LD], which is also close to Moscow but is not the recognized grouping — the PIT is recognized by Moscow. And there were the Maoists.

They were for a more solid front, of a popular-front type, a governmental front. We rejected that, because we felt it didn't correspond to the concerns of the masses. The masses didn't want to hear about the government. They simply wanted to fight in defense of their freedoms.

On August 19 [1983], President Diouf raised the price of foodstuffs. We called on the other parties to take part in a campaign against the price hikes, but they refused.

So on our own, with our limited resources, we carried out a countrywide campaign. We set up People's Resistance Committees, which were broad formations around our party, involving people who belonged to no party or who came from other parties. In this way, we worked with factions of these parties in different parts of the country, and in Dakar as well. Activists of the PDS [Senegalese Democratic Party, the largest bourgeois opposition party] came to work with us in the committees.

This was our first experience in setting up mass fronts around the demands of the working people.

Then on September 29 [1984] there was an increase in the price of rice, with other increases projected. We went into action against this and we called on the other parties. We resumed discussions, and out of them, seven parties, one union, and one youth organization agreed to call a protest meeting. This meeting was suddenly banned, although it had already been approved by the minister of the interior. The day of the meeting we were forced to withdraw to the headquarters of one of the parties to conduct the meeting.

On November 4, all the independent unions that follow us called a meeting as well. It too was banned.

From then on, we understood that the struggle against austerity must be linked to the struggle for democratic liberties, for the defense of meetings, the right to assemble and organize, etc. So we struggled around these questions.

In the meantime, there were municipal elections. The parties were divided. The majority of the opposition parties boycotted the elections, but they did not put forward an alternative around which to act. So it was a passive boycott. Only the Stalinists of the PIT and LD and a bourgeois nationalist party took part in the elections, which were marked by fraud like those in 1983.

Right after the elections, Abdou Diouf raised bus fares. Again, the same parties got together to discuss this. A round-table discussion of the opposition was held in Guédiawaye [a neighborhood of Dakar], involving eight parties.*

All the proposals were made by us, because of our experience in forming the anti-price-hike committees. So we proposed a petition campaign, which was launched. Our party alone obtained thousands of signatures. Around these petitions general assemblies of neighborhood committees were called to democratically elect bureaus that could be removed at any time.

Some of the parties are hesitating; they don't understand this move. And there are others that are trying to take advantage of it to set up a more structured front; their leaderships are trying to use the popular discontent to set up organizational structures that correspond to their strategic aims. But this is inadequate, it won't work. They tried it many times before and it didn't work.

We are taking part in this struggle with the other parties, while at the same time we are carrying out independent initiatives, in order to develop the committees. That's why I went to Kaolack, where there are some perspectives for setting up three committees. There were discussions with the leaders. Everyone is in the committees. Even representatives of the governing party are prepared to work with the committees. There are PIT activists who refuse to work with the other opposition parties but are in the committees.

So today, it seems that these committees are the political and organizational response that relates to the concerns of the masses. Therefore, we are fighting to launch these committees, to expand them in all the cities in Senegal, and to centralize them.

Q. In what other kinds of work and among what social sectors is the OST most active?

A. There has been some evolution in the organization's activity since its inception. In fact, this evolution has been quite rapid over the past five years.

In 1979, most of the organization's forces

* For the text of the resolution adopted by the eight opposition parties at this meeting, see the May 27 *Intercontinental Press*.

were in the student movement. But since then we have established a presence in all the trade unions, in leadership positions. We held the post of general secretary in the UTLS union federation. Last week, a member of our Political Bureau was elected deputy general secretary of the University Teachers Union. We have intermediate leadership positions among the airport staff, in the Democratic Union of Technicians of Senegal (SDTS). In addition, we have leadership responsibilities among the ranks; some members are union delegates.

In contrast, the organization is very weak among students today. We think that's an error. We went to an extreme by pulling all our forces out of the student movement and not leaving any there. We have a political line that influences many students, but we have only 10 members in the university and high school movements. Together with these fractions, we are now once again raising the question of developing our presence in this sector.

We have been carrying out work among peasants. We have a controlling influence in two rural sectors, which are composed of several villages.

This is the first time, for the past two years, that we have had an experience like this. There was much hesitancy, and we made errors by intervening as we would among workers.

The peasantry is a stratum that is politically very far behind the working class. It was always under the political boot of the bourgeoisie and functioned as a political client for the reactionaries and the bourgeoisie. It never had an experience of traditional struggle, of developing a consciousness against the bourgeois state and the bourgeoisie.

Only now, with the economic crisis and the state's refusal to raise the price it pays to the producers for their peanuts, the peasants are organizing a passive resistance that is greatly upsetting the bourgeoisie. If you look in the newspaper, every day there's an article on the parallel markets.

We were among the first to have understood these specific forms of resistance, to take a position and to campaign in support of this movement of resistance of the peasantry. We feel this movement is extremely important, because it's one more element of the social polarization in the country. More and more, the line is being clearly drawn between the working people and the bourgeois state.

The resistance of the peasants makes it particularly urgent for us to define the specific kind of work that we must conduct among the peasantry.

Q. My last question is very broad. What perspectives does the OST have for the revolution in Senegal, and how do you see it within the broader African revolution?

A. The perspectives for the revolution in Senegal — yes, that's a very broad question.

In Africa, there is a constant instability of power, even in periods when there is no economic crisis like the one we are living through. These are neocolonial bourgeois regimes. In

certain cases we can say that these African regimes are just puppet regimes. The rapid turnover of these types of regimes comes from the activity of the working people, but also from their congenital weaknesses.

This helps explain the disconcerting ease with which certain coups have been successful, as in Liberia, where five or six people got together on the beach and decided to overthrow the president. There was also the failed coup in Gambia, in which a handful of individuals succeeded in toppling the regime. We can also speak of Burkina, where small groups have made coup after coup. Or Ghana, where a small group seized power, handed it back, and then seized it yet again. In Senegal a few months ago, a statement was issued by a group of junior officers that threatened to seize power from the regime.

This reflects the objective fragility of these regimes, which is linked to the historic conditions in which they were born and to their countries' economic and social oppression.

There is a generational break in the army, which is generally the only stable social body in these countries. Some 25 years after independence, the first generation, which was trained in the colonial schools, has been succeeded by a new generation, which has experienced the mass movement, has visited other countries, and is closer to the ranks.

It would be unimaginable for a battalion of marines to decide the question of power in the United States in 24 hours. But in Africa it is possible.

The rapid turnover of parties, contrary to what is often said, is not orchestrated by imperialism. They surprise even imperialism. The new regimes, to build up a base, are obliged to adopt popular policies, such as the struggle against corruption, which is very popular in countries like ours since the whole process of the bourgeoisie's formation is linked to embezzlement and corruption.

So at any moment, in face of a structural weakness of the bourgeoisie or the state, another group may take power, without being commanded to do so by imperialism. Imperialism then later seeks to win it over and to negotiate with it. That's what the example of Liberia shows.

But we think that the usual methods of dealing with the question of power in other regions or countries may be inadequate for Senegal.

To raise the question of power means not just to assimilate these facts, but to integrate them into a perspective of sharpening the activity of the working people.

In these conditions, the only fundamental element for us is to build a party with such a perspective. Today we are concentrating all of our energies to multiply our forces, in terms of their strength and political influence in the mass movement and their geographic expansion.

We think that the working class, whatever its numerical strength at this point, continues to be the key class. This is not linked to its

size, whether it is small or not, but to the entire historical and socioeconomic analysis we have made of the evolution of the classes, in our discussions on the construction of a revolutionary party. We saw its role in practice in the 1968 general strike.

But the construction of the party and the education of the masses against the imperialist presence here and against the Senegalese bourgeoisie is, for us, inseparable from our struggle to link up with the peasantry — the entire peasantry — on this question.

We believe that in Senegal there is only one landlord: the state. Even if the state uses its holdings to weave formal political relations in the countryside with the former traditional chieftaincies, the only landowner remains the state. There is no class of big landowners in Senegal. So for us this makes it all the more true that the entire peasantry has an interest in the struggle to liberate the country and in the struggle for socialism in Senegal.

The discussion that we are conducting on the role of the party involves a reexamination and a rejection of a certain scholastic understanding of Marxism or of a Trotskyism centered primarily on the proletariat. We are now going through this discussion, and one of the basic theses will be on the kind of party we want to build in Senegal. We call it a people's party of the proletariat.

The fundamental class in Senegal is the proletariat. But the dominant class, on the physical and social level, remains the petty bourgeoisie, both rural and urban. It is impossible in these conditions to build a party with popular social roots while skirting the question of bourgeois participation.

We will face up to that, not by going to the petty bourgeoisie in an opportunist manner, but by putting great stress on raising the collective consciousness of our activists. The party that we want to build, in certain social strata, will be largely of a petty-bourgeois peasant origin. But it will be proletarian in its program and strategic aims.

That's one side of our discussions: redefining the kind of party that we want to build. That wasn't clear five or 10 years ago. It's a product of our experience in building an organization over the past several years.

We're trying to throw all our energies into the current political situation, which is very favorable to the construction of this party. I think there have been many advances in this, compared with several years ago.

Favorable perspectives are opening up before us. There are difficulties, but we are advancing. □

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'The revolution is the people'

Speech by Nicaraguan leader Tomás Borge to the CDSs

[The following speech was delivered by Tomás Borge, Nicaragua's minister of the interior and a member of the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front. It was given in Managua's Comandante Ana María Plaza on April 26, 1985.

[Borge's speech was delivered at the close of events marking the fourth anniversary of the establishment of "revolutionary vigilance," a system of neighborhood surveillance and patrols aimed at preventing counterrevolutionary sabotage. The revolutionary vigilance is carried out by members of the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDSs), which are organized throughout Nicaragua.

[The translation from a tape recording made at the site of the speech is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Allow me to begin my remarks by extending a cordial greeting to a delegation from the European Parliament. (APPLAUSE) We have already greeted the representatives of friendly nations.

We would also like to send a warm greeting to all the secretaries in Nicaragua on this their day. (APPLAUSE)

There are some people who ask themselves whether the Sandinista People's Revolution has the support of the people. Here we have what is undoubtedly a large and representative cross-section of the people, and we ask these representatives of the people: Do you support the Sandinista People's Revolution? (CROWD SHOUTS "YES". CHANTS OF "NATIONAL DIRECTORATE: GIVE THE ORDER!")

I believe I have phrased my question incorrectly and that the answer is not correct, because the revolution is the people.

Therefore, the people do not support the revolution; the revolution is the people. (APPLAUSE) Without the people there is no revolution. And without the revolution, this people would no longer be the people and would be turned into a community of slaves. When the people are the revolution, the people organize themselves.

The Sandinista Defense Committees are one of the broadest and largest and perhaps the most important form of people's organization.

The Sandinista Defense Committees, as Commander María Leticia [Herrera] noted, have contributed with shining enthusiasm to the health campaigns. We could never quantify or measure the contribution the Sandinista Defense Committees have made in the fight against infant mortality and sickness.

The fitting recognition that the World Health Organization bestowed upon Nicaragua



José G. Pérez/IP

Tomás Borge, with FSLN leader Leticia Herrera, at April 26 CDS rally in Managua.

is a distinction that is in great measure a recognition of the work done by the Sandinista Defense Committees.

The Sandinista Defense Committees have made a substantial contribution to the adult education campaigns, not to mention their contribution to the development of the militias and the implementation of the Patriotic Military Service, and not to mention the important contribution that they make around the complex tasks of food distribution. Is there anywhere you don't find the CDSs?

Where are the CDSs? The CDSs are here, there, and everywhere. (APPLAUSE) You

Our people's struggle is helping dig imperialism's grave . . .

even find the CDSs in the bile-soaked and hate-filled guts of our enemy.

What has the National Directorate determined to be the principal task of the Sandinista Defense Committees? (SHOUTS FROM THE CROWD) You have said it: revolutionary vigilance!

Why did the National Directorate determine that the principal and fundamental task of the Sandinista Defense Committees would be revolutionary vigilance? To a great extent for the following reason — because reality has shown that the main responsibility of Nicaraguans at this ominous hour is defense of the nation.

What does this mean? It means a division of labor. Among the masses there are sectors of the people directly involved in the armed combat. The vanguard in this regard is the Sandinista People's Army, with the active participation of the special units of the Ministry of the

Interior and the People's Militia.

The militia, like the CDSs, is drawn from the deepest roots of the laboring classes and is the organized people's contribution to the armed defense of the revolution.

The Ministry of the Interior, which confronts the terrorist conspiracies through the State Security and confronts crime through the police, also counts on the support of the revolutionary vigilance and of the voluntary auxiliary police. This task, given the character of the war, is both an activity of the home front and also a direct confrontation. Other sectors of the people are involved in the great tasks of the home front. Among these we can include those working in production.

As their name implies, the Sandinista Defense Committees make up the powerful people's organization that helps to defend the homeland fulfilling the tasks that have been assigned to them by the revolutionary leadership.

CDS members: the aggression, the war, the cowardly and indecent threats against the people are what make revolutionary vigilance a natural and necessary thing at this specific time.

This decision forms part of our right and our duty to survive by actively involving all sectors of the people.

I am going to cite just one example to you CDS members involved in revolutionary vigilance. Here in Managua is the petroleum refinery. It is true that for obvious reasons the government wants to make sure that this refinery is not destroyed by an act of terrorism. But it is also in the interests of all those who in one way or another derive benefits from the petroleum that is refined — factory owners, transporters, and the population as a whole, who get their light from petroleum, which is the source of

our electricity. No one would benefit from the destruction of the refinery, and an act against this strategic center would be a national tragedy.

But the nearby neighborhoods — Las Brisas, Linda Vista, Monseñor Lescano, Los Arcos, Morazán, Valle Dorado, and others — would fall victim to a disaster involving unimaginable losses in human lives and material goods if the refinery were sabotaged.

Men, women, and children would die. And I say this would happen in the neighborhoods I have mentioned, and particularly Los Arcos,

All the murderers, all the gorillas, all the bandits the world over hate you, CDS brothers and sisters . . .

where we have been told that there are many Sandinistas but little revolutionary vigilance. (APPLAUSE)

Would the work of the State Security and the police be enough, I asked myself, to prevent a terrorist act against the refinery, against the waterworks, against the country's communications centers, against the centers of production, against the hospitals, against the schools? State Security has learned of concrete plans, as everyone knows, to destroy factories, to distribute among children pencils and toys that are really explosive devices. The State Security and the police cannot by themselves keep watch over and protect all these vital objectives and protect our children.

It is essential that the people participate. And what will make this participation by the people effective and even invulnerable if not the revolutionary vigilance? This is the main thing, quite apart from the significant contribution that the revolutionary vigilance makes toward neutralizing crime.

It is proven, and María Leticia referred to this fact, that the nearly total lid that the State Security has maintained over terrorism is due, to a considerable degree, to the CDS vigilance. And to the extent that this activity by the people has increased, as the Commander pointed out, there has also been a considerable decline in assaults, thefts, homicides, murders, and other forms of crime.

Only those who are confused, only those who do not have the ability to use common sense can ignore the role of the CDSs and the exceptional contribution of their principal task — revolutionary vigilance.

Who benefits from revolutionary vigilance if not the people? Who, if not the people, should carry out revolutionary vigilance? Even the opponents of the Sandinista Defense Committees and the revolutionary vigilance benefit from the work of the CDSs and the revolutionary vigilance.

Once our enemy, once the armed counter-revolution has been defeated in the military arena, the militia members, the homeland sol-

diers will return to their work centers, to the peace of their homes, to their training unit. Once the enemy has been completely neutralized in its plan to create an internal front, it seems to us at this point, the sleepless nights and the efforts of revolutionary vigilance will no longer be necessary.

However, imperialism has long-term plans, and unfortunately we will have to wait many years before the coffin you have before you, which symbolizes imperialism, is planted six feet under the ground. (APPLAUSE) Of course, our people's struggle is helping to dig imperialism's grave.

Then the Sandinista Defense Committees can fulfill their destiny: to be basically an organization dedicated to happiness and to love and to providing a sense of cohesion and content to community services.

But, I ask, what is required by the tragic and painful present period which damages the bones and the sinews of the homeland? Nicaraguans, it requires winning the war and crushing the terrorist and criminal conspiracies. For now, Nicaraguans, we must go to the battlefield.

We must have dialogue, but speaking the only language that the murderers understand, the language of rifles and machine-guns. Using this language — with which we defeated the National Guard [of Somoza] in the streets, the cities, and the mountains, (APPLAUSE), using this language with which we defeated Somoza when Somoza thought he was the god of Nicaragua — we will defeat the genocidal Somozaist Guard at the present time when Reagan thinks he is the ruler and the king of creation. (APPLAUSE AND CHANTS OF "HERE OR THERE, WE DON'T LIE. IF THE YANKEES COME, THEY WILL DIE!")

The Sandinista Defense Committees answer a vital need. They mark our people's instinct for self-preservation. Do you members of the CDSs believe that the unrelenting hatred that the enemies of the revolution bear for you is purely coincidental? Do you think that it was coincidental that hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans have joined the Sandinista Defense Committees? The hatred against the people and the people's instinct confront each other and combine with one another.

But let's look at who is negatively affected by the existence of the Sandinista Defense Committees and the revolutionary vigilance.

Who but the terrorists, the counterrevolutionaries, those who futilely dream of returning to a past that will never come back?

Who but the bums, the criminals, the drug addicts, the rapists, the thugs, the irresponsible elements, those who are filled with hatred and spite against the process of changes that the revolution has unleashed?

Who if not the Reaganites over there and the Reaganites from here, each of them a more confused fool than the other. (APPLAUSE)

The reactionary and fascist-like press throughout the whole world spills its venom against the Sandinista Defense Committees.

And this, of course, is no coincidence. All those here who think that they bear illustrious family names and have blue blood, they are the ones who describe the hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans today organized in the Sandinista Defense Committees and the revolutionary vigilance as rabble, as sweat-drenched, as a mob, as thugs. This, of course, is by no means coincidental.

Let it be said in passing that the rabble, the mobs, the sweat-drenched, the thug-like CDS members have saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of children, have educated tens of thousands of adults, have tied the hands of the murderers, and have driven the COSEP¹ members and reactionaries everywhere to the brink of hysteria! (PROLONGED APPLAUSE. CHANTS OF "PEOPLE'S POWER" AND "THEY SHALL NOT PASS!")

Ask Reagan about the CDS. Ask Pinochet, the murderer of the Chilean people, ask Stroessner, the murderer of the Paraguayan people, and ask Duvalier, the murderer of the Haitian people. Ask the CIA, ask the Central American gorillas, ask the highway robbers and those who steal consciousness, ask them and you will already know the answer. All the murderers, all the gorillas, all the bandits the world over hate you, CDS brothers and sisters. (APPLAUSE)

The Sandinista Defense Committees are eyes and ears, shields, trenches, clenched fists. But they are also, it must be said, hands

Insults and unnecessary violence are wrong. Nor is it correct to use the people's organization to satisfy individual appetites . . .

extended to aid anyone in need without discrimination of any sort.

The Sandinista Defense Committees must be beacons of happiness in every community. It is disgusting that situations like the ones María Leticia mentioned exist (APPLAUSE), that in the CDSs favoritism develops, that forms of repression and discrimination arise.

In no way is it correct, rather it is reprehensible, that the CDSs should become distributors of favors to friends, that they should deny aid to a citizen who is to one or another degree confused in political terms, that such people are not included in programs to distribute staple food supplies, that reprisals are used against them.

The Sandinista Defense Committees must function in such a way so as to attract people, not repel them. Insults and unnecessary violence are wrong. Nor is it correct to use the people's organization to satisfy individual appetites, or to resolve family quarrels by adopting positions reflecting partiality. Rather they

1. Superior Council of Private Enterprise.



Michael Pennock/IP

Militia members at February 1985 celebration in Managua of fifth anniversary of militia's formation. "The militia, like the CDSs, is drawn from the deepest roots of the laboring classes."

can become and must become centers of advice and family harmony, of celebration of community joy.

If neighbors have a problem, the Sandinista Defense Committees must help them, whatever their political or religious creed. If a neighbor, a family, has trouble with a youth, with a boy, the family must be aided. All this, among other things, is what the Sandinista Defense Committees must be.

The Sandinista Defense Committees are there to defend the besieged homeland and to find solutions to various problems in the community.

The Sandinista Defense Committees are, must be, an organization of clear eyes that see straight, an immense family that shares in the suffering of all, a chorus of songs, and a refuge of compassion and human solidarity. (APPLAUSE)

The majority of the Sandinista Defense Committees bring together the best, the most selfless and enthusiastic sons and daughters of the people. They are exemplary in their devo-

The U.S. government has unleashed against us not just a military war, but also an economic, political, and ideological war . . .

tion to carrying out the duties that the revolution, with absolute confidence, entrusted to them.

But the isolated cases of abuses, arbitrary actions, and incorrect attitudes have been manipulated with great relish by the enemies of the organized people.

At the same time, as María Leticia also pointed out and as has been widely commented on in recent days, there has been a decline in the revolutionary vigilance.

Certainly it is a moving and stirring experience to walk through the outlying neighborhoods of all the cities in the country and to see in the starlight thousands and tens of thousands of men, women, and children who are alert and enthusiastic, sometimes bearing up under the burden of the rain and the weight of their eyelids, while carrying out revolutionary vigilance.

But undoubtedly there has been a drop in the number of people carrying out vigilance. And María Leticia has pointed out some of the causes. But it would be good for us to ask ourselves why this drop has taken place.

Has the revolutionary consciousness of our people declined? Has the spirit of struggle that made possible the radiance of July 19 [1979] disappeared? (SHOUTS OF "NO")

A few months ago in the elections, the people participated massively and voted in an overwhelming majority in favor of the revolution.

Participation in the militia units, in the volunteer auxiliary police, in the coffee and cotton harvests undoubtedly continues to have the support of the people.

Only six days ago, last Sunday, there was a day of people's vaccinations. Through the voluntary labor of thousands of CDS members, practically every child in Nicaragua was immunized.

Each time the U.S. government steps up its invasion plans, the people turn out massively to dig trenches and shelters as proof of their determination to defend their homeland.

When imperialism's claws dig into the homeland's back, the people take up their battle stations.

No, the people's enthusiasm has not diminished. They have shown that they are conscious, that they are brave, that they have audacity. In the veins of this people runs molten lava. How could there be a decline in the enthusiasm of a people who have unhesitatingly

restored their marimbas and their dawn? Who can doubt the consciousness of this people who were born to challenge, to struggle, to win?

Perhaps it has not been sufficiently explained that the U.S. government has unleashed against us not just a military war, but also an economic, political, and ideological war.

If transportation is bad, the U.S. government shares responsibility for that, although this does not deny the deficiencies that Commander William Ramírez is so courageously trying to solve.

If there are shortages of some products, this is also in great measure due to Reagan's war policies, without denying — that would not be honest — our shortcomings, which Commander Cabrales is confronting.

If there are those who preach passivity and surrender in the face of the aggression, it is because the enemies of the people encourage these prophets of defeat. The people must understand all this. And making sure they understand this is another task of all the members of the Sandinista Front and a task of all revolutionaries in Nicaragua.

The war is not one little piece of aggression. The war is a totality, the war is the sum of many factors. And therefore defense cannot be partial. It must be total.

Let's think, for example, about the ideological offensives launched against us every day.

The CDSs must always be the opposite of bureaucratism, the opposite of highhanded methods . . .

Let's analyze their immediate objective. Don't these ideological offensives aim to paralyze the masses, confuse the masses, divide Nicaraguans, restore anxiety and pessimism? Isn't their hatred of the Defense Committees part of this war?

The starting point and the basic aim of the attempts to spread confusion and discredit, the aim of the fury with which they carry out their ideological offensive against the people, against the CDSs, is to tear the masses away from their tasks in revolutionary defense. And perhaps some sectors have fallen victim to this confusion.

Another reason for the drop in revolutionary vigilance is, as María Leticia pointed out, related to the organizational problems. The people doing revolutionary vigilance are not always clear about the content of their task. Sometimes they sit on the sidewalk watching the stars go by, without doing anything else, without any content to their work. Every person on revolutionary vigilance must know what objectives are to be guarded. Every person on revolutionary vigilance must know to whom to report information and what each person must do in every case where there is information to report.

Thirdly, the mobilization of many com-

pañeros — especially young people — in the Patriotic Military Service, in the BIRs,² in the coffee and cotton harvests in past months has also played a part in the low number of people doing revolutionary vigilance.

Right now vigilance is one of the activities that the Defense Committees carry out. It is the principal activity of the CDSs. But revolutionary vigilance must not be thought of as a separate activity or as a parallel organization to the CDSs. Revolutionary vigilance is a task that the CDS members carry out as one aspect of their participation in that people's organization.

Revolutionary vigilance is not an institutional task, nor is it dependent on the Ministry of the Interior. It is a task of the masses, which society as a whole benefits from.

We should make clear that the CDSs are people's organizations with a dual character. They are broad, heterogeneous, community organizations that, because of the war conditions the country suffers from, carry out tasks related to the defense of the homeland and the gains of the people.

They must have a better understanding of this conception. This is a discussion in which the leadership bodies, the intermediary bodies, and the ranks of the Sandinista Defense Committees must take part.

Everyone must take part in this discussion so that what is done is the fruit of the people's opinions. The first thing that must be clarified is the nature of the CDSs. They are the revolutionaries. Therefore we must insist that they be headed by the most outstanding members in the neighborhood or the community.

The representatives of the CDSs must be the compañeros and compañeras who are the most militant, who take the problems of their neighborhood or community upon themselves, who

Guaranteeing a climate of peace, without forgetting the war, must be a constant objective of the revolutionary vigilance . . .

distinguish themselves in the vaccination campaign, the popular education programs, and especially in revolutionary vigilance.

Leading the Sandinista Defense Committees must be the most outstanding, the best members of the community.

And who are the leaders of the CDSs? Their leaders must never turn into little neighborhood *caudillos*. They must gain a sense of the feelings of the ranks. They must learn from the masses in order to teach the masses, as each revolutionary and each leader of a people's organization must do.

The CDSs mean people's participation, and this signifies communication between the revolutionary state and the mass organizations. It

means being critical. It means being self-critical. It means common decisions. All the evils that still survive in society must be closely watched by the CDSs.

The CDSs must fight against selfishness and corruption, as the Commander also pointed out.

The CDSs must always be the opposite of bureaucratism, the opposite of laying down the law and highhanded methods. The unwilling-

Militarily, the mercenary armies are powerless against the armed people . . .

ness of some compañeros to take part in some tasks may be due to the fact that they do not understand that their activity means saving lives and property.

Consolidating the works that have been achieved means attention to peace. Harmony means the happiness of the people.

There are those who maintain that vigilance must be organized on a territorial basis. There are also those who argue that vigilance should concentrate on economic, military, and strategic objectives.

We are not going to express an opinion on these various ways of looking at the question in order not to step on anyone's opinions. The people's wisdom must find the light and solve the deficiencies and the contradictions.

Many times you say "National Directorate, give the order!" In this case as in many others, the National Directorate will say, "Nicaraguan people, CDS members, give the order!" (APPLAUSE)

Carrying out our daily labor, political, and social obligations does not excuse us from taking part in revolutionary vigilance in our neighborhoods. If we were to compare those who are directly confronting the aggressor's forces in the military arena and those who carry out revolutionary vigilance, in order to determine which of the two tasks is more dangerous and more strategically important, some compañeros would probably think that the battlefield is the most strategic. Undoubtedly the military confrontation is decisive, and of strategic importance, and is the most dangerous.

But the tasks carried out by those doing revolutionary vigilance are also fundamental tasks! Their work is aimed at protecting the home front, and a broad and effective home front means constant, continual, and effective support to the battlefronts.

Everything that we do in the cities, and everything we leave undone, will inevitably have an impact on the course of the war. If the production units located in the cities were subjected to attacks, it would be difficult for us to meet the requirements and needs of our combatants.

Guaranteeing a climate of peace, without forgetting the war, must be a constant objective of the revolutionary vigilance. The war forces us to look in all directions. The enemy

destroys production units and tries to prevent the construction of new highways. It attacks villages, schools, and hospitals.

Nevertheless, speaking objectively, the CIA-directed counterrevolution cannot endanger the power of the revolution. Militarily the mercenary armies are powerless against the armed people.

But there are some who think that it is possible to destroy the people, as happened in Grenada. They try to use every method, every kind of trap. And they aim their lying teletypes, their news from "well-informed sources" as they say, inventing the idea that there are internal divisions in the ranks of the revolution. We should clear this up.

Let these fly-by-night characters harbor no illusions. Let these idiots harbor no illusions about what they will never know. They are twisted minds, or mentally retarded, or mentally retarded and twisted minds at the same time.

The Sandinista National Liberation Front is united like flesh to bone, like child to mother, around the sacred principles of the revolution. (APPLAUSE)

The leaders of the Sandinista People's Revolution are united as the fingers of the hand — to make a fist of steel or to extend a hand to a friend. (APPLAUSE)

The nine fists of steel of the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation

The Sandinista National Liberation Front is united like flesh to bone . . .

Front, the National Directorate's nine hands of friendship are firmly united. (APPLAUSE)

The thousands and tens of thousands of powerful fists of the members of the Sandinista Front, the thousands and thousands of extended hands of the members of the Sandinista Front are firmly united.

Don't fool yourselves, Messrs. Imperialists. Don't fool yourselves, Mr. Bourgeois and Mr. Reactionary. We are more united than ever, prepared to go on at the head of our people until the final and total victory. (APPLAUSE)

Revolutions are invincible. They are invulnerable. Let me repeat it once more. The only ones who can kill revolutions are the revolutionaries. When the Americans arrived in Grenada, they did not come to kill a revolution. They came to kill a corpse, because the Grenadian revolutionaries themselves had already gone ahead and killed this revolution. What kind of feat was it for the United States to kill a corpse?

But as long as we have moral authority and enthusiasm, as long as we are ready to make all the sacrifices and efforts needed to guarantee the development, the purity, and the righteousness of this process, we will continue to have a revolution here.

There will be a revolution as long as the people are united around its vanguard, as long as the members of the Sandinista Front keep

2. Infantry Reserve Brigades.

their principles clear and do not become separated from the masses. Here the will of the revolution's leaders is the will of the people, and this historic guarantee allows us to state without any doubt that we will have a revolution here today, tomorrow, and always — until the centuries run out. (APPLAUSE)

Of course, Nicaraguans, no one can deny that the economic measures affect the people. It would be absurd to say that the increases in bus fares, prices of staples, gasoline, electricity, construction materials do not affect the people's economy.

These measures involve sacrifices, and these sacrifices cannot always be fairly distributed among all the sectors of society. It was necessary to confront the serious problems that were developing in the economy, which unfortunately has been subjected to all the plagues — the war destruction, the cost of fighting this war, the international economic crisis, the unequal terms of foreign trade, the U.S. government's sabotage of credits for and exports from Nicaragua.

To this we also must add the shortcomings and human errors committed despite the best intentions of our government leaders.

Initially we wanted to do everything, and perhaps this was one of our main mistakes. We wanted to build schools, hospitals, highways, housing, irrigation, all kinds of things. Each ministry projected unlimited growth, including the ministry of the interior. Later we realized we had to grow among the masses, and the results have been positive.

We underestimated the objective limitations imposed upon us by underdevelopment and our weak economic structure. The distortions in our economy were and continue to be great. For example, a new tractor turns out to be cheaper than repairing a used one. The one who produces potatoes makes less from them, for example, than the one who sells them. Someone who stands in a line at a supermarket and then resells the goods makes more than a worker does from a whole day's work.

Inflation, speculation, the decline in labor productivity were becoming a strategic problem grafted onto the entire problem of aggression that the country faces.

If the government had not taken these measures now, the deplorable state of the people's economy would have been infinitely worse.

Initially we wanted to do everything, and perhaps this was one of our main mistakes . . .

And even though these measures do not immediately solve the economic problem, they limit the damages, the wounds caused by the crisis and by the aggression.

If the U.S. government were not organizing the war against Nicaragua, these measures would not have been necessary, or would have been less hard-hitting. The day the war ends we will immediately have the right and the ob-

ligation to initiate a real reconstruction. That is why it is so important to win the war. Because winning the war means winning the right to development. Winning the war means ending imperialism's strategic plans.

For the time being, due to these circumstances, the development plans must complement the fight to win the war. The economy is another battlefield. Our enemies know this. Those who are attacking us know this. And our people must also know this in order to be prepared to resist and win in this arena of struggle as well.

During this week, *compañeros* of the CDSs, in the United States they are talking about nothing but Nicaragua. And throughout the world they are talking about Nicaragua. We are no longer a tiny, insignificant spot of land in the world's geography. Now we are like a lighted candle that people can see from every corner of the world. (APPLAUSE)

The lights at the White House burned all night during those days while Reagan and his advisers tried to bestow political recognition on the mercenaries of the counterrevolution through the U.S. Congress. But while the lights of the White House were burning, the leaders of the Sandinista Revolution and the Sandinista people were fully prepared and had kindled their ability to analyze.

Our people had lit the bonfires of their determination, their patriotism, their unshakable willingness to fight, to live, and to die for Nicaragua.

The members of the U.S. Congress had no right and have no right to discuss whether or not to give aid to the counterrevolution. What would happen if a European parliament discussed whether or not to provide "x" million francs or dollars or any other currency to wage war on some other country?

What would happen if in our National Assembly we began to discuss whether or not to provide millions and millions of *córdobas* to carry out terrorist attacks in another country or to bring war to another nation?

If we had done this, it would have been correct to bring us up on charges. Do we or do we not have the right to file charges against and point our fingers at the enemies of our people who have taken it upon themselves to discuss in another country what the destiny of the Nicaraguan nation should be? (APPLAUSE)

Well, nonetheless in the end common sense and decency prevailed, and Mr. Reagan's request was turned down.

And does this mean, I asked myself, that the U.S. aggression has now ended? Does it mean that Mr. Reagan has no alternative but to respect Nicaragua and to respect international law? Would that it were so.

But we should harbor no illusions, Nicaraguans. The U.S. government is determined to hate us and to destroy us. Therefore it would go completely against common sense for us to harbor illusions.

I think it is correct to say that the aggression will go on. The war continues. The counterrevolution will not lack money. It was good

that this \$14 million was voted down, because this represents a political victory for sound judgment and decency.

But last year they received \$26 million from private organizations in the United States. They will not lack political, moral, and material support from the Reagan administration. Mr. Reagan himself said a few hours ago that the vote in the House is not final.

The goal of the Universal Trek-85 maneuver which has taken place in recent days in Honduras is, according to one of the U.S. commanders, and I quote his exact words: "the objective of perfecting the technical and logistical preparations for an eventual operation similar to the invasion of Grenada in October 1983."

Who would this invasion be against? Are they perhaps thinking about invading Hon-

We are like a lighted candle that people can see from every corner of the world . . .

duras? Honduras has already been invaded. (APPLAUSE) Are they thinking about invading Panama? Or Costa Rica? Or Mexico? Or the Soviet Union?

No, they are not thinking about invading Mexico and Panama. At present I don't believe they ever think about sending their armies to invade the Soviet Union.

They are preparing to invade Nicaragua. But no maneuver, no practice can prepare them for the response this people will give them. Clearly we do not want them to invade us. We would have to pay an immeasurable price if they invade us. How could we possibly be so senseless as to want them to invade? We must make every possible effort to avoid this invasion.

But if they come, if they ever come, woe to Nicaragua, to Latin America, to the United States itself. If they come, we will be like frenzied wasps, ants, and panthers. If they come, they will have to mix their blood with our blood. They will have to kill us, and they will have to die. (APPLAUSE. CHANTS OF "HERE OR THERE, WE DON'T LIE. IF THE YANKEES COME, THEY WILL DIE!")

It is clear that Reagan has proposed entering the annals of history as the "peacemaker" of our time. Just like Somoza entered the annals of history as the "pacifier" of Las Segovias. Everything he touches, does, and says is predicated by the word "peace": the MX missiles are "Peacekeepers," the U.S. marines that invaded Lebanon were presented as a "peace force." Those who invaded Grenada were soldiers of "peace." He calls the plan to destroy Nicaragua and plunge Nicaragua into darkness and blood a "peace plan."

But what does peace mean for us, and what

does peace mean for Mr. Reagan? For us, peace is life.

For Mr. Reagan, peace is death. Peace, for Reagan, means humiliation, giving up sovereignty, political submission, calluses on the knees.

For the Nicaraguan people, peace means respect for our national dignity; peace signifies mutual respect; peace signifies stopping the aggression. We are going to defend this peace with our blood, with taut muscles, with eyes open wider than the horizon, grasping guns, and conscious. (APPLAUSE)

This is a people who do not know the meaning of fear. If you don't believe it, ask Somoza. This is a people who have battle flags, whose only slogan is courage and unwavering defense of their flag, their rivers, their land, their life, their sun, and their stars.

Those who want to humiliate us and enslave us will first have to crush all our bones one by one and spill our blood drop by drop.

Reagan's attack against the revolution is an all-sided plan that fights the revolution on all fronts — the military field, the ideological arena, the economic aspect, the political plane, and the psychological level. It is like the five

**We should harbor no illusions.
The U.S. government is determined to hate us and to destroy us . . .**

claws of a beast's paw crushing anything that is not to its liking. He has power and sufficient resources to maintain these five claws.

Why is it that this small, backward, and poor country causes him such headaches, so many sleepless nights, endless meetings with his advisers, and even confrontations with his own congress and allied countries?

As far as I know, we do not have submarines or nuclear missiles. And it is not our intention to threaten the internal security of the United States, as they like to say. Nor is it our intention to invade the United States, Mr. Reagan. It is not our purpose to cause you migraine headaches.

Mister Reagan has calmly gone so far as to compare his counterrevolutionary sons to no less than Simón Bolívar, Lafayette, George Washington, and the fighters of the French resistance.

You need guts, you need to be the architect of anti-history to say that CIA agent Adolfo Calero is the present-day counterpart of the liberator Simón Bolívar. What nerve these imperialist gentlemen have!

Is there perhaps something in common between Colonel Bermúdez and George Washington? Between General Sucre, one of the liberators of South America, and Benito Bravo?

What similarities are there between the first president of the United States, who fought against the English crown to obtain his coun-



Michael Baumann/IP

CDS contingent in an October 1983 march in Managua.

try's independence, and the "cop" López [former National Guard lieutenant]?

Perhaps if you cannot compare him to the first president of the United States, you could compare him to that country's last president. (APPLAUSE)

They want us to have a dialogue. That's fine, we also want to have a dialogue. But we want to talk with those who really can stop the aggression, not to those who obey their orders. We want to talk with the one who gives the orders, not those who receive them.

They claim that we should talk with the FDN [Nicaraguan Democratic Force], a body made up of officials of the Somozista Guard. Despite the costly publicity campaign that they initiated in recent weeks, trying to show what cannot be shown, that the FDN has nothing to do with the Somozista Guard, the reality of the facts has been more unassailable and categorical than their prosaic efforts at propaganda.

It is true that in the ranks of the FDN there are peasants, enrolled by force or persuaded by trickery. But it is undeniable that the brain, the spinal cord, the nervous system, the circulatory system, the central axis of the FDN is the Somozista National Guard. Who could doubt that?

Who is its true leader? Mr. Reagan.

Who is the apparent commander-in-chief? Adolfo Calero, a CIA agent since 1961, as everyone knows.

Who is head of its high command? Enrique Bermúdez, colonel of the former National Guard, participant in the imperialist invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965.

From the moment that Colonel Bermúdez entered the military academy in 1948 as cadet number 380, he renounced his right to be Nicaraguan.

How many members of the high command of the FDN are from the National Guard? The FDN high command has seven members. How many would you think are from the National Guard?

Seven! (LAUGHTER)

The person in charge of personnel, the person in charge of intelligence, operations, of logistics, of transportation, of communica-

tions. All of them are ex-officers of the Somozista Guard. And they want us to have a dialogue with these people.

Until a few weeks ago, the head of counterintelligence of the FDN was the former National Guard officer Ricardo Lau Castillo, who had to be quickly replaced when it became publicly known that he killed Bishop [Oscar] Arnulfo Romero in El Salvador. The ex-Guard who was a killer in Nicaragua murdered this great bishop, a friend and brother to the revolutionaries.

So who do you think they replaced him with? Another ex-Guard officer! Ex-major Donald Torres.

This is who they want us to have a dialogue with.

Eight of the nine regional commando units of the FDN are led by ex-members of the National Guard, almost all from the EEBI.³ The majority were also decorated or promoted in 1979, before their defeat, for their great "exploits" massacring the people for Somoza.

This is who they want us to have a dialogue with.

Pablo Emilio Echaverri was in the special services of the command unit of the National Guard I and planned the capture of Jalapa in his operation called "hammer and anvil," and

They are preparing to invade Nicaragua. But no maneuver, no practice can prepare them for the response this people will give them . . .

when that failed, they put into practice Operation Exodus that involved kidnapping peasants and forced recruitment to the counterrevolutionary ranks. They want us to have a dialogue with this murderer Pablo Emilio Echaverri.

Armando López Ibarguen, chief of logistics of the FDN high command. A member of the National Guard since August 1957. He mur-

3. Basic Infantry Training School, an elite unit of Somoza's forces.

dered, among others, Favio and Laura Urbina, Alfredo Lumbí, and Santos Ruíz in 1976. With this heartless murderer, they want us to have a dialogue.

José Benito Bravo Centeno, head of a regional commando unit. He joined the National Guard in 1956, and he also participated in the invasion of the Dominican Republic. In 1979, while in the EEBI, as a reward for his crimes he received the medal of merit. He must have had a great deal of merit to the EEBI to receive this medal. He was the bodyguard of Julio Somoza Portocarrero, one of Anastasio Somoza's sons. With this Guardsman they want us to have a dialogue.

José Francisco Ruíz Castellón ("Renato") head of a regional commando unit. Assigned to the EEBI since joining the National Guard and promoted to lieutenant in 1979 for "services rendered." With this torturer they want us to have a dialogue.

Róger Francisco Sandino Villagra, head of the operations base BL-3 Ariel. He joined the National Guard in 1966. In 1976 he operated in the Waslala zone, murdering dozens of peasants. He completed a course in military intelligence at the U.S. military base in the Canal Zone. With this thug, they want us to have a dialogue.

Ramón Bonifacio Castellón Villalobos, head of a Task Force. He joined the National Guard in 1967. He took courses in the Canal Zone and in El Salvador. He was responsible for many murders in the hills of Bilambí, Vari-

It is disgusting that in the CDSs favoritism develops, that forms of repression and discrimination arise . . .

llal mountain, the La Ceiba area north of Jinotega. In 1979, he was promoted to captain and they awarded him the medal of merit. With this brother in crime of Chigüin they want us to have a dialogue.

Walter Saúl Calderón López, head of armaments for tactical operations for the FDN. He joined the National Guard in 1973. Since joining he was assigned to the EEBI. In May 1973 he was promoted to lieutenant and placed in the General Somoza Battalion.

Félix Aleides Espinoza, also a former lieutenant in the National Guard, who led the massacre at San Francisco del Norte, where they murdered 17 peasants and kidnapped dozens of others and took them to Honduras.

With these executioners who are truly responsible for tremendous rivers of blood and tears, they want us to have a dialogue.

They want us to sit down and to smoke a peace pipe with them, and almost ask us to share bread and wine with them.

We are going to talk with them when the gentlemen from COSEP tell us exactly how many grains of sand are in the sea and how many stars there are in the sky. And the day that they finish counting we will think many

times before having a dialogue. (APPLAUSE)

What could we talk with these murderers about when they do not even have their own political blueprint?

A dialogue with Alfonso Callejas Deshón, who during Somoza's dictatorship was vice-president of the republic.

What does Reagan want when he says we must have talks with the *contras*?

To talk with them means giving them a legitimacy that they do not have, recognizing them as a national political force. It would mean that we forget who they are. Have you forgotten yet who the Guard was? (SHOUTS OF "NO!") They want us to lose sight of their strategic objective — to destroy the Sandinista People's Revolution and return Nicaragua to its neocolonial condition. Do you want to turn power back to the National Guard? (SHOUTS OF "NO!")

If we were to agree to a dialogue, it would mean agreeing to a return of the National Guard. It would be the beginning of a series of concessions that would ultimately lead to handing over the revolutionary power, the people's power.

With these people, there is no possible dialogue. They knew what they were doing, they had plenty of time to reflect upon their actions. They even had time to repent. This revolution was so generous that they had that opportunity to repent.

They chose to subjugate people, to murder, to repress. Nicaraguans, with them, there is no possible dialogue ever. (APPLAUSE)

Dialogue with MISURASATA [Sandinista Union of Miskitos, Sumos, and Ramas] is something else. They are made up of forces that are based on other concepts and have a different character. Dialogue with the murderous Guard is not the same thing as dialogue with the representatives of this confused organization, which objectively turned counterrevolutionary, but with which we can reach an understanding. It is one thing to have a dialogue with them and with the political organizations inside the country, which is acceptable and commendable. It is something quite different to have a dialogue with the criminals.

The value we see in dialogue is shown by the agreements reached between Commander Luis Carrión and MISURASATA leader Brooklyn Rivera. We will go ahead and implement the agreement. Next Sunday we will free all the Miskitos, Sumos, Ramas, and Creoles who are now under detention for illegal activities, regardless of what organization they belong to — whether ARDE [Democratic Revolutionary Alliance] or MISURASATA or even the FDN — bearing in mind the special conditions in which the activity of these Nicaraguans took place.

We take a different attitude toward our peasant brothers who for one reason or another joined or became involved in the ranks of the counterrevolution because they have not been

able to understand the principles of our revolution, because they have not learned that this revolution is theirs. For these humble sectors of the people there will always be a pardon and a place in every heart of the Nicaraguans. (APPLAUSE)

Members of the CDSs, participants in revolutionary vigilance: Yesterday the clearsighted chief of the Sandinista People's Army, Compañero Humberto [Ortega], informed our National Directorate about the latest blows dealt to the armed counterrevolution. The conclusion drawn is that we are defeating the armed counterrevolution.

But the counterrevolution in one or another form will continue receiving military and economic aid. The threats of military and econom-

The National Directorate has placed in your hands the security of our factories, the peace of our citizens . . .

ic aggression continue intact. We are obliged to be suspicious, to be realists. When facing poisonous snakes there is no alternative but to be mistrustful.

In addition to the military offensives and the dangers of a direct attack, we must add the possible immediate reactions by those who feel resentful about their political defeats. We must expect economic and diplomatic attacks, and above all a powerful ideological offensive.

Just like the soldiers who are shouldering the homeland's rifles with unshakeable determination, so too we must mobilize the tireless eyes of the people to make sure that not a single counterrevolutionary can sow terror, to prevent the ambushes by the tigers, to prevent the growth of the bad apples.

We must deal with tedium and listlessness. We must transform revolutionary vigilance into an efficient, pleasant, and happy activity. Discuss, *compañeros*. Bring in ideas for driving sadness and the remnants of cynicism out of the neighborhoods, the common areas.

You participants in people's vigilance, you *compañeros* of the stars and the rain, you must work with renewed energy to prevent the spread of poison and death.

You are the sentinels of life, you participants in revolutionary vigilance. The National Directorate has placed in your hands the security of our few factories, the tranquility of our poor hospitals, the peace of the citizens, the leisure of our elderly, and the dreams of our children.

Owners of Nicaragua: With optimism in the Front, with confidence in the future, let us again cry out the shining words for today and forever: Free Homeland! (CROWD RESPONSES "OR DEATH!")

(PROLONGED APPLAUSE)

Reagan isolated on blockade

Few governments support economic aggression

By José G. Pérez

MANAGUA — Although the fact has been covered up by the U.S. capitalist press, the Reagan administration stands virtually alone on a world scale in its economic blockade against Nicaragua.

This is in sharp contrast to the situation a quarter of a century ago, when the U.S. government imposed an economic blockade of Cuba. At that time, all Latin America — with the exception of Mexico — joined the blockade. The Organization of American States — appropriately denounced by the Cubans as nothing more than a “Yankee Ministry of Colonies” — formally ratified Washington’s decision and expelled Cuba from its ranks.

Today, it is the U.S. rulers who are isolated — diplomatically and politically — following the blockade of Nicaragua.

Perhaps the most humiliating defeat was the unanimous vote of the Latin American Economic System that adopted a resolution that “repudiates” and “condemns” the U.S. blockade. The resolution calls on the U.S. government to “revoke the complete economic blockade and other coercive measures adopted against Nicaragua.” It specifically mentions the U.S.-government campaign to deny Nicaragua a \$60 million loan from the Interamerican Development Bank.

The Latin American Economic System includes 25 nations, virtually all the countries of the region. Only the dictatorship in Chile, headed by butcher Augusto Pinochet, did not vote for condemning the U.S. blockade. Instead, Pinochet had his representatives stay away from the meeting.

A Nicaraguan complaint at the United Nations Security Council had similar results. There the U.S. representative vetoed a resolution condemning the blockade, which other-

wise would have passed with 13 of the 15 votes in favor.

Even the British Tory regime of Margaret Thatcher refused to identify itself with Washington’s position, despite Thatcher’s debt to Reagan for helping Britain in 1982 to reimpose its control over Argentina’s Malvinas Islands. Britain abstained on the vote, and spokespeople for the British government have said they consider economic blockades “ineffective.”

Other close allies of Washington in Europe, including the governments of Spain and France, demonstratively welcomed Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega immediately following his visit to the Soviet Union. This trip was cited by the U.S. government as one of the pretexts for the embargo.

Belgium, another close U.S. ally, has begun

importing bananas from Nicaragua that used to go to California.

In Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, repudiation of the blockade is also widespread. The Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries denounced the blockade as part of “a plan to destabilize and overthrow the government of Nicaragua.”

The members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance have unanimously repudiated the blockade. The Soviet Union, which leads the group, has agreed to guarantee the bulk of Nicaragua’s petroleum for this year, even though Nicaragua is not in a position to pay for the oil.

The true measure of how isolated the Reagan administration is diplomatically on this point is the complete list of all the governments that have publicly supported the blockade. There are only two: El Salvador and Honduras.

Not surprisingly, shortly after these governments expressed their support, their presidents visited Washington. They went home with fresh promises of U.S. aid, bringing their retainers to about half a billion dollars a year each. □

Hondurans protest U.S.-trained killers

Two Honduran human rights groups spoke at a press conference in Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, May 7 to protest the participation of U.S. soldiers in training Honduran death squads.

“Today we know,” stated Dr. Ramón Custodio López, president of the Honduran Human Rights Committee (CODEH), “that the formation and training of such antiterrorist squads or death squads was part of a joint operation between the Central Intelligence Agency and the U.S. Defense Department, carried out in Honduras through six Green Berets.”

The *Washington Post* had reported that the six Green Berets were sent to Honduras as part of a worldwide anticommunist program of the Pentagon. They were headquartered in La

Venta and were visited there by former Honduran armed forces commander Gen. Gustavo Álvarez and personnel of the U.S. embassy.

Custodio added, “We plan to express our demand for the expulsion of [U.S.] Ambassador [John] Negroponte because of his participation in these crimes.”

Joining Custodio at the press conference in Tegucigalpa was Zenaida Velásquez, president of the Committee of Relatives of Missing Detainees in Honduras (COFADEH). The two human rights organizations also denounced a “campaign to discredit them” through statements falsely attributed to the groups that make it appear they have criticized the revolutionary government of Nicaragua.

A manifesto allegedly signed by CODEH and COFADEH was circulated at a May 1 demonstration. The bogus manifesto condemned alleged human rights violations in Nicaragua. A similar hoax was presented as a newspaper advertisement on May 6.

Custodio explained the position of the human rights groups on Nicaragua. “We do not have proof, nor do we denounce such violations,” he said. “Even if we did, they would fall outside our scope since we limit our work to Honduras.”

He pointed out that “it was in Honduras where the antiterrorist squads established the national security doctrine as a result of which we have 147 missing, hundreds tortured and murdered, as well as political prisoners. In these antiterrorist groups, Somozist Nicaraguans like Col. Ricardo Lau and others caused the disappearance of more than 18 Hondurans and many more Salvadorans.” □

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