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Reagan Milks Hijacking for Chauvinist Campaign



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Reagan milks hijacking for chauvinist campaign

By Doug Jenness

The capitalist rulers in the United States have seized on the June 14 hijacking of TWA Flight 847 to whip up chauvinistic fervor. This feverish campaign is built around the theme that the United States is under siege and all Americans must rally around the flag.

President Ronald Reagan, sounding this note in a nationally televised news conference June 18, proclaimed that the United States is "a nation being attacked by international terrorists who wantonly kill and who seize our innocent citizens as their prisoners." The editorial staffs of all the mass circulation dailies and the television and radio networks have chimed in like a well-practiced chorus.

The June 21 *New York Post*, for example, ran a multipage list of international "terrorist attacks" against the U.S. government in the last 15 years. The headline, "America Under the Gun," was wrapped around the American flag and repeated on every page with the list.

The Empire State Building in New York City has been lit up in red, white, and blue. And yellow ribbons, which became a symbol of patriotic sentiment in 1980 when U.S. citizens were held in Iran, are beginning to appear in many places throughout the country.

This chauvinist campaign is much like those Washington orchestrated in response to the 1980 Iranian events, the deaths of some 200 U.S. marines in Lebanon in 1983, and the downing of a Korean airliner by a Soviet plane in the same year.

Since the hijacking and holding of 40 passengers and crewmen in Lebanon, four U.S. marines and two U.S. businessmen were killed in El Salvador. This incident was quickly milked by the government and the press to feed the jingoist campaign against "international terrorism."

The *New York Times*, reporting on the funeral of the four marines, where Reagan was the featured speaker, stated that the ceremony "struck the same themes of heroism and patriotism as at a service that Mr. Reagan attended on Nov. 4, 1983. On that occasion, Mr. Reagan paid homage to the military men killed and wounded in Lebanon and Grenada. . . ."

Through their campaign the U.S. ruling circles are attempting to create a climate where working people in the United States will more readily accept the need for Washington to militarily intervene in other countries. They are attempting to show that it is necessary to defend "Western civilization" from "uncivilized barbarians," as Reagan bluntly puts it.

The Reagan administration immediately responded to the hijacking with a military show of force. By dispatching a naval armada, led

by the aircraft carrier *Nimitz* and bearing 1,800 marines, to Lebanon's coastal waters, Washington is attempting to use intimidation.

On June 24 Shiite Amal leader Nabih Berri declared that Washington must pull back its warships from Lebanon before the TWA passengers will be released.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, defending the presence of U.S. military forces, stated that "it is the beginning of a war. That's why these various military movements that we think are important to make, to be ready to do anything that may be decided to be done, have to be made and why they should be treated as military movements in wartime."

Many Lebanese vividly remember the brutal shelling of towns and villages by the U.S. battleship *New Jersey* less than two years ago.

Reagan has also used the pretext of the San Salvador events to beef up military aid to El Salvador's armed forces for their war against the popular liberation struggle in that country.

In a direct threat to the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, Reagan's press secretary announced that the White House would consult with Congress on additional steps "to end the external support for Salvadoran terrorists that they receive from Nicaragua and the Communist bloc."

Washington is also capitalizing on the Lebanon and San Salvador events to step up its current drive against "spies" in the United States. Under the guise of preventing military and industrial secrets being stolen and given to "foreign enemies," the government is openly considering wholesale use of lie-detector tests in workplaces with "high-security" jobs and applying the death penalty for those convicted of spying.

Moreover, a proposal for an additional \$50 million for the CIA to strengthen U.S. "security measures" abroad breezed through the Senate with a voice vote. And Reagan administration officials say they anticipate little difficulty in getting Congressional backing for proposals to put more cops on airplanes and in the airports.

Despite its claims, Washington's policies have little regard for the safety or lives of the 40 TWA passengers and crewmen being held in Lebanon. This is shown by the White House's refusal to urge the Israeli government to meet the just demand for the release of 766 Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners. Both Tel Aviv and Washington adamantly state they will make no concessions to "terrorism."

The prisoners — 570 Shiite Muslims, 147 Palestinians, and 49 others, including Druse, Christians, and Sunni Muslims — were arrested between November 1983 and April

1985 in southern Lebanon by Israeli troops. They were picked up on suspicion of resisting Israeli military occupation of their villages and hustled across the border to Atlit military prison near Haifa in northern Israel. This was in flagrant violation of the Geneva accords of 1949 governing treatment of captured civilians. In April the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross protested the Israeli action.

In April and May Israeli authorities released hundreds of other Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners and on June 24 released 31 of the 766 in Atlit.

TWA passengers and family members interviewed by TV and newspaper reporters have stated that all the prisoners should be freed in order to achieve the release of the hostages.

Yet in spite of all this, Washington and Tel Aviv are holding to their "don't-give-in-to-the-terrorists line." Washington says the decision to release the prisoners is up to Israeli officials. And Tel Aviv says it is up to Washington to make the request to free them, since it was a U.S. plane involved in the incident. This cynical charade is being played at the expense of the remaining 735 prisoners in Israel, as well as the 40 TWA passengers and crewmen.

Who are the terrorists?

Reagan, and the few Democrats who have spoken up, say that the United States has been singled out for special abuse by "international terrorists."

This charge, however, turns the facts on their head, and the true victims become the criminals.

This is easily shown by reiterating briefly Washington's role in Lebanon in the last several years. In 1982 the U.S. government backed the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the three-year reign of terror that followed. Thousands of Palestinians and Lebanese died in the bloody siege of Beirut in the summer of 1982, and thousands more have died during the military occupation that followed. Israeli forces have bombed and strafed villages and made dragnet sweeps, arresting and jailing thousands.

Some Israeli forces still remain in southern Lebanon, where they are helping the South Lebanon Army, set up and supplied by the Israeli military. Just a few days after the hijacking some 2,000 Lebanese Shiites fled their villages under shelling from the South Lebanon Army.

Washington has also played a more direct role in Lebanon. In 1983 thousands of U.S., British, French, and Italian troops were in Beirut and just off shore in naval vessels. This "international peacekeeping force," which was attempting to prop up the reactionary puppet regime of Amin Gemayel, carried out air attacks against Lebanese opponents of the Gemayel government around Beirut. U.S. warships lobbed scores of one-ton shells into Lebanese villages.

These facts, however, are only part of the story. There is also the role Washington played

in creating Israel in 1948. This state was formed by forcibly driving thousands of Palestinians out of their homeland. Today the majority of the Palestinian population live as refugees in several countries in the Mideast. The rest live in second-class status in Israel. Israel's very existence then is a permanent source of justified resistance by the Palestinian people.

So it should not be a mystery why the U.S. government is the object of so much hatred and attacks in the Middle East.

In El Salvador, Washington has been financing, training, and supplying the army that is conducting a dirty war against a popular revolt of workers and peasants. U.S. pilots are flying bombing missions from bases in Honduras against villages in El Salvador. The U.S. government is sponsoring and financing the *contra* army that murders, rapes, and pillages in Nicaragua, seeking to overturn the government of that country.

So Reagan's charges about "terrorism" are dripping with hypocrisy. In fact they are designed to divert attention from the truly mammoth, international campaign of terror that Washington is carrying out against those who dare to challenge the political and economic domination of their countries by the North American colossus.

Terror against Palestinians

Berri, head of the Amal militia and a minister in the Lebanese government, is the go-between in the negotiations to release the 40 hostages and free some 700 prisoners.

Amal is based on the Shiite Muslims, constituting one-third of Lebanon's population. The Shiites have traditionally been the most oppressed and exploited sector in the country. They have also been the least represented in the government.

Amal was set up in the 1970s by bourgeois political forces to counter the growth of the Communist Party among Shiites. From the time it was formed until 1982, Amal established itself by fighting the Lebanese CP and the Palestinian organizations based in the refugee camps in Lebanon. It did not wage battle against the reactionary Phalangists, a capitalist party based on the relatively privileged Maronite Christian minority.

During the last three years, many Shiites have radicalized and become active in the resistance against Israeli occupation. This struggle, in which the Berri-led Amal has played a major role, has forced Tel Aviv to gradually withdraw its forces from Lebanon.

Israel's original goal in invading Lebanon was to wipe out the Palestine Liberation Organization in Lebanon, and, if possible, crush it altogether. While it succeeded in dealing a costly blow to the PLO, it did not completely destroy it.

Amal claims that to keep Israeli troops out of Lebanon, it is necessary to disarm the remaining PLO forces. In the past couple of months Berri's organization has undertaken

this task itself. It has carried out a bloody assault against three Palestinian camps on the outskirts of Beirut. Hundreds have been killed and thousands wounded, including children.

This shameful attack against the Palestinians has aroused anger among the Arab peoples throughout the region. But the Reagan admin-

istration, which so loudly rails against "terrorism," has nothing to say when the victims are Palestinian refugees. In Reagan's phraseology, with its thinly veiled racism, Palestinians too are "uncivilized barbarians" challenging "Western civilization." Their plight does not fit into his star-spangled banner campaign. □

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FLNKS congress rejects French plan

Protests neocolonialist proposals; decides to participate in elections

By Neil Jarden

[The following three articles appeared in the June 14 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.]

[Neil Jarden was part of a *Socialist Action* reporting team that visited New Caledonia in late May and early June.]

* * *

HIENGHÈNE — On May 25–26, the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) of New Caledonia held its third congress since its founding in September last year. The gathering was attended by 1,500 people, including observers from Tahiti, France, Australia, and New Zealand.

The congress was held at Hienghène, at the northern end of New Caledonia's East Coast, which is a major concentration of the Kanak population.

As a prominent banner at the conference reminded participants, Hienghène is the place



Jean-Marie Tjibaou, a leader of the FLNKS, in front of Kanak flag.

where, last December, right-wing settlers stopped a truck and murdered 10 FLNKS members who were returning from a meeting. The banner included a quote from FLNKS

leader Eloi Machoro, who was himself assassinated by the French police and local fascists in January this year: "Our 10 brothers are dead, but the order remains for the liberation of Kanaky: the struggle continues."

'For a Pacific without colonialism'

[The FLNKS conference heard greetings from a number of guests who were present: leaders of the Polynesian Liberation Front of Tahiti; a representative from a land-rights struggle by farmers at Larzac in France; members of Kanak solidarity committees in Australia; and from two representatives of the New Zealand Socialist Action League.]

[Written greetings were also received from the independence movement in Martinique (a French colony in the Caribbean) and the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) the French section of the Fourth International.]

[Following are the greetings presented to the conference by the Socialist Action League delegation.]

* * *

On behalf of the Socialist Action League, and on behalf of all class-conscious workers of New Zealand, we bring greetings to your third congress. It is an honour for us to be invited here.

Your struggle is at the centre of attention of the peoples of the South Pacific right now. We follow its progress closely.

Today it is France which is the foremost among the great powers struggling to hang on to its colonies in the region. But there are other imperialist powers which want to dominate the region economically, politically, and with their military power. New Zealand itself is such a power, with its own neo-colonies in the South Pacific. And this fact is true despite the anti-nuclear policies of the New Zealand government. The same New Zealand government which has barred U.S. nuclear warships has not given its support for independence for the Pacific countries.

At this moment, in reality, the New Zealand government is strongly allied to the government of France and that of the United States.

Thus we think that our task in New Zealand is to explain the truth about the struggles in the region, and to explain to workers in New Zealand the links between these struggles and their own struggles against exploitation. This is why the Kanak struggle is such an inspiration for us.

For a Pacific without colonialism, without imperialism, without capitalism! Long live the FLNKS! Kanaky will win!

Fabius plan

The main purpose of the conference was to discuss the response of the FLNKS to the French government's proposals for the future of the French colony. French imperialism wants at all costs to hold onto this mineral-rich territory, both for economic and military-strategic reasons.

The French government's proposals were announced in April by Prime Minister Laurent Fabius and are now known as the "Fabius Plan." The plan centres on the division of New Caledonia into four zones and the establishment of new "regional assemblies" in each of these zones, with a territorial assembly to be made up of the members of the regional bodies.

The exact powers of the regional assemblies in relation to the overall New Caledonian territorial assembly are currently being discussed by a committee of the French parliament (National Assembly). The proposed zones have been carefully drawn up so that the Kanak independence forces can easily win two out of the four, while still remaining a minority in the territorial assembly.

Nouméa

The region based on the capital, Nouméa, which is the only large town, would have 19 out of a total of 43 seats in the territorial assembly. And Nouméa is the place where al-

most all of the white settler population and their allies in the other immigrant communities are based, outnumbering the Kanak population there by five to one.

Elections for the regional assemblies are scheduled for August this year.

Other key points in the Fabius Plan include:

- A referendum to be held in 1987 on a proposal for "independence in association" with France, with France keeping control of key areas such as police, the military, and foreign policy.

- A massive expansion of the French military presence in New Caledonia. This expansion is already in fact under way, with the lengthening of the runway at Tontouta international airport, to cater for big military transport planes. Other parts of the military plan are for a big army base at Poum, in the far north of the territory, and a naval base at Nouméa capable of servicing nuclear submarines.

August elections

While rejecting the "Fabius Plan" overall as neo-colonialist, that is, an attempt to continue French economic and political domination of the country even after formal French rule might end, the conference did accept that the FLNKS will participate in the August regional elections.

This marks a break with FLNKS policy in the period since it was founded, which was centred on boycotting the colonial institutions, in particular the territorial elections held last November 18.

Some forces participating in the FLNKS argued that the boycott should be maintained, but the overall consensus of the conference was for participation. The largest single party in the Front, the Caledonian Union (UC), had announced in advance of the conference that it was going to participate in the August elections, while another of the five constituent parties, the United Front for Kanak Liberation (FULK), had previously publicly stated that it was for a boycott.

Conference debate

FULK leader and Minister of Foreign Relations in the FLNK's Provisional Government of Kanaky, Yann Celene Uregei, emphasised in the debate at the conference that the Fabius Plan had been imposed on the Kanak people, while at an earlier meeting with Kanak representatives the Mitterrand (Socialist Party) government of France had recognised the "innate and active right" of the Kanak people to independence.

Uregei said that the FLNKS would not win a majority in the south and in the Nouméa region, so the regional elections would lead only to control over a small minority of the total population. He said that the FLNKS's international credibility had been largely built up on its boycott position and that it would be seen as a weakening if they were to participate now.

UC leaders Yeiwine-Yeiwine and Jean-Marie Tjibaou, on the other hand, emphasised the massive French military presence as a key

factor in their desire to avoid another boycott. "The situation has evolved since last November," said Yeiwine. "Now there are 7,000 Mobile Guards here, and it is difficult if not impossible to organise a boycott today." The UC argued for "building their power through the regions," namely the two regions which the FLNKS will be able to clearly win.

As a result of the murderous racist attack on a Kanak demonstration in Nouméa on May 8, the conference also decided not to proceed with a planned follow-up action in the capital on June 8, but rather to hold demonstrations in other centres on that day.

Prior to the congress, the right-wing papers in Nouméa were predicting that the FLNKS would split over the question of the elections. But all forces at the congress were firm on the

need to maintain their unity in face of the joint opposition of the French government and the leaders of the settler population in Nouméa.

Entire people

The well-organised conference security, and the seriousness and discipline of the 1,500 participants as well as hundreds of others who helped to do all the cooking and run the event, showed both the intensity of the struggle that the Kanak people have been going through and the fact that this is a struggle of an *entire people* for their liberation.

This was underlined as we drove back in a large convoy of vehicles from the conference to Nouméa: all the way down the East Coast, village people were lining the main route to give a wave or a clenched-fist salute. □

FLNKS seeks Polynesians' help, fights divide-and-rule tactics

By Neil Jarden

NOUMÉA — "You don't give independence to monkeys!" says the slogan on a wall here, summing up the widespread racist attitudes of the white settler population.

These attitudes are reflected throughout New Caledonia's capital — in racist cartoons in the right-wing papers; on political T-shirts; and in day-to-day conversation.

For example, a taxi driver who drove us into Nouméa from the airport commented: "These people [the Kanaks] have just woken up, and now they want to come and steal our homes, but it will only be over our dead bodies!"

This taxi driver was neither rich, nor white. She was part-Tahitian, part-Maori, and was a typical example of the way in which the leaders of the white community have worked to keep the immigrant peoples — Algerians, Indo-Chinese, Indonesians, Polynesians, and white workers — on their side and opposed to the rights of the Kanak people.

Special privileges

This is done through careful handing-out of privileges, on the one hand (for example, job preferences to all immigrants over Kanaks), plus a racist campaign and violent attacks against any whites and others who support the Kanaks, on the other.

In the racist papers one sees continual suggestions that the only reason the Kanaks are in revolt is that they are being "pushed," either by the "socialist" French government, or by local "Marxist revolutionaries." Whites supporting the struggle have been murdered (the best-known example being French priest and head of the pro-Kanak Caledonian Union, Pierre Declercq, in 1981), and have had their homes and cars fire-bombed.

Polynesians from the Wallis Islands, of whom there are some 12,000 in New Caledonia, are used in the front lines of anti-

Kanak demonstrations.

The Kanak independence fighters are making efforts to win the Wallisians and other working people, in particular through the Federation of Kanak and Exploited Workers Unions (USTKE), which includes Kanak, white, and other members.

FLNKS leader Eloi Machoro, before he was gunned down in January, had achieved the most success in neutralising or winning over the local Wallisian community in the mining town of Thio, on the East Coast. The USTKE itself has had its offices destroyed.

If a serious break was made in the anti-independence stance of the non-Kanak workers, the "majority" standing behind the local white leaders would crumble. This explains the right wing's hysteria, their viciousness, and why non-Kanaks sympathetic to the independence struggle are a special target for them.

French government

The right-wing press rails against the Mitterrand government in Paris as being pro-FLNKS, but the French imperialist government and the local capitalist settler leaders rely totally on one another. France could not hang on to this valuable prize without the weight of the local white population to back up its claims. And without the massive French military presence, the white population would not last long in a head-on confrontation with the Kanaks, who know the entire countryside intimately and are the vast majority there.

Although adopting a supposed "neutral" stance between Kanaks and settlers, in reality the police and military from France mix with, see eye to eye with, and readily act in favour of the settler community.

Despite their differences with the current office-holders in France, the local settler leaders are the most valuable agent the French government has in the country. □

Tahitians back Kanak struggle

Call for boycott of South Pacific Festival of Arts

By Neil Jarden

HIENGHÈNE — Among those present at the May 25–26 conference of the FLNKS in New Caledonia was a delegation of four members of the Polynesian Liberation Front (FPL) of Tahiti, led by Oscar Temaru, who is mayor of Faa'a, an important municipality in "French Polynesia."

The conference approved a resolution proposed by the Tahitian delegation, calling for a boycott of the South Pacific Festival of Arts, due to be held in Papeete, Tahiti, on June 29.

Oscar Temaru had with him at the conference a letter to be sent to all those groups which have been invited to participate in the festival. It explained why the city council of Faa'a had decided to boycott the festival and was calling on others to do so.

The main reason is "Our strong feeling of solidarity with the original organisers of the festival, our Melanesian brothers in Kanaky, who were deprived by their colonial masters in Paris of this opportunity to show in their own country, their own customs and traditions, mainly in order to please their local oppressors who had long condemned the festival as 'a propaganda vehicle for terrorists.' To accept the transfer to another Pacific Island, that is Tahiti, ruled by the same colonial power is therefore an insult to our Melanesian brothers and would serve only to polish up the badly tarnished image of France in the Pacific."

Another reason for the boycott call was "the way in which Mr. Gaston Flosse and his government [the local government of French Polynesia], who strongly supports the right-wing settlers in Kanaky, plans to exploit the festival for his own, partisan political ends.

"During the preparatory meeting in February in Papeete, the participating delegates had fixed the date of the festival to the 29th of

June. Because it is a day of special significance to all Polynesians.

"The truth is that this is a day of shame, because it was on this day in 1880 that King Pomare's kingdom, by fraudulent means, was transformed into a French colony. Flosse is now trying to use the festival to have this date recognised as a national day, against the will of the Polynesian people."

Oscar Temaru explained to *Socialist Action* that he saw the date of June 29 in Tahiti as being very similar to Waitangi Day [marking the assertion of British control] in New Zealand. He hoped that Maori cultural groups planning to participate in the Festival of Arts would not attend, or at least delay their arrival date until after June 29.

Party formed

Oscar explained how his Polynesian Liberation Front had been organised in 1977, when the French were proposing a "statute of internal autonomy" for Tahiti.

"We were part of a group which studied this statute. We found there would be no real power in the local government. The French High Commissioner would be the big boss and it would be very easy for him to manipulate the elected people. Such things as Immigration, Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Justice would remain in the hands of France, and it clearly stated that French Polynesia is a part of France.

"Our problem was that the politicians were going around translating the French word meaning 'internal autonomy' to mean 'independence,' to fool people that this was what they were really going to get. A lot of our people don't understand French. We set up the party to educate the people about these things."

The FPL contested and won the local elections in Faa'a soon after it was set up, using the

election campaign, and now the resources of office, to carry the independence fight further. The most recent major actions led by the Front have been an anti-nuclear demonstration of some 4,000 people in March and the collection of money to support the Kanak struggle.

"We are inspired by the Kanak independence fight," said Oscar. As he explained in an article printed in the Papeete daily *La Dépêche* in March this year:

"The truth is, if our Kanak brothers are in revolt today:

• it is because colonialist France, without consulting them, took possession of their country;

• it's because a whole succession of French governments used the country as a human cesspit for 20,000 convicts;

• it's because the French administration has driven them from their lands to make way for white settlers, who more often than not were freed convicts, or their even more depraved and brutal former jailers;

• it's because French and multinational companies have seized their main natural resources, the nickel deposits of New Caledonia;

• it's because in order to exploit this stolen treasure these companies imported thousands upon thousands of workers from Vietnam, Indonesia, France, Wallis Island, and Tahiti;

• it's because one after the other the governments of General de Gaulle, Pompidou, and Giscard, at a time when almost all other Third World countries had become independent, went on running New Caledonia like a 19th century colony."

Colonial domination

"The gravest injustice of all, and the one against which our Kanak brothers are protesting with the greatest vigour, is this uncontrolled, unlimited, immigration which has ended up making them a minority in their own country. . . .

"We too, we Maohi people [of Tahiti], have been exposed to the same kind of domination and exploitation as the Kanak people. . . .

"The only small difference is one of numbers; we are not yet quite as dominated and submerged as our Kanak brothers in New Caledonia."

The stand being taken by the Polynesian Liberation Front is particularly important in view of the fact that most Tahitian immigrants in New Caledonia, and the present local Tahitian government itself, are being used by the French government and the white settlers in opposition to Kanak independence.

Successful efforts by the FPL and others in Tahiti, coupled with inspiration from the Kanak people themselves, can help turn this situation around. □

FLNKS reaffirms independence goal

[The following resolution was adopted by the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) congress in May.]

* * *

1. The FLNKS is fighting for Kanak socialist independence. Although resulting from the acquisitions of the struggle of the FLNKS, the Fabius Plan is not that of the Kanak people. The FLNKS rejects its neo-colonial logic.

2. The region, through the activity of its militants on the ground and in a transitional

phase, can aid the building of Kanak socialist independence and concretise the demand of the Kanak people, who have as their only guarantee what they themselves provide through their own mobilisation. In this perspective, the FLNKS is ready to use the regional electoral stage, while relying on its own structures.

3. As far as the referendum stage is concerned, in the government plan, the FLNKS will make its position clear after a future conference.

4. The FLNKS affirms its opposition to any military base in Kanaky.

Strikers confront Queensland government

Electrical workers lead resistance to employers' offensive

By Lee Walkington

BRISBANE — In an industrial confrontation with serious repercussions for all Australian workers, the reactionary Queensland government has dealt some severe blows to the working conditions and trade union rights of the state's electricity workers.

In the more than four months since some 1,000 linesmen, members of the Electrical Trades Unions (ETU), were sacked by the South-East Queensland Electricity Board (SEQEB) for striking against the board's attempt to replace their jobs with contract labor, the union's position has been seriously weakened. From a situation in which the sacked workers and their supporters in the electricity industry had the state government on the defensive, the government has now rolled back the conditions of electricity workers and introduced an array of new repressive antistrike and antipicketing laws.

Throughout the dispute the ETU members, along with many other unionists around the country, have recognized that they face an attack not merely on their working conditions but on the union itself and trade unionism in general.

However, in trying to fight for their rights, the membership has been hampered by a trade union and Labor Party leadership which has done little more than organize token solidarity and issue verbal condemnations of the Queensland government for not coming to a compromise with the unions. From the outset this leadership was reluctant to recognize what was at stake and unprepared to wage a real fight.

The Queensland government of National Party Premier Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen has blazed a trail for the ruling class with its anti-working-class legislation modeled on the British laws introduced by Margaret Thatcher's government. Employer groups and the conservative opposition parties throughout Australia have been quick to support the Queensland government's initiative and have promised similar legislation when in government themselves.

Because of the weakness of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and the official trade union leadership in Queensland, the Bjelke-Petersen government has been able to play a national role for the bosses in attacking working peoples' interests. In 1975 Bjelke-Petersen was prominent in the ruling-class campaign to bring down the federal Labor government of Gough Whitlam.

The National Party government in Queensland, which unlike in most of the rest of Australia governs without an official coalition with the other major capitalist party, the Liberals,

has been in the forefront of many attacks on democratic rights. In 1978, despite strong protests, it adopted laws severely restricting the right to street marches and other civil liberties. It has also attacked women's rights and land rights of the Aboriginal people of the state.

Now this reactionary government is taking the lead in the current bosses' offensive against the unions.

Contract labor

The dispute between the electricity linesmen and SEQEB began with a strike over the employment of contract labor to perform work traditionally done by SEQEB's permanent and unionized work force. After a series of widespread blackouts which affected the state for two weeks, the ETU workers, with the assistance of power station operators who supported the sacked linesmen, were close to victory in their dispute.

This was in spite of a State of Emergency declaration by the Queensland government. The government then chose to further intervene in the dispute through an Industrial (Commercial Practices) Act which threatened

finances of up to \$50,000 against individuals and \$250,000 against unions. Under the threat of these fines and the "promise" of conditional reemployment of the sacked linesmen, the Queensland Trades and Labor Council which had taken over the leadership of the strike from the ETU, ordered the power station operators to return to work.

With the supply of power restored, the government immediately regained the initiative and drove home its advantage with a vengeance.

The conditions of reemployment laid down for the SEQEB workers contained many objectionable features. These included the signing of a statutory declaration requiring workers to name workmates who had supported remaining on strike or engaged in picketing. In addition, the new humiliating conditions of employment included longer hours, a no-strike clause, an end to demarcation between jobs (a driver could be ordered to perform semiskilled work and vice versa), no union membership, no sick leave entitlements, no bonus payments, etc.

Of the 1,000 on strike very few were prepared to accept anything less than what they had started with. The government, meanwhile, went on a campaign to recruit new workers and to further SEQEB's use of contract labor.

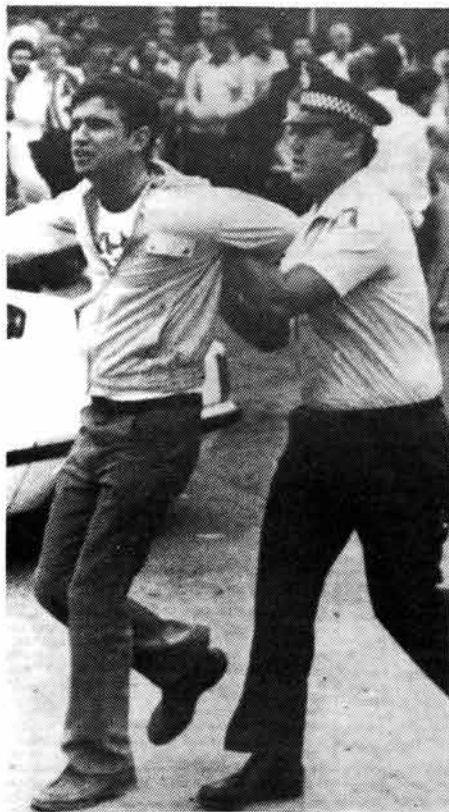
At the same time, the government rushed a series of laws through state parliament that broadened the attack into one directly affecting all workers in the state. The new legislation allowed for civil conscription of any person to maintain electricity supply and gave the police powers to arrest any person considered to be picketing or harassing electricity workers.

Responsibility for allowing this situation to come about can be squarely placed on the shoulders of the trade union and Labor Party leadership, which was incapable of responding to such an offensive. Trapped in their self-defined role as mediators between the workers and the ruling class, these bureaucrats have found the aggressive and class-conscious approach of the Queensland government too hard to handle.

Counted on Labor government

The Trades and Labor Council, the state body of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), for several weeks pinned its hopes on the possibility that the federal Labor government led by Prime Minister Bob Hawke would intervene in the dispute on its behalf.

The federal government, concerned about defusing union action against the Queensland government, has sought to resolve the conflict



Australian cop arrests striker.

through helping to place state electricity workers under coverage of a federal award of the arbitration system.* It has passed legislation to speed this process. There is no guarantee, however, that the Queensland government through SEQEB will abide by the conditions of the federal award. Neither are there any provisions for the reinstatement of the sacked workers.

In short, the response of the federal Labor government has been to sidestep any fight with the Bjelke-Petersen government and let the

*Under the arbitration system in Australia, trade unions have to be registered with either the state or federal branch of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission before their agreements with employers to award rates of pay, job conditions, etc. are recognized by law.

antiunion assault go unchallenged. It is concerned, above all, to preserve the Prices and Incomes Accord — a class-collaborationist pact by which the trade union movement guarantees industrial peace in return for certain economic and social “reforms” from the Labor government.

Many unions have, however, taken action in support of the ETU workers. Seamen and waterside workers, as well as communications, building, transport, and rail workers have all participated in stoppages aimed at putting pressure on the Queensland government. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been raised for the families of the striking workers, a development which has prompted moves by the Queensland government to find legal measures to stem such support.

The picketing of SEQEB depots has also

continued under the control of the ETU rank-and-file strike committee. The pickets have been joined by many supporters, including a number of ALP parliamentarians, who have been arrested on the picket lines along with union officials, lawyers, religious leaders, and civil libertarians. The intention of the pickets has been to try to make the antipicketing sections of the legislation unenforceable.

Big May Day actions

The annual Labor Day march in Brisbane, the capital of Queensland, in early May was the biggest march in decades and three times the size of last year's. Almost 15,000 workers marched in support of the official theme of solidarity with the sacked ETU members. A contingent of over 1,000 ETU members and their families drew prolonged applause from fellow unionists and crowds in the streets. Many provincial towns and cities also held marches, sometimes the first in many years.

In other cities around the country thousands of building workers stopped work on May Day in solidarity with the ETU and in protest of the antiunion legislation of the Queensland government. About 4,000 building workers took to the streets in Melbourne, 2,500 in Sydney, and similar numbers in other state capitals.

The ACTU's action has been limited to calling on its affiliated unions to “blockade” Queensland for 24 hours on two occasions. Further such actions were suspended when the federal government took its action to help transfer the ETU workers from a state to a federal award.

These token actions also contrast sharply with the ACTU's call for a 24-hour national strike only five years ago when leading unionists in Western Australia were arrested under repressive legislation introduced by the previous conservative government in that state. That legislation was effectively neutralized and later repealed as a consequence of this action.

The Queensland government's successes in its latest unionbusting campaign have only emboldened it in attacking democratic rights in other areas. Recent police raids on two abortion clinics are evidence of this. (See accompanying article.)

Meanwhile a majority of the sacked SEQEB workers have maintained their strike over several months in the face of immense pressure, although some have been forced to look for jobs elsewhere. This continued stand in defending union principles has been an inspiring example to the ranks of the trade union movement. But they cannot hope to win their struggle alone.

In early June several unions — including state branches of the ETU — repeated calls for the ACTU to remount its campaign of industrial action against the ETU sackings and the Queensland antiunion legislation. The ACTU executive has continued to reject such calls. The result is that as each day and week passes in this dispute, it becomes increasingly difficult to successfully relaunch the campaign.

Listen to our readers

For several months we have been running appeals urging our readers to help support *IP* with financial contributions. We are pleased to announce that the results, while not spectacular, have been good.

One reader in Brooklyn, New York, has sent three contributions — one each in April, May, and June — totaling more than \$100. With the last check he urged us to “continue the fine work.”

We also received a donation of \$40 from Zurich, Switzerland, and a similar donation from London.

In addition to these and other contributions, we have also received letters of encouragement from subscribers, some requesting that their subscriptions be renewed. Others are from publications asking for exchange subscriptions.

For example, *Political Detainees Update*, published in the Philippines, wrote, “We got a copy of your publication through a friend from London and we find it very interesting, especially the analysis of political conditions in the different sectors/groups (e.g. labor, women, etc.) Also, the articles in your publication would help us situate the Philippine problems in a global context since there are parallels in the countries that you feature.”

A letter from the National Workers Committee in Randallstown, Maryland, said, “Your publication is stimulating and rewarding reading. Keep up the good work.”

A newspaper dealer in Washington, D.C., who recently began a standing order of 10 copies of *IP*, wrote, “We sell a lot of alternative periodicals and have received requests for your excellent publication, so it should sell well.”

A student at the University of Botswana in southern Africa, after seeing a back issue, recently sent us a letter asking for our

subscription rates. We hope that he becomes one of our regular readers.

Our coverage on Africa has been extensive, including documents and first-hand interviews. When our managing editor, Ernest Harsch, visited Burkina in March he was able to interview the country's president, Thomas Sankara. That interview, published in our April 29 issue, was favorably noted by Alexander Cockburn in his column in the June 15 issue of the *Nation*, a weekly liberal magazine published in New York. He included our address, and as a result, we have received several inquiries asking for that issue and information about subscribing.

A reader from Buckinghamshire, England, who recently renewed his subscription, wrote, “I'm glad *IP* seems to have stabilised at 32 pages per issue — that way you can get *much* more in, and you need to with U.S. aggression in Central America being stepped up every day. Hopefully you can get back to a weekly schedule soon. Keep up the good work.”

While we have no immediate plans to go to a weekly, we intend to continue publishing 32 pages regularly every two weeks. (A while back we published 24 pages in many issues.)

In order to keep this up we need support from our readers. Our income from subscriptions and newsstand sales is insufficient to help cover our costs, and we need additional funds to keep going.

The endorsements of our readers, shown by the few examples we have cited here, illustrate the useful role *IP* plays. If you also have any comments, suggestions, or criticisms please write to us.

To contribute to *IP*, please send whatever amount you can afford to: *Intercontinental Press*, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014 USA.

The sacked Queensland workers face a concerted attack not just by one reactionary state government but by the whole ruling class. And the target is not just the destruction of union rights and conditions in Queensland's power industry but the hard-won conditions and the right to organize for all workers.

To defeat this growing drive will require an equally determined nationwide struggle by the whole union movement and its allies, relying on concerted industrial and political action by the ranks, not on token protests and the intercession of Labor "representatives" in the bosses' courts. □

Police raid abortion clinic

Doctors charged under criminal code

By Julie Walkington

BRISBANE — There has been an angry reaction from women's rights supporters and defenders of civil liberties in the wake of raids by Queensland state police on two fertility control clinics last month.

The clinics, one in a Brisbane suburb and the other in the city of Townsville, over 1,000 kilometers north of Brisbane, were the targets of simultaneous and highly publicized raids on May 20. Police claimed staff at the clinics were performing illegal abortions. During the raids, police seized the medical files of over 47,000 patients, including those of 10,000 men who had undergone vasectomy operations — an illegal procedure in Queensland.

Doctors from the clinics were charged under sections of the Queensland Criminal Code relating to illegal abortions and are due to appear in court in early July. Both clinics have been operating openly for several years, and according to the staff abortions have been performed within the framework of the existing Queensland laws.

This is not the first time the state government, notorious for its assaults on civil and trade union rights, has tried in recent years to further restrict the right of women in Queensland to control their own bodies. In 1980 it in-

roduced legislation virtually outlawing abortion in the state. However, a vigorous campaign by various progressive women's groups helped to defeat the legislation.

According to Justice Minister Neville Harper, the raids, which involved more than 100 police, were ordered in response to a recent petition signed by 3,000 supporters of the antiabortion "Right to Life" organization. The government clearly aimed to use the raids to further the reactionary propaganda campaign

against women's right to abortion. The media were forewarned, nearby streets were sealed off, and police were even instructed to search sewers for "fetal matter."

There was an immediate reaction, however, to this crude sideshow aimed at intimidating women from seeking abortions. On the following day, radio call-in programs were jammed with callers expressing outrage at the arrests. Some 1,500 people rallied in Brisbane the following evening to protest the government's actions and to organize for a continuing campaign. The backlash to the raids has also been felt inside the governing National Party, with many women members and some parliamentarians feeling compelled to publicly criticize the conduct of the police operation and the invasion of privacy entailed in the seizure of the files.

The government's intention was clearly to capitalize on the successes it has had recently in driving back trade union rights during the long-running dispute with the state's electricity workers. However, the latest attacks on the right to abortion have only served to strengthen political opposition to the government. □

Croatians in Australia defend terrorist

By Chester Nelson

Hrvatski Tjednik, a Croatian weekly published in Australia, is up in arms about an article that appeared earlier this year in a Swedish daily, *Arbetet*. The article exposed several unsavory features in the life of Miro Baresic, a hero of the right-wing Croatian newspaper.

Baresic was already well known in Sweden before the appearance of the *Arbetet* article in February. He was one of two members of the Ustashi, a Croatian fascist organization, who murdered Vladimir Rolovic, Yugoslavia's ambassador to Sweden, in April 1971. The Swedish courts sentenced Baresic and his accomplice, Andjelko Brajkovic, to life imprisonment.

The Ustashi favors dismembering the multinational state in Yugoslavia established by the workers' and peasants' revolution in the 1940s. It wants to create an independent Croatian state like the one the German Nazi occupation forces helped them set up during World War II.

Baresic did not stay in jail long in Sweden. In September 1972, three of his fellow Croatian terrorists hijacked a Scandinavian Airlines jetliner and threatened to blow it up with nearly 80 persons aboard if Baresic, Brajkovic, and several other Croatian prisoners were not released.

The Swedish government let Baresic and the others go, and they flew from Malmö to Madrid in the hijacked plane. They turned themselves in to the Spanish authorities and were tried and imprisoned. But after less than 21 months in jail Baresic was released and went to Paraguay, ruled for more than 30 years by Gen. Alfredo Stroessner's bloody tyranny.

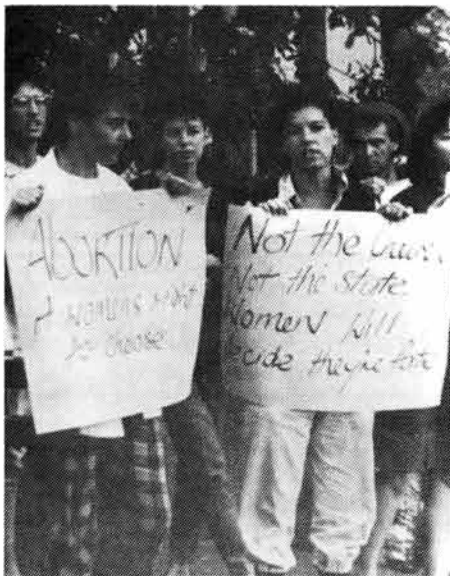
Here is where *Arbetet's* story, complete with photographs, begins. According to the Swedish daily, Baresic made out well in this haven for assorted reactionary exiles. Paraguay is where Nicaragua's tyrant Anastasio Somoza found refuge after his regime was overturned in 1979.

Baresic, after going through a training program in the Paraguayan army, landed a job as a bodyguard to the Paraguayan ambassador to the United States. In this capacity, he had the confidence of Paraguay's leading military and government officials. One of the photos published by *Arbetet* shows a smiling Baresic with the chief commander of Paraguay's military forces in the latter's office.

In the United States in 1978, Baresic bluffed his way into a job at the Pentagon under a phony name. Shortly afterwards he was arrested for using a false name. According to *Arbetet* the CIA attempted to get him to become a spy for them in the Croatian movement. He claims that he refused to do this and went back to Paraguay in 1979.

In 1980 U.S. government agents were involved in getting Baresic out of Paraguay and back to Sweden, where he now remains in prison.

Hrvatski Tjednik, edited by members of the Croatian Movement for Statehood in Australia, responded to the *Arbetet* article with major coverage defending Baresic. The Croatian paper printed a front-page photo of him peering out behind prison bars with a banner headline, "Dirty tricks around Baresic." Mijenko Eljuga, a supporter of Baresic living in Sweden, is quoted hailing the reactionary terrorist and adventurer as "a great Croat" who is "today a living legend among Croats." □



Abortion rights demonstrators in Brisbane.

Washington's 'unsinkable aircraft carrier'

Reagan administration pushes ahead with militarization

By Will Reissner

The "USS Honduras" — that's how many U.S. military personnel refer to that impoverished Central American country. The nickname reflects Honduras' recent transformation into an "unsinkable aircraft carrier" and a base for Washington's military intervention in Central America.

Since this transformation began in 1981, Honduras has been the scene of a steady buildup of U.S. military power, carried out under the guise of nonstop military exercises and maneuvers.

From October 1981 until the present, the Pentagon has staged one military exercise after another on Honduran territory. The latest, Cabañas-85, began on June 7 and is scheduled to run until September 27.

In the course of these exercises, the Pentagon has transformed Honduras into a launching pad for extensive air raids against the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) guerrillas in El Salvador and a home base for counterrevolutionary mercenaries carrying out a war against Nicaragua's Sandinista government.

In the course of these maneuvers and exercises, the Pentagon has built in Honduras the infrastructure of military bases, roads, airfields, field hospitals, and supply depots needed to handle a massive, direct U.S. invasion of Nicaragua or El Salvador.

In addition, more than 70,000 U.S. troops have taken part in the maneuvers, familiarizing themselves with the area and local conditions and carrying out practice landings and invasions.

Nearly 100 U.S. warships have docked at Honduran ports, carrying troops and war matériel. Hundreds of helicopters and planes, including the gigantic C-54 Galaxy transports, the largest plane in the Pentagon's fleet, have landed at U.S.-built airfields in Honduras.

Under cover of the maneuvers, the Pentagon has constructed 14 military bases in Honduras. It has built or improved eight airstrips and two radar sites. It has stockpiled M-60A3 tanks and M-113 armored personnel carriers in the country.

The airfield at Aguacate, for example, was improved for what the Reagan administration claimed was support for the 1983 Big Pine 2 exercise. Since then, Aguacate has become the main base for airdropping supplies to U.S.-organized counterrevolutionary forces operating against Nicaragua.

The airfield at Palmerola has been turned into the headquarters for a 1,200-man semipermanent U.S. military presence, including an army field hospital. Palmerola now houses the 224th Military Intelligence unit, whose recon-

naissance planes fly over El Salvador every night, gathering information on FMLN guerrilla concentrations for the Salvadoran army.

The Reagan administration has also used Honduran territory to get around Congressional limits on the number of U.S. military personnel in El Salvador. From June 1983 to September 1984, some 5,000 Salvadoran troops were trained by U.S. military instructors at the U.S.-built Regional Military Training Center at Puerto Castilla on Honduras' Atlantic coast.

Vast sums have been spent in setting up this military infrastructure. The Pentagon has spent at least \$100 million just on the maneuvers and exercises in Honduras.

Arming contras

All the while, Washington has been arming, organizing, and financing Nicaraguan counterrevolutionary military units — the "contras" — which operate against Nicaragua's revolutionary government from bases in Honduras. These units have become, in effect, irregular warfare units of the Pentagon.

According to Efrén Mondragón, a former regional commander of the contra forces who took advantage of a Nicaraguan amnesty law to return to his homeland, contra military operations are organized by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency in coordination with the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Honduran armed forces.

According to Mondragón, U.S. military advisers are present at the contra bases in Honduras. He added that Honduran armed forces chief Gen. Walter López and Colonel Calderón, whom he describes as the liaison between the Honduran army and the CIA, are actively involved in the contra military operations.

U.S. military aid

Direct U.S. military aid to the Honduran armed forces has also jumped dramatically. In 1980, before the U.S. buildup in the country began, the Pentagon's annual military aid package for Honduras totaled only \$4 million. For 1986, the Reagan administration proposes giving the Honduran regime \$88.2 million in military aid.

The Reagan administration has also used expanded economic aid to buy Honduran complicity in Washington's fight against the revolutionary forces in El Salvador and the contra war against the Nicaraguan government.

With the exception of Haiti, Honduras is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. In large sections of the country, people eke out an existence from subsistence agriculture. Nearly 75 percent of the country's 4 million people live in the countryside, and more than 40 percent of the population is illiterate.

The Honduran economy is dominated by two U.S. corporations, United Brands (formerly United Fruit) and Standard Fruit, which have had vast banana plantations in the country since the late 1800s. Between them, the two U.S. companies directly or indirectly employ more than 18,000 Hondurans. They also control four-fifths of the country's railroad tracks and much of its maritime shipping.

Bananas, which are the country's principal export, are grown on huge tracts on Honduras' northern coastal plain. The heart of this region is the city of San Pedro Sula, the country's commercial center. In addition, the ports of Puerto Cortés, Tela, La Ceiba, and Trujillo are dominated by the banana trade.

Early in this century the U.S. Marines were sent to Honduras on several occasions to protect the investments of the U.S. banana companies.

Despite Honduras' desperate poverty, the country has received far less U.S. economic aid than other proimperialist regimes in the region, reflecting Washington's view that you do not have to buy what you already own.

In fiscal 1985, Honduras will get \$134.9 million in U.S. economic aid, and the Reagan administration has proposed \$142.9 million for fiscal 1986. The U.S. Agency for International Development announced in May that under the Reagan administration's Caribbean Basin Initiative, Honduras would receive \$69 million to reactivate its economy.

Since 1981, Costa Rica has received \$651.8 million in U.S. economic aid, El Salvador has gotten \$1.08 billion, and Honduras only \$519.6 million.

Opposition to Suazo

Many Hondurans are clearly unhappy about their government's slavish support of the Reagan administration's counterrevolutionary policies in Central America.

President Roberto Suazo Córdova, who took office in January 1982 as the first civilian head of state in a decade, has lost a large part of his initial popular support due to his government's close alignment with U.S. policy.

As opposition to Suazo's policies has grown, so has repression. Through March 31, 1984, 147 people "disappeared" at the hands of the police and military.

But the dissatisfaction with Suazo Córdova has spread into sectors of the armed forces as well. The armed forces continue to exercise the real power in Honduras through the National Security Council and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces.

Until March 31, 1984, the armed forces commander was Gen. Gustavo Álvarez, a strong proponent of total alignment with the

Reagan administration's policies on Central America.

But significant opposition to Álvarez's policies arose within the armed forces.

Some of this opposition reflected a feeling by sectors of the military that Álvarez was selling out Honduran interests to Washington at too low a price. These officers hoped to secure more military and financial aid from Washington by balking at some of the Reagan administration's demands.

Other elements in the armed forces fear that Honduras is being pushed into a war against Nicaragua solely to serve the Reagan administration's interests.

In addition, for several decades Honduran military training and doctrine has stressed that the main military threat to Honduras comes from El Salvador, with which Honduras fought a short war in 1969. Many Honduran officers worry that the balance of forces between the Salvadoran and Honduran militaries is shifting dramatically in favor of the Salvadoran armed forces due to the huge military buildup in El Salvador being financed by Washington.

As a result of these various strains of opposition to Álvarez's policies within the military, on March 31, 1984, Álvarez was removed from power at gunpoint by younger officers who were, according to *Washington Post* correspondent Edward Cody, "disgruntled by his high-handed style and worried that purely Honduran interests would be eclipsed by regional U.S. interests."

Álvarez was shipped off to Miami, and was replaced by Gen. Walter López, a former air force pilot and hero of Honduras' 1969 war with El Salvador.

Pressuring Washington

With the replacement of Álvarez, the Honduran military has tried to exact a higher price from Washington for doing the Reagan administration's bidding in Central America.

One attempt to do this was the Honduran government's decision to close the Regional Military Training Center at Puerto Castilla because Washington was unwilling to adjust the balance between the number of Salvadoran and Honduran troops receiving training there.

Another measure along this line was the Honduran government's decision in early May to close several contra bases near the Nicaraguan border and to move others further from the border region.

The moves against the contra bases came in the two weeks before President Suazo's May 20 arrival in Washington for talks with Reagan.

During Suazo's visit, the Honduran head of state tried to convince Reagan to agree to a joint defense treaty between Washington and Tegucigalpa, obligating Washington to come to Honduras' defense in the event of an invasion from El Salvador.

Suazo also suggested to U.S. officials that

future U.S. military maneuvers in Honduras should be scaled down.

The Reagan administration, however, refused to be drawn into a joint defense treaty



ROBERTO SUAZO CÓRDOVA

that might be interpreted as a "tilt" toward the Honduran regime against its Salvadoran counterpart.

The joint communiqué issued at the end of the Reagan-Suazo meetings focused its hostility on Nicaragua. The communiqué stated that Washington will take "appropriate measures" to defend Honduras "against Communist aggression."

Reagan stated that he and Suazo share "serious concern over the threat to the entire region posed by the Communist, Sandinista regime in Nicaragua and its Cuban and Soviet supporters."

The U.S. president claimed that Honduras is "facing a serious threat of Communist aggression and subversion. There should be no doubt that we will fulfill our mutual defense obligation under the Rio Treaty and the O.A.S. Charter."

Reagan's statements point up the possibility that Washington might use fighting between Nicaraguan troops and the Honduras-based contras to charge that Nicaragua had "invaded" Honduras and to intervene directly with U.S. troops.

At the same time, Reagan kept mum about tensions between the governments in Tegucigalpa and San Salvador.

As George D. Moffett reported in the May 21 *Christian Science Monitor*, U.S. officials felt that Suazo had "little bargaining leverage with his US counterparts."

"For one thing, Honduras is too poor, too dependent on the US financially, and too concerned about leftist threats to its own security from El Salvador and Nicaragua to jeopardize relations with the US altogether."

High U.S. military officers have not minced words with the Honduran generals. When Gen. Paul Gorman, outgoing head of the U.S. Southern Command, visited Honduras late in 1984, he bluntly told complaining Honduran officers, including the head of the armed forces General López, "You can stay with us, or you can go with the Cubans."

One U.S. analyst, quoted by George D. Moffett in the *Christian Science Monitor*, stated: "Honduras has mortgaged itself to the Reagan administration. Now they're really in the soup."

As opposition to Suazo's political course grows, the Honduran president has used a variety of methods to try to control his opponents. The Honduran press recently published documents stating that President Suazo had paid his palace guards more than \$400,000 in bribes in 1984 to keep them loyal. In the May 5 *New York Times*, James LeMoyné reported that "both Honduran and Western officials said in interviews that Mr. Suazo is believed to have offered large payments to leading army officers to keep their men in the barracks."

Confronting Honduran Congress

Suazo also faced a direct political crisis when the majority of the Honduran Congress resisted his attempts to handpick his successor by manipulating the rules of the presidential election scheduled for November.

Suazo and the Honduran Congress collided in March, when the congress replaced five of the nine members of the Supreme Court, charging that they were bending the election laws on Suazo's behalf. Suazo responded by ordering the arrest of the newly appointed justices.

The chief justice appointed by congress, Ramón Valladares Soto, was imprisoned on March 29 and charged with treason by Suazo.

Valladares was finally released from jail on May 22, following a compromise worked out between the president and congress on new rules for the November election.

Before Suazo agreed to the compromise, however, trade union leaders had threatened to call a general strike. That threat was bolstered by the impressive turnout of more than 100,000 workers in militant May Day demonstrations.

There have also been reports of armed actions by guerrillas opposed to the Suazo regime. According to the April 1 issue of *Liberación*, the Morazanist Front for the Liberation of Honduras (FMLH), which takes its name from the 19th century Central American patriot Francisco Morazán, took responsibility for the bombing of the Volcanique dance hall in Tegucigalpa, frequented almost entirely by U.S. military personnel and Nicaraguan contras.

The FMLH also announced that on Feb. 15, 1985, a unit made up of forces from the FMLH and the Honduran Revolutionary Workers Party of Central America (PRTC-H) attacked four U.S. Green Berets in the city of La Ceiba. □

Nicaraguan unions appeal for help

Campaign launched to win solidarity from unions throughout world

[The following appeal for solidarity is being circulated to trade unions throughout the world by the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST), which represents nearly 90 percent of Nicaragua's organized urban workers.

[Since it was issued on March 21 by Lucío Jiménez Guzmán, general secretary of the CST, and Denis Meléndez Aguirre, international relations secretary of the CST, it has received a positive response. According to an interview with Meléndez that appeared in the May 23 *Barricada Internacional*, published weekly in Managua, a peace boat commissioned by workers in Western Europe will arrive in Nicaragua in July carrying production materials and tools. Financial aid has also been received, he said, from the Workers Commissions of Spain, as well as from Swiss and Bulgarian unions. The French General Confederation of Labor (CGT) has initiated a solidarity campaign.

[The full text of this appeal was reprinted in the March-April issue of *Unidad Sindical*, newspaper of the General Workers Federation (CGT) in the Dominican Republic.

[Since the CST's campaign around the appeal began, the U.S. imposed an economic embargo on Nicaragua. This act of aggression underlines even more the urgent need for solidarity with Nicaragua's working people.

[The following English-language translation was provided by the national executive secretariat of the CST.]

* * *

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Please allow us to send you greetings and to express our deep confidence that we will achieve the peace that we long for and are fighting for daily.

Brothers and sisters, we would like to take this opportunity to summarize the critical situation our people are living through as a result of Mr. Reagan's war-mongering policy, and to raise with you the idea of urgent action in solidarity with our cause. Let us explain.

Nicaraguan workers are suffering under and confronting the onslaught of the Reagan administration's policies of aggression. As Nicaraguan workers we appeal to the trade unions of the world to help us survive.

The U.S. aggression that is bleeding the working people of Nicaragua affects each and every aspect of our life. We must call attention to the difficult economic and social situation we inherited from Somoza's military dictatorship — such as the \$520.3 million in damage caused by the bombardment of some 50 percent of our industries and housing; \$518.8 million in decapitalization and plunder of the gov-

ernment in 1978–1979; the foreign debt of \$1.65 billion; the cost of 50,000 human lives of those who perished and the care for 40,000 orphans; the feeding of one million people — with a totally dependent economy.

The aim of the brutal U.S. war of aggression is the total and complete destruction of the Sandinista People's Revolution. That is why from the border areas of Honduras and Costa Rica, thousands of mercenary forces, supported by the president of the United States, Mr. Reagan, and advised by the Central Intelligence Agency, have kidnapped, raped, and brutally murdered more than 8,500 people, including children, young people, women, old people, workers, students, peasants, and professionals.

They have unleashed terrorism, destroying and burning down homes, schools, farm cooperatives, child-care centers, transportation, oil and food depots. This has resulted in over \$1.08 billion in economic losses.

In addition, the foreign debt of \$1.65 billion has risen to \$4.35 billion because of interest. Due to the international economic crisis and the U.S. government's aggression, Nicaragua will have a balance of trade deficit of approximately \$500 million in 1985.

Of the earnings from exports, 37 percent goes to service the foreign debt left by Somoza and 40 percent goes for oil purchases. These two categories alone add up to 77 percent, leaving 23 percent for obtaining the things that we must buy abroad: medicines, vehicles, spare parts, inputs for agriculture, etc.

Nicaraguan working people are being brutally attacked by the U.S. superpower. Nicaragua and its people's democracy need committed solidarity in order to survive. The involvement of the U.S. government against Nicaragua becomes ever more dangerous with the present Big Pine III military maneuvers, in the course of which the number of U.S. soldiers stationed in Honduras, 20 miles from our border, has risen from 5,000 to 10,000.

There they are stockpiling inordinate amounts of ammunition, bombs, and missiles. Units of armored M-60 tanks have been deployed barely three miles from our borders. There are aerial maneuvers involving highly sophisticated planes, the secret units like Task Force 160 of the 101st Airborne Division, and naval maneuvers in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. These shows of force are carried out very close to our coasts, in open provocation and violation of Nicaragua's territorial waters and air space.

The economic, commercial, and diplomatic blockade has weighed down on the backs of the Nicaraguan workers. One small example is

the recent blocking of the \$58 million loan that the International Development Bank was to provide Nicaragua for use in basic social and infrastructural programs benefiting the Nicaraguan people.

There is overwhelming evidence of Mr. Reagan's aggressive policies: the cuts in the quotas for our main agricultural export products such as meat, sugar, and bananas, which has a seriously damaging impact on the Nicaraguan economy; the U.S. refusal to accept the ruling of the International Court of Justice in the Hague; the ignoring of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 530; the pressures exerted on the governments of Costa Rica, Honduras, and El Salvador not to negotiate or sign the Contadora Peace Treaty.

This administration's political and foreign policy line rests on the platform of criminal aggression by the Reagan government against Nicaragua. Likewise, the Nicaraguan workers are being bled white, and the United States wants to totally destroy them, as U.S. Vice-president George Bush stated in Honduras, on March 17, 1985.

In the face of such a difficult situation, today more than ever we are asking for solidarity so that Nicaragua may survive.

Therefore, we propose that trade unions take part in the following concrete tasks:

1) Organize a week of solidarity with the people of Nicaragua on July 15–21, 1985. Prior to that week, we propose that messages be sent to the U.S. Congress condemning Reagan's action and calling for U.S. troops to leave Central America, as well as backing peace initiatives that do not infringe on the dignity of our peoples.

2) For that same week of July 15–21, 1985, we propose that workers be urged to donate one day's wages to partially overcome the damage the war has caused us.

We Nicaraguan workers are sure that we will find a high moral sense of solidarity and that our request will meet with an effective response. Therefore, we repeat our thanks in advance for all the gestures of brotherhood and solidarity. We wish you success in carrying out these tasks. □

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Workers protest government policies

Massive actions reflect widespread ferment in the unions

By Marcelo Zugadi

BUENOS AIRES — The May 23 national work stoppage and massive demonstration of 200,000 workers in front of Argentina's presidential palace, called by the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), marked the close of a period opened by the victory of Raúl Alfonsín's Radical Civic Union (UCR) in the October 1983 presidential election.

The labor actions ushered in a new political situation, one in which President Alfonsín's government no longer has the initiative, and in which the relationship of class forces has shifted to the detriment of the capitalists.

The workers' movement is taking to the streets again as it did in the final year of the military dictatorship, which ruled from 1976 to 1983.

The May 23 strike and rally marked the third time in one month that workers came out in massive actions.

The first demonstration of 150,000 people took place April 22, the day the trial of nine commanders of the previous military dictatorship began. The demonstrators demanded the punishment of all those responsible for the repression during the nearly eight years of dictatorship.

On April 26 there was a second mass rally, at the presidential palace, in response to a call from Alfonsín himself, who had announced that a conspiracy was afoot to stage a coup.

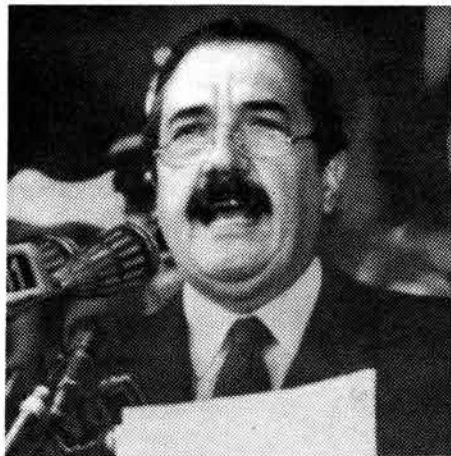
But instead of presenting a plan to confront the threat of a coup, Alfonsín used the occasion to put forward an austerity program that would plunge the country into recession, sharply cut real wages, and impose a restructuring of the economy along the lines demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The May 23 national work stoppage and demonstration of 200,000 workers opposed not only the threats of a coup, but also the government's plans to implement the IMF's guidelines.

Each of these mass gatherings in Buenos Aires was duplicated by similar actions in other cities around the country.

The May 23 national work stoppage had been preceded by discussions throughout the country. On buses and trains, in sidewalk conversations, and in countless workplace assemblies, virtually the entire population took part in discussions about the plan of struggle proposed by the CGT, the aims of the labor bureaucracy, the possibility of containing the rampant economic crisis, and the government's role in that crisis.

Several common threads could be heard everywhere: skepticism about the government's



RAÚL ALFONSÍN

ability to respond to the economic crisis, opposition to any coup, lack of confidence in the trade union bureaucracy, and perplexity over the obvious question of what is to be done.

At the May 23 rally, one of the CGT general secretaries, Saúl Ubaldini, implicitly raised the question of power in his much-discussed statement that "the government must change or it must go." Yet neither Ubaldini nor the other CGT speaker, Osvaldo Borda, went beyond criticizing the government. Neither presented their own alternative, and in particular they made no mention of what steps should be taken given the certainty that the government would not change its economic course.

Alfonsín's authority undermined

When the Alfonsín government took office, it stirred a wave of hopes in the majority of the population. But after 18 months in office, the foundations of Alfonsín's authority have been undermined. The Argentine political scene is again dominated by the threat of a social explosion, the reappearance of right-wing terrorism, and the capitalists' jockeying for position to counter the growing demands of the workers.

The record of the first 18 months of Alfonsín's presidency shows that he is not the vehicle of Argentina's rebirth, as many had hoped. Rather his presidency is stamped by the deepest-going economic crisis in Argentine history, with the inflation rate reaching 1,000 percent over the past 12 months.

At the same time, the three traditional pillars of Argentine political life are all in political crisis:

- The military high command has been discredited by its mismanagement of the economy, the brutal record of its eight years of rule,

and the humiliating defeat suffered in the 1982 war against British aggression over the Malvinas Islands.

- The Peronist movement's four-decade domination of the workers' movement through the CGT and the Justicialist Party has come undone and the movement is splintering.

- The traditional political machine of the Radical Civic Union has been thrust aside by Alfonsín and his backers.

Alfonsín's aim had been to take advantage of the political crisis to build a "third national movement" around his own leadership, as Hipólito Irigoyen had done in the early part of the century and Juan Perón was able to do beginning in the 1940s.

The new president's aim was to build a vast coalition that cut across class lines in civilian society and drew in the military as well.

But Alfonsín's attempts to divide the labor movement and build an organized pro-Alfonsín wing within it have been unsuccessful. Events have shown that the early support workers gave Alfonsín's government did not mark a historic retreat in working-class consciousness. Rather that support was a way-station on the road the workers' movement is traveling in its break with Peronism.

Since the end of the military dictatorship, the workers have been able to regain control over major segments of their union organizations and have set limits on what the CGT leadership can do against their will.

There have been numerous local labor battles, through which new rank-and-file groupings and leaders have been tested and gained experience.

A sector of the trade union bureaucracy (including Lorenzo Miguel of the powerful Metalworkers Union and Jorge Triaca, one of the four general secretaries of the CGT) hopes to build an alternative to Alfonsín by forging an alliance with the armed forces and big business.

This is the perspective put forward by a grouping known as "The Eleven," which brings together one segment of the CGT leadership, the landowners of the Argentine Rural Society, and the big capitalists of the Argentine Industrial Union.

But the trade union officialdom is very sensitive to a change that has taken place in the labor movement, one that many left-wing commentators were unable to see. Ever since the huge working-class upsurge in the city of Córdoba in 1969 (which has come to be known as the Cordobazo), class consciousness has been growing among the workers, and the workers have been moving further and further

from the bourgeois ideology of Peronism.

The military dictatorship was unable to stop that process, despite the fact that leaders of the CGT supported the military's fierce and bloody repression against the working-class vanguard.

The Peronist officials of the CGT and the Justicialist Party no longer have the support of the bulk of the working class, and the Peronist movement itself has fractured.

'Group of 25'

In the union movement, one faction of the bureaucracy, the "Group of 25," is attempting to differentiate itself from the traditional methods of Peronist trade unionism exemplified by Lorenzo Miguel, and challenged the Miguel faction in the union elections.

The "Group of 25" has its counterpart in the political arena in the "democratic wing" of the Justicialist Party.

The results of the union elections concretely reflected this division in the Peronist union apparatus. The "Group of 25" won control of key unions such as the mechanics, the state workers, construction workers, rubber workers, and power and light workers.

Lorenzo Miguel's faction retained control over the Metalworkers Union (helped by the courts, which allowed challenges to all the opposition slates nationally). But Miguel's faction was defeated in some important locals of the Metalworkers.

Militant and antibureaucratic forces won about 20 percent of the posts in the union structure. But their percentage was much higher in the delegates' bodies and internal commissions.

Given the divisions in the bureaucracy, the strength of the opposition is being felt not only in the individual unions, but in the structure of the CGT federation itself.

The strong showing of the "25" reflects, in a distorted fashion, the radicalization of the



Protesting IMF policies in Buenos Aires.

workers' movement as a whole. In order to challenge the dominant wing of the bureaucracy, the "25" had to adopt a democratic and combative program and allowed left groupings into their slates.

In addition, the many clear-cut victories won by class-struggle forces at the local and regional level and in the workplaces show that the radicalization of the workers' movement is taking place on a national scale and is no longer confined to isolated vanguard sectors, as it had been a couple of years ago.

The victories of class-struggle forces in the local elections were not due to the influence of individual local leaders or specific local experiences, but rather to a widespread consciousness in the ranks. In fact, if so many class-struggle leaders had not been killed under the military dictatorship, the phenomenon would have been stronger around the country.

Under the impact of this radicalization, the CGT bureaucrats themselves have been forced to shift ground. The very same leadership that signed an economic and political program with

the landowners and industrialists also called the May 23 national work stoppage.

In addition, for the first time in their history, the CGT leaders had to make concessions to militant workers in order to insure the success of the national mobilization. For the first time in CGT history, its leadership allowed left parties to share the podium at a CGT-sponsored event.

The presence of representatives of the Communist Party and the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) on the platform on May 23, and the recognition they were given by the two CGT speakers, is an unmistakable sign that the top officials recognize that an ideological and political shift is taking place in the ranks, one that requires a verbal shift to the left.

That shift, however, is purely tactical. It is significant that the speaker who announced the presence of the left parties and groupings was J.C. Rousselot, a recognized fascist with ties to the ultraright gangs.

The CGT leadership's ultimate aim is to crush the opposition that threatens its existence. But before it can do that, it intends to use its "left turn" as a battering ram at the CGT convention to neutralize and divide an opposition bloc that could otherwise threaten its control over the federation's structures.

The CGT bureaucracy's aim in the national work stoppage and mass mobilization on May 23 was to both neutralize the class-struggle opposition in the union and seize the political initiative from the government.

Through the massive response to the May 23 action, the CGT leadership was successful in standing up to the government. But the bureaucracy's goal is not to advance a social and economic plan that favors the workers. In fact, the plan that the CGT bureaucrats worked out with the Union of Industrialists and the Rural Society is basically the same one that Alfonsín put forward in his April 26 speech.

The May 23 action showed that the CGT is the only viable alternative pole of attraction to the Alfonsín government. But the outlook of the current factions of the CGT leadership prevent it from assuming this role in any consistent way.

May 27, 1985

Austerity measures imposed

In a televised prime-time address on June 14, President Raúl Alfonsín announced a package of drastic economic reforms adding up to what he described as a "war economy."

The measures include issuance of a new currency, wage and price freezes, higher taxes, and an end to government budgetary deficits. They are expected to cut individual wages some 30 percent within weeks, which will lead to a sharp drop in living standards.

One Argentine banker, quoted in the *New York Times*, admitted "it is very clear that it will be a tremendous blow to the working man in Argentina."

Alfonsín's plan is expected to plunge Argentina even deeper into an economic re-

cession that has caused a sharp decline in living standards over the past two years.

The level of the present economic crisis is seen in the fact that the inflation rate is over 1,000 percent per year while the country's foreign debt stands at more than \$48 billion.

The new currency, called the austral, has been valued at US\$1.25. One thousand "Argentine pesos," the current currency, will be exchanged for one austral. The "Argentine peso" was introduced by the previous military government in mid-1983, when it exchanged 1,000 old pesos for one "Argentine peso."

Thus, within two years 1 million pesos had declined in value to one austral, worth \$1.25.

— Will Reissner

Argentina condemns militarization of Malvinas

The British government's militarization of the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands poses a threat to all the countries in the southern part of South America, Argentina Foreign Minister Dante Caputo told the Organization of American States on May 15.

Caputo spoke three days after the British government opened a new military airport on the South Atlantic island group, which is colonized by Britain, but which rightfully belongs to Argentina. Argentina captured them in 1982, but British troops regained control after a full-scale war.

The Argentine diplomat noted that British government officials estimate London will spend a total of £2.52 billion [£1 = US\$1.27] to fortify the islands between 1982 and 1986.

"It is estimated," Caputo added, "that there are more than 4,000 soldiers on the Malvinas Islands, as compared to a civilian population of 1,600-1,800."

The British military presence also includes at least a dozen frigates and destroyers, which Caputo argued "represents approximately one-quarter of all the British frigates and destroyers in service."

A squadron of submarines is also permanently assigned to the Malvinas, Caputo charged, as well as Phantom and Harrier fighter planes, heavy Chinook helicopters, other types of combat helicopters, and some six Hercules transport aircraft.

"The strength of the ground, air, and maritime forces transferred by the United Kingdom to the Malvinas," Caputo stated, "surpasses by far what is needed to simply stop or repel a possible invasion of the islands by Argentina."

The Argentine foreign minister reiterated his government's "intention to deal peacefully with the conflict over the sovereignty of the islands with the United Kingdom." He quoted President Raúl Alfonsín's March 20 statement that "just as the Argentine claims will not be weakened by time, our determination to solve the sovereignty issue through a frank and comprehensive dialogue with Great Britain shall not decline."

But Caputo warned that the military buildup on the Malvinas Islands gives the British government the ability "to project its strategic air capability from the Malvinas Islands to the South American continent, completely covering the territories of Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, the southern territory of Brazil, and Peru."

He added that the British government "has already turned the South Atlantic and South America as a whole into a nuclear battlefield by installing this strategic base." □



British troops on Malvinas Islands.

10 AND 20 YEARS AGO

Intercontinental Press

Africa Asia Europe Oceania the Americas

July 7, 1975

In a series of secretly plotted moves that began shortly after dawn June 26, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi abolished democratic rule in India and seized personal power, converting herself into a dictator.

In her first actions, she declared a state of emergency that in effect abolished the constitution and enabled her to govern by decree; she ordered the arrest of all opponents, whether they stood to the right or the left, who might offer a serious challenge to her coup; she set up a tight censorship of the press; and she mobilized the police and armed forces.

A few hours after the proclamation of the state of emergency, Gandhi claimed in a national broadcast that the dictatorial measures had been taken to "save democracy" in India. "I am sure you are all conscious," she said, "of the deep and widespread conspiracy which has been brewing ever since I began introducing certain progressive measures of benefit to the common man and woman of India."

"In the name of democracy, it has been sought to negate the very functioning of democracy."

But was there really a "conspiracy" involving thousands of persons? Gandhi's justification for the state of emergency, echoing the similar "conspiracy" stories that accompany almost every dictatorial coup, is a patent fake.

Gandhi's real intent was to hang on to power in the face of a developing Indian Watergate. Her coup came only two weeks after she was convicted of illegal campaign practices.

WORLD OUTLOOK

PERSPECTIVE MONDIALE

(Predecessor of Intercontinental Press)

June 25, 1965

The coup d'état pulled by Colonel Houari Boumedienne in Algiers June 19 has been judged by experts in this field to be one of the most skillful in history. It caught virtually everyone by complete surprise, the most stunned of all being [President Ahmed] Ben Bella who was hauled out of his bedroom at 2:25 a.m. by the conspirators.

Of all the top figures in the Algerian leadership, Boumedienne has been the most taciturn. He was credited with being personally not inclined to take power, being content to stand behind Ben Bella. Behind the mask other ideas were brewing.

The first effect among the masses in Algeria was complete shock. The plotters had seized all the mass communications media and therefore were able to block any appeals to the public for resistance and to issue instead their own versions of the news and appeals to remain calm.

In the absence of a well-organized vanguard party, of unions with an independent leadership, the army stood as the only cohesive force in the country. Under such conditions the resistance had to begin from scratch and the big question was what would be the reaction of the masses? Obviously Boumedienne counted on their demoralization, on the slackening and sag in the revolution which has been visible for the past year or so.

But teen-age youth began demonstrating in Algiers on the evening of June 20 and these demonstrations have been repeated after sundown every evening since then, with a significant rise in the age level of the participants.

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Twenty years since coup in Algeria

How workers' and peasants' government was overturned

By Steve Craine

Twenty years ago this June marked the end of an important but sometimes neglected chapter in the historical experience of the world's working people in winning state power and wielding it in their own interests. The workers' and peasants' government that held power in Algeria for a little more than two years was overthrown on June 19, 1965.

The June 19 coup was led by officers who had been part of the revolution's leadership. They did not immediately reverse all the social gains of the revolution, but the coup broke the momentum of the advances made in Algeria during the first three years of independence, which followed a bloody eight-year war against French colonial rule.

The coup, led by Col. Houari Boumedienne, severed the alliance that had been built between the leadership around President Ahmed Ben Bella and the masses of city workers, agricultural laborers, peasants, and other exploited producers. The new government, not based on the mobilization of the oppressed masses, gradually dismantled many of the gains of the revolution.

A powerful anticolonial struggle

The Algerian war of independence of 1954 to 1962 was one of the most powerful and protracted anticolonial struggles in the post-World War II period. It served as an inspiration to other colonized people throughout the world, especially in Africa. In fact, while this war was going on, most of the nations of Black Africa won their formal independence.

The armed phase of the independence movement opened on Nov. 1, 1954, six months after the revolutionary forces in Vietnam dealt the French army a devastating defeat at Dienbienphu. On that date, the newly formed National Liberation Front (FLN) mounted an attack on the French in the Aures Mountains in eastern Algeria.

Over the next eight years the FLN-led independence forces faced up to 400,000 French soldiers, equipped with the most advanced military technology of the time. The French colonialists threw half of their navy and almost two-thirds of their air force at the Algerian freedom fighters. Paris spent an average of \$1 billion each year on its dirty war.

Besides destroying thousands of villages, French troops erected electrified barriers to seal the borders and used torture and a wide range of spy techniques to try to break the liberation movement. French settlers opposed to independence conducted a terror campaign against the predominantly Arab people of Algeria.



Ben Bella (left) with Boumedienne in 1962.

Some 2.5 million people were displaced by the war, and more than 1 million deaths were directly attributable to it. Hundreds of thousands of orphans flooded the cities, while equally large numbers of Algerians were driven into exile.

But the FLN proved unbeatable because it had the strong backing of the big majority of Algerians. They fought with determination to end the domination of France and the French settlers (known as *colons* or *pieds noirs*).

Ninety percent of Algerian commercial and industrial activity was in European hands at the time the independence movement took up arms. The colons, comprising only 11 percent of the population, held 42 percent of the industrial jobs. They also owned the best agricultural land and the largest and most modern estates.

As of independence in July 1962, some 1.1 million rural residents owned no land and 90 percent of the peasants who did own land had less than 5 hectares (about 12 acres). The top 4 percent of all Algerian-owned land holdings accounted for 38 percent of the cultivated land in the country. Agricultural wage workers made up the biggest portion of Algeria's working class of about 600,000.

The majority of Algerians were malnourished. Ninety percent of the population was illiterate, and only one Algerian child in 10 attended school.

Broad independence movement

The popular desire for national independence became organized into a resistance movement partly as a result of World War II. FLN leaders like Ahmed Ben Bella fought in the French army, where they were convinced

that the fight was against fascism and national oppression.

This illusion was shattered in the immediate postwar period. Not only did Paris refuse to allow Algeria and its other colonies the democratic right to self-determination, but the French army was used to crush growing proindependence movements. As many as 45,000 Algerians were killed in the wake of independence demonstrations on the day the world war ended in Europe. The war and its aftermath proved to be a big education for the future leaders of the FLN on the nature of imperialism. It helped galvanize support for independence in all sectors of Algerian society.

The FLN sought to include all those who opposed French rule. And it was largely successful in doing so. It had support among the exploited rural population, both landless agricultural workers and poor peasants. It included in its ranks traditional clan chieftains. In the cities, workers, the small layer of educated middle class, and even significant capitalist figures supported the front. Trade union and radical groups worked in the FLN, too.

In addition to the FLN leadership, which functioned mostly from exile during the independence war, the movement's armed wing, the National Liberation Army (ALN), operated within the country. It was based on local clans and largely free from control by the center. A third component of the independence forces was an exile army in neighboring Tunisia under the command of Col. Houari Boumedienne.

One proindependence force that was excluded from the FLN, however, was the Algerian Communist Party (PCA). The PCA formally supported independence, but because of its ties to the French CP, it had supported the repression of the liberation movement when the French CP was part of a capitalist coalition government in 1946 and 1947. This undercut the PCA's credibility among many independence fighters.

The FLN leaders, however, accepted the assistance and participation of Marxists who were consistent fighters against colonialism, even though the FLN's call for "Arab socialism" explicitly rejected Marxism. Ben Bella had said, for instance, "I am a believer in socialism, short of Marxism."

The FLN's Tripoli Program, adopted in May 1962, shortly before independence, reflected the views of the most radical section of the leadership, especially those close to Ben Bella.

The Tripoli Program attacked not only French colonial rule, but also the feudal gentry and feudal mentality in Algeria. It called for

the working class, peasants, youth, and women to carry the revolution forward with a socialist perspective.

It stated that under the domination of foreign capital the Algerian economy could not be developed. Instead it proposed mass participation in nationalizations to break the power of the imperialist monopolies. The program also advocated broad agrarian reform.

By the time the FLN leaders met in Tripoli in May 1962, the French government was looking for a way to extricate itself from Algeria.

The Algerian war had already contributed to the disintegration of the French Fourth Republic and its replacement by Charles de Gaulle's Fifth Republic in 1958.

After a few years of unsuccessful battle with the FLN and faced with a mounting antiwar movement in France, de Gaulle was ready to concede independence. But he faced a new ob-

stacle with the revolt of the colons, seeking to prevent independence. The Secret Army Organization (OAS) of anti-independence colons not only terrorized Algerians, but took its fight to France as well, even attempting to assassinate de Gaulle.

But in spite of the OAS terror campaign, in March 1962 the French government signed agreements with independence leaders at Évian, France. The Évian agreements provided for a cease-fire, Algerian and French referenda on independence, a provisional government led by the FLN, and the integration of the existing officer corps into the National Liberation Army. They promised protection for French property and that Algeria would remain in the franc zone for international trade. The French armed forces in Algeria were to be reduced by 90 percent within a year, but a naval base would remain under French control for 15 years and French atom bomb tests would be

permitted in the Sahara desert.

The Tripoli Program protested the agreements, characterizing them as a "neocolonialist platform which France is ready to use to propagate its new form of domination." Supporters of the provisional government set up by the Évian meeting walked out of the Tripoli conference, while the remaining delegates approved its radical program unanimously.

New struggles after independence

Once independence was formalized July 3, a struggle began for leadership of the government. On one side was Yusef Ben Khedda, president of the Provisional Government chosen with the participation of French officials at the Évian conference. He was supported by Algerian capitalists and some regional military leaders of the ALN. On the other were the more radical leaders of the independence

Fourth International defended, learned from revolution

Throughout its development, the Algerian revolution was a touchstone of world politics for the entire workers' movement.

The Fourth International, especially its supporters in France, contributed significantly to defending the independence movement during its hard-fought eight-year war against French colonialism.

Revolutionary Marxists in France campaigned for an unconditional end to French domination of Algeria and helped organize solidarity for the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) both before and after independence.

The antiwar movement they helped build in France faced not only government repression, but the terrorism of the right-wing Secret Army Organization (OAS).

The Fourth International also played a big role in publicizing internationally the rich experiences of the Algerian revolution as they were taking place. Especially important in the English-speaking countries was the publication of *World Outlook*, the predecessor of *Intercontinental Press*. This news magazine was launched by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in September 1963, during the period of the revolution's greatest advances.

In its first two years, *World Outlook* published major documents and speeches of the FLN leaders, providing its readers a direct view of the progress as well as the problems of the revolution. It also carried numerous articles — including first hand reports — on the mass mobilizations of Algeria's workers and peasants and the response to their revolutionary actions in world capitals from Paris to Havana.

The Algerian revolution contained many interesting features that deserved and still deserve serious consideration by Marxists. These include the nature of the revolution-

ary anticapitalist government that was established and the process this government began to take toward eliminating capitalist economic domination in Algeria.

The Fourth International participated in the discussion on these questions and offered its views.

The Feb. 21, 1964, issue of *World Outlook* featured on its front page a statement of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, "On the Character of the Algerian Government."

"For some time," this declaration began, "the course of the new regime in Algeria has shown that it is a 'Workers and Peasants Government' of the kind considered by the Communist International in its early days as likely to appear . . . as a possible forerunner of a workers state.

"Such a government," it went on, "is characterized by the displacement of the bourgeoisie in political power, the transfer of armed power from the bourgeoisie to the popular masses, and the initiation of far-reaching measures in property relations."

The United Secretariat noted that the establishment of a workers' and peasants' government in Algeria is "concrete evidence of the depth of the revolutionary process occurring there. It is of historic importance not only for Algeria and North Africa but for the whole African continent and the rest of the world."

A few months after the June 19, 1965, coup that overthrew Algeria's workers' and peasants' government, the World Congress of the Fourth International began discussing the lessons of Algeria in the context of a major resolution on the African revolution.

After more discussion a thorough assessment of the lessons of the revolution and the coup that reversed it was taken up in a

1969 resolution of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International.*

This resolution characterized the June 1965 coup as marking "the destruction of the workers and peasants government." It noted that "molecular changes for the worse, which had been accumulating both in the consciousness of the various classes and in the government personnel and organization, had ended in a qualitative change. . . . The new power represented a reactionary resolution of the contradiction that had existed between the capitalist state and the workers and peasants government with its socialist orientation."

The 1969 resolution stressed the impact the Algerian revolution had on revolutionaries in other parts of the world. "The Cubans, especially, were influenced by it. After the victory of the Cuban revolution and the establishment first of a workers and peasants government and then a workers state in Cuba, this reciprocal influence continued, with Cuba now becoming an example for the Algerians."

However, the IEC explained, "the dynamics of the Algerian revolution was determined by important differences from the developments that led to the establishment of the Cuban workers state." Among these were the response of French imperialism, the quality of the two leadership teams, and the failure of the FLN to dismantle all elements of the previous bourgeois army, as the Cubans had done.

* This resolution is included in the Education for Socialists Bulletin, "The Workers and Farmers Government," by Joseph Hansen. The bulletin is available for \$3.00 (plus \$0.75 for postage) from Pathfinder Press, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014 USA.

struggle, including Ben Bella and Boumedienne, supported by the exploited masses.

Even among those in the FLN who voted for the Tripoli Program in May, there were many who still thought concessions to Paris were the only way to save the shattered country. The independence war, widespread sabotage by anti-independence colons, and the sudden departure of large numbers of these French settlers seriously disrupted the Algerian economy.

About 800,000 colons left Algeria immediately after independence — a real blow to an economy that relied heavily on their skills. Of the small number of educated Algerians many were victims of OAS terror in the final months before independence. Those who survived were unable to fill the gap.

In this context there was strong pressure on the FLN to make concessions to French imperialism to cushion the shock of independence.

The left wing of the FLN, organized under Ben Bella's leadership in the FLN Political Bureau, defeated the Provisional Government and installed Ben Bella as prime minister in August. But the same hesitations about breaking with French economic domination reemerged within the leadership again and again, leading to a series of splits and defections from the movement.

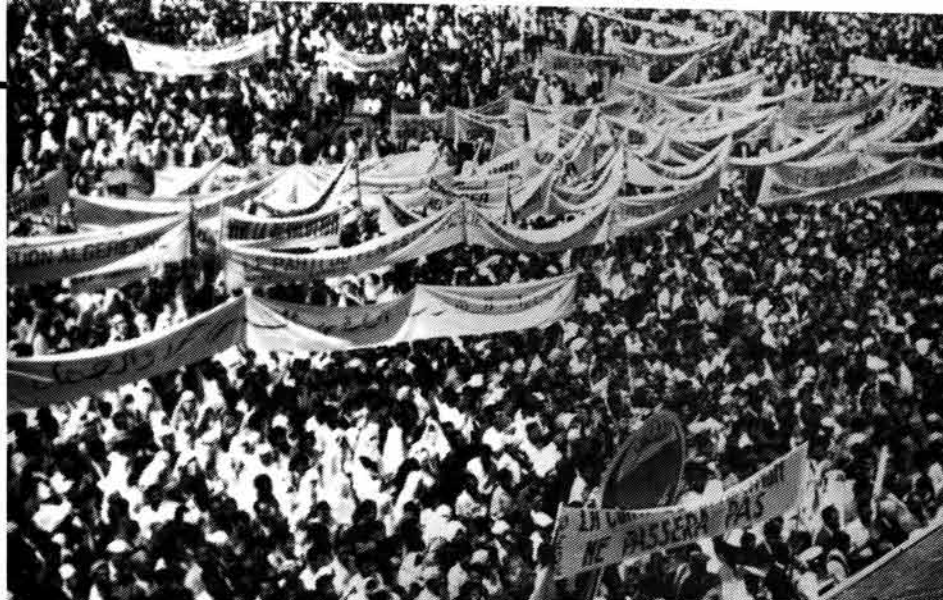
March decrees

The FLN leadership faced a big test in March 1963 when the French government forced the issue of Algerian sovereignty by conducting a nuclear bomb test in the Sahara. The FLN was put on the spot to decide whether the Évian agreements with Paris or its own anti-imperialist Tripoli Program would determine government policy. Ben Bella, acting on his own and without the support of some of his cabinet, decided to retaliate against this flouting of Algerian sovereignty.

In a series of decrees he ordered that businesses and farms "vacated" by settlers who fled the country after independence would be permanently taken over by the government. Many of the former colon enterprises were already being administered by the government. But the status of these properties had been seen as temporary, and it had remained possible for the former owners to reclaim them.

The vacated properties formed the base of a new and growing nationalized sector of the economy. This nationalized sector now included almost one-quarter of all land under cultivation (especially much of the best land and the largest estates) and many important industrial operations.

Following the decrees on vacated property, a series of other steps were taken. Ad hoc formations, called "workers' management committees," that had developed out of the struggle over the previous several months, were formally recognized. These committees were the means by which workers could put their stamp on policies in state enterprises. More property, including unabandoned holdings of French



1964 rally in Algiers to hear Ben Bella, on second anniversary of Algeria's independence.

settlers and Algerian capitalists, was nationalized. A May 14 law permitted the government to put under its protection any property "whose acquisition, management, exploitation, or utilization are susceptible of disturbing the public order or social peace."

Accompanying these measures were massive mobilizations of the workers and peasants.

'A revolution of the shoe-shine boys'

Ben Bella followed up the March decrees with a nationwide speaking tour. Entire towns turned out to hear the FLN leader. His appearances were turned into rallies in support of the new measures. Slogans like "Land to the peasants; factories to the workers" and "Yes to the recent decision for socialism" were raised by the crowds.

In one such address, Ben Bella said, "Today we are opening a still greater struggle than that which ended July 2, 1962 — the struggle for socialism. . . . We don't want to replace one set of pigs by another set wearing turbans. This is a revolution of the poor people, of the widows, the shoe-shine boys."

The Algerian government also strengthened its international ties. It received aid from the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, and Eastern European countries and provided support for anti-colonial liberation movements. Ben Bella had visited Cuba in October 1962 in a show of solidarity during the "missile crisis," when Washington was threatening Cuba over its right to have missiles to defend itself. In July 1963, Cuban revolutionary leader Che Guevara visited Algeria. After meeting with workers' committees, he commented, "I was reminded of Cuba. The same spirit, the same enthusiasm, the same inexperience also, perhaps, but also the same intense desire to do things and to do them well."

In the six months following the March decrees, the revolutionary actions of the government and the people reached their crest.

By October 1963 all French-owned land had been confiscated, amounting to some 4 million

hectares (10 million acres). This land was being worked by 200,000 agricultural workers. About 450 industrial enterprises, out of a total of 3,000, were also nationalized.

These measures increased the class polarization going on in the country. In April, merchants in Algiers rallied against the government's actions at the opening of a new headquarters for the General Union of Merchants (UGCA). Workers mobilized to drown out the right-wing speeches with shouts of "Bourgeoisie to the steam-baths" and "Vive Ben Bella." When Ben Bella arrived, he told the demonstrators, "I want to tell you that the Algerian revolution is not for the merchants, and to be frank, plain, precise, it's the revolution of the fellahs [peasants] and the shoeshiners."

The French government, too, opposed the anticapitalist moves in Algeria. Initially, the French rulers tried to use bribery and economic pressure, rather than a direct military assault, to force the FLN government to pull back from its revolutionary course.

Resorting to blackmail, Paris declared after the March decrees that the cost of compensating French businesses expropriated in Algeria would simply be deducted from the aid promised as part of the Évian accords. The imperialists also cultivated close relations with Algerian opponents of the revolutionary government, including conservative layers in the army.

Several key figures quit the government immediately after Ben Bella's March decrees. Some of these went on to lead armed counter-revolutionary uprisings. In October, during a military campaign against these counterrevolutionaries, the Moroccan army, with tactical assistance from a U.S. military aid mission, invaded Algerian territory. It was forced to retreat in a few weeks when Ben Bella called on the entire country to mobilize for defense and simultaneously appealed to the Moroccan people to rebel against King Hassan.

Within the FLN, the increasing confronta-

tion with imperialism led to more defections. Another group left the government after the adoption of a new constitution and the election of Ben Bella as president in September 1963. The constitution strengthened the presidency and provided for only one legal party — the FLN, which “carries out the objectives of the democratic and popular revolution, and constructs socialism.”

A workers' and farmers' government

The months following March 1963 marked a qualitative turning point in the Algerian revolution. As workers and peasants mobilized to fight in their interests, the government increasingly came into conflict with the Algerian capitalists. Procapitalist figures in the FLN, who had contributed to the anticolonial struggle but opposed the dynamic of the revolution, deserted.

What developed in Algeria in this period was a workers' and peasants' government — a popular revolutionary power — supported by the vast majority, the exploited producers. It was a government of the mobilized working people who sought to defend their initial revolutionary conquests and were beginning to take the first steps toward transforming the economic foundations of Algerian society.

The hated French colonial regime had been overturned and its repressive forces shattered. The lands and many of the factories of the colonial settlers and the French imperialists were now in the hands of the new revolutionary government.

But Algerian capitalists, reinforced by imperialism, still retained significant advantages. The challenge of the FLN-led regime was to secure and defend the positions it had won, organize and educate the working people, institutionalize the new workers' and farmers' republic, and to move forward with the transition to a new social and economic order. But the FLN faced many difficulties, and was unable to lead this transition. Within the old pre-independence civil service and within the army, a new bureaucracy was arising. These bureaucratic layers, including some of the most important leaders, were fearful of the unfolding class struggle as the oppressed masses pressed forward with their demands.

The severe lack of trained personnel made for rough going in the nationalized sector. By the end of 1963, the government had been able to find directors for only 25 of the 450 state enterprises. At the end of 1964 almost a third of the state farms had no accountants.

Without big successes in the nationalized sector, the idea of breaking economic ties with France was even more frightening to some. Algeria remained very dependent on her former colonial ruler. Three-quarters of Algerian exports went to France. About 500,000 Algerian workers had emigrated there to get jobs. They sent home some \$60 million annually, a significant portion of the national income.

All these pressures led to considerable hesitancy and vacillation on the part of some in the

FLN leadership. The more radical elements of the FLN, including Ben Bella, took the approach of trying to conciliate and compromise with these cautious and conservative individuals. Instead of appealing to the masses for support against rightward-moving opponents, Ben Bella relied more on maneuvering among the various cliques in the top leadership.

This indecisiveness led to a series of retreats after the upsurge of mid-1963. The exploited producers, who were essential for moving forward the revolution, became disoriented and their active support for the government waned.

The Ministry of Agriculture clashed with the newly formed National Federation of Agricultural Workers (FNTT) over who should have the major role in management of the state farms. The government offices in charge of nationalized farms eventually took over the union, which could have helped mobilize the largest bloc of workers in the country.

Promises of further agrarian reform that could have consolidated the support of the exploited peasants were continually delayed. Similarly, the decision to establish a popular militia was taken but never implemented. Women were not given greater equality and job opportunities as promised in the Tripoli Program.

Conservative base in the army

The army was an important base for conservatism. It provided relatively good pay and steady employment (both of which were hard to find in Algeria) to an elite group. The officers on top of the army hierarchy had the biggest stake in maintaining social peace with the capitalists, at the expense of working people.

Ben Bella saw the army officers as a rival for power in the government more than as a threat to the goals of the revolution. He began removing army men from government posts. But he did little to combat the influence of their political outlook. And he did not appeal to the worker and farmer base of the revolution against them.

In May 1965 Ben Bella requested the resignation of Foreign Minister Abdelaziz Bouteflika, one of the last allies of Colonel Boumedienne in the cabinet. This precipitated the June 19 coup in which Ben Bella was arrested and control of the government was transferred to Boumedienne.

The composition of the new government, called the National Council of the Revolution, was not announced until July 5. The next day it was recognized by Washington. The *New York Times* reported June 28 that Boumedienne had already “put out feelers to the U.S. for continued economic aid, and American diplomats were pleased by a sudden toning down of anti-American Marxist polemics on the government radio.”

Cuban President Castro condemned the coup. It “is not and cannot be described by anyone as a revolutionary uprising,” he said in a June 26 speech. The coup, he said, “is, in the first place, a painful clash within the revolu-

tionary ranks; a painful conflict within the revolution, in which arms and force are used against revolutionaries and not against a feudal king, not against a representative of imperialist interests, not against a spokesman of the exploiters and reactionaries, not against an enemy of the people, but against the representatives of the Algerian Revolution.”

A few demonstrations against the coup were mounted, but they did not last long. In only one area did the military consider it necessary to use significant force against them. After a period of relative tolerance, the new government moved to repress the left. Leaders of the main union federation, after some hesitation, decided to take a neutral stance toward the Boumedienne government.

Later, the government actually reprivatized some of the nationalized property. The best of the state farms were turned over to the army, and some businesses were returned to their former owners. Police began to be used to break up strikes, the union federation's newspaper was closed, and in June 1966 union leaders were arrested. Ben Bella remained in prison until 1980.

The June 19 coup overturned the workers' and farmers' government and established a regime committed to defending capitalist rule in Algeria. The new rulers, however, did not return political rule to France, thus the basic conquests of the eight-year war of independence have not been reversed.

In fact, some of the legacy of the Algerian revolution survives today. Boumedienne continued some of the policies, and much of the rhetoric, of the workers' and farmers' government he overthrew. And, like other governments in formerly colonized countries, his government has come into conflict with imperialism at times. It has aided the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Polisario Front, which is fighting for Saharan independence from Morocco. It has also been an active member of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries.

The Boumedienne regime even decreed further nationalizations in 1967 and 1968. But they were not carried out with the mass mobilizations that gave the earlier nationalizations their revolutionary thrust.

The achievements of the Algerian workers and peasants when their government was in power, from mid-1963 to June 1965, should be studied along with the examples of the early years of the Russian revolution and the Cuban, Nicaraguan, and Grenada revolutions of today. These revolutions demonstrate the power of the workers' and farmers' government as an instrument in the fight to eliminate capitalist exploitation. They can inspire workers and farmers in all capitalist countries with a perspective for solving the whole range of problems they face.

And as with the Grenada revolution, the problems that led to the overturn of Algeria's popular revolutionary government must also be analyzed and studied to help avoid their repetition. □

'War and Crisis in the Americas'

New book of speeches and interviews by Fidel Castro

By Doug Jenness

[The following is the introduction to a new collection of speeches and interviews by Cuban President Fidel Castro, to be published in July by Pathfinder Press. Entitled *Fidel Castro Speeches 1984-85: War and Crisis in the Americas*, the book is available for \$6.95 (plus \$.75 for postage) from 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014 USA.

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* * *

On four successive evenings in February 1985, Cuban President Fidel Castro entered the homes of millions of television viewers in the United States. Answering questions directed to him by Robert MacNeil on the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour, Castro explained, in clear and simple terms, the views of the Cuban government on a wide range of topics.

The four-part interview, which was broadcast twice, generated considerable debate and discussion throughout the country. Castro made a positive impression on many people, and the overall effect of the interview helped undermine Washington's relentless anti-Cuba campaign. Doubts were raised in the minds of many viewers about the justifications given by the U.S. government for its current course toward war in Central America and the Caribbean.

The interview on the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour, which is published in this collection, is one of many speeches and interviews given by Castro between December 1983 and March 1985. Twelve of these are excerpted or reprinted in their entirety in this volume.

Two principal themes emerge from these documents. One is the enormity of the stakes in the struggle against Washington's course in Central America and the Caribbean. The other is the explosive social and political situation generated throughout Latin America by the deepening economic crisis of world capitalism and the debt burden it imposes on Latin American countries.

The revolutionary perspective that Castro outlines is in response to the U.S. government's sustained offensive in the region over the last five years. A clear picture emerges of the consequences for Washington if it invades Nicaragua or Cuba.

One of the questions dealt with in these speeches and interviews is the qualitative upgrading of the military preparedness of the Cuban people.

In May 1980, the Cuban government announced that, in addition to the armed forces

and reserves, a volunteer militia would be formed for the first time since the early years of the revolution. Since then, more than one million Cuban men and women have enrolled in this Territorial Troop Militia. Organizations such as the Federation of Cuban Women, the National Association of Small Farmers, the trade unions, and the neighborhood Committees for the Defense of the Revolution have also been drawn directly into these active defense preparations.

Castro gives particular credit to the creation a decade ago of the elected organs of People's Power — representative governing bodies from the local to the national level — for making possible the breadth of these defense preparations.

The central concept in Cuba's defense policy, Castro reminded the National Assembly of People's Power in December 1984, is that "the military defense of the country, on the battlefield and in all the backup work in any form of attack — blockade, war of attrition, invasion, total or partial occupation of the country — was a task for both the armed forces and the people as a whole, so the people had to be organized and prepared for the struggle."

He illustrated what he called "people's war" by pointing to several of the most notable examples from recent history: defense of the Soviet Union against Germany's invasion during World War II, the struggle of the Vietnamese against U.S. aggression, the Algerian fight for independence from French colonialism, and the current liberation struggle in El Salvador.

Castro then added that Cuba has an advantage over even these historic struggles. This is because, he said, "In our country, it is an entire people, 10 million inhabitants, united, with a single party and army, a solid mass structure, a single government, complete unity and no bourgeoisie, a solid and coherent social system. A worker, peasant, and student people; a country where everybody, women and children included, would stand solid with a political and military doctrine, defending the country. A country like that can be exterminated with ten or more atom bombs, perhaps, although that would be another type of war and only possible in the framework of a world war."

As a result of Cuba's recent military preparations, he added, "the defensive capacity of the country has been multiplied by ten." An aggressor now knows, Castro affirmed, "that if he attacks he will have to pay a price ten times greater than he would have had to pay four or five years ago, as great a price as defeat and humiliation, that is, an unpayable price."

The Cuban people's determination to defend their country and revolution is cited by Wash-

ington as evidence of Cuba's preparations to "export" revolution to other Latin American countries.

The Cuban leadership repeatedly explains that this is a slander designed to justify hostile actions against Cuba. Cuba's policy is not "an adventurist one; we are not warmongers," Castro told a December 1984 Cuban student congress in a speech excerpted for this volume. To the contrary, we "will do all that is in our hands to further détente in our area, in Cuba and in Central America."

'We should not lower our guard'

Shortly following this speech, an agreement was reached between the Cuban and U.S. governments on immigration matters. In reporting this December 14, 1984, accord to the Cuban people on national television, Castro urged that "the same spirit that characterized these talks prevail in those that are now in progress and that will be held in the world in the weeks and months to come." Nonetheless, he cautioned, "our constructive, positive, receptive stand doesn't mean that we are overconcerned about negotiations" and "no one should harbor illusions. We, especially, should not lower our guard or in any way neglect our defense."

Castro's cautionary statement soon proved to be well-taken. On May 20, 1985, Washington demonstrated its low opinion of normalizing relations with Cuba by belligerently starting up Radio José Martí. This was eighty-three years to the day after Washington's imposition of a fake, neocolonial independence from Spain — a date etched in the consciousness of every Cuban fighter against Yankee domination. The Cuban government responded to what it called this "cynical and provocative decision" of Washington by suspending the immigration agreement. The statement of the Cuban government is reprinted as an appendix to this volume. [The statement also appears on page 409 of this issue. — IP]

While the Cuban leadership has repeatedly reiterated its readiness to enter into discussions to improve relations with the United States, Castro emphasized to the student congress that "peace is not attained through weakness. Peace is attained through strength, courage, and determination of peoples. I believe this is what has characterized our revolution over these twenty-five years."

Even if détente with Washington is achieved, he stated, "defense cannot be neglected! This is very important, for what we have achieved cannot be cast aside. It is a reality imposed by our geographical location."

Right now the Nicaraguan government is the central target of Washington's mounting attacks in the region, and it also, like Cuba, has

been effectively parrying each move made by the North American colossus.

Nicaragua counters Washington's moves

As in Cuba, the Sandinista government in Nicaragua is mobilizing and organizing the working class and peasantry to defend the revolution. It has been forced to allocate gigantic human and material resources to put up an effective defense against the *contras*, the U.S.-financed and -organized mercenaries. This has meant substantially strengthening the military forces. And it has imposed the burden of putting a large portion of that country's limited economic resources behind the defense effort.

In addition to the deaths and maiming of thousands of Nicaraguans, the brutal U.S.-engineered *contra* war has led to economic hardship for most of the country's citizens. Defense needs have made it impossible for the new government to continue advancing many economic and social programs at the same pace as during the first years after the 1979 victory. But the big majority of Nicaraguans recognize that if their workers' and peasants' government is overturned, all hope of further economic and social advances will be snuffed out. It is the Sandinista-led government that has made possible the gains that the Nicaraguan people have achieved. For that reason, they are resisting everything Washington is throwing at them and making big sacrifices to make sure they win.

Their determination is proving effective. They have dealt the *contra* raiders substantial defeats, inflicting many casualties and driving thousands of them out of the country. Moreover, the armed people have prevented the *contras* from establishing a foothold on Nicaraguan soil that could be used as a territorial basis for establishing a counterrevolutionary "provisional government" that Washington could rush in to recognize and support.

The victories that the Sandinista government has scored against the mercenary bands have raised the stakes for Washington. Castro pointed out to the student congress that "any adventure in Central America will not be the walkover Grenada was." The U.S. government would have to pay "an enormous political and human price" for the direct use of its troops, he said.

Castro spelled out what this would mean in an interview with the Spanish press agency EFE in February 1985. "Perhaps [Washington] would have to kill hundreds of thousands of people in full view of international opinion, in full view of the mass media, television, film," he said. "No matter how many measures they might take, they wouldn't be able to hide the magnitude of the genocide they would have to commit there with the use of their warships, bombers, tanks, and troops to kill Nicaraguans."

The majority of Nicaraguans, Castro said, are guided by the same principle as the Cuban people. "Our country can be exterminated but not defeated. That is our philosophy and the philosophy of the Nicaraguans and the Salvadorans."

Cuba to host union meeting on debt

Cuba is scheduled to be the site of a Latin American and Caribbean Trade Union Conference July 15-17 to discuss the gigantic foreign debt weighing down on countries in the region.

Representatives from more than 60 union federations in 35 countries have been invited, according to a report in the May 30 issue of *Granma*, a daily published in Havana. Three international and regional union federations and more than 10 peasant organizations have been invited to attend.

Roberto Veiga, general secretary of the Cuban Workers Federation, speaking at a Havana Press conference said the proposal grew out of discussions at two earlier meetings. On May 2 in Uruguay some South American union organizations met to discuss the debt problem and called for a con-

tinental-wide union conference on the question.

In early May the Fourth Unity and Solidarity Conference of Workers of the Caribbean, meeting in Guadeloupe, proposed that a broad union conference be held in Cuba.

Veiga said that the conference will help to create a powerful front of all the union forces that want to unite for the salvation of Latin American people, and that are energetically calling for a New International Economic Order. The meeting, he said, can launch a powerful front to affirm that the foreign debt is politically, economically, and morally unpayable.

Also present at the press conference were trade unionists from Nicaragua, Uruguay, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Panama.

Castro is often asked by interviewers whether or not there are Cuban troops in Nicaragua, and what military assistance Cuba would offer to Nicaragua in the event of a U.S. invasion. Each time, Castro explains that Cuba has some military advisers in Nicaragua, but that most of its personnel there are teachers, doctors, construction workers, and others engaged in civilian activities. He then challenges the governments of much larger and wealthier countries to match the assistance in these areas that Cuba has provided to Nicaragua.

Castro points out that in the event of a U.S. military blockade of Nicaragua, the Cuban government would be physically limited in what it could do. "We can't, just as in the case of a blockade against Cuba, break the blockade." Cuba and Nicaragua are small countries in this region, he notes, "where the United States has overwhelming superiority in conventional air and naval weapons, not to mention nuclear weapons."

From the military standpoint, both the Cuban and Nicaraguan governments are relying on the mobilization and readiness of the working people in their own countries if Washington imposes a blockade, launches an air attack, or sends in U.S. combat troops.

Look to Latin American people

In addition to their own defense preparations, the Cuban and Nicaraguan governments are also looking for international support, especially from the people of Latin America. Cuban and Nicaraguan leaders repeatedly point out that a U.S. war against Nicaragua would become a Central American war.

The explosive political situation in Latin America makes the opportunities for winning support there far better than in the early years of the Cuban revolution, when Washington had some success in isolating Cuba from other Latin American countries.

In the 1960s Washington succeeded in getting Cuba excluded from the Organization of American States (OAS) and got the OAS to urge member countries to sever diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba. By September 1964 every Latin American country had broken diplomatic relations with Cuba, with the sole exception of Mexico.

This sharply contrasts to the response in Latin America to the U.S. government's embargo against Nicaragua announced May 1, 1985. The Latin American Economic System (SELA), which includes twenty-five countries in the region, called on Washington to lift the trade sanctions. It also resolved to aid Nicaragua in countering the effects of the embargo.

Moreover, Cuba has reestablished diplomatic and trade relations with many Latin American countries. Two examples can be cited to demonstrate how much Cuba's isolation has been broken down in recent years. Cuba's volume of trade with Argentina last year surpassed that with Mexico, Cuba's largest trading partner in Latin America for more than two decades. And, in April, Ecuador's President León Febres Cordero made the first visit to Cuba by a Latin American head of state, other than from Mexico, since 1959.

Castro often points to another contrast between the 1960s and today. Twenty years ago Latin American countries were not weighed down by the mammoth debts they owe to imperialist banks today. In fact, one of the problems many Latin American countries had at that time was obtaining credit for loans. In 1961, "during the period of obsessive trauma over the Cuban revolution," Castro says, President Kennedy launched the Alliance for Progress. This was aimed at averting revolution by increasing aid and loans to the Latin American countries.

"Twenty-four years have elapsed since

then," Castro explained to U.S. television reporter Robert MacNeil in February. "The population has doubled. The social problems have tripled. The debt is \$360 billion. And in interest alone they must pay \$40 billion per year — double the amount Kennedy thought was going to solve the problem in a certain number of years."

Kennedy's promise that the Alliance for Progress would bring prosperity for the majority of Latin Americans has proved to be hollow. Today the Latin American governments are being pressured by the big banks, through the International Monetary Fund, to apply onerous, belt-tightening measures against their working people or lose their credit. As a result, economic conditions for the great majority continue to deteriorate throughout the continent. They suffer from skyrocketing inflation, cutbacks in social services, and high unemployment. Massive numbers of peasants, driven off the land, scrape out a meager living in miserable shantytowns ringing the cities.

Castro reported to the Federation of Cuban Women in March 1985 that in the past twenty-six years "we have seen many things, but never what we're seeing now, phenomena that are reflected in the delegations that visit Cuba. Not only is there an enormous, monstrous crisis, but also a growing awareness of the situation created by that crisis."

This awareness, the Cuban leaders say, is giving rise to a very explosive situation.

"The U.S. administration may say that democracy [in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay] is advancing," Castro told the Spanish EFE interviewers, "but what is advancing is the crisis of the U.S. system of domination in Latin



America." As a result of the debt crisis engendered by this domination, he told MacNeil a few days earlier, "I am convinced that the Latin American societies will explode, because there is a situation of despair among the workers, among the middle strata, and even in the oligarchy."

Chile, governed by a military dictatorship, is a "volcano," with the prospect for a "pro-

found social revolution if rebellion breaks out," Castro predicted in the EFE interview. But the rulers in countries with civilian governments also face a dilemma, he told *Excelsior*, a daily paper published in Mexico City. They say they "aren't about to burden the people with the consequences of the debt" or "sacrifice their countries' development." Yet they don't say how this can be done, Castro added, "if no solution is found for the problem of the debt."

The increased militancy and political understanding that are emerging from the crisis today among tens of millions of people throughout the Americas can create a powerful ally for the struggle by the Nicaraguan and Cuban people against aggression. "An intervention in Nicaragua would cause a commotion in Latin America," Castro told EFE. "Graphically speaking," he added, "we say that to intervene in Nicaragua is to play with fire beside a powder keg. . . . It would really be a great folly on the part of the United States."

To illustrate what the response is when "a country of the Latin American family" is attacked, Castro cited the example of the British war against Argentina over the Malvinas Islands in 1982. "Despite the fact that the Argentine government was an indefensible, completely isolated, and discredited government," he said, "the Latin American nations unhesitatingly supported Argentina, that is, they supported the Argentine people. They supported the Argentine nation in its war against the British and there was a deep sense of solidarity."

It is within the framework of this political and economic situation in Latin America that the Cuban leadership proposes specific measures to alleviate the debt crisis.

When Castro was interviewed in March by *Excelsior*, he explained that the debt has grown so large that there is no way to pay it. He proposed that the debt be canceled. The imperialist governments, Castro said, should assume responsibility for the debt. He suggested that they raise the money to pay the banks by issuing ten-year government bonds. Funds for paying the interest could be obtained by reducing military expenditures 10 percent.

The response in Latin America to these proposals by the Cuban government also gains a hearing for other of its positions, including winning respect and solidarity for the struggle against Washington's aggression in Central America and the Caribbean. The Cuban leadership is pursuing every avenue of dialogue open to it to promote its proposals on the debt situation — trade unions, cultural organizations and activities, religious organizations, professional associations, political parties, liberation groups, state-to-state relations, the capitalist press, and international bodies.

For some time Castro has been explaining the source of the mounting debt crisis and how it can be overcome. This was the theme of his report to the Sixth Summit Conference of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries in Havana in 1979.

Shortly following that meeting, Castro reported to the United Nations General Assem-

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bly on behalf of the Nonaligned Movement. He stated there that "the task of helping us to emerge from underdevelopment is first and foremost a historic and moral obligation for those who benefited from the plunder of our wealth and the exploitation of our men and women for decades and for centuries."

Castro called on the imperialist countries to contribute \$300 billion, above and beyond their current investments, for distribution to oppressed countries "in the form of donations and long-term moderate- and low-interest credits."

In evaluating the severe hardships that all countries oppressed by imperialism are suffering, Castro told *Excelsior* that Latin American countries "are in a better position than those of any other region in the world to tackle this problem seriously." He pointed to their political weight in the world, their enormous debts, their terrible economic and social crises, their deep community of interests, their potential for joint action.

Castro emphasized that the basis exists to unite all the peoples of Latin America to fight for a common proposal against the big bankers in North America and Western Europe. He once again cited the solidarity displayed by millions of Latin Americans against the British government during the Malvinas War.

But the current economic crisis and robbery by the imperialist banks, Castro said, have the potential to unite the Latin American countries much more than the Malvinas War did. He suggested that the Latin American governments form "a club, a committee, a group, or whatever you want to call it" that would collectively cancel their debts and present common demands on imperialism. He cited the example of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which in the 1970s contested the monopoly position of the big imperialist energy trusts in order to get a more just price for their oil. But the "debtors' club" that Castro proposes "would be much fairer and economically more beneficial for all countries," he explains.

Castro rejects proposals that call simply for renegotiating the loans or for short-term moratoriums. These are often motivated, he says, by the argument that the debt problem is very complicated and cannot be resolved easily. The "technical aspects mean nothing" to working people, however, because "they offer them nothing when they get up in the morning to look for work or when they see their wages shrinking while products grow more and more expensive." But the simple proposition that the Latin American countries collectively cancel their debts, and that the imperialist governments assume responsibility, makes a lot of sense to working people, he told *Excelsior*.

Castro says that canceling the debts "would be no more than the beginning. We would have to demand an end to unequal terms of trade; an end to protectionist policies; an end to the practice of dumping and to unjust, abusive monetary policies, excessive rates of interest, overvaluation of the dollar, and other diabolical procedures that make our countries' develop-



ment impossible."

The Cuban leadership is directing its proposals to the Latin American governments for their consideration. At the same time, tens of millions of Latin Americans, especially the exploited workers and peasants who would most benefit from a cancellation of the debts, have heard about and are discussing the debt cancellation proposal. They have begun to press their governments to endorse it.

Castro, in refuting less far-reaching alternatives for dealing with the debt problem, stated that such formulas "don't attract, don't rally, don't persuade, don't motivate, and they don't mobilize anyone." By removing the negative, it is easy to see what the Castro proposal does accomplish. It is one that *does* attract, *does* rally, *does* persuade, *does* motivate, and *does* mobilize.

So far, the impact of Castro's proposal has been stunning to commentators. The *Excelsior* interview, for example, was run in installments in nine consecutive issues — each one featured on the front page — along with considerable commentary, both pro and con. The *Excelsior* interview was widely publicized, summarized, and excerpted in other newspapers and on television and radio throughout Latin America, and elsewhere around the world. Summaries were run in major dailies in Brazil, the South American country with the largest debt burden. The Cuban government published the section on the debt crisis in Latin America in pamphlet form in several languages, and is distributing it throughout the world. The full interview, which includes Castro's views on the situation in Central America and the Caribbean, is scheduled for publication in Cuba. The interview has also been published in Bolivia as a book by the Sergio Almaraz Center for Economic and Political Studies.

The positive response in Latin America has

created consternation in the boardrooms of U.S. banks and corporations, and has been the subject of articles in the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, and other big-business dailies.

Tad Szulc, a journalist who covered Cuba and Latin America for many years for the *New York Times*, wrote from Havana that "there is no question that when Mr. Castro speaks Latin Americans listen."

Roger Lowenstein, writing from Havana for the *Wall Street Journal*, complained that Castro "has harped on debt in dozens of speeches and interviews, as well as in private talks with politicians, business executives and diplomats from around the world."

Lowenstein said that "Mr. Castro's meddling in debt obviously is unwelcome in Washington. And that is one reason why some Latins are pleased Mr. Castro is speaking out." He quoted an unnamed ambassador to Cuba from a Latin American country. "There are 20 presidents in Latin America saying the debt is unpayable. But Americans take more note of it when Fidel is saying it."

It is not just a single individual that people throughout Latin America and the world are listening to. They are responding to the example of the Cuban revolution — what it has accomplished, and its selfless internationalism. As Castro put it in his speech to the Cuban National Assembly in December 1984, "In the field of moral values, the example, the ideas of socialism and patriotism we represent, go beyond the borders of our small island and are more powerful than the most sophisticated strategic weapons and the old capitalist ideas."

A different lending policy

An important theme of Castro's speeches and interviews is the contrast between the effects of the world capitalist crisis on socialist

Cuba and on the rest of Latin America.

He points out that Cuba has the lowest hard-currency debt in Latin America, and that it continues to enjoy significant economic growth. Eighty-five percent of Cuba's trade is "with countries of the socialist community," he explains, "and, while the terms aren't the same with all of them because they have different levels of development and availabilities of resources, our relations are based on truly fair principles of cooperation and trade."

In its relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Castro says, Cuba does not suffer from unequal terms of trade, protectionist measures, or the dumping of low-priced goods. It has also been able to obtain credit on easy terms.

A common charge by U.S. ruling circles is that Cuba has been able to hang on only due to massive doses of Soviet aid. Columnist James Reston bluntly stated in the *New York Times* that "Mr. Castro's so-called revolution has been a spectacular failure. He has been surviving by borrowing from the Soviet Union. . . ."

It is true that following Washington's economic embargo in the early 1960s, Cuba's trade and credit with the Soviet Union was indispensable for its economic growth. The question Reston fails to answer, however, is why Cuba — substantially dependent on economic relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe — has made gigantic strides in education, health care, and industrial development, while living standards are being driven down in every other Latin American country, despite massive loans from U.S., British, and other imperialist banks.

"If the industrialized capitalist countries employed the same forms of trade and economic and financial relations that we have with the socialist community," Castro says, "the problems I have mentioned would be solved and the Third World countries' development would be guaranteed."

Not immune to world capitalist crisis

Despite Cuba's social and economic achievements, it has not been immune to the effects of the world capitalist crisis. Cuba still obtains loans from and has substantial trade with capitalist countries, trade it is working to increase. It has been hit hard by the high interest rates it must pay for hard-currency loans. The prices it must pay for imports from the world capitalist market have increased. At the same time, prices have plummeted for many of the semifinished products and many of the raw materials it exports, particularly sugar.

In December 1984, Cuba's National Assembly discussed a series of proposals to deal with these economic problems. At the meeting Castro compared these proposed economic measures to the launching of the Territorial Troop Militia and preparations for "people's war."

Cubans must also wage "the economic battle of the entire people, the economic war of the whole people," he said.

Castro explained that "the entire 1985 plan was revamped and definitive versions of the

1986-90 plan and the long-term plan for the year 2000 are being drawn up" in the realization that savings are the most immediate source of increased usable earnings.

Castro emphasized that the goal is to carry out these measures "without affecting what the population already receives." Nevertheless, he said, "we must begin with what we have and not think about new increases beyond what we have, at both the personal and social levels."

One area where a retreat must be made, Castro explained, is housing. Construction of new housing has not kept up with demand, and there is no immediate prospect of resolving the shortage. Priority, Castro pointed out, must go to production that generates exports.

Faced with this situation, the National Assembly adopted a new housing law aimed at utilizing existing dwellings more fully. The government anticipates that more housing will be made available by relaxing the policy on renting out rooms and exchanging homes, offering more incentives for repairs and maintenance of homes, and encouraging individual construction of new homes. To facilitate this, tenants in rented housing are being granted ownership titles to their dwellings.

In addition to Castro's interviews for U.S., Spanish, and Mexican publications and television, and speeches in Cuba and Nicaragua, this volume includes two speeches by the Cuban leader at an October 1984 meeting of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). The CMEA is a ten-member organization that coordinates economic cooperation between the Soviet Union, many East European countries, Mongolia, Vietnam, and Cuba. Also included here is an interview with Cuban Vice-President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez given at the time of a June 1984 CMEA meeting held in Moscow.

In Castro's brief opening remarks to the October 1984 CMEA meeting in Havana, he urged that, "The countries that make up the socialist community in the CMEA must not overlook" the "threatening situation" in Central America and the Caribbean. He described the huge resources Cuba is putting into military and economic preparations, emphasizing that "all our people are preparing to defend the homeland and the revolution to the last inch of territory and the very last breath."

Both at the October and June 1984 CMEA meetings, the Cuban representatives pointed to the importance of helping Nicaragua, which is not a member of the CMEA. Castro stated in Havana that "we believe it is dramatically urgent to do our best to help Nicaraguans confront victoriously the enormous human and economic sacrifices that the Reagan administration's attacks have imposed on it. Cuba will spare no efforts to fulfill this undeferrable duty."

Underlining its commitment to help Nicaragua, the Cuban government in January 1985 canceled the \$70 million debt owed to Cuba for helping to build the Victoria de Julio sugar mill in Nicaragua. This decision was announced by Castro during his speech at the dedication of

the new mill, which is published in this volume. Cancellation of the debt will not only aid Nicaragua, but serves to underscore the brutal money-grubbing character of the capitalist profiteers, who, despite their vast resources, refuse to wipe the slate clean on a single debt owed to them.

The Cuban representatives at the CMEA meetings also strongly supported the special efforts of countries making up this organization to bridge the gap between its relatively more developed members, on one hand, and Cuba, Vietnam, and Mongolia, on the other.

* * *

The outcome of the unfolding conflict between Washington and the working people of Central America and the Caribbean will depend on many factors, especially developments in the fight against imperialism elsewhere in the world, including in the United States. The Cuban and Nicaraguan governments are prepared to confront the direct military might of the U.S. government. But they do not assume that a U.S. invasion is inevitable, that nothing can be done to help stave it off. To the contrary, they explain that their determination and the thoroughness of their defense efforts — not only military, but their entire range of international activities — can help deter the use of U.S. troops.

Castro concluded his speech to the Cuban National Assembly by stating that "one of the ways to struggle for peace is to do what we have done: be stronger. Our strength is no threat to anybody; but our strength does make a successful attack on our country virtually impossible. Our power is an element of containment."

* * *

This volume is part of Pathfinder Press's series entitled Fidel Castro Speeches. Other volumes include *Cuba's Internationalist Foreign Policy 1975-80* and *Building Socialism in Cuba*.

As with the earlier volumes, most of the speeches have been taken from the English-language *Granma Weekly Review*. Two of the items — Castro's interview with *Newsweek* correspondents and his speech in Nicaragua — are taken from the biweekly socialist news-magazine *Intercontinental Press*. And Castro's television interview on the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour is published here for the first time in a readily accessible form.

In order to keep the book to a reasonable length, some of the contents have been excerpted. Wherever excerpts have been made, these are indicated by four ellipses. Minor editing for clarity and consistency has been done, in consultation with the Spanish-language texts.

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'A provocative decision'

Cuban government protests Radio Martí broadcasts

[On May 19 the U.S. Interests Section in Havana officially informed the Cuban government that the broadcasts of Radio Martí would start on May 20. The Reagan administration in Washington made this news public a few hours later.

[The following note from the Cuban government was sent early on the morning of May 20 to the U.S. Interests Section. It is reprinted from the May 26 issue of the English-language *Granma Weekly Review*, published in Havana by the Cuban Communist Party.]

* * *

As a result of the cynical and provocative decision of the government of the United States to start subversive broadcasts against Cuba as of May 20, a grim and shameful date which recalls the military occupation of Cuba by the United States, the plunder of its best lands and other natural resources, the neocolonization of our country, and the pseudorepublic accompanied by an amendment to its Constitution which gave the United States the right to intervene in Cuba, to which must be added the gross insult of using the glorious name of José Martí for these broadcasts, deeply wounding the feelings of the Cuban people, the government of Cuba wishes to communicate to the government of the United States the following statement:

It is the government of Cuba's understanding that going on the air with these broadcasts, a decision taken years ago but not implemented until now, when it is done in a strangely secretive and surprise manner, without prior notice to the U.S. press or the government of Cuba, save the laconic, hypocritical, and justificatory message sent 12 hours before by the U.S. Interests Section and information made public shortly after — all at a time when various kinds of constructive steps had been taken to reduce existing tension between the two countries — has no possible explanation other than that of a clear intent to respond basely to the solid and irrefutable charges and statements made by the government of Cuba on the critical economic situation of Latin America and the Third World, and on the immoral, unpayable foreign debt and the ruthless economic plunder that the unjust system of international relations has imposed on those countries.

Unquestionably, the government of the United States clearly intends, with this measure, to create tension and conflict around Cuba which will divert the attention of international opinion on this grave problem, divert our country's efforts in the struggle for an adequate solution to this critical and explosive situation, and silence Cuba's charges.

Taking into account, moreover, the fact that

this downright act of provocation shatters and ruins the bases for communication and relations which have been established over years between citizens of Cuban origin resident in the United States and citizens of our country, and in view of the perfidious position of the government of the United States in its relations with Cuba and the contempt for our people reflected in these shameful, dishonest practices, the government of Cuba has decided:

First to suspend all proceedings related to the implementation of the agreement on migratory questions signed between the delegations of the two governments on December 14, 1984, in the city of New York.

Second, to suspend all trips by citizens of Cuban origin living in the United States to Cuba, except for those authorized on strictly humanitarian grounds.

Third, the government of Cuba plans to adopt additional measures regarding communications between the United States and Cuba.

Fourth, the government of Cuba reserves the right to reconsider the cooperation it has been unilaterally providing to the government of the United States in the struggle against illegal exits from the country and other activities in which the United States benefits from the spontaneous and selfless cooperation of Cuba.

Fifth, the government of Cuba reserves the right to transmit medium-wave radio broadcasts to the United States to make fully known the Cuban view on the problems concerning the United States and its international policy.

The government of Cuba wishes, therefore, to notify the government of the United States that it is not at all concerned by the warning in today's note to the effect that a strong Cuban reaction would make relations with the United States more difficult for a long period of time and block any possibility of progress on bilateral issues. Such unscrupulous methods of blackmail and force on the part of the government of the United States make any improvement in relations with Cuba, or any other self-respecting country, impossible.

Cuba will continue developing its relations with other Latin American and Third World countries. It will continue advocating the need for the cancellation of the foreign debt in these countries and continue fighting for an end to protectionism, the ruinous dumping of many of their basic export items; the brazen theft of their natural resources by way of unequal terms of trade, exorbitant interest rates, the unethical and arbitrary overvaluation of the dollar, and other brutal and abusive methods of exploitation and plunder of their economies; and fighting for a new international economic order.

If the price we must pay for this and for the defense of our dignity and sovereignty is to make relations with the United States more difficult for many years and prevent any possibility of improvement or any other price, we will gladly pay it. The government of the United States bears the sole responsibility for this option.

The people of Cuba have withstood over 25 years of arrogant policy, economic blockade, and threats and aggression of all kinds from the United States. The current administration in that country should harbor no doubts as to our resisting as long as is necessary. One day, the people of the United States themselves will put an end to such a sterile, blind, senseless, egotistical policy. □

'Sandinistas Speak' published in Iran

Pathfinder Press, based in New York, recently announced that two of its best-selling titles have been published in Iran in Farsi.

Sandinistas Speak, printed by Solidarity Publishers, includes selections from the English-language *Sandinistas Speak*, published by Pathfinder in 1981, and *Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution*, published in English earlier this year. In addition the new Farsi-language book contains a speech by Cuban President Fidel Castro. Included as appendices are the joint communiqué between Iran and Nicaragua signed in 1984 and greetings to Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega by Mir Hussein Musavi, prime minister of Iran. The collection also includes two new introductions.

Woman's Evolution from Matriarchal Clan to Patriarchal Family, by Evelyn Reed, has

been translated by the prominent Iranian writer Mahmoud Enayat. He has also written an introduction to the book, along with translating Reed's original foreword. The book was printed by Hashemi Publishers.

Woman's Evolution first appeared in English in 1975. It has since been translated and published in French, Spanish, Turkish, Swedish, and Japanese.

Sandinistas Speak, *Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution*, and *Woman's Evolution* are available from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Orders can also be made through one of Pathfinder's regional distributors. For Europe and Africa write to: 47 The Cut, London, SE1 8LL, Britain, and for Asia and the Pacific Ocean area write to: P.O. Box 37, Leichhardt, Sydney, NSW 2040, Australia. □

Repression against left forces

Regime tries to crush growing worker, student opposition

By Mustapha Taha

[In early January, 26 people were arrested on charges of membership in the Egyptian Communist Party—Congress Faction (a left split from the Egyptian CP) or in a "Trotskyist Communist organization."

[A dozen were immediately released pending later trial, while the rest were released several weeks later. But the court has not yet ruled on the indictment brought against them.

[The following article, dated May 12, 1985, is reprinted from the June 10 issue of *Inprecor*, a fortnightly magazine published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. The translation from French is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

CAIRO — The Revolutionary Communist League of Egypt has been hit by three waves of repression in the past 10 years: in July 1975, July 1980, and January 1985. During that period, the Egyptian left as a whole has been hit by nearly 20 waves of arrests, leading to the imprisonment of thousands of activists. Some were subjected to torture, as has been recently demonstrated in court.

The fundamental aim of these repressive campaigns is to crush in the egg the forces of the Egyptian left. Despite their isolation and weakness, these left forces continue to represent a danger that cannot be underestimated by a regime confronting serious difficulties and a never-ending series of crises.

Repression and economic and social changes

The heavy repression of the Egyptian left during the past 10 years has accompanied the deep-going political, economic, and social changes the country has gone through. The historic national enemy of the Arab peoples, the Zionist state of Israel, which has been the aggressor against Egypt and the Arab states since 1948, has suddenly become a bosom buddy of the Egyptian regime. Measures leading to normalization of relations between the two countries have been energetically carried out, while Egypt's diplomatic relations with most of the Arab countries were broken.

In addition, the Egyptian government has totally subordinated itself to U.S. imperialism. The nationalist objectives of Arab unity and national independence have been replaced by a program whose priorities are dictated by U.S. interests in the region.

Finally, the open door policy toward foreign investments has caused grave economic problems and very strong inflationary pressure.

These economic and social changes as a whole have given rise to a broad series of so-



Egyptian student demonstration in 1979.

cial struggles. Since the mid-1970s we have seen:

- The hunger riots in January 1977, which spread throughout the country and in which millions of citizens took part. These reached such a level that the government had to call in the army to put them down.
- The religious brawls between Muslims and Coptic Christians in the early 1980s, which the regime played a direct role in unleashing. But this unrest later bypassed the regime, forcing it to confront the Islamic religious groups, which put an end to the previous flirtation between the regime and the religious current in general.

This confrontation led to a great wave of repression that hit thousands of members and sympathizers of religious groups, and ultimately provoked the assassination of Anwar Sadat.

Sadat's successor, Hosni Mubarak, began his reign by arresting several thousand people belonging to all the opposition religious and political currents.

- The third wave of social agitation began two years ago and still continues. It has been marked by student strikes and demonstrations on the majority of Egyptian universities during the last two years. The main aims of these actions were the elimination of reactionary student slates in the elections and the expulsion of the "university guards" from the campuses, as

well as a number of demands relating to the student milieu.

During the same period dozens of strikes and workers' revolts broke out. We can, for example, cite the events that took place in late 1984 and early 1985 in the industrial city of Kafrel-Dauwar, paralyzing the whole city and leading to bloody confrontations between the workers and the central security forces.

This wave of struggles in Egyptian universities and working-class cities indicates the possibility that they may become more widespread. It also indicates that the left forces that directly or indirectly took part in these struggles have an objective possibility of expanding their influence.

Why the latest arrests?

The regime's latest campaign of arrests in early 1985 hit activists of various communist currents, and especially members and sympathizers of the Trotskyist Revolutionary Communist League (RCL).

This repressive wave had several aims. One aim was to repress those who could be considered the most dynamic and influential members of these communist currents. Another aim was to thwart the RCL's attempts to build its strength in view of the struggles expected to break out in the near future. Another was to determine its organizational scope.

The repression also aimed to frighten and warn off the other clandestine communist groups, and especially the Egyptian Communist Party, which is itself targeted for a future campaign of repression.

The latest repression also aimed to break up the campaign opposing Israel's participation in the International Book Fair in Cairo.

These arrests were accompanied by an orchestrated campaign of repressive propaganda. This included statements by the minister of the interior; attacks by government newspapers on those detained, in which the RCL was accused of spreading atheist ideas, stockpiling explosives and weapons, and preaching bloody revolution; and statements by the prosecutor of the State Supreme Security Court, even before the end of the inquest, threatening those detained with life sentences at hard labor.

The propaganda campaign was aimed against communism in general, with an eye to Hosni Mubarak's visit to the United States.

However, the left forces were able to respond to these slanders in limited fashion through several articles in the "legal" opposition newspapers and by organizing a series of marches, demonstrations, and meetings at the International Book Fair, as well as by circulating a manifesto written by those held in El-Kamater prison and a communiqué by parents of those being held.

Other repressive campaigns are in the works. It will again be necessary to expose the false character of so-called Egyptian democracy and to organize campaigns of solidarity with all the activists who are hit by the police repression. □

The revolution struggles to survive

Besieged by rightist attacks, economic crisis, imperialist pressures

By Ernest Harsch

When the first wire dispatches came in on Dec. 31, 1981, reporting that a group of anti-imperialist and left-wing soldiers and civilian activists had seized power in Ghana, officials in Washington, London, Paris, Bonn, and other imperialist capitals took notice.

The U.S. and British governments immediately expressed their "concern," while the U.S. State Department set up a special "working group" to monitor events in Ghana. Paris imposed a ban on any French credits to Ghana.

These concerns were underlined by the initial anti-imperialist declarations of the new Provisional National Defence Council

This is the second 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 first article covered the PNDC's seizure of power, its initial measures, and the formation of the defense committees. The next one will look at the PNDC's foreign policy, as well as more recent economic and political developments.

(PNDC), headed by Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings. They were deepened by the enormous mobilization of up to half a million Ghanaian workers and farmers in support of the PNDC a week later.

Then they turned to outright alarm as the mobilizations continued, as Ghanaian working people began forging their own popular organizations, and as Ghana's big businessmen, wealthy traders, and corrupt senior officers came under sharp attack.

For the imperialists, Ghana was too important to ignore. With a population of 12 million and one of the most developed economies in West Africa, political events in Ghana have often had a wide impact throughout the continent. The CIA and British intelligence had already intervened to overthrow a government there once before — that of Kwame Nkrumah in 1966 — for attempting to break free from the imperialist grip, the same goal set by the PNDC.

But to intervene again was not that easy. The scale of the revolutionary upsurge in Ghana, surpassing what happened between 1957 and 1966 when Nkrumah was president, placed a big obstacle in the imperialists' path. The risks of direct intervention were highlighted on Jan. 28, 1982, when tens of thousands marched on the U.S. and British embassies following a report that British troops, with U.S. backing, were set to invade.

So the imperialists took a more indirect approach, relying on various pressures to slow



JERRY RAWLINGS

Ernest Harsch/IF

down the revolutionary process, sow divisions within its leadership, and foment discontent.

Without any official announcements, Washington froze its aid to Ghana and tightened its credit restrictions.

Some neocolonial governments in the region were prompted to take their own measures. The U.S.-backed military junta in Liberia broke diplomatic relations with Ghana. The government of Nigeria, on which Ghana depends for much of its oil, imposed an oil embargo. This caused severe shortages until the arrival of Libyan oil shipments.

At the same time, domestic opponents of the PNDC were encouraged and aided. In March 1982, two U.S. citizens and a West German were expelled from the country on charges of spying and establishing ties with former security officials of the previous regime.

A budding counterrevolution

The Ghana Bar Association, grouping most of the country's lawyers, came out in opposition to the public tribunals that are trying former officials and corrupt businesspeople. In fact, many of those brought before the tribunals are themselves lawyers, who, as a profession, have been found to be the most consistent tax evaders.

The Association of Recognised Professional Bodies (ARPB), in which the lawyers' association is a leading force, demanded that the government hold elections and hand over power to a "civilian" regime, that is, to the old bourgeois parties. (The Rawlings government itself is overwhelmingly civilian.)

Ghanaian businessmen and traders engaged in economic sabotage, sending capital abroad and withholding goods from the markets. Managers in some state-run corporations stopped processing workers' paychecks and obstructed production.

The Catholic Church hierarchy denounced some PNDC policies and attacked Rev. Kwabena Damuah for participating in the PNDC (he resigned from the council a few months later). Former trade union bureaucrats, who had been ousted by their own union members, blasted the PNDC's supposed violations of union rights.

Counterrevolutionary thugs, soldiers, and police carried out physical attacks against leaders of the mass-based People's Defence Committees (PDCs) and Workers Defence Committees (WDCs), murdering a number of them.

In London, Nigeria, and elsewhere, right-wing Ghanaian exiles formed the Campaign for Democracy in Ghana headed by Maj. Boakye Djan, as well as other groups dedicated to the ouster of the PNDC. During this period, the U.S. ambassador to Ghana, Thomas Smith, met regularly with Djan in neighboring Togo and with leaders of the ARPB within Ghana.

To an extent, these counterrevolutionaries were able to take advantage of incidents of indisciplined behavior by troops and police, using them to smear the government as repressive. They also seized on ultraleft or bureaucratic actions by some PDC and WDC leaderships, such as the burning down of markets in Kumasi, Koforidua, and Tamale, summary and arbitrary punishments of traders (including publicly shaving the heads of market women), and assaults on churches.

The counterrevolution's greatest propaganda boon came in late June 1982, when three conservative High Court judges and an army officer were kidnapped and killed by then unknown assailants. This set off a flurry of protests by the ARPB and other right-wing groups, seeking to blame the PNDC for the murders.

As the right wing mobilized, so did supporters of the revolution. At the end of July, there were massive rallies organized by the PDCs and WDCs in Accra, Takoradi, Koforidua, Swedru, and elsewhere. In Accra alone, up to 100,000 demonstrated to denounce the professional association's campaign against the PNDC.

In rejecting the demands of the ARPB, workers at the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi noted that its members "constitute a greater part of those whose avarice,

greed and selfish ambitions have contributed in no small way to the present socioeconomic mess in which we find ourselves today." The country's continuing economic difficulties, the workers' statement said, "are the result of the evil machinations of the rich few in the society who still control the major means of production, distribution and exchange."

Adventurist moves

In the midst of this sharpening class polarization, leaders of some of the left-wing groups supporting the PNDC embarked on an adventurist and bureaucratic course that eventually split the PNDC and almost led to the government's overthrow.

These figures belonged mainly to the June 4 Movement (JFM) and the People's Revolutionary League of Ghana (PRLG), which had emerged out of the student movement. They had members and supporters in the PNDC, the cabinet, and leadership bodies of the PDCs and WDCs. (Rawlings himself was formally a member of the JFM, though he played little direct role in its day-to-day activities.) In August 1982, the two groups established a United Front.

The JFM and PRLG jointly published the *Workers Banner*, which presented itself as a revolutionary socialist newspaper. Articles in the *Workers Banner* were liberally sprinkled with quotations from such figures as Marx, Lenin, Georgi Dimitrov, and U.S. Communist Party leader Gus Hall.

Throughout September, October, and November 1982, the *Workers Banner* became increasingly sharp in its criticisms of the PNDC. The paper denounced the "fake revolutionaries surrounding the PNDC" and accused it of "a tendency to compromise with imperialism" and of "a leisurely approach, hesitation and a general slackening" in face of the right-wing opposition.

The paper called instead for "more ruthless action." It suggested that this should involve executions, stating that "there can be no revolution without violence. A revolution without casualties is no revolution!"

What this meant soon became clear.

The PNDC eventually learned that it was a PNDC member who was responsible for the killings of the judges. His name was Amartey Kwei, a former workers' leader and JFM member who had resigned from the PNDC in August stating that he had become impatient with the pace of the revolution. When his role in organizing the killings came to light, he was arrested.

In late October, two other members of the PNDC broke with Rawlings: Chris Atim, a former student leader and the secretary of the June 4 Movement; and Sgt. Aolga Akata-Pore, a supporter of the JFM. Atim was also head of the National Defence Committee, which coordinated the work of the PDCs and WDCs nationally, and Akata-Pore headed the defense committees in the military.

Using those positions, Atim, Akata-Pore, and other leaders of the JFM and PRLG at-



Ernest Harsch/IP

Defense committee contingent at March 6, 1985, Independence Day ceremonies. Committee activists have been in forefront of struggle against counterrevolution.

tempted to mobilize support for a bid to overthrow Rawlings. At a meeting of WDCs in Accra, their supporters spread rumors that Rawlings and his colleague Kojo Tsikata had fled the country and that Akata-Pore was the new chairman of the PNDC. Rather than winning support for their bid for power, this spread panic among working people. The rumors were dissipated only when Rawlings appeared publicly at a workers' rally.

Efforts were made to heal this rift, but to little avail. Suspicions and political confusion spread among most of the anti-imperialist and left-wing organizations and within the leaderships of the PDCs and WDCs.

The political situation was further muddled by false accusations that the leadership was dominated by Ewes (meaning Rawlings and Tsikata) to the detriment of Frafra and other nationalities from the north (Atim and Akata-Pore).

Reactionaries mobilize

The rightist opposition saw an opening and struck.

It quickly picked up on the theme of an "Ewe plot" in an effort to rally opposition to the PNDC among Ghana's other nationalities.

On November 22, Brig. Joseph Nunoo-Mensah, a member of the PNDC and the chief of the defense staff, resigned from the council. His resignation letter was released by the U.S. embassy even before other members of the PNDC saw it.

The next day, troops at Burma Camp launched a coup attempt and shelled Osu Castle, the seat of government. They were put down by loyal army units.

A series of arrests followed, among them former heads of the Bar Association and the state-run Cocoa Marketing Board, the latter of whom was subsequently imprisoned on charges of bankrolling the coup attempt. Also

arrested were PNDC member Akata-Pore and a group of northern soldiers loyal to him. Chris Atim fled the country.

This openly proimperialist coup attempt again galvanized working people into action. They poured into the streets in defense of the revolutionary struggle, hundreds of thousands filling Independence Square in Accra.

With the loss of most of the original PNDC members, new figures were named to it: Ebo Tawiah, a dockworkers' leader; Aana Enin, a former State Fishing Corp. manager; and Naa Polkuu Konkuu Chiiri II, a traditional chief.

The existing National Defence Committee (a number of whose members had been involved in the October events) was dissolved. "Some of the personnel of the NDC turned themselves into lords competing for spheres of personal power," Rawlings charged.

A new NDC was named, and several cabinet shuffles followed. While some people were purged, many left-wing activists continued to play leading roles in the PDCs and WDCs and to hold key posts in the government. They included JFM members who had broken with Atim, as well as members of the New Democratic Movement (such as Finance Secretary Kwesi Botchway).

The defeat of the November 1982 coup attempt did not mark an end to right-wing attacks.

The case of former PNDC member Amartey Kwei dragged on for months, giving the counterrevolutionaries considerable ammunition with which to smear the PNDC. In particular, they went after Kojo Tsikata. This was facilitated by the fact that the PNDC itself had appointed a conservative judge to head the board investigating the case. He seized on Kwei's unsubstantiated accusations that Tsikata was implicated in the murders, charges that were amplified and spread by the ARPB and other groups. No evidence of this was ever pro-

duced, and Kwei's testimony quickly unraveled. (Kwei was eventually found guilty of the murders and executed.)

Every few months, it seemed, there was another coup attempt or incursion by armed counterrevolutionaries. One of them, on Feb. 27, 1983, featured direct imperialist connections: a U.S. passport found on one of the counterrevolutionaries, his wife's getaway in the U.S. military attaché's diplomatic car, and the direct involvement of a Dutch diplomat, who was promptly expelled from Ghana.

It was around this time, in early 1983, that the central leadership of the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS), which formerly supported the revolutionary struggle, was taken over by the most right-wing and anticommunist elements in the student movement, acting in league with former leaders of banned bourgeois parties. The NUGS demanded that the PNDC resign. Key NUGS leaders went so far as to appeal for the establishment of diplomatic relations with the apartheid regime. They called the presence of South African troops in Namibia a bulwark against "international communism."

'Our economy is still neocolonial'

In the midst of such attacks and pressures, the Ghanaian people were hit by other severe difficulties during 1983. Many Ghanaians stress that it was the darkest year in their memories.

The low rainfall of 1982 turned into a drought, the worst in half a century. Agriculture was devastated. Cereal production fell 450,000 tons short of what was needed to feed the population. Serious hunger appeared in the Northern and Upper regions. The drop in the water level at the Akosombo hydroelectric dam led to widespread power cuts and a further fall in industrial production. Brush fires swept large parts of the countryside, destroying both cocoa and food farms.

In February 1983, the Nigerian government, seeking to blame that country's unemployment on "aliens," expelled some 2 million non-Nigerian workers. More than a million were Ghanaians. This resulted in a sudden increase in Ghana's population at a time when there were few jobs available.

These blows struck an economy that was already going through an extreme crisis. In many ways, Ghana is more directly vulnerable to the world capitalist recession than other, less developed African countries that are not so closely integrated into the world market. Much of commercial agriculture revolves around the production of cocoa for export, which accounts for some 60 to 70 percent of all of Ghana's foreign earnings and for half of its cultivated land. Though Ghana has some important industries, on average they must import 64 percent of their raw materials from abroad.

Because of the low prices paid on the world market for cocoa, cocoa production declined by more than one-half between 1970 and 1983 (while food production fell by 40 percent).

This cut foreign earnings further, leading to serious trade imbalances and making it impossible to import the raw materials needed to keep industry running. By 1981, manufacturing production had fallen to 63 percent of its level in 1977. Overall, industrial enterprises were operating at 20 percent of their capacity. Between 1970 and 1982, the gross domestic product declined an average of 0.5 percent a year. The foreign debt climbed to \$1.1 billion.

The annual inflation rate hit 120 percent, as living standards in 1983 fell to some 16 percent of their levels in 1972. The local currency, the cedi, became virtually worthless, though its official exchange rate remained grossly overvalued. This encouraged a flourishing black market and the smuggling of goods to neighboring countries.

In a major speech in early 1983, Rawlings reviewed Ghana's disastrous economic state, exacerbated by the policies followed by the previous regimes. It was necessary, he said, "to work out a strategy to progressively wrestle the economy from the domination of international finance capital." Rawlings stated that while this was the PNDC's ultimate goal, it was not feasible in the immediate future.

Members of the PNDC and the government have cited various reasons for this, above all Ghana's desperate need for foreign funds. While aid from the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, North Korea, and the Eastern European countries has risen significantly since the PNDC came to power, it has not fulfilled even a major part of Ghana's needs. Therefore, Ghanaian leaders say, they had little choice but to seek loans and investments from imperialist corporations, banks, and financial institutions.

But economic constraints are not the only ones hampering the anti-imperialist struggle. At a conference in East Berlin in April 1983 marking the 100th anniversary of the death of Karl Marx, Ato Austin, then the PNDC's secretary for information, stated, "We do not yet possess a mature political party. Our economy is still neo-colonial basically, which is protected by a state machinery yet to be qualitatively transformed. The full potential of our working class and peasantry is still to be fully mobilised."

While the PDCs were essential for "mobilising the people to consolidate the National Democratic phase of our revolution," Austin said, "the Defence Committees at this stage are still diffuse and amorphous — a situation which renders the ongoing revolutionary transformation easily vulnerable to imperialist intrigues and sabotage."

Recovery program

It was against this background that the PNDC launched its initial economic and social programs, which have been relatively modest. They have not seriously tackled the sharp social and economic inequalities that exist in Ghanaian society. They have not been aimed at transforming the neocolonial nature of the economy, but at pulling it out of its immediate crisis. This, Ghana's leaders say, will eventu-

ally open up some possibilities for improving the people's living standards.

In early 1983, the PNDC launched a three-year Economic Recovery Program, which projected investments at \$3.5 billion. Among its major features were:

- A mobilization of resources to repair and expand roads, railways, bridges, ports, electricity supply, trucks, and other services essential to the economy's functioning.

- The virtual nationalization of import and export trade, giving the government control over trading licenses. This has been used in particular to restrict the import of luxury and nonessential goods, making it possible to import more raw materials and spare parts to revive industrial production.

- Increased assistance to agriculture, for the production of cocoa and food crops. This has involved aid both to large capitalist farmers and to small working farmers, including an increase in the prices paid to cocoa farmers by the state-run Cocoa Marketing Board, the adoption of a new payment system in which farmers have received full and prompt payment for the first time in 10 years, the rehabilitation of 9,500 cocoa farms ravaged by drought and fire, the provision of new forms of cheap credit for farmers, increased supplies of fertilizers and farm equipment, and the establishment of many local community farms, set up and run by the PDCs. The National Mobilisation Committee supported this effort to boost farm production by channeling many of the 1 million Ghanaians who returned from Nigeria into various agricultural projects.

- The resumption of a number of mining and industrial projects abandoned after Nkrumah's overthrow.

- A "rationalization" of industry. This means a clampdown on the privately owned plants that produce nothing, but are simply fronts for acquiring foreign exchange allocations, which are then sold on the black market. This will also entail a cutback in the size and number of state corporations, many of which run at a considerable loss. The PNDC has insisted that any workers affected by this effort be retrained and redeployed to other occupations, to prevent an increase in unemployment.

Taken together, the goal of these measures has been to reverse the unfavorable trade balance and to increase national production.

"Production and efficiency must be our watchwords," Rawlings declared in an August 1983 speech, signalling a theme that has become increasingly prominent in government statements. "Many of us have spent too much time worrying about who owns what. But there can be no ownership without production first."

In part, such statements have been directed against those, particularly among some left-wing groups, who have urged sweeping nationalizations of foreign-owned enterprises. According to the PNDC such takeovers are not now feasible, given Ghana's shortages of capital and trained personnel.

Many working people in the cities and countryside have responded to Rawlings' appeals

for increased production. Community labor mobilizations are quite common. And over the past year there has been a notable increase in agricultural and industrial production.

Ghana's capitalists, however, have been far less responsive, despite new economic incentives and inducements. Most Ghanaian capitalists are interested primarily in the quick profits obtainable from trade, financial speculation, and smuggling — not production. This has prompted government officials to condemn these "self-interested compradors" who are refusing to invest in productive enterprises. They are being penalized through various licensing and taxing mechanisms.

Enter the IMF

The most controversial aspect of the PNDC's economic program has been the severe austerity measures it has adopted in conjunction with loan agreements signed with the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

Initially, the PNDC balked at approaching the IMF for the loans it needed to implement the Economic Recovery Program. But individual imperialist governments and banks refused to sign agreements with the PNDC until it came to terms with the IMF.

The talks with the fund first opened in late 1982. They dragged on for months, as the IMF initially rejected the economic program put forward by the PNDC's Finance Ministry. The IMF demanded the lifting of all price controls on essential consumer goods, which the PNDC refused to do. The PNDC had, however, already begun implementing some other drastic austerity measures. In this context, the IMF agreed to the PNDC's program and approved a \$377 million credit.

With the conclusion of the IMF agreement, other U.S. and West European banks were more willing to extend their own loans and credits, and a string of new agreements was signed.

Parallel to these talks, the PNDC took a series of drastic financial measures. The cedi was massively devalued, several times, so that by early 1985 it stood at 53 cedis to the U.S. dollar, compared with 2.75 cedis to the dollar in 1982. This brought the cedi much closer to its actual value (and thus undermined the black market). But it also brought a sharp rise in prices for food, fuel, medicines, and many consumer goods.

Finance Secretary Kwesi Botchway maintained in a March 1983 interview that "for a government for whom the interest of the workers is paramount," the brunt of the price hikes should be "borne by the parasitic elements who want to make millions overnight without sweat and in violation of existing laws."

Taxes were sharply increased for businesses and professions and a special "wealth tax" was imposed on certain properties of those with a net wealth of more than 500,000 cedis.

Meanwhile, steps were taken to try to ameliorate the austerity measures' impact on working people. Workers received bonuses, special tax breaks, and periodic wage in-

creases. New People's Shops were set up and run by the PDCs, in order to directly distribute scarce goods to the public, bypassing the private merchants who still sell goods at far above the official prices.

But the effectiveness of these measures was limited. The People's Shops handle only a small portion of consumer goods, while the devaluations and price hikes have brought considerable suffering to Ghanaian working people, who already had a hard time making ends meet. This has stirred discontent and provoked criticism.

Shortly after the April 1983 budget containing the first of these measures was announced, the Interim Coordinating Committee of WDCs in Tema, Ghana's main industrial center, described the budget as "the harshest the country has ever had." It said that working people were "beginning to doubt the PNDC's commitment to destroying the social power of the exploiters and aid the liberation of the oppressed."

June 19 coup attempt

Counterrevolutionaries in Ghana saw another opportunity to step up their attacks. Though they had always opposed the workers' interests, they now demagogically sought to capitalize on the discontent over the price hikes.

In May 1983, both the NUGS and the ARPB issued statements demanding the establishment of a "national government."

University students in Kumasi, Cape Coast, and Legon staged antigovernment demonstrations. In Kumasi, the students were joined by some merchants and unemployed. At Legon, they armed themselves with cutlasses, burned effigies of Rawlings and Tsikata, and assaulted journalists. In Cape Coast they wrecked all the press offices.

Once again, workers mobilized in response. Some 2,000 mineworkers from the gold mines of Obuasi marched on Kumasi and took over the campus. Armed workers organized by the Accra and Tema WDCs did the same at Legon. The Accra Central Workers Defence Committee staged a rally condemning the NUGS and calling for the formation of a people's militia.

Just a few weeks later, on June 19, armed counterrevolutionaries, including many former soldiers, infiltrated into Accra from neighboring Togo. They seized the Ghana Broadcasting Corp., declaring the overthrow of the PNDC. They attacked three prisons, freeing scores of soldiers imprisoned for previous coup attempts. PDC activists were attacked in various parts of the country.

The PNDC immediately appealed to the defense committees to secure the capital. Barricades staffed by PDC activists went up across the major roads, blocking movement by the coup plotters, some of whom were captured by the PDCs. Meanwhile, loyal army units stormed and retook the broadcasting station.

But the main coup leaders, and many of those freed from prison, escaped. Among them was the central organizer, Cpl. Halidu

Gyiwah, a colleague of former PNDC member Akata-Pore.

Among those detained in the wake of the coup attempt were the president of the Bar Association, the national secretary of the ARPB, and the president and secretary of the Ghana Manufacturers Association.

Large demonstrations in defense of the PNDC took place in Accra, Kumasi, Cape Coast, Sekondi-Takoradi, Tamale, Tarkwa, Wa, Jasikan, Ho, Bolgatanga, and elsewhere. At the massive rally in Accra, demonstrators carried signs reading, "People's power forever," "No U turn," and "Forward with the revolution."

Almost every resolution adopted by workers' organizations called on the PNDC to begin training and arming a people's militia. Rawlings responded that the PNDC would do so, though it was not until the past year that its first units were actually set up.

Factory occupations

Partly in response to the June 19 coup attempt came a series of further workers' occupations, which again underlined the continuing radicalization among workers.

Some 10,000 workers marched on the Supreme Court building and briefly occupied it. Workers also took over two privately owned publishing houses (which had printed rightist literature) and occupied a local subsidiary of the British-owned Cadbury company that had laid off 120 workers. This latter occupation, which lasted for a month, won the workers' unconditional reinstatement.

There have been other takeovers, including at the French-owned Air Liquide. The first significant one actually took place earlier, in November 1982, when workers took over the Ghana Textile Printing (GTP) and Juapong Textiles plants, both run by a subsidiary of the giant British Unilever conglomerate. They occupied the plants in reaction to management layoff plans, of 600 workers in the case of GTP. The workers elected their own committee to run the plants and exposed Unilever's sabotage of production. Workers from throughout the country flocked to the GTP plant to express their solidarity.

The government supported this action, though it cautioned that it did not favor nationalizations and factory takeovers as a general policy. PNDC member Ebo Tawiah expressed the council's support for the workers, "especially when those who own the means of production use their exclusive monopoly to intensify the suffering of the masses and undermine national stability in general."

The PNDC has also warned private companies, both Ghanaian- and foreign-owned, not to lay off workers. In some cases it has ordered the reinstatement of laid-off workers.

The turbulent events of late 1982 and 1983 showed that despite the PNDC's austerity policies and the continued economic hardships, working people were determined to defend the PNDC from counterrevolutionary attacks.

Their attitude was summed up in a joint statement by the University of Ghana WDC and the Teachers and Educational Workers Union. Although it criticized certain shortcomings of the PNDC's policies, it stressed, "But so long as the PNDC provides favourable con-

ditions for the advance of the democratic struggle of working people for genuine national independence, popular democracy and social well-being, we shall resist any . . . who attempt to derail the December 31 process."

[Next: *Fourth year of revolutionary upsurge*]

DOCUMENTS

A discussion with Kojo Tsikata

Ghanaian leader explains difficulties of struggle

[The following is taken from a discussion between Kojo Tsikata, the special adviser to Ghana's governing Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), and an 18-member delegation of North American political activists. It took place in Accra, Ghana's capital, on March 4. Of the two questions cited here, the first was by Ron Price of the Patrice Lumumba Coalition and the second by Ernest Harsch, managing editor of *Intercontinental Press*.

[Tsikata is one of the most well-known political figures in Ghana. Under the government of Kwame Nkrumah (1957-66), he was involved in the military training of freedom fighters from other African countries, particularly from southern Africa. After Nkrumah's overthrow, he went to Angola, where he worked with the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), which was fighting against Portuguese colonial rule. In the early 1970s he was invited back to Ghana, but was soon imprisoned for his political views, tortured, and sentenced to death on frame-up charges of being involved in a coup plot.

[Later freed, Tsikata became part of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, headed by Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings, which seized power on June 4, 1979. After the AFRC ceded power to a civilian bourgeois regime, agents of the Military Intelligence tried to assassinate him. In May 1982, several months after Rawlings' second seizure of power, he was named special adviser to the PNDC.]

* * *

Most of you are very much acquainted with our first president, Nkrumah, who, as you know, is the founder of our state and whose life was dedicated to the liberation of our continent. We here in the government, in the PNDC, are doing our modest best to emulate his example in our country, to try to restore the dignity of our country, to consolidate our independence, and to create an independent economy for our people.

There are, of course, a lot of difficulties. Our history has been very complicated since the overthrow of Nkrumah in 1966.

I think that our independence, as Nkrumah said, has to be conceived of on a continental basis. What he said 28 years ago, on the eve of our independence, is more relevant today than when he said it.



KOJO TSIKATA

Ernest Harsch/IP

As you well know, the real threat to Africa is the regime of apartheid in South Africa. Without the liberation of our people in South Africa, our sovereignty in the other countries of Africa is very much threatened. This has been quite clear in the case of Mozambique, in the case of Angola.

We in Africa think very much of our sovereignty, of our independence, beyond our borders, the borders which were demarcated by colonialism a hundred years ago.

I would also like to pay some tribute to the Afro-Americans who have helped us here in Ghana, who have helped us in our struggle to achieve our independence, particularly the great scholar W.E.B. Du Bois, of whom we are proud and whose body remains here on our soil.

We identify very closely with the struggle of Black people everywhere in the world, especially in the United States, of which we are all very familiar. And the contribution that that struggle has made, not only to the African liberation movement, but to the world liberation movement, is very clear to us.

The independence struggle led by Nkrumah, the experience of the period led by Nkrumah from 1957 to 1966, the reactionary intervention of 1966 and the subsequent military dictatorships that we've had — all these experiences are very important in analyzing what is taking place today.

We emerged in this process as a military conspiracy, supported by various small progressive circles. 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.

We are very open, we are very honest about our mistakes, about our weaknesses. We don't claim to be experts. The revolutionary process is a living process, and it's very important to be very creative, to understand concretely the conditions which exist in our country, as well as the psychology of our people, the mentality of our people, the things which can be accepted by our people. So we have to take all these things into consideration.

There are some mistakes which we have made. But we also think, very humbly, that we have had some victories as well.

The revolutionary path is not a straight path. It's full of zigzags. We have tried as much as possible to discuss all these things with our comrades, with our brothers, but there are some differences. These differences come out quite openly. We talk about them and we try to find a solution to the problems that we encounter in our process.

Question. I was very impressed, when I was in Grenada in 1981, about the revolutionary process there. And I was also very depressed when the revolution collapsed. I realize that because of the particular way in which the process is taking place here, there are limitations within it. The question for me is, what is the strength of the forces that now constitute the vanguard?

Answer. I find it myself, personally, sometimes much more complicated, much more difficult, than it was in a guerrilla struggle, for example. Sometimes these military activities are simpler and more direct than political work that is necessary for a revolutionary process. And that has been the experience of most of the brothers, of the comrades who have been involved with mass work.

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.

The experiences of the past, especially the experience of Nkrumah, has left us with a lot of lessons about mass work, party work. Nkrumah's contribution to the anticolonial struggle was in creating, soon after the war, one of the most dynamic mass movements on the continent, the Convention People's Party.

But some of us also witnessed the internal decomposition of this organization, leading eventually to the weaknesses that enabled the CIA and all kinds of counterrevolutionaries to make their play in February 1966. So we have to be guided very much by those experiences; otherwise we can commit the same errors as well.

The scientific principles of revolutionary

work are there. But they have to be applied concretely to the conditions that we find today in our country.

Question. What were some of the factors in your decision to negotiate a loan agreement with the International Monetary Fund? What kind of problems do you see with this, and how does the government explain it in relation to your broader programs?

Answer. It is true that we have some assistance from the IMF and the World Bank in the recovery program which we are implementing.

In 1982, when we took over, we had a very frank assessment of our economic situation. It was a very revealing experience and it was very clear that our country had been going downhill, that it was on an economic decline, and that it was very important for us to halt this decline.

We believed that it was possible to mobilize our people to get them to halt this decline by their own strength and work. But at the same time we needed some assistance. We consulted people who are very close to us politically, in trying to work out a solution to some of the problems which we faced. And we ourselves worked out our national recovery program, a three-year program that we negotiated for the assistance of the IMF.

These negotiations are not easy negotiations, with those imperialist-controlled organizations. They are very hard negotiations. But it is our program that we negotiated. It is not that they are giving us a program to implement, as is being portrayed in the Western press about the relationship that we have with the IMF.

It is true that we have taken a lot of measures which, as revolutionaries, we cannot describe as popular measures. There is no doubt at all about that. These are very, very hard decisions that we have had to make. The devaluation that we had to carry out is a very large devaluation. We have had to increase prices. These are not measures which a revolutionary regime should take. And we are not going to pretend that these are popular measures. These are measures which are making life extremely hard for our people.

But in order to gain support for the revolution it is also important to improve the material conditions for our people, who have been living since 1966 under very difficult material circumstances.

These are some of the factors which made us approach the IMF. Of course, we have not accepted all the conditions which they have tried to impose.

At the end of the period of the recovery program, which is this year, we will make an assessment of the program in order to see in what way it has been able to halt the decline in our economic life and to see if we have established the basis to try to work out a development program in which we rely on ourselves, without some of this assistance, which exposes us to some of the conditions that we have had to live with over the past two years. □

Poland

Three Solidarity leaders jailed

'Illegal' to protest price hikes

By Ernest Harsch

A Warsaw court on June 14 sentenced three prominent critics of the Polish bureaucracy to prison for their political activities and views. The sentences were the stiffest yet meted out since the government of Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski declared a political amnesty last year and released several hundred imprisoned activists.

All three jailed by the Warsaw court were among those previously detained and amnestied. They were: Bogdan Lis, a former vice-chairman of the outlawed Solidarity union movement, who received a two-and-a-half-year sentence; Wladyslaw Frasnyniuk, a Solidarity leader from Wroclaw who was jailed for three and a half years; and Adam Michnik, a prominent dissident and Solidarity supporter, who was handed a three-year prison term.

According to the official charge sheet, they were found guilty of having "actively led and taken part in the activities of an illegal trade union" and of having "acted with the aim of creating public unrest by illegally organizing a protest action in the form of a 15-minute strike on Feb. 28, 1985."

This was a reference to a call for a nationwide strike by Solidarity's underground Provisional Coordinating Committee (TKK) to protest steep price hikes that were then being projected. But the TKK called off the planned strike in response to a government promise to suspend the price increases. That promise was not kept, however, and the authorities are now implementing the price rises in a staggered fashion.

Lis, Michnik, and Frasnyniuk were among seven Solidarity figures who were detained by police on February 13 following a meeting at the Gdansk home of former Solidarity chairman Lech Walesa. The four others were released.

The authorities' decision to prosecute Lis, Frasnyniuk, and Michnik was aimed at making an example of them to all working people in Poland who might dare to protest against the material privileges, arbitrary rule, and economic mismanagement of the bureaucrats who govern the Polish workers' state.

The trial itself was a mere formality. Its outcome was determined even before it opened on May 23.

The presiding judge, Krzysztof Zieniuk, has long had close ties with the secret police apparatus. Contrary to the Polish government's practice in such trials in recent years, the courtroom was closed to the press and to all but a handful of onlookers. The defendants were permitted only cursory discussions with their lawyers. Zieniuk did not allow them to frame

their answers, insisting that they respond to questions with a simple "yes" or "no." In almost every session, the judge ordered Michnik removed from the courtroom.

One key piece of prosecution evidence was a tape recording purportedly made of a conversation between Lis and a police official. The police transcript portrayed Lis as admitting some of the charges and providing details of Solidarity members' underground work. However, when the tape was played in the courtroom it was virtually unintelligible. When Lis began to explain that the tape was a doctored montage spliced together from many surreptitiously monitored conversations, the judge cut him off.

Lech Walesa was also called to testify. He assumed full responsibility for calling the February 13 meeting, but denied any criminal intent. "I know that three innocent people are sitting in the dock," he told the judge.

Following the end of the trial and the sentencing, Walesa himself was summoned to the Gdansk prosecutor's office and warned that he was still under investigation on the same charges as Lis, Frasnyniuk, and Michnik. The prosecutor warned him to stop criticizing government policies or face punitive action.

The Warsaw trial comes at a time of tightening restrictions on political dissent, following a brief period of relative relaxation after the July 1984 amnesty.

According to the government's own admissions, the number of political prisoners has again climbed upward, to about 150. According to Solidarity sources the number is closer to 200.

New amendments to the university law call for greater direct government controls, including the reintroduction of loyalty oaths and reduced participation by students and nonteaching staff in the university management councils.

The penal code has been made more stringent. Among other changes, it now provides for up to three months' imprisonment for simply participating in a political demonstration. In the past, only demonstration leaders were subject to such penalties.

These repressive moves are in response to a new upturn in protest actions. On May Day, for example, unexpectedly large crowds turned out for marches and rallies by Solidarity supporters in Gdansk, Warsaw, Elblag, Krakow, Lodz, Poznan, Szczecin, and at least a half dozen other cities. In Warsaw up to 20,000 marched, chanting, "May Day is our holiday!" and "There is no freedom without Solidarity!"

The jailing of Lis, Frasnyniuk, and Michnik has also stirred protest. In just a week after their conviction, more than 10,000 Poles had signed petitions demanding their release. □