

# **INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS**

combined  
with **inprecor**

Vol. 23, No. 17

September 9, 1985

USA \$1.25 UK £0.65



Mass funeral for victims of apartheid police.

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## **Sandinistas Explain New Pay Policy**

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# Break links with apartheid!

By Ernest Harsch

While much of the world has expressed outrage at the South African regime's brutal crackdown on Black protest, the U.S. and British governments, in particular, have stuck firmly to their alliance with the white supremacists in Pretoria.

This was once again underlined by their response to South African President Pieter Botha's August 15 speech to a provincial congress of the ruling National Party. Botha's speech was filled with vague and meaningless phrases about "co-responsibility," "participation," and "negotiation." The only time Botha became concrete was when he rejected outright one of the key demands of the oppressed Black majority: one-person, one-vote in a unitary state (in other words, majority rule).

The U.S. and British governments sought to ignore the basic and obvious thrust of Botha's speech — an intransigent defense of the racist apartheid system — and instead interpreted his vague euphemisms as signals of "reform." Such a false portrayal of Botha's policy is aimed at justifying their close ties with his regime.

A British Foreign Office spokesperson insisted that Botha's speech contained "a number of positive features," an assessment that was echoed by West German officials.

Robert McFarlane, U.S. President Ronald Reagan's national security adviser, termed the speech an "important statement" that could "advance the end of apartheid."

This was amplified a day later by Chester Crocker, the assistant secretary of state for African affairs and a key figure in the elaboration of the Reagan administration's policy of "constructive engagement" toward the apartheid regime.

Against all the evidence, Crocker maintained that Botha's address marked "a renewed commitment to reform." Crocker repeatedly insisted that the White House would not abandon its "constructive engagement" policy and reaffirmed its firm opposition to any economic sanctions against Pretoria.

The actual victims of the apartheid system — South Africa's dispossessed and rightless Black majority — viewed Botha's utterances quite differently. Leaders of the ongoing mass protests within South Africa, as well as exiled leaders of the outlawed African National Congress (ANC), pointed to the speech as confirmation that the apartheid system cannot be reformed. It must be overthrown, they said. (See article on page 516.)

## Massive economic stakes

For Pretoria's allies, the overthrow of the apartheid state is unacceptable. Their political and economic stakes in South Africa are enormous, and they will go to great lengths to defend them. This is regardless of however much

U.S., British, and other imperialist government officials are obliged to publicly "deplore" the injustices of apartheid.

South Africa's economy is closely intertwined with those of its main foreign partners. This fact accounts for much of the resistance of the U.S. and Western European governments toward the demand for economic sanctions against South Africa.

Britain — which governed South Africa directly until 1910 — has the most extensive economic ties. British direct investments alone now amount to some \$7 billion. Out of South Africa's top 100 companies, 12 are direct subsidiaries of British companies and another 25 are partially owned by British interests.

One top official of Margaret Thatcher's Tory government recently commented to a reporter that if economic sanctions were imposed against South Africa, British corporations would "have the most to lose."

The U.S. imperialists are not far behind. The United States is now South Africa's single most important trading partner. And it is second only to Britain as a source of foreign investments. Of the top 100 U.S. corporations, 55 have operations in South Africa. Direct U.S. investments there now total \$2.3 billion.

This U.S. stake, moreover, is concentrated in some of the most strategic sectors of the South African economy: U.S. companies control about half of the South African oil industry, 70 percent of the computer industry, and 30 percent of the auto industry.

In addition to these direct investments, U.S. banks have nearly \$5 billion in loans to South African banks and corporations, as well as to the government. U.S. corporate interests and individuals also own some \$8 billion of shares in South African companies. This brings the total U.S. stake in South Africa to more than \$15 billion.

By the late 1970s, West German companies accounted for 10 percent of all foreign investments in South Africa, and South Africa is now West Germany's third largest overseas market. French imperialism has important interests in South Africa as well, and Japan has emerged as a key South African trading partner.

For Pretoria's allies, these economic ties are exceptionally lucrative. Foreign investments in South Africa earn among the highest profit rates in the world, based as they are on the superexploitation of the Black workers, whose wages are kept extremely low by apartheid's suppression of virtually all Black rights.

These investments are also vital to Pretoria. To keep its industrialized economy going, South Africa relies on its ties with the United States, Western Europe, and Japan for trade outlets and for sources of financing and technology. Without them, key sectors of South African industry would grind to a halt,

threatening the functioning of the apartheid system itself.

Besides participating in the exploitation of South Africa's large Black working class, these foreign corporations also play a crucial role in bolstering the apartheid regime's repressive apparatus. Foreign oil, computers, vehicles, spare parts, and advanced technology keep the South African police, military, and armaments industry functioning.

## Policeman of southern Africa

Besides being a profitable place to invest, South Africa is an integral part of the entire world system of imperialism.

Pretoria is itself an imperialist power. Although weaker than its senior U.S. and Western European partners, it has an enormous economic and political influence over other countries in southern Africa, such as Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Malawi. It also controls its own direct colony: Namibia.

Because of its great economic weight and its role as the communications and transport hub of the entire region, South Africa likewise serves as a base for other imperialist interests seeking to expand into the rest of southern Africa.

The apartheid regime is the major defender of imperialist interests throughout the region. With a highly industrialized economy, a strong (and exclusively white) capitalist class, and a powerful military apparatus, it is the key regional bastion of reaction standing against the advance of the African liberation struggle.

Pretoria provided direct military support to the Portuguese colonialists in their battle against the Angolan and Mozambican freedom fighters. It helped prop up the racist Rhodesian settler regime in Zimbabwe. Though the Angolan, Mozambican, and Zimbabwean masses eventually prevailed, Pretoria forced them to pay a high price for their independence. It remains today a major obstacle to those peoples' further advance, as seen in particular by the South African-organized mercenary wars in Angola and Mozambique.

In addition to its role as a regional gendarme, the apartheid regime is a crucial part of the world imperialist military alliance. The NATO powers rely on South African intelligence monitoring of the shipping lanes around the Cape of Good Hope, and NATO warships have access to South African ports.

Pretoria, moreover, has developed a nuclear capacity. Its nuclear industry was initiated and built up with considerable U.S. economic and technical assistance. In a joint test with the Israeli regime, Pretoria detonated its first small nuclear device in 1979 in the ocean waters between South Africa and Antarctica.

## True face of 'constructive engagement'

It is not "abhorrence" of apartheid, but the defense and advancement of these imperialist interests in southern Africa that underlie the foreign policy stance of the U.S., British, and other Western European governments toward Pretoria.

This was spelled out explicitly by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Crocker in a 1981 speech, in which he stressed that "important Western economic, strategic, moral and political interests" were at stake in South Africa. "South Africa is an integral and important element of the global economic system," he said, "and it plays a significant economic role in its own region. We will not support the severing of those ties. It does not serve our interests to walk away from South Africa. . . ."

Since 1980, this U.S. stance — which is a long-standing one going back decades — has been reflected in the Reagan administration's policy of "constructive engagement," involving greater political, military, and economic ties with the apartheid regime.

South African military and intelligence officers have made more frequent visits to the United States, and South African naval officers have received training by the U.S. Coast Guard. Formal restrictions on the sale of U.S. products to the South African police and military were eased, and U.S. military sales to South Africa rose to \$28 million in 1981-83 — one-and-a-half times the total amount officially exported to South Africa in the previous 30 years.

Washington was instrumental in arranging a \$1.1 billion loan to Pretoria from the International Monetary Fund. In the United Nations, the U.S. representative (usually together with the British delegate) has vetoed every proposal for mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa.

As a cover for Pretoria's continued occupation of Namibia, the White House has insisted that Cuban troops must be withdrawn from Angola before Namibia can gain its independence.

To justify this increased collaboration, U.S. officials claim that Washington's greater "leverage" with Pretoria enables it to press the Botha regime to push through more so-called reforms in the apartheid system.

Some minor alterations in the way apartheid functions have been enacted in recent years, but they involve no fundamental easing of the oppression of South Africa's Black majority. In fact, Washington's increased support for Pretoria has simply encouraged the apartheid regime to strike out militarily at neighboring countries and to dig in its heels against the democratic demands of South African Blacks.

That is why Black trade unions and anti-apartheid political organizations in South Africa have stepped up their calls for an end to all international support to and ties with the racist regime.

Although it is illegal in South Africa to call on foreign companies to divest, leaders of the United Democratic Front (UDF), a broad coalition of 600 anti-apartheid organizations, have done so publicly. At a rally of 1,000 in Cape Town in late July, Trevor Manuel, the UDF's Western Cape secretary, hailed the French government's decision to recall its ambassador from South Africa, but at the same time demanded that all French investments be withdrawn, especially in the field of nuclear

power.

The African National Congress, at its National Consultative Conference held in June, issued a "Call to the Peoples of the World" reaffirming this stance.

"We accuse those Western countries and their transnational corporations which collaborate actively with the regime of complicity in the commission of the crime of apartheid. The time has come to cease all collaboration and step up the all-round support for the ANC, the vanguard of the oppressed people of South Africa."

The ANC's call concluded:

"• Intensify the campaign to isolate racist South Africa in the economic, political, diplomatic, military, educational and cultural fields.

"• Impose mandatory sanctions through the UN Security Council.

"• End all nuclear collaboration with apartheid South Africa.

"• Demand the immediate and unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners.

"• Increase diplomatic, financial and material support and develop solidarity with the ANC.

"• Demand the immediate independence of Namibia.

"• Demand that the racist regime stop its aggression against the Front Line States and Lesotho.

"• Give all forms of support to these innocent victims of fascist aggression and expansionism.

"Freedom is at hand!

"Now is the time to act!

"Now is the time to bring the apartheid regime to its knees! "

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Intercontinental Press specializes in political analysis and interpretation of events of particular interest to the labor, socialist, colonial independence, Black, and women's liberation movements.

Signed articles represent the views of the authors, which may not necessarily coincide with those of Intercontinental Press. Insofar as it reflects editorial opinion, unsigned material stands on the program of the Fourth International.

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INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS (ISSN 0162-5594) is published biweekly except for one issue in January and one issue in August for \$30 per year by Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Intercontinental Press is indexed by the Alternative Press Index, P.O. Box 7229, Baltimore, MD 21218; tel.: (301) 243-2471.

**To Subscribe:** For one-year subscriptions in the U.S. or Canada send US\$30.00. Subscription correspondence should be addressed to: Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Telephone: (212) 929-6933.

For airmail subscriptions to Britain, Ireland, and continental Europe send US\$40.00 for one year; US\$20.00 for six months. Write for subscription rates to all other countries.

For air-speeded subscriptions to Australia: Write to New International Publications, P.O. Box 37, Leichhardt, N.S.W. 2040. In New Zealand: Write to Socialist Books, P.O. Box 8730, Auckland.

We prefer payment in bank drafts or postal checks payable in U.S. dollars because of the charges involved in clearing personal checks drawn on other currencies. However, personal checks will be accepted, with an additional 5 percent added for clearing charges.

Please allow five weeks for change of address. Include your old address, and, if possible, an address label from a recent issue.

Intercontinental Press is published by the 408 Printing and Publishing Corporation, 408 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Offices at 408 West Street, New York, N.Y.

# Police bullets fail to curb mass upheaval

*Country rocked by township rebellions, student protests, workers' strikes*

**By Ernest Harsch**

One of hundreds of martyrs of the apartheid regime's crackdown on Black protest, Victoria Mxenge fell on August 1, slain by a government-backed death squad outside her home in Umlazi, near Durban.

Mxenge's murder aroused particular outrage. She had been a leader of the United Democratic Front (UDF), the countrywide anti-apartheid coalition of nearly 2 million members. A lawyer, she had been scheduled to defend UDF leaders facing trial on "treason" charges. The Natal Organisation of Women, of which she had also been a leader, called her "a beacon for the women involved in the liberation struggle." Four years ago, her husband, a political activist as well, had been slain in a similar manner.

Thousands of people flocked to a memorial meeting for Mxenge at the University of Natal, in Durban. Speakers blamed the authorities for the killing. The crowd chanted the names of imprisoned leaders of the outlawed African National Congress (ANC), which is leading the liberation struggle.

Some 10,000 people turned out a few days later for Mxenge's funeral near Kingwilliamstown, where she was buried alongside her husband. Some speakers openly called for the regime's overthrow. "We are committed to seeing that South Africa comes down to her knees," declared Stephen Tshwete, a former political prisoner. "We want to bring them down. There is no apology for that."

This rising boldness and militancy comes in the face of a murderous police repression that has left nearly 650 Blacks dead over the past 11 months, some 140 of them since President Pieter Botha imposed a state of emergency on July 20.

## 'Regime has to be destroyed'

Popular anger has been further aroused by Botha's August 15 speech to the Natal provincial congress of the ruling National Party.

Billed in advance as a "manifesto of reform," Botha's speech was actually a staunch defense of the fundamentals of the racist apartheid system.

Among other things, Botha insisted on the maintenance of the Bantustans, the impoverished rural reserves designed to segregate and divide the African population. He explicitly rejected the popular demand for one person, one vote in a unitary state. That, he claimed, "would lead to chaos. Consequently, I reject it. . . . I am not prepared to lead white South Africans . . . on a road of abdication and suicide." And he warned "those who prefer revolution to reform" that his regime was pre-

pared to use even "stronger measures" to maintain its rule.

Oliver Tambo, the president of the African National Congress, denounced Botha's speech the next day.

Botha, Tambo noted, had "pledged to perpetuate the criminal Bantustan system, further to balkanise our country and to continue the land dispossession of the African majority which is confined to a little more than 10 percent of South Africa."

Tambo continued, "He who is responsible for the massacre of so many people throughout southern Africa had the cheek to blame the victims of state terrorism for the violence of the apartheid system."

"Botha," Tambo stressed, "has confirmed what we have said many times before — that apartheid cannot be reformed. . . . The masses of our people are showing that there is only one item on the agenda: action. The task before the ANC and our people is clear. The Botha regime has to be destroyed as a matter of the greatest urgency."

## Mobilizations spread

A month after the state of emergency was imposed on 36 districts around Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth, the apartheid regime has still not been able to suppress the ongoing mass mobilizations. Rallies, marches, strikes, and other popular actions demanding an end to the police repression and the scrapping of apartheid take place every day.

This is despite the police killings of scores of protesters and the detentions of several thousand political activists, who are being held without charge and without the least contact with relatives or lawyers.

Amnesty International announced in London August 13 that it had received information that some of these prisoners have been tortured, including unionists, students, and religious figures. Detainees have been beaten, threatened with execution, and subjected to electric shocks, according to the report.

Of those picked up by the police, the vast majority — more than 80 percent according to the Detainees' Parents Support Committee — are from organizations affiliated to the United Democratic Front. The leadership of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), a key UDF affiliate that has been in the forefront of the township protests, has been particularly hard-hit.

Not only has this crackdown not halted the upsurge in the areas covered by the state of emergency, but the month since it was imposed has actually seen the protests spread to other parts of the country, involving yet

broader layers of the population. Cape Town, Durban, and some of the Bantustans — which have been relatively quiescent in recent months — have been swept by major actions.

Across the country, hundreds of thousands of Black students have continued to stay away from their classes to protest the imposition of the state of emergency and the regime's racist education policies.

Just a week after the emergency was declared, most Black high schools were shut down in the Cape Peninsula, the area around Cape Town. This boycott involved both Africans and Coloureds (those of mixed ancestry).

In Witbank, east of Pretoria, students maintained a month-long school boycott. In Pietermaritzburg, west of Durban, high school and primary students walked out of their classrooms in a show of solidarity with 16 UDF leaders slated to go on trial there.

In Soweto, the sprawling Black township outside Johannesburg, police have tried to break the student boycott by indiscriminately rounding up hundreds of young students.

At the predominantly white University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, some 2,000 students boycotted lectures to protest the state of emergency. In Cape Town, Coloured students from the University of the Western Cape and white students from the University of Cape Town staged several joint demonstrations; as protesters chanted, "Botha is a terrorist!" and "Forward we shall march to a people's government!" police attacked them.

Beginning in Port Elizabeth and then spreading to East London, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Pretoria, local Black organizations have launched boycotts of white-owned businesses. In the Western Cape region alone, UDF supporters have distributed 70,000 pamphlets calling for support to the boycotts around demands for the lifting of the emergency, the release of political prisoners, and the withdrawal of troops from the Black townships.

Since the current upsurge began a year ago, Black workers have been in the forefront of the mobilizations.

This has remained true since the emergency was declared. Workers have gone on strike in Pietermaritzburg and Durban, at the Verwoerd dam project in the Orange Free State, and elsewhere. Some of the strikes have been over economic demands, others to protest the state of emergency.

Pamphlets circulating among workers in the Black townships stress the close connection between the apartheid regime's racist policies and the low wages and poor working conditions maintained by the employers, stating that

they are "two sides of the same bloody coin."

In early August, 500 delegates of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), which claims 230,000 Black miners in the gold and coal mines, called for a strike to demand a 22 percent wage increase. The delegates appealed to members to boycott white-owned businesses if the state of emergency is not lifted. And they threatened to call an immediate general strike if Botha followed through on a threat to expel from South Africa the 1.5 million migrant workers from other countries.

A broadcast over the ANC's Radio Freedom, beamed into South Africa from several nearby Black-ruled states, hailed the NUM's stand. "Compatriots, we have the power," the broadcast declared. "The white minority regime cannot move without us. We know that we are a mighty force that can bring down the Pretoria regime."

Facing the threat of a massive and costly strike, the mining companies increased their wage offers somewhat. In order to study the new offers, the NUM postponed its original

strike deadline to September 1.

One of the regions with mounting unrest is Durban, South Africa's second-largest industrial center.

In late July, some 2,500 Black bakery workers walked off their jobs to demand a pay increase. They staged militant marches through the city, singing freedom songs and giving clenched-fist salutes.

In the Black townships around Durban, students and other youths staged numerous actions. Following Victoria Mxenge's murder, memorial rallies were held in the townships, and COSAS called a school boycott to protest the killing.

These actions were met with some of the fiercest repression yet. Within several weeks, at least 70 people were killed in the Durban area.

Much of the repression came from the police. But some of it also came from reactionary Black goon squads organized by the KwaZulu Bantustan administration, headed by Chief Gatsha Buthelezi.

Though he is widely viewed among Blacks as a collaborator with Pretoria, Buthelezi has frequently sought to strike an anti-apartheid image. Through such demagoguery, his position in the KwaZulu administration, and his authority as a traditional tribal chief, he has long sought to impose his political domination over South Africa's 5 million Zulu-speakers, particularly through his Zulu-based Inkatha political organization.

Since the beginning of the current upsurge, Buthelezi has become increasingly strident in his denunciations of the UDF and the ANC, accusing them of engaging in an "unholy duet of violence."

With the development of the protests in Durban's Black townships — which Buthelezi considers part of his "fief" — he has also unleashed thousands of Inkatha members, armed with sticks, knives, and spears, to try to crush them. The first major attack came after a memorial for Mxenge in Umlazi township, which is administratively part of KwaZulu. Twelve people were killed. With police looking on or assisting, Inkatha thugs attacked protesters and residents in KwaMashu, Lamontville, and other townships as well.

One aspect of this crackdown involved attacks on Indians in the township of Inanda, resulting in several deaths and causing hundreds of Indians to flee. According to Farouk Meer, a UDF leader living in Inanda, the area was slated by the government for incorporation into KwaZulu, but the population had been reluctant to leave their homes. The attacks, he noted, "will certainly facilitate the movement of Indians away from Inanda, thereby making it more easy to become incorporated into KwaZulu, which is what the government's intentions are."

The UDF and other anti-apartheid groups have condemned Buthelezi's actions, stressing that they aid the regime's divide-and-rule policies.

But Buthelezi's political influence is waning. As the recent protests show, more and more Blacks, including Zulus, look to the mass mobilizations organized by the UDF and to the overall leadership of the ANC. Another sign of this came in May, when the Zulu-language newspaper *Ilanga* reported that in an opinion poll of Africans around Durban, 48 percent favored imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela as "the best leader for the Black people in South Africa today." Buthelezi came in a poor second, with 28 percent.

Other Bantustan administrations, which generally have even less support than Buthelezi, have also been buffeted by the popular upheaval. Since the emergency was imposed, student boycotts have spread to BophuthaTswana, Lebowa, Transkei, and Ciskei. The Transkei administration has declared its own state of emergency, arresting hundreds of protesters.

In a statement released August 24, the UDF, commenting on these spreading protests, noted that Botha's repression "only serves to intensify resistance and strengthen peoples' hatred towards the system." □

## Demands for Mandela's release mount

When Rev. Allan Boesak, a patron of the United Democratic Front, called for a mass march on Pollsmoor Prison outside Cape Town to demand the release of Nelson Mandela, the apartheid regime became alarmed. More UDF leaders were picked up by the police, and the government warned that it would take "stern action" against any march to Pollsmoor.

In recent years, the demand for Mandela's release has become particularly widespread within South Africa, as it has internationally. Virtually every Black organization in the country, and some white ones as well, have demanded that he be freed.

For those opposed to the apartheid regime, Mandela has come to symbolize the struggle for a free South Africa.

Mandela emerged in the 1940s as one of a new generation of younger and more militant leaders of the African National Congress. He helped turn the ANC toward a mass-action perspective, and was a central leader of the 1952 Defiance Campaign of mass civil disobedience against apartheid laws. In 1961, after the ANC had been outlawed, Mandela went underground and organized an antigovernment general strike. At the end of that year he led in the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the ANC's armed wing. Captured by the police in 1962, he was later sentenced to life in prison.

In the more than two decades since his jailing, Mandela's stature and political influence within the country have grown. They have grown because of the deepening of the freedom struggle and because of his own conduct in prison, particularly his firm adherence to his political beliefs. Twice



this year, President Botha offered to release him if he renounced the armed struggle. Mandela refused to do so.

The regime's wrath against Mandela has also fallen on his family. Winnie Mandela, his wife and an outspoken activist in her own right, has suffered from years of police restrictions and house arrest. In early August her home was raided and smashed up by the police; a week later it was burned out.

When the U.S. embassy offered her \$10,000 to help rebuild the home, she spurned this hypocritical offer, stating that acceptance would imply support for U.S. policy. "Our people are angry that the Reagan and Thatcher administrations, in particular, should continue to condone the activities of the South African government," she told reporters August 21.

# Protests mount worldwide

*Embassies, shipping targets of anti-apartheid actions*

By Steve Craine

The apartheid regime's state of emergency and crackdown on opposition inside South Africa has met with a strong response from anti-racist activists in many countries. In recent weeks thousands marched in the streets, while workers have taken action to block trade with South Africa.

In the largest single protest in the United States, 30,000 people — many of them trade unionists — marched on the South African consulate in New York City August 13. This demonstration demanded an end to the state of emergency and freedom for jailed African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela. It also called for the U.S. government to cut off economic and political support to Pretoria and for a halt to U.S. corporate investment in South Africa.

Protesters chanted, "Death to apartheid," as they rallied at "Nelson and Winnie Mandela Corner," site of the South African consulate. Banners in the crowd proclaimed, "Free Mandela, jail Reagan."

The New York action was organized by an emergency coalition of more than 50 trade union and community organizations. Officials of the city's labor federation and several unions marched at the head of the crowd.

Union contingents included autoworkers, teamsters, teachers, garment workers, government employees, and hospital workers. The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and Coalition of Labor Union Women, along with Puerto Rican, Asian-American, and Black civil rights organizations, were also present.

The previous day, in Washington, D.C., some 6,000 people marched on the State Department, where they delivered 50 mock coffins, symbolizing the thousands killed in the fight against apartheid. This action was organized by the Free South Africa Movement, which has sponsored daily pickets at the South African embassy since November 1984, and by the Southern Africa Support Project.

Smaller demonstrations recently took place in Detroit, Atlanta, and other U.S. cities.

In London, 250 people attended an anti-apartheid briefing held by representatives of the ANC and the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), the liberation movement in South African-occupied Namibia. This meeting called for mass picketing at the South African embassy on August 10 and August 31.

More than 300 women demonstrated outside the South African embassy in Canberra, Australia, August 9, as part of an international day of solidarity with the women of South Africa and Namibia.

Members of the Transport and General

Workers Union in Southampton, England, refused to load machine tools bound for South Africa's weapons industry in late July. On August 1 the cargo was impounded by British customs officials, but the dock workers are demanding a guarantee that the equipment will not be shipped to South Africa at some later date. Jim Slater, secretary of the National Union of Seamen, commented, "If government is not going to stop arms equipment going to South Africa, it's up to trade unions to take action."

In Australia, the Waterside Workers' Federation refused to unload a South African freighter in Sydney and members of the Operative Painters and Decorators' Union banned South African goods at an international exhibition in Melbourne.

The South African Congress of Trade Unions — which is allied with the ANC — has called for more of these solidarity actions by workers around the world. A statement by SACTU President S.D. Dlamini and General

Secretary John Nkadimeng called for the international trade union movement to take "immediate action to cut off Apartheid South Africa." They requested unionists to refuse to handle all maritime, land, air, and telecommunications traffic to and from South Africa and to mount "massive demonstrations at all diplomatic missions representing the white minority regime abroad."

The United Mine Workers Union (UMWA) in the United States is engaged in a long strike against the A. T. Massey coal company. Massey is owned 50 percent by Royal Dutch Shell, a major coal operator in South Africa. UMWA officials have joined anti-apartheid protests in several U.S. cities.

The Organization of African Trade Union Unity has called on all African unionists to join demonstrations for economic and diplomatic sanctions against South Africa. It called on union members in Africa and Europe to condemn those governments, particularly London and Washington, that continue to support the apartheid regime.

Speaking as chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi supported a worldwide effort to "totally isolate the racists." The Organization of African Unity has also called for "obligatory economic sanctions" against South Africa and "total diplomatic isolation." □

## N.Z. movement blocks rugby tour

The international movement against apartheid in South Africa scored a big victory in July when the New Zealand Rugby Football Union (NZRFU) was forced to cancel a tour of South Africa by New Zealand's national team, the All Blacks, just days before the team was scheduled to leave.

Many capitalist politicians and newspapers tried to credit the tour's cancellation to a lawsuit filed by liberal lawyers challenging a technicality in the rugby association's constitution. In reality, the demise of the tour (and the existence of the lawsuit as well) was the product of a strong antitour movement in New Zealand and of the explosion of political action by the Black majority in South Africa.

Just a week before the cancellation, 3,500 Black workers at a Volkswagen plant in South Africa went on strike when they found out that Volkswagen planned to supply vehicles for the All Blacks and the South African team, the Springboks, during the tour.

The New Zealand anti-apartheid movement had proved its potential on May 3, when demonstrations in several cities drew a total of some 80,000 people to protest sports ties with the South African regime. (New Zealand's population is only slightly

more than 3 million.)

Anti-apartheid activists campaigned against the rugby tour in factories and other workplaces throughout New Zealand, while many school rugby teams withdrew in protest from NZRFU-organized competition.

A front-page article in the Auckland fortnightly *Socialist Action* hailed the cancellation of the tour. The paper reflects the views of the Socialist Action League, New Zealand section of the Fourth International. The strength of the antitour protests, *Socialist Action* pointed out, had convinced the majority of New Zealand's ruling class that going ahead with the rugby matches in South Africa would be "too politically costly, both in New Zealand and internationally."

Above all, Eileen Morgan wrote, New Zealand's rulers wanted to avoid repetition of the big antitour protests of 1981 in which riot police were unleashed on thousands of radicalizing young people.

"Despite the claims to the contrary," Morgan wrote, the New Zealand victory "confirms the potential of united mass mobilisations in the streets — independent of the institutions of the capitalist state — to wrest concessions from the ruling rich in the course of the fight for social justice."

# Address by ANC President Oliver Tambo

*'Our watchwords must be mobilization, organization, struggle'*

[The following is an "Address to the Nation" by Oliver Tambo, president of the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa. It was broadcast on July 22 over the ANC's Radio Freedom, beamed into South Africa from Ethiopia, Zambia, Tanzania, and other African countries. The text of the address has been provided by the ANC. The subheads and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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Compatriots,

Forty-eight hours ago [South African President] P.W. Botha announced a state of emergency affecting the Eastern Cape, the Witwatersrand, and the Vaal Triangle. Already in these areas many people have been arrested. Combined military and police units have moved to occupy certain townships such as KwaThema. People have been murdered by these forces of occupation. The truth about the criminal misdeeds of these bands of marauders has been kept out of the public eye through tightened press censorship.

Inevitably the fascist measures of extreme repression that Botha has imposed will be extended to other areas of our country. Botha has at last decided to impose martial law. He has granted full powers to his armed forces to govern certain areas of our country. This is an eventuality for which the Botha regime has prepared and about which we have repeatedly warned. This regime can now no longer conceal its true face. What has become plain for all to see is the reality of military dictatorship and not the comforting but spurious image of a reformer that Botha had sought to cultivate and project.

The Pretoria regime speaks about law and order. It says it has imposed martial law on large parts of our country in order to reestablish order and stability.

In cynical disregard of the interests of the majority of the people of our country, the United States government, the principal ally of the apartheid regime, has not hesitated to approve of the new measures of repression that its friends in Pretoria have adopted. The Reagan Administration has openly said that it hopes that these measures will succeed in their purpose. Botha and Reagan hope and pray that the intensified campaign of terror against the people and our democratic movement will succeed to stop our march to liberation. They are intent to ensure that racist law and apartheid order continue to hold sway.

That is the hopeless mission that the Pretoria regime and its supporters have given themselves.

Our own tasks are very clear. To bring about the kind of society that is visualised in the



Ernest Harschi/IP

OLIVER TAMBO

Freedom Charter,<sup>1</sup> we have to break down and destroy the old order. We have to make apartheid unworkable and our country ungovernable. The accomplishment of these tasks will create the situation for us to overthrow the apartheid regime and for power to pass into the hands of the people as a whole.

We have achieved a good deal of progress in making South Africa ungovernable. Correctly, we concentrated on the weakest link in the apartheid chain of command and control. For months, we have maintained an uninterrupted offensive against the puppet local government authorities in the black urban areas as well as other state personnel in the townships such as the police and their agents.

By declaring a state of emergency in these areas, Botha has admitted that his organs of government have collapsed. He has conceded that the only way he can restore apartheid rule in these townships is through martial law. He could no longer govern in the old way.

The perspective ahead of us is to intensify the struggle exactly in these areas that are under martial law. In struggle, we must make it impossible for our enemy to govern even in the new way. We must confront its new organs of government in the townships — the combined army and police units which have been

1. The Freedom Charter is a program of democratic demands for the abolition of the apartheid system, drawn up at a Congress of the People in Kliptown, South Africa, in June 1955. It has been adopted by the ANC as its program.

brought into our midst exactly to reassert apartheid rule and therefore to perpetuate our oppression and suffering. This is the first task we have to accomplish in the light of Botha's state of emergency — to confront and defeat his new organs of government.

While saluting those among our people who have responded so magnificently to our call to make our country ungovernable, we must also draw attention to the fact that not all areas of our country and not all sections among the oppressed responded with the same level of activity and determination. This has enabled the enemy to concentrate its forces on certain areas of our country. Even now, under its state of emergency, the apartheid regime has the possibility to concentrate its attack on a selected number of areas in our country.

This is a situation which we must correct. It is vital that all areas of our country should join in the general offensive to make the apartheid system unworkable and South Africa ungovernable. There is not a single black person anywhere in our country who can say that he or she lives in conditions of freedom. We are all subjected to domination by organs of government imposed on us by the apartheid regime. This is the case whether we live in the towns or the countryside.

In the past, all of us have joined together to reject apartheid rule, whatever form it took. Accordingly, we have consistently rejected the Bantustan system and the community councils. We have also overwhelmingly rejected Botha's tri-cameral parliament as well as the organs of local government visualised in the latest apartheid constitution.<sup>2</sup> But, as we had foreseen, all these institutions have been imposed on us despite the fact that we do not want them. As usual, the apartheid regime has refused to act in accordance with the will of the people.

We, for our part, have no cause to submit to the dictatorship of the racists. We have said we are opposed to its apartheid institutions. These have been imposed on us against our will. We have no choice but to destroy them. This is what we have done in the Eastern Cape, on the Witwatersrand, in the Vaal Triangle, and the Free State. We must spread this offensive to reach all other parts of our country. In all our

2. The 10 Bantustans are rural African reserves, designed to foster divisions among Africans along language lines and to deny them citizenship in the country as a whole. The community councils are local apartheid administrative bodies, staffed by Blacks. The tricameral parliament, set up in 1984, comprises new Coloured and Indian chambers of parliament alongside the previous white chamber — a further effort to divide Coloureds and Indians from the rest of the Black population.

localities, wherever they may be, we must rise now and destroy the apartheid organs of government that are used to hold us in bondage. We make this call to all black people — African, Indian, and so-called Coloureds.

Our people in some parts of the country are suffering under the iron heel of military dictatorship. They are facing the full might of the apartheid state because they dared to stand up to fight for our liberation. Regardless of what the martial law administrators do, the masses of our people in these areas will continue the fight for our emancipation. The time has come that the rest of the black masses of our country, all 25 million of us, should join in one determined offensive to make all of our country ungovernable. If needs be, let us force the apartheid regime to deploy its armed forces in every village and township in our country. Let us act together to make all of South Africa ungovernable.

#### Take struggle into white areas

Racist white South Africa is, without doubt, applauding P.W. Botha for declaring the state of emergency. These hidebound white supremacists see this act of desperation on the part of the apartheid regime as a demonstration of firmness and a determination to protect white privilege at all costs. They are convinced that Botha will succeed to suppress our struggle and save the apartheid system from collapse.

White South Africa will not awaken from this dream world while our struggle is concentrated in the black areas of our country. We cannot and should not allow a situation of relative peace and tranquillity to obtain in the white areas of our country while the black townships are in flames. We must take the struggle into the white areas of South Africa and there attack the apartheid regime and its forces of repression in these areas which it considers its rear.

For many years, the Pretoria regime gave its white supporters a false sense of security by deluding them into believing that the battle-front of struggle was drawn at the borders of our country. We have shattered that myth and brought the struggle to the very doorstep of the colonial oppressor. The enemy, however, continues to hope that it will manage to hold our struggle to that line of battle, outside of the white towns and cities. As we buried the illusion of a confrontation taking place at the borders of our country, so must we now put paid to the notion that our struggle will remain confined to the black areas.

No longer should white South Africa live with the idea that it can continue with its business as usual while our people are perishing in their hundreds, out of sight of the white families that have sent their sons into our townships, armed to the teeth and with one intention only, to kill, kill and kill.

Our task, to take the struggle into the very midst of the enemy, presents all revolutionaries of our country with the challenge of devising the correct tactics to realise this objective. It is a challenge that all of us, workers,

women, and youth, must meet. It however also places a special responsibility on all our white compatriots who are committed to bring about a democratic South Africa to act now to show the white population of our country that however much it might try to close its eyes to what is happening, the fact of the matter is that our country is in crisis.

White South Africa must be made to realise that Botha cannot guarantee its security. The greater the repression that he resorts to in defence of white minority rule and in the name of the whites of our country, the greater becomes the level of insecurity facing these very same whites. To guarantee its own security, white South Africa has to come over to the side of the forces fighting for a democratic and non-racial society. The alternative that Botha offers them — that of pitting themselves against the overwhelming majority of the people of our country — is nothing but a death trap. Nothing will come of it except grief for the whole of white South Africa.

We offer our white compatriots the only way out of the crisis which will surely engulf them, and that, in the near future — renounce Botha and his apartheid republic; join the anti-racist forces in the struggle for a democratic South Africa.

#### 'There is no middle road'

The time has also come that those who serve in the apartheid tri-cameral parliament and claim to stand for a democratic South Africa, should abandon the illusion that this parliament can do anything to solve the problems of our country. This institution is as much a part of the structure of apartheid rule as are the racist army, police, and the prison service. It is an instrument for the perpetuation of white minority rule. To hold out the hope that it can do anything to bring about a just social order is to attempt to hoax the people and to aid and abet the Pretoria regime in perpetuating its rule of terror. If there is any genuine anti-racist left wing within Botha's parliament, now is the time for them to abandon this house of iniquity and join the masses of the people in struggle for a truly just society.

Large parts of our country are under a publicly proclaimed state of emergency. Others are treated as though they are under such a state of emergency. This situation no longer allows for the playing of inconsequential games presented as an effort at reform. It demands that each one of us should choose sides: one is either on the side of genuine change or one is on the side of continued repression. There is no middle road.

Those among the black people who have persisted in refusing to stop serving the army are now faced with the inevitable consequences of their mercenary stubbornness. They have now been turned into an army of occupation and administrators of martial law. If, in the past, they considered their duties as normal, they can no longer do so. There is nothing normal about an emergency. Neither will the actual tasks that they will carry out be normal. Their masters will demand of them the most

heinous acts of brutality against their own people. On them will fall the greatest burdens in Pretoria's campaign of extreme repression.

Once more we call on these black people to leave the ranks of the enemy which is using them to terrorise their own mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and children. We call on those whom the enemy has armed to turn their guns against those who have invaded our townships and not point them at the unarmed black masses of our country who are fighting to liberate themselves.

There are some black people in our country who, claiming to be leaders and representatives of our people, have joined the clamour for the maintenance of apartheid law and order. The enemy is using these so-called law-abiding blacks to justify the intensified campaign of repression it has launched under the state of emergency that it has proclaimed. We call on these misguided individuals to direct their anger against those who have brought our country to the situation in which it is today.

Only recently, Afrikaner<sup>3</sup> intellectuals at the state-funded National Council for Social Research correctly laid the blame for the conflict in our country on the apartheid system. It is the height of servility for the black people who call themselves leaders to refuse to acknowledge this truth and instead seek to secure a livelihood for themselves by blaming the victim of terror for the injury done to him.

The apartheid system is in crisis. The state of emergency will not extricate the racists from this situation. All it will do is further to deepen that crisis and increase the cost in human lives of ending white minority domination in our country. We have advanced a great deal towards the realisation of our goal of a united, democratic, and non-racial South Africa. There can be no stopping now. There can be no turning back.

Let us therefore mobilise and march together in even greater unity towards freedom. At all times we must expect that the enemy will respond with even greater repression. We must withstand these campaigns of terror with the same determination that we have displayed over so many months. But more, we must defeat these campaigns and raise our struggle to even higher levels.

Our watchwords must be mobilisation, organisation, struggle. All our people must be mobilised into action. All our people must be organised for action. All our people must engage in struggle. That must be our reply to the enemy's desperate counter-offensive.

In that struggle we have to step up our armed offensive. In a situation of martial law, the need for the oppressed masses to resort to people's war becomes plain for all to see. Therefore the order of the day to all units of

3. The Afrikaners comprise a majority of the white population and provide the main electoral base for the governing National Party. They are descendants of the early Dutch settlers, and speak a Dutch-derived language, Afrikaans. (The remainder of the whites speak English.)



Umkhonto we Sizwe<sup>4</sup> is that they must strengthen their links with the people. They must act together with the people to inflict the greatest possible number of casualties on armed enemy personnel. They must take the battle to the enemy and, side by side with the heroic masses of our country, defeat the enemy's efforts to rule in a new way, seize the initiative from the enemy, and drive him into retreat. Thousands upon thousands of our people have been engaging the enemy in

4. The Spear of the Nation, the ANC's armed wing.

armed confrontation, using primitive means to deliver their blows. Now is the time for them to face the enemy using modern weapons of war.

At this hour of a heightened enemy counter-offensive, progressive humanity has rallied behind us as never before. The whole world has denounced Botha's state of emergency and pledged its support for our struggle. The international community will adopt new measures to isolate the apartheid regime, which has declared war against our people.

Drawing strength from this international

support, we must march with even greater confidence to victory. Botha's state of emergency is an admission of defeat. Each desperate act he adopts is a sign that we are approaching our goal.

Make apartheid unworkable!

Make South Africa ungovernable!

Prepare the conditions for the seizure of power by the people!

Amandla ngawethu! ["Power to the people!"]

Matla ke a rona!

Ihlomile!

# ANC reaffirms anti-apartheid strategy

## Conference urges 'seizure of power by the people'

[The African National Congress (ANC), the liberation movement of South Africa, held its Second National Consultative Conference in Zambia June 16-23 (the first such conference was in 1969).

[Attended by 250 delegates, coming both from within South Africa and from countries around the world, the conference reaffirmed the ANC's broad strategy of overthrowing the apartheid regime through mass political action and armed struggle. (That strategy was earlier outlined in various documents, including a January 8 speech by ANC President Oliver Tambo and an April 25 "Call to the People" issued by the ANC's National Executive Committee. Those documents were reprinted in the March 4 and June 10 issues of *Intercontinental Press*, respectively.)

[The conference also, for the first time, opened all the ANC's bodies, including its underground cells within South Africa and its top leadership organs, to South Africans of all races. Previously they had been formally restricted to Africans, though Indians, Coloureds (those of mixed ancestry), and whites were able to be members of the ANC's exile organizations and carried out support activities within South Africa.

[The following is the final communiqué of the ANC conference, as read to a news conference in Lusaka, Zambia, on June 25 by President Tambo. The subheads and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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The Second National Consultative Conference of the ANC has taken place. It opened on June 16th, the ninth anniversary of the Soweto uprising of 1976, and closed on the 23rd. We had originally planned to finish on the 26th of June, our Freedom Day, which this year is also the 30th anniversary of the Freedom Charter. But so extensive and thorough were the pre-conference discussions among the members that it was possible to conclude our work three days earlier than was originally planned.

The venue of the conference was Zambia. We would like to take this opportunity to thank

His Excellency President [Kenneth] Kaunda and the Central Committee of UNIP<sup>1</sup> most sincerely for allowing us to hold our conference in this country. We are especially grateful for the invaluable assistance that they extended to us at very short notice to ensure that we had all the material requisites for a conference of the size that ours was. We shall forever be indebted to the Zambian people and their leadership for this outstanding contribution to our struggle.

The conference was attended by about 250 delegates representing our entire organisation. They came from every country in the world where we have members. They were drawn from all the national groups of our country. Among them were the leaders of our movement, all our diplomatic functionaries — the chief representatives, commanders, and other members of our army, political organisers, trade unionists, administration, production, health, and cultural workers, propagandists, students, and other members who are employed outside the ranks of our organisation.

We met under the theme: "From the Venue of the Conference to Victory." Therefore the central tasks of our conference were to assess our situation, especially inside South Africa, and agree on the measures we need to take in order to achieve victory over the apartheid regime. We characterised the conference as a council-of-war for the obvious reason that even as we opened our meeting the continuing massacre of our people loomed large in our minds, highlighted by the criminal invasion of Botswana and the murder of innocent people in Gaborone.<sup>2</sup> Whether we wanted war or not, the Pretoria regime was telling us in action that the only way we could stop the blood-letting was to go to war.

1. The United National Independence Party, Zambia's governing party.

2. On June 14, South African commandos struck across the border into neighboring Botswana, attacking several homes and offices where South African refugees were living in Gaborone, that country's capital. Twelve people were killed in the attack.

Our conference was fortunate to be addressed by our leaders who are in prison and whom Botha is still refusing to release. Shortly before it opened, we had received a message from the leaders in Pollsmoor and Robben Island prisons signed, on their behalf, by Nelson Mandela.<sup>3</sup> Here is what our leaders said:

"We were most delighted to hear that the ANC will soon have another conference. We sincerely hope that such an occasion will constitute yet another milestone in our history. It is most satisfying, especially in our present position, to belong to a tested organisation which exercises so formidable an impact on the situation in our country, which has established itself firmly as the standard-bearer of such a rich tradition, and which has brought us such coveted laurels.

"As you know we always try to harmonise our own views and responses with those of the movement at large. For this reason, we find it rewarding indeed to know that, despite the immense distance and the years which separate us, as well as the lack of effective communication channels, we still remain a closely knit organisation, ever conscious of the crucial importance of unity and of resisting every attempt to divide and confuse.

"We feel sure that all those delegates who will attend will go there with one central issue uppermost in their minds: that out of the conference the ANC will emerge far stronger than ever before. Unity is the rock on which the African National Congress was founded; it is the principle which has guided us down the years as we feel our way forward.

"In the course of its history, the ANC has survived countless storms and risen to eminence partly because of the sterling qualities of its membership, and partly because each member has regarded himself or herself as the principal guardian of that unity. All discussions, contributions, and criticism have generally been balanced and constructive, and above all, they have been invariably subjected to the

3. The president of the ANC at the time, Nelson Mandela was captured by the police in 1962 and subsequently sentenced to life in prison.

overriding principle of maximum unity. To lose sight of this basic principle is to sell our birthright, to betray those who paid the highest price so that the ANC should flourish and triumph.

"In this connection, the positions taken by Oliver Tambo on various issues and also stressed by Joe Slovo inspired us tremendously. Both drew attention to vital issues which, in our opinion, are very timely. They must be highlighted and kept consciously in mind as we try to sort out the complicated problems which face the movement and as we try to hammer out the guidelines for future progress.

"These remarks are the clearest expression of that enduring identity of approach of members of the movement wherever they may be and a summary of achievements of which we are justly proud. In particular we fully share the view that the ANC has raised mass political consciousness to a scale unknown in our experience. It is in this spirit that we send you our greetings and best wishes. We hold your hands firmly across the miles."

And so conference "hammered out the guidelines for future progress." And what are those guidelines?

#### **Mass action and armed struggle**

Our conference agreed unanimously that the Botha regime is still determined to defend the apartheid system of white minority rule by force of arms. Accordingly, it agreed that there was no reason for us to change our broad strategy, which pursues the aim of seizure of power by the people through a combination of mass political action and armed struggle.

It however agreed that the possibility of victory was greater now than at any other time in our history. This requires that we should step up our all-round political and military offensive sharply and without delay. The masses of our people have been and are engaged in a struggle of historic importance directed at making apartheid unworkable and the country ungovernable. They are creating the conditions for the escalation of our attack leading towards the situation where it will be possible for us to overthrow the apartheid regime.

The delegates agreed that it was vital that we take all necessary measures further to strengthen the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe inside of our country exactly to meet the demands of our people and our situation for a heightened and coordinated political and military offensive.

The conference also resolved that we cannot even consider the issue of a negotiated settlement of the South African question while our leaders are in prison. It agreed that we should continue with the campaign for the immediate and unconditional release of these leaders.

In the situation which obtains within the country in which the crisis of the apartheid system has become endemic, conference agreed that the Freedom Charter provides the basis for the satisfaction of the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of our people. In this regard, the participants agreed that it was impor-

tant that we should win as many whites as possible to our side. We should also adhere to our opposition to and our struggle against the Bantustans as well as the apartheid tricameral parliament and related institutions. We must continue to pose the alternative of a united, democratic, and non-racial South Africa.

The conference endorsed the view advanced by our imprisoned leaders about the importance of unity. In a call to our people inside the country, the delegates said:

"Those of us who are true liberators should not fight among ourselves. Let us not allow the enemy's dirty tricks department to succeed in getting us to fight one another."

Conference noted and paid tribute to the contribution that the United Democratic Front had made towards the strengthening of the unity of the democratic forces of our country and condemned the arrest and prosecution of its leaders and activists.<sup>4</sup>

The participants also agreed that this unity must find expression in the mass activity of all our people against the apartheid regime. Consequently, it is important that all our people should be organised and mobilised, in the towns and the countryside, including those in the Bantustans. The black workers are of special importance in this regard and are, as we have said before, the backbone and leading force in our struggle for national liberation.

#### **'Declare apartheid regime illegitimate'**

Conference also assessed the international situation. It agreed that we should further expand our system of international relations and reach out even to regions, countries, and governments with which we might not have had contact before.

It urged the international community to "declare the apartheid white minority regime illegitimate."

Addressing itself to the specific question of the planned New Zealand rugby tour of South Africa, conference reiterated that "if the tour takes place, responsibility for any adverse consequences to New Zealand, her reputation, and her future participation in international sport, as well as any threat to the lives of the players themselves, will rest squarely on the heads of the New Zealand Rugby Board." While saluting the opposition of the New Zealand government to the tour, it also urged this government to take further action to stop the tour.<sup>5</sup>

Among other things, the conference also addressed special greetings to each one of the Frontline States, Lesotho, the OAU and

SWAPO, among others.<sup>6</sup> It also agreed on an appeal to the international community.

The conference was honoured with many messages of solidarity from the international community, originating from governments and organisations from all corners of the globe. They included messages from the presidents of Botswana, Algeria, the German Democratic Republic, and Guinea Bissau; the foreign ministers of Finland, Ghana, and Zimbabwe, the Central Committees or the equivalent committees of ZANU(PF), the Frelimo Party,<sup>7</sup> the British Labour Party, the Swedish Social Democratic Party, the German Social Democratic Party, the Communist parties of the Soviet Union, Romania, Bulgaria, and others, trade unions, students', women's, youth, religious, and solidarity organisations, and the peace movement.

Naturally, we also discussed questions related to our structures and the personnel required to implement the historic decisions taken by conference. Constitutional guidelines were adopted which lay down that we should meet in conference at least once in five years and that the National Executive Committee should hold office for the same period. Conference confirmed the position taken in earlier constitutions of the ANC that membership is open to South Africans of all races who accept the policies of our movement.

The conference also decided to increase the size of the National Executive Committee to 30 members and gave powers to the Executive to coopt an extra five members if the need arises.

The conference reelected 19 out of the 22 members of the outgoing National Executive Committee. Of these three [not reelected], one did not stand for reelection. Conference therefore elected 11 new members of the NEC. Among these are one white comrade, two Indians and two Coloureds. The three most senior officials of the ANC — the president, the secretary general, and the treasurer general — were all returned unopposed and unanimously.

We have emerged out of our conference more united than ever before. As our people and the international community observe South Africa Freedom Day tomorrow, June 26th, the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Freedom Charter, the ANC will be among them greatly strengthened, of one mind on all questions, and determined to take the battle to the enemy and persist in struggle until victory is won. □

6. The frontline states are Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe; the Organization of African Unity is Africa's inter-governmental body; the South West Africa People's Organisation is the liberation movement fighting for Namibia's independence from South African rule.

7. The Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) is Zimbabwe's governing party, while the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) is the ruling party in Mozambique.

4. The United Democratic Front, formed in 1983, is a broad coalition of some 600 community groups, women's organizations, students associations, trade unions, and other anti-apartheid organizations. The combined membership of its components is nearly 2 million.

5. On July 15, the New Zealand Rugby Football Union announced that the planned rugby tour of South Africa had been canceled.

# SWP sets anti-apartheid campaign

Theme of national convention: 'turning the party outward'

By Doug Jenness

OBERLIN, Ohio — The 33rd national convention of the Socialist Workers Party, meeting here August 10-15, decided to make participation in the rapidly growing anti-apartheid movement a central priority.

As the convention was taking place, big developments were happening in the Black freedom struggle in South Africa. Protest actions were occurring in many U.S. cities, including a demonstration of 30,000 in New York City.

A high point of the convention was the greetings by Neo Mnumzana, chief representative of the African National Congress (ANC) to the United Nations. Some 900 delegates and observers welcomed him with a standing ovation.

Speaking on behalf of the ANC's National Executive Committee, Mnumzana stated, "The United States is interested in apartheid in South Africa, it's interested in reversing the revolutionary gains of the people of Nicaragua, it's interested in propping up fascist regimes all over the world."

"Remember," the ANC leader added, "that U.S. foreign policy is nothing but a logical extension of its domestic policies. If the United States supports repressive regimes this is only because the United States is repressive towards its own population. So when we fight the United States in the so-called outposts on the periphery of imperialism, we are also fighting the United States on behalf of your freedom."

About 200 convention participants attended a class that Mnumzana gave on the freedom struggle in South Africa. He had been scheduled to speak at the convention's wind-up rally. But he had to leave earlier that day for another engagement in New York City.

Following Mnumzana's greetings, SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, reporting for the party's Political Committee, said that the developments in South Africa and the protests in the United States mean "that we have to take a second look at what's been happening since we've been here, so that we can see what's possible to do when we leave."

He outlined the opportunities presented by the anti-apartheid campaign. "What we're heading into is a period where it's difficult for any union not to endorse the fight for freedom. It is difficult to believe that the opening of the school year in a few weeks will be normal," he added.

Barnes stated that "the decision we've made by unanimous consent is that this is an opportunity to throw every single thing we have, our entire movement, into this."

He urged that everything be done "to take this movement as it is, to take the coalitions as



Holbrook Mahn/IP

Some 900 delegates and observers attended SWP convention August 10-15.

they are, to take the people and organizations who are moving around this as they are, to take the union movement as it is, with its structure as it is, and get on board to do everything humanly possible to advance this."

To help kick off this effort, the *Militant* newspaper announced that it would resume publication one week earlier than scheduled after its summer break. It produced a special eight-page issue within days after the convention. SWP and Young Socialist Alliance members and their supporters immediately began selling it at anti-apartheid demonstrations throughout the country.

Moreover, the SWP's National Committee met right after the convention to discuss the nature of the Black revolutionary struggle in South Africa and the anti-apartheid movement in the United States.

## Party was prepared

The discussion in the party leading up to the convention as well as the reports, workshops, and union fraction meetings at the convention helped prepare the party to quickly respond to the mounting anti-apartheid protests. The central theme, in fact, of all convention activities was how to make further advances in turning the party outward.

Mary-Alice Waters, reporting for the National Committee on the fight against the U.S. war drive in Central America, noted that the successful protests against Washington's policies on April 20 represented "a real turning point in the development of a mass action movement against U.S. intervention in Central

America and the Caribbean." She pointed to the significant union involvement in the actions, which drew some 125,000 demonstrators in Washington and other North American cities.

The April 20 protests, Waters said, provided "a new opening, a new opportunity that we were able to throw ourselves into." Party members actively sought support from fellow unionists, farmers, students, and others and began turning outward, she said. "We made some errors, but we learned from them and are stronger for it," she noted.

Waters underlined the high stakes in the fight against Washington's aggressive policy in Central America and the Caribbean. This policy, she said, is to relentlessly push toward an ever-expanding war, in order to overthrow the revolutionary government in Nicaragua. "We are part of the battle," she affirmed, "to try to push back the counterrevolutionary drive and hold off a full-scale U.S. invasion of Central America."

## Steps forward in union work

A big step in turning the party outward was registered by the party's nine industrial union fractions, each of which held meetings during the convention.

The fractions are in the following unions: Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; United Auto Workers; United Steelworkers; Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers; International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; International Association of Machinists; United Transportation Union; International Union of

Electronic Workers; and United Mine Workers.

Following the meetings of the unionists, the convention heard a report on the organization of the party's union work. This report, which was approved by the delegates, explained that experience has shown that party branches face difficulties when they have only one union fraction. A branch can have a more rounded political life and a better knowledge of the labor movement by having more than one fraction, even if each fraction is smaller, the report pointed out.

It was reported that the national auto fraction — the party's largest — decided to release 40 of its 100 members to help build fractions in other cities and other unions.

John Gaige, the party's national farm work director, reported that some of the farmers in the United States who are fighting against foreclosure are becoming curious about and are identifying with revolutionary struggles in Central America. He explained the significance of two tours to Nicaragua organized by working farmers.

Gaige also described the rich experiences of party members who have participated in farm protests this year in the Midwest. But, he pointed out, exploited producers on the land are found throughout the country, and paying close attention to their situation is a key job for all branches.

Gaige's report, based on discussions in the National Committee, is the first report on U.S. farmers to be adopted by an SWP national convention.

#### New look at Black struggle

Mac Warren, reporting for the National Committee, initiated a discussion on the key social changes that have taken place following the defeat of legal racial segregation in the 1960s. He reiterated the significance of this momentous conquest — not only for Blacks, but for working people as a whole. He noted that most gains achieved through this victory remain intact, creating a big obstacle to the capitalist rulers' offensive against the working class and exploited farmers.

He stated that a new civil rights movement is not on the agenda. Rather, the oppression of

Blacks, coupled with their greater integration into the unions, is spurring them to play a vanguard role in working-class struggles. This will be very important for the big labor battles that are coming, he said.

Warren outlined some of the changes in the class structure of the Black community, especially the development of a large layer of better-off Blacks. This layer, he said, identifies more with the well-being of capitalist society than with the struggles of Black workers.

The convention reports were based on two major documents. The first was "The Revolutionary Perspective and Leninist Continuity in the United States." This resolution was first submitted to the SWP membership leading up to the party's August 1984 convention. The final, edited form was the result of further discussion in the SWP discussion bulletin, in party branches, in the SWP National Committee, and at the August 1984 and January 1985 party conventions. The January convention voted to submit this resolution to the 1985 World Congress of the Fourth International. There it received 13 percent of the votes of the regular and fraternal delegates.

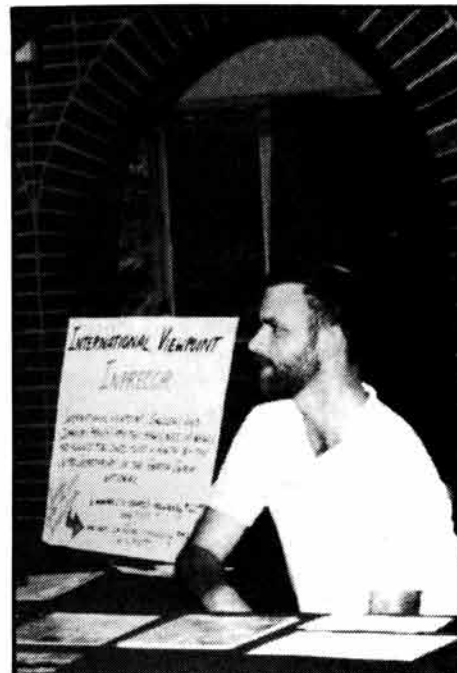
The second document was "The Workers' and Farmers' Government in the United States: An Alliance of the Exploited Producers," adopted by the party's August 1984 convention.

The general line of both documents, which appear in the Spring 1985 issue of *New Internationalist*, was reaffirmed by the August 1985 convention.

#### Class-struggle perspective in U.S.

In addition to the convention reports and discussion, there was an extensive educational program. This was opened the first evening with a talk by Jack Barnes, who presented many of the themes that were covered in the classes, workshops, and convention reports throughout the week.

The United States is a difficult country to understand, both from the outside and from the inside, he stated. The way class relations appear masks the reality of the country. The fact is, he pointed out, "The class struggle is deepening in the United States because the laws of capitalism are unfolding here with a ven-



Janet Post/IP  
60 subscriptions to "International Viewpoint," a fortnightly published under auspices of United Secretariat of Fourth International, were sold at SWP convention.

geance. Great battles are being prepared, even though not consciously by very many workers or those claiming to speak for them at this moment."

"The three pillars," Barnes pointed out, "that make up the social relations of production in the United States are the wages system, the rents and mortgages system, and the colonial system."

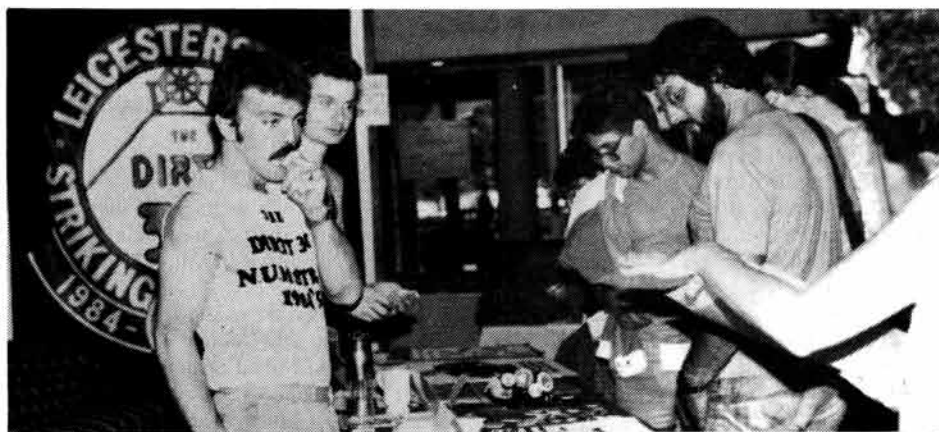
He also noted that the structure of the working class is changing, as it has for decades. "It is not the bourgeoisification of the working class as a whole, but the proletarianization of layer after layer of working people of every kind which has marked, and continues to mark, American history," he said. Nor is the introduction of new technology raising the skill level of workers. To the contrary, he said, workers are becoming less skilled.

At the moment, he said, the ruling-class offensive is greatest on the ideological front. Its goal is to prevent working people from distinguishing between their friends and enemies and block them off from their potential allies.

#### More than 90 classes

More than 90 classes were held during the week on a wide variety of political questions. Some were given by participants from other countries, including Australia, Britain, Canada, Iceland, Kampuchea, New Caledonia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Altogether there were 74 international guests from 10 countries.

Among the visitors were seven British miners who were active in the recent miners' strike. They held a well-attended panel where



British miners' table attracted great interest.

they described the strike and the current campaign on behalf of miners victimized by the employers. Like many of the other international participants, the miners had a table where they sold materials and held informal discussions.

The YSA organized a panel discussion on the Fourth International's youth conference held in July in France. In addition to members of the YSA who attended the conference, the panel included participants from Canada and New Zealand.

During the convention, greetings were presented by a representative of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

Michel Prairie, coeditor of *Nouvelle Internationale*, a French-language magazine of Marxist politics and theory published in Montreal, explained the importance of this new publication for building the Canadian section of the Fourth International in Quebec.

SWP leader Larry Seigle reported on the expansion plans of Pathfinder Press in North America, Britain, and the Pacific region. These include stepping up promotion and sales from its offices in London and Sydney.

The final rally focused on solidarity with fighters around the world. The speakers included: Susanna Ounei, a leader of the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front in New Caledonia, who is currently touring the United States; Mick Richmond, one of the British miners from Leicestershire; Mary-Alice Waters, who had just returned from Cuba where she attended a major conference on the foreign debt; Ellen Haywood, national secretary of the Young Socialist Alliance; and Andrea Gon-

zález, SWP candidate for mayor of New York. *Militant* editor Malik Miah, who chaired the event, announced the launching of a drive to raise \$125,000 for the Socialist Publications Fund.

During the convention, the credentials committee reported that of the 70 delegates elected by branches, 48 were women, 6 Black, and 2 Chicano. Of those attending the convention

nearly 200 were YSA members. For 66 participants, it was their first SWP convention. A big majority of those attending belonged to industrial unions. Three participants were working farmers.

The convention elected a new National Committee of 50, which includes 17 women, 12 Blacks, and 7 Latinos. Four members of the Control Commission were elected. □

## 214 'IP' subscriptions sold; drive launched

Two hundred fourteen subscriptions to *Intercontinental Press* were sold at the August convention of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. New subscribers accounted for 77 of them, and 137 readers renewed their subscriptions.

This impressive sale kicks off an international drive to get more *IP* readers in the next 10 weeks. In order to help promote this effort we are making a special offer to subscribers. If you subscribe for six months or longer or extend your subscription, you can receive a \$2.95 discount on one of two books. The books are: *War and Crisis in the Americas: Speeches 1984-85* by Fidel Castro; and *Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution*. Both books were published this year by Pathfinder Press in New York.

The 250-page book by Castro includes speeches and interviews by the Cuban leader made between December 1983 and March 1985.

The 412-page book on Nicaragua includes speeches, articles, and interviews with about a

dozen Sandinista leaders from 1982 to 1984.

Many of the documents in both books first appeared in English in *IP*, which shows the kind of substantial reading you get when you subscribe to *IP*. The speeches and articles we carry by Castro and other Cuban leaders and by the Sandinistas remain one of our most appealing features. One reader, who recently changed his address, sent a note praising our "fabulous magazine" for publishing Castro's speeches. "Keep up the good work!!!" he urged.

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# Five years of progress

## Ties with anticolonial struggles strengthened

By Andy Jarvis

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

\* \* \*

July 30 marks the fifth anniversary of Vanuatu's national independence following 75 years of joint French and British colonial rule. Throughout its past five years in government, the ruling Vanuaaku Party has continued to implement the political course it charted during the 10-year struggle it led for independence.

This political course centres on eradicating the legacy of colonial domination and developing Vanuatu as a nation run by and for ni-Vanuatu (the people of Vanuatu), and at the same time offering support and solidarity to all peoples fighting for independence and national liberation, above all in the South Pacific.

A number of recent examples illustrate the way the Vanuaaku Party is advancing these goals.

### Colonial legacy

Vanuatu is a nation of 80 islands with a population of 130,000. Colonial rule kept the country in a state of extreme economic backwardness and underdevelopment. Economic activity declined further during the final years of the independence struggle.

Despite this legacy inherited by the ni-Vanuatu at the time of independence, Vanuatu today has the fastest economic growth rate of any Pacific Island country. The Gross National Product rose by an estimated 4 percent during 1984. Dependence on foreign aid to subsidise the budget has been reduced by 50 percent.

This progress is a product of the economic policies being implemented by the Vanuaaku Party government. Among the measures introduced have been the following:

- A major land reform under which European-owned land, amounting to over a third of the total, has been restored to ni-Vanuatu tribal ownership.
- Ni-Vanuatu have been appointed to hundreds of jobs previously occupied by European civil servants.
- The size of the civil service and the former high wages and privileges of this layer have been sharply reduced. Budget savings resulting from these moves have been redirected towards providing schools, hospitals, and housing.
- Major steps have been begun towards developing the infrastructure of the country —

roads, communications, water supply, etc. One of the most ambitious goals set by the government is to provide water supply and sanitation for all by 1990.

• Priority has been placed on a programme of economic diversification. This includes encouraging the development of forestry, fishing, and the cattle industry, as well as the production of new export crops such as vanilla, cocoa, and coffee. At the same time considerable progress has been made towards replanting the severely rundown coconut plantations and improving the quality of the copra produced. (Copra still accounts for 75 percent of Vanuatu's exports.)

• A number of small local industries have also been developed. These include ice-cream and chicken factories, a cement and concrete plant, and tourism-related enterprises.

• Trade unions have been developed with the direct encouragement and support of the government. To date, 13 unions have been formed and are joined together in a federation — the Vanuatu Trade Union Congress.

Earlier this year the government decreed a national minimum wage for all workers, which is two to three times greater than the previous ruling rural wage rates. (Around 85 percent of the population is rural-based.)

Because of Vanuatu's traditional dependence on aid from imperialist powers — above all Britain, Australia, and France — implementing such policies has not been without repercussions and difficulties.

For example, following the recent announcement of the national minimum wage,

the Commonwealth Development Corporation withdrew its involvement from major coffee and cocoa projects.

Aid funds and compensation owed by the French government have often not been paid, or have been delayed.

Other aid often has strings attached. Projects given highest priority by the ni-Vanuatu are not always those that foreign governments and other aid donors are willing to assist.

Similarly, big business corporations undertaking projects in Vanuatu have often refused to agree to the terms requested by the Vanuatu government.

It is Vanuatu's foreign policy, however, which has caused the most alarm among the imperialist powers in the region. Their concern is reflected by the periodic scare-mongering articles published in the big-business media.

"Vanuatu poised to arm Kanaks" and "Castro's toehold on our doorstep" are two recent headlines that reflect the sort of sensational articles that are written.

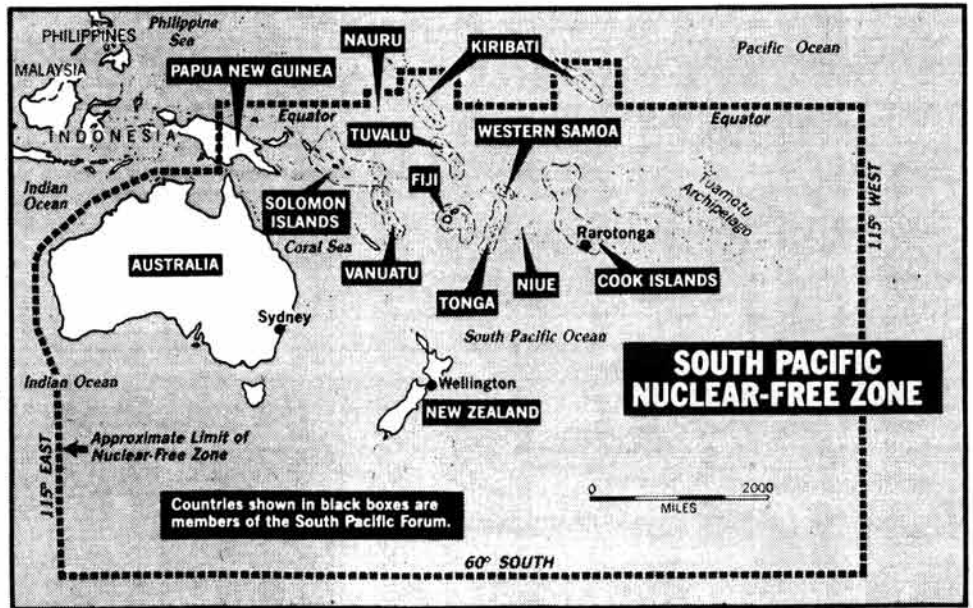
Vanuatu has consistently rejected criticisms of its actions from imperialist politicians and the media.

"It's like trying to keep people under your toe or in line," declared Prime Minister Walter Lini in an interview last year. "This we cannot accept. We are an independent and sovereign state. We decide for ourselves and we shall not let others decide for us."

### Support for struggles

A number of recent examples highlight the Vanuaaku Party's commitment to maintaining its independent foreign policy course.

- At the end of June the Vanuaaku Party, in conjunction with its own annual conference, hosted a meeting of South Pacific independence movements. In attendance were representatives of the FLNKS (Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front) of New Caledonia, Fretilin (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor) of East Timor, OPM (Free Papua Movement) of West Papua, and inde-



pendence groups from French Polynesia.

Vanuatu is the only Pacific country to recognise the OPM. Similarly it supports Fretilin as the "sole and legitimate" representative of the East Timorese people. Both West Papua and East Timor are occupied by Indonesia.

- Vanuatu has maintained ongoing close collaboration with the FLNKS in working to aid the Kanak independence struggle. In early June the Vanuatu government hosted a joint meeting of fellow independent Melanesian governments, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, together with the FLNKS. The meeting agreed on a common policy and course of action.

This included a demand that the South Pacific Forum meeting in Rarotonga [one of the Cook Islands] in August take "more positive and concrete" action on New Caledonia and agreement to act unilaterally in taking the Kanaks' case to the United Nations decolonisation committee if the South Pacific Forum fails to do so. It was also decided to reject the French government's proposals for a referendum in New Caledonia "without electoral reforms which would guarantee Kanak independence."

- Vanuatu boycotted the South Pacific Arts Festival in Tahiti in June as a protest against continuing French nuclear testing and colonialism in the Pacific. When Greenpeace's *Rainbow Warrior* arrived in Vanuatu in June it was welcomed by Walter Lini and other government ministers. An official from the Prime Minister's office, Charles Rara, joined the *Rainbow Warrior* for the planned protest journey to Tahiti as a demonstration of the government's support.

- The Australian representative of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation), Ali Kazak, visited Vanuatu in May. According to a report in the *May/June Free Palestine*, Walter Lini gave Kazak an assurance of Vanuatu's support for the PLO and said that they would do more to make people in the region aware of, and support, the aspirations of the Palestinian people.

#### Relations with Cuba

- Cuba's newly accredited ambassador to Vanuatu, Ana-María González Suárez, visited Vanuatu in April. According to the *Vanuatu Weekly*, González and Walter Lini held talks on developing "bilateral co-operation between the two countries, as well as exchange visits."

González is reported as saying that Cuba is "impressed by the positions Vanuatu is taking regionally and internationally on many issues such as support for liberation movements" and that it would support Vanuatu's "struggle to maintain its independence and non-aligned position."

Vanuatu is the only South Pacific country to have diplomatic relations with revolutionary Cuba. It has also established relations with Vietnam. Vietnamese ambassador Huang Bao Son visited Vanuatu late last year, where he is reported to have praised Vanuatu's "staunch struggle" against imperialist and colonial domination.

It is these diplomatic links which have been most sensationalised by imperialist politicians and the capitalist media, as well as by the pro-imperialist opposition parties inside Vanuatu itself.

Despite such attempts to try and use anti-communism to discredit the Vanuaku Party, the party continues to enjoy mass support among the majority of ni-Vanuatu.

The party was resoundingly re-elected in general elections in November 1983. And in an important election in April, the Vanuaku Party won the mayoralty elections in Port Vila, the capital, for the first time.

Imperialism's hostility and lack of respect

towards Vanuatu has not only been reflected through provocative articles in the capitalist media and restraints on economic aid.

Early this year French marines invaded and occupied Vanuatu's southern-most territory, the uninhabited Matthew and Hunter Islands. France, which claims the islands as its own, regards them as strategically important for enlarging its maritime zone centred on New Caledonia. The two islands are situated 500-600 kilometres east of New Caledonia.

The FLNKS in New Caledonia supports Vanuatu's legitimate title to the islands. A detachment of French marines is now permanently stationed on the territory. □

## Paris defies antinuclear protests in Pacific

In the face of growing protests in the South Pacific, French President François Mitterrand refuses to halt the testing of nuclear weapons in the region. On August 18, he ordered France's armed forces to prevent "by force if necessary" any attempt to enter French territorial waters where nuclear tests are scheduled to be held.

This directive came a month after a boat owned by the environmental group Greenpeace was blown up in Auckland, New Zealand, causing the death of one crew member. The vessel, the *Rainbow Warrior*, was to have led a flotilla of boats protesting French nuclear weapons testing in the Pacific. Another ship is on its way from Europe to replace the *Rainbow Warrior*. The focus of the Greenpeace protests is nuclear tests Paris has scheduled in the next few months on Mururoa in French Polynesia.

During the last 40 years, Britain, France, and the United States, the nuclear powers with colonies, trusteeships, and other territorial outposts in the region, have conducted 210 atmospheric and underground nuclear tests. This has been done with little regard for the health and safety of the Polynesian, Micronesian, and Melanesian peoples living there. Moreover, the tests and other military operations have been carried out in total contempt for the Pacific islanders' democratic right to determine their own affairs.

Along with their struggle for independence from colonial rule, the Pacific islanders have demanded a nuclear-free Pacific. The fourth Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific Conference, meeting in Vanuatu in July 1983, affirmed that "the Pacific people's struggle for self-determination and independence [is] inseparable from the struggle to attain a nuclear-free Pacific."

An antinuclear pact signed by eight South Pacific governments on August 6 reflects this mounting pressure against the storage, transportation, and testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific. The treaty, which declares the South Pacific a nuclear-free zone, was signed by Western Samoa, Tuvalu, Fiji, the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, New Zealand, and Australia. Representatives from the remaining five members of the Pacific Forum, a 13-member regional organization, took it back to go

through constitutionally mandated procedures at home before deciding to sign it. They are Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Nauru, and the Solomon Islands.

The signers announced that they will send representatives to the United States, France, and Britain and urge those governments to apply the agreement to their own territories in the region. The treaty bans the use of or testing of nuclear weapons and the dumping of nuclear wastes in a zone extending from Australia to South America and from the equator to Antarctica. It also prohibits the stationing of nuclear weapons and the exportation of nuclear material without strict safeguards.

After a long debate, however, the Pacific Forum governments did not agree to ban the passage of nuclear ships or aircraft. Visits by nuclear ships or aircraft are considered to be a matter for the individual governments.

Since early this year, the New Zealand government has refused port calls by U.S. warships unless it is assured that they are neither nuclear-powered nor carrying nuclear weapons. Washington refuses to give such guarantees, and as a result its ships have in effect been barred from New Zealand. Several Pacific Forum members, including the Australian government, however, continue to accept port calls by U.S. nuclear warships.

Several newspapers in France have charged that the French man and woman arrested by New Zealand authorities in connection with the sinking of the *Rainbow Warrior* are French secret police agents. The New Zealand police have identified the woman as a captain in the French army. This has generated considerable controversy in France — a controversy that comes on top of deepening debate over the Kanak revolt in the French colony of New Caledonia. Paris has stationed tens of thousands of troops there to support French settlers against the independence struggle of the Kanaks, the native Melanesian people.

Moreover, Mitterrand faced big protests this summer in the French colony of Guadeloupe in the Caribbean. He finally was forced to back down and release Georges Faisans, a prominent independence fighter being held in a French prison. □

# Sandinistas explain end to payment in kind

## *Urge Nicaraguan workers to strengthen unity, fight speculation*

[In May 1985, the Nicaraguan government announced the elimination of "payment in kind," a practice whereby workers in some consumer industries were allowed to purchase products made at their factory at low prices. We are printing here excerpts from a meeting Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and other Sandinista leaders had with factory workers in Managua, some of whom opposed the government's decision to end payment in kind.

[The payment-in-kind practice grew out of a decision in 1980 to make products available cheaply to workers in some factories in order to help alleviate immediate needs of their families. The practice mainly affected workers producing cloth, garments, shoes, and food.

[In 1983, led by the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST), Nicaraguan workers agreed to forego a wage increase because of the economic problems the country was suffering, due in large part to the U.S.-backed mercenary war.

[Local agreements, however, were concluded at some factories establishing quotas of products workers could buy cheaply to compensate for the lack of a wage increase. The CST led the struggle to win the payment-in-kind quotas at that time.

[However, as the war escalated further, demanding even greater allocation of the nation's resources to defense, and as Nicaraguan capitalists took advantage of the situation to create artificial shortages and jack up the prices of basic goods, the payment-in-kind practice no longer fulfilled its original purpose. Some workers began obtaining large quantities of goods from factory commissaries in order to put them on the black market at grossly inflated prices.

[By September 1984, when a national union assembly was held, the problems of shortages, inflation, and declining buying power had become acute for the working class. The assembly emphasized winning the war and increasing factory production as the keys to improving the economic situation. The problem of some workers abusing their access to the commissaries was also addressed. A resolution was adopted to reduce workers' payment-in-kind quotas. It explained that payment in kind "is an obstacle to the rational distribution of our resources and encourages speculation. . . ."

[In a May Day 1985 message, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) called for making "decisive progress in eliminating payment in kind and barter between unions. Under the present conditions these practices foster a lack of supplies in the official distribution channels and contribute to speculation, to increasing inflation, and to the breakdown of the urban workers. These practices also give no

thought to the peasants and agricultural workers who are selflessly laboring under war conditions to provide food to the whole nation. The entire people must resist the aggression equally!"

[When the U.S. trade embargo went into effect a few days later, Nicaraguan Vice-president Sergio Ramírez delivered a speech May 10, announcing that payment in kind would be eliminated immediately as part of a package of economic measures to meet the effects of the embargo.

[The announcement initially got a mixed reaction from workers who had benefited from the payment-in-kind practice. Tiny ultraleft sectarian groups sought to exploit the situation, attempting to whip up confused workers against the government and the FSLN. Right-wing opponents of the government also campaigned against the measure.

[At the Fanatex textile plant in Managua, two ultraleft groups tried to provoke a strike against abolition of payment in kind. These were the Nicaraguan Communist Party (PCN) and the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT).

[The PCN leads a small union federation called the Federation of Trade Union Unity and Action (CAUS). At one time following the 1979 revolution, the CAUS was the union representing the Fanatex workers. Its misleadership so disrupted production at the plant that the workers rejected the CAUS, and now Fanatex workers are represented in their big majority by the CST.

[In the early years of the revolution, the CAUS organized several strikes in nationalized enterprises, often around the demand for immediate wage increases.

[The PRT, previously known as the Revolutionary Marxist League (LMR), claims to be Trotskyist and is identified with the Latin American political current led by Nahuel Moreno of the Argentine Movement for Socialism (MAS).

[The role of sectarian groups was an aspect of the discussion at Ortega's meeting with workers about payment in kind. The meeting took place June 4 at the Fanatex plant and included workers from that plant, the People's Metallurgical Industry, the Pepsi Cola plant, and other factories, as well as students.

[The form of the gathering was a "De Cara Al Pueblo," or "Face the People" meeting, in which leaders of the revolution appear in neighborhoods and at factories to field questions and hear grievances and suggestions.

[Ortega opened the meeting with a report on the war against the U.S.-backed mercenaries and the stakes in this battle for the Nicaraguan working class. We have selected below excerpts from the questions and answers about

payment in kind that followed Ortega's presentation. The transcript and translation are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

Good afternoon, compañeros. My name is Dionisio Felipe Mendoza Martínez. I am from the People's Metallurgical Industry. I am going to ask a question, but first, I want to clarify something about what the compañero said about cloth. There are 250 workers in my plant. We have not received any cloth. It may be that they only give him a remnant of six yards, but those of us who work in the metallurgical industry get nothing. I just wanted to clarify that.

Now my question to Commander of the Revolution and President of the Republic of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega Saavedra. Compañero commandante, I want you to tell me why partisan, ultraleft sects are allowed to provoke strikes causing indiscipline and disorder, and join with ultraleftist international groups, and ultraright groups, to discredit our revolution.

*Daniel Ortega.* Well, I want to first address myself to something that is closely related to the question the compañero posed, and that is the matter of economic demands.

What do the workers fight for? What do the people fight for? Of course the workers and the people fight for a better situation in terms of justice and freedom. In terms of justice, it is to end the economic exploitation of the workers, to have the possibility of educating their children, of meeting their basic needs for food, transportation, and, as much as possible, housing.

In terms of freedom, it is for the worker to have the possibility to make himself heard, to participate in the workers' own organizations, to have a country that is truly free, sovereign, independent.

When the Sandinista Front was fighting against the Somoza dictatorship, naturally it took up these demands of the workers as a goal to be achieved.

But in the short term, what had to be done? In the short term it was not possible to fight for economic demands. What was that kind of struggle? The struggle around economic demands meant organizing the workers to carry out strikes, to increase the wages at a particular workplace. That was as far as the economic struggle went.

And then afterwards, when prices went up again, another strike by the workers to raise their wages again. That was the typical economic struggle: a struggle that could be described as sectoralist and egotistical. It did not go to the root of the problem; it did not solve



the problem.

Ever since then, since the time of those struggles against the Somoza dictatorship, there have been supposedly revolutionary political groups, some of them allegedly Marxists, or Leninists, others Trotskyist, groups of various denominations, one might say, who have put forward this type of economic struggle. And they were enemies of the Sandinista Front.

Why? Because we thought that the struggle of the Nicaraguan people could not be a struggle of the economic kind. Because the economic struggle in these circumstances means to accept the set-up of ruling-class domination. It means, simply, to ask the exploiters, the Somoza dictatorship, the capitalists, for crumbs to improve the wages of the workers.

And in some cases this became payment in kind. There were many enterprises even in the time of the Somoza dictatorship that were giving payment in kind to keep the workers quiet. It was good for the exploiters' system that the workers should carry out this kind of struggle. Because it kept them quiet for a while. The workers were pacified with the contracts that were signed by Somoza's Ministry of Labor and the leaders of those political groups that carried out this kind of economic struggle.

What did the Sandinista Front propose? The Sandinista Front said that the workers should take power.

Clearly this was a dangerous proposal. One has to risk one's life in seizing power. For the workers to take power means to destroy, to do away with the power of the exploiters, of the bourgeoisie and Somozaism. It was necessary to eliminate that power.

And to accomplish that it was necessary to do battle with the military instrument that capitalism used to oppress the Nicaraguan people, which was Somoza's National Guard and the Somozaist security apparatus.

For that reason, all those different groups, who called themselves all different things and who described themselves as the representatives of the workers and of the proletariat, hated the Sandinista Front. They said that the Sandinista Front was an organization of terrorists and provocateurs; in this they agreed with Somoza. Because we said that it was necessary to overthrow the system so the workers could come to power, and that it was necessary to break with the strategy of economic demands.

The revolution triumphed, and these people are still theorizing. They are very good at theorizing, and talking, and calling themselves the representatives of the proletariat, of the workers, of the peasants. But they did not dare take up arms against the Somoza dictatorship. Some members of these organizations broke with their organizations and fought on the side of the Sandinista Front. Some died fighting with the front.

Others did not. Others on July 17 [1979] were still swearing that the National Guard was going to crush the front. They were still calling us provocateurs and lunatics for having

launched a battle against the National Guard. They were still saying the economic struggle was better.

Well, if we had stuck with the economic struggle, we would still be waging the economic struggle today, maybe against the son of Somoza. He would be president today, and we would still be carrying out the economic struggle against him.

And we would have to prepare ourselves to carry out the same struggle against his son. We could spend centuries carrying out that struggle, and the workers would never have come to power in Nicaragua.

Instead, we came to power, we defeated the dictatorship, we overthrew capitalist domination, and these people do not want to accept that fact. They do not want to accept the fact, as we have often pointed out in the National Directorate, that in a showdown like the one Nicaragua is going through, or in any type of confrontation, there can only be two sides.

In a baseball game you cannot have three teams playing at the same time; only two teams play. In a soccer match you cannot have three teams playing at once; there are only two teams. In a boxing match you cannot have three boxers fighting at once; only two can compete. And here in this struggle there can only be two sides: the people, the revolution with the Sandinista Front at the head, and imperialism, the bourgeoisie, and the sell-out parties. Nothing else. (applause)

But these people think there can be three sides in this fight. And doing that, they strengthen the enemy's team. It is impressive to see how the proimperialist news media in our country and abroad publicize the statements of those people who call themselves revolutionaries when they take a stand against the revolution.

Even today these people have the mentality of economic demands. They use smooth talk to try to win recruits to their unions and their political groupings

They now exist in our country because the plan of the revolution is for pluralism.

But the people are smart enough to know which is the revolutionary party, the revolutionary force that defends their interests, and which are the political forces that do not defend their interests. We are waging a political struggle here, an ideological struggle. And we are not afraid of that political struggle, we are not afraid of the ideological struggle, because we have confidence in the wisdom of the people. We know that the people will not be mistaken, the people will not be fooled, despite what is said day after day both by the right-wingers and by those who call themselves revolutionaries, who are really nothing but ultraleftists.

Some of them call themselves Leninists, but Lenin himself described them as ultraleftists. That is what Lenin called them, ultraleftists. And these ultraleftists line up with the right wing in this country to blame the Sandinista Front and the revolutionary government for all the problems that people in Nicaragua com-

plain about.

What they are doing is putting themselves on the other side, on the team of the opponents of the people, of the people's enemy. They are taking the side of imperialism, which is the enemy of the Nicaraguan people.

Talk is cheap; it is easy for them. It is easy to try to trap the workers, who do have real needs, who have real economic problems, who are now losing the payment in kind. It is easy to say to those workers, "Listen, *compañero*. This is an attack on the people. They are taking away rights that you won in the past. The FSLN is taking them away. That proves that the FSLN does not defend the interests of the workers. Let us have a work stoppage, let us go out on strike against the FSLN to make them respect the rights that the workers have won."

That kind of talk is cheap. And it is demagogic.

For us it would be the easiest thing in the world, and certainly for the *compañero* in charge of the enterprise it would be most pleasant, to say, "Instead of giving you 15 yards of cloth monthly, we are going to give you 30." I am sure everybody here would applaud us and would lift the *compañero* on their shoulders. (laughter)

But then what would happen? Revolutionaries cannot be demagogues. We cannot be phonies, and we cannot be liars. Telling the truth means making the effort to explain so people will understand; that is okay. If it means that some people will be upset because they do not understand, that is okay too. We have to tell the truth even if some people do get upset. We have to continue discussing with them until they understand why the measures we are taking are right. It is here that the question of the aggression comes into it. If the country were not being attacked, we would certainly not have as many social and economic problems as we are now experiencing. And I say social problems first because the human problems are the most important.

Which is more difficult for the Nicaraguan people, for the Nicaraguan family? Is it more difficult to give up 15 yards of cloth now? (Because we are not going to continue giving the 15 yards of cloth, which went to the speculators, even though it is true that the income helps a family.) Or is it more difficult to conscientiously send a son or nephew, or oneself, to the battlefield? That is, to give up one's life, not 15 yards of cloth. What are 15 yards of cloth, or a few bars of soap, or a pair of shoes — which is what payment in kind is in many cases — what is that compared to risking your life?

Those who are risking their lives in battle, the peasants who are working the fields and fighting, the young men mobilized at the battlefield, they are the ones who make it possible for these factories to function in relative normalcy. And they are not asking for payment in kind. They are working and fighting and living in very difficult conditions.

That is the price we now have to pay for

having made a revolution, for wanting to be free. That is the price we have to pay for confronting an enemy who wants to destroy this revolution.

And it is an enemy that does not solve the problems of countries that do not have revolutions either. What is the economic situation of the workers in Latin America? Perhaps the right-wing demagogues and the ultraleftist demagogues who blame the FSLN for the economic problems of this country will show us a country in Latin America that does not have economic problems as serious, or more serious, than ours, despite the fact that we are under attack.

More serious at least for the workers. Why? It is true that in many countries of Latin America businesses are functioning very efficiently. But at what cost? The cost is the exploitation of the workers. The cost is the lack of union organization for the workers. Just today the workers in a hospital in El Salvador rose up and shut the hospital down. And what did the democratic government of El Salvador do? They invaded the hospital with troops. Some of the patients died. The workers were beaten and taken prisoner.

That is how efficiency works in some of the countries that they hold up to us as examples of democracy. And that is how efficiency works in many factories too. What was the efficiency of capitalist enterprises under Somoza? Did the workers perhaps have a chance to organize, to speak out and discuss things? To know what was going on? To improve their conditions? The factories were run with the minimum number of workers.

That is something that we discussed yesterday in a meeting with cadre of the FSLN. It would be easy to make all businesses here run efficiently, with the mentality of capitalist exploitation. All that is needed is to run the factories with 50 percent or 60 percent of the workers they now have. Many enterprises could function with 40 percent.

But that is not what the revolution was made for. If we have problems with raw materials at a factory, what have we done? We have turned to the solidarity of the workers to take on these problems, and to be able to keep all the workers on the job.

So these demagogic and opportunist groups — there are always demagogues and opportunists — who want to present themselves as revolutionaries, have an opportunist and criminal attitude.

They are playing imperialism's game. They are putting themselves on the side of imperialism and making common cause with the right-wing groups. They do not want to recognize the leadership and the authority that the FSLN has in this country. They do not want to acknowledge that.

How do we combat these people? We are not going to try to silence them by decree. We are going to combat them by strengthening the consciousness of the workers. To the degree that the workers are conscious that we are in a situation of war, and that the enemy is even planning to invade, then they can understand

all of the measures we have taken.

We are going to go through even more difficult times to consolidate this revolutionary process. We may even have to confront a direct intervention by U.S. troops. And after defeating that intervention, as I am sure it will be defeated, we will go on to consolidate this revolutionary process. We do not want it, but we must be prepared to confront, if necessary, even a direct military intervention by the United States. Because the report that I read this afternoon is not something we made up. It is something that the U.S. strategists have been discussing and working on. So we must be prepared, consciously, to confront the worst moments.

Why is that? It is because we are a revolution. If we were not a revolution that defended the interests of the workers and peasants, then you can be sure that the United States and President Reagan would never have declared war on us. The U.S. government would not behave like this toward the FSLN, the government of Nicaragua, and the Nicaraguan people if this were not a true revolution. The United States wants to eliminate it because it is a true revolution. That explains their attitude.

And these people who, as we have said, have a demagogic and opportunist approach, are playing the foreign aggressor's game. They are trying to confuse the workers. In this, they are as mistaken as the U.S. government. The workers are able to understand economic laws. They are able to think for themselves. They are able to analyze things. They have not gone to the university, and they do not have degrees, but the workers can understand, and they must understand, the economic situation and the political and military situation. Then the workers will be better prepared to defend their interests against the ultraright and against the ultraleftists who are allied with imperialism.

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Good afternoon, Mr. President. My name is Omar Bravo Rodríguez. I am a worker at Fanatex. I am not afraid to speak out, because the people are here, and in Nicaragua the people speak out without fear. I do not want to be misunderstood. I want to repeat something that has already been mentioned several times. It is about the problem that we have here at Fanatex, or one of the problems, perhaps the one the workers here feel most strongly about. We want a direct response about the proposal concerning the cloth.

The commandante asks, what does it mean? What is 15 yards of cloth for us? I think that all of the Fanatex workers here know what that 15 yards means.

They all have the answer to that, and I do not know why they are all so quiet this afternoon. Sometimes when there is no supervisor or no one from the union around, or when we are alone in the lunchroom, or in the hall, everybody talks about the cloth. But this afternoon we are with our commander and president. It is here that we should speak our minds, without fear or hesitation.

Maybe for some people the 15 yards is a help for their family, because a dress or a pair

of pants or a shirt costs a lot of money. But for others whose wages are very low it has more economic importance. Because 15 yards of cloth a month is more than any family is going to use. So some take the approach of selling half of it to help themselves out financially.

I am going to tell you what 15 yards of cloth means to me personally. My salary is very low. I get 1,400 córdobas a week [US\$50]. You know that food prices are very high, and sometimes food is hard to get too. I am married. I have a wife and one child. But in addition my mother is about 75 years old, my father is retired, I have two orphan nephews, and five younger brothers. (laughter) And I have to support all of them on 1,400 córdobas a week.

So what happens? At the end of the week, I need more than 2,000 córdobas more. When we were getting the 15 yards of cloth, I had a hope of covering those expenses, but now that is gone. At this point — you do not want to hear about this but I am going to tell you — I owe about 10,000 córdobas since the payment in kind was suspended. And it is clear that nobody is going to pay that debt for me. So that is what 15 yards of cloth means for me.

It is quite possible that many of you here today have sons or brothers who are in the military service. Sometimes those young people in the military service were the breadwinners in their homes. And when they are mobilized, the family is left without a source of support. I know many families where the mothers are crying. They do not have a job, and their only son, who was supporting them, has been mobilized. So there is that problem too.

I hope you will excuse me for repeating this. But for me this is what 15 yards of cloth means. Now I would appreciate it if the president would tell us, what we are all waiting here for him to tell us — he has already said it indirectly, that the sacrifice for being a free country and the way that we have to confront the blockade by Yankee imperialism is by sacrificing the 15 yards. He has already said it indirectly. But right now we are all waiting for him to tell us bluntly, yes or no. Are they going to continue giving us the 15 yards or not? (some applause; shouts of, "No")

Because if there is not going to be that cloth (shouts of, "No, man") I think that . . . Some of you are afraid, right? (shouts of, "No") But I am not afraid. If there is not going to be that cloth, commander . . . There were 1,500 working here I think. But already something like 200 have left. And I think that if there is not going to be that cloth more than 1,000 will leave. (laughter) And it is not because they are counterrevolutionaries. The reason we leave is not that we are counterrevolutionaries or that we oppose the process. It is because of the low wages and the economic situation in each household. So we want a yes-or-no answer this afternoon. (shouts of, "No") Thank you.

*Commander Dora María Téllez.* We are going to try to go through this one more time so that the *compañero* can follow it. It seems that it is not clear yet. Listen, *compañero*.

The other day, May 1, the National Directorate presented something that is very important for us to keep in mind. If this country is for everybody, then we all have to take on the responsibilities together, and equally.

There was a metalworker here from the People's Metallurgical Industry [IMEP]. What did he say? He said, "We didn't get a single yard of cloth in our commissary." Is he responsible for the fact that he works somewhere where they make metal structures? Let us suppose that all productive workers have the right to payment in kind. Then what do we do? Do we give steel bars, or metal structures, or windmills to those who work at IMEP? Because one worker is no different from another. That is, you as a worker do not have more rights than Compañero Blandino from IMEP.

Or consider for example a worker for the INCA factory. We give him a roll of barbed wire to take home. He can take it home and sell it. So he sells it, at a profit. To whom? To an intermediary, who then sells it to a peasant. The peasant of course pays more for it.

The peasant uses the wire to enclose his little plot, and he plants his corn and beans. When he harvests the corn and beans he figures out the cost: "The barbed wire cost so and so, therefore I have to sell my corn and beans for so and so, right?" So he says, "I cannot sell this corn for 800 pesos. I have to sell my corn for 1,200 pesos to pay for that barbed wire I bought on the black market."

So those 1,200 pesos show up again when you have to pay 18 pesos for one pound of corn. You thought that you were defending your standard of living with that barbed wire, just as you thought you were defending it with those 15 yards.

What do you do with those 15 yards? You sell half of it, even if you have a big enough family that you could use it. Nevertheless, you sell half of it.

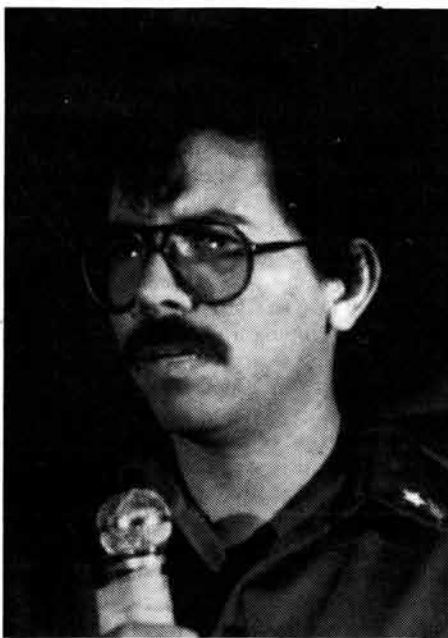
The worker at SANDAK, for example, gets shoes. Then he sells them, maybe to the same buyer who comes around to the corner here. So those SANDAK shoes do not make it to your commissary here because they are on the black market. And you buy them at twice the price. So we are really fooling ourselves.

Now what about the workers who do not get payment in kind? Are they any the less workers? Are their rights less? Health workers, for example. What type of payment in kind could they receive? Would we agree that health workers should take home medicine to sell it, so it can show up in the baskets at the Eastern Market? Should they be given that?

What payment in kind could teachers get? They cannot take home the students. (laughter) There is no way. (applause) Or a government worker. What type of payment could he get?

It is unquestionably correct that the workers should discuss the business of the cloth on their lunch hour. It is logical. It would be absurd to think that everyone here is thrilled with the suspension of payment in kind. That is not true.

It is true that this is a blow. It is a blow that affects families financially. It reduces the in-



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come of the workers. All of that is true. But it is also true that those 15 yards are a knife in the back of other workers. Because it is speculation.

How can some workers in this country have the right to speculate when others do not? What is the attitude that works in this country? Is it the attitude of "looking out for number one"? Or is it the attitude of "all working and all fighting to improve things"? Because the attitude of "looking out for number one" is the same as saying, "Let some other fool go fight, I am going to stay here and be comfortable."

If the combatants at the frontlines took the approach of looking out for number one, where would we be? The old boss would still be on the payroll at Fanatex, paying your wages. And the Guard patrols who repressed the workers on the Northern Highway [Managua's industrial zone] would be paid salaries by this company. You remember that. That is where we would be.

So looking out for number one cannot be the workers' policy. No worker can say, "Me first, and the others can go to the dogs." That is not the approach.

There is another responsibility that the workers at Fanatex have, and that workers at other factories and workplaces have. From here you have a hundred and some, or 200 workers mobilized. I have mentioned this on other occasions, but maybe some of the compañeros were not here at the last meeting.

What is the responsibility that workers have to the families of those who have been mobilized? Some compañeros began to give them the cloth. But others proposed that it would be better not to give them the cloth but to give them cash, 50 pesos. In other words some compañeros were looking for a cheaper way out. Because of course the cloth was not worth 50 pesos, it is worth 800 pesos a yard.

So who will take responsibility for the

mobilized workers who are not here? Those who have no family to support them, who have no commissary, who have no payment in kind and no wages and are not here complaining.

Just the other day I was here, and there were some compañeros here, including a young woman with her mother who had just given birth, and her 15-day-old daughter. The father had been mobilized seven days before the birth. Here, a worker from Fanatex. He did not think first of all, "Well, I had better solve my problem first."

Is there or is there not going to be payment in kind? There is not. I think that answer has been made sufficiently clear and public. (prolonged applause from most of the workers)

What is there going to be? What right do the workers have that it is correct to fight for? The commissary. From the 15 yards of cloth that are not going to be distributed at Fanatex, we are going to arrange to send some to the workers at IMEP, or to the workers in health or education. Of course some allotment should remain for the needs of the families of the Fanatex workers. But no more allotment for speculating. The needs of your family are one thing. It is correct to defend that, to the extent possible. Defending the right to speculate is another thing.

Look, if you have five kids, your mother and father, a total of eight people dependent on you, it is correct to suggest some quota of cloth to more or less cover the needs of the family. But it cannot be correct to suggest that there is a right to speculate. Because proposing the right to speculate is the same as proposing the right to stab any worker we meet in the street. There is no way; nobody can live at the cost of someone else's life. I think that is sufficiently clear.

The situation is not easy. It is quite difficult. We have never said that the economic situation of the workers is easy. It is a difficult situation. But we should take a look at some other countries. Sometimes here we forget about these things.

We should think about other countries where 500,000 or 600,000 workers are laid off without pay when the factories shut down. Or where they shoot down people in the streets to stop the strikes and mobilizations. We can consider any other country where, even without a war, the weight of the economic crisis falls on the workers, and there is no increase in wages. This is probably the only country in Latin America that increases wages, trying more or less to defend the workers against inflation. There is no other. We could check them off one by one. So we cannot get disoriented there.

So, are the Fanatex workers going to quit because there is not any more payment in kind? Well, the Fanatex workers can answer that question. We think the workers of this country are responsible enough and politically conscious enough to know what they are working for. You are the ones familiar with the work you do.

If the Fanatex workers all quit, that is a political thing. It means forgetting about the fact

that you make the cloth for uniforms. It means abandoning the soldiers in the frontlines. You have a political responsibility, not just with the soldiers, but with the people.

So I do not think all the Fanatex workers are going to quit. Some will, maybe some of those here today. We all know that there are a lot of new workers at Fanatex. Some of them perhaps came to work here because they were looking for the commercial connection. Because you all know that there were some workers here who bought cloth from the other workers. That is, they were not really workers anymore, they were dealers. They were dealers who came to work here so they could be in the front of the line to buy the cloth from the other workers. Maybe they left to carry on their business somewhere else, or to work somewhere else. We do not know which.

But there are other Fanatex workers, like the innovator who spoke before, who love their jobs and understand the importance their work has for the development of the country, to overcome the crisis and win the war.

We think the Fanatex workers are politically responsible. This revolution would not have gone on for six years if suddenly Fanatex could be left without workers just because payment in kind was cut off. We would not have moved forward an inch that way.

So, I believe, with this last go-round, the problem is more or less clear. I think we must insist that it is not correct to fight for rights that other people cannot have, or to evade obligations that everyone has. Everyone has the obligation to work. And many have the obligation to serve in combat. So let us not call for rights that others do not have, and let us not evade the duties that all of us in this country have. (applause)

*Ortega.* I want to go back to something that one of the Fanatex workers said responding in part to a question I had asked about the significance of the 15 yards of cloth.

In the first place I want to say that I think it is incorrect for this worker to criticize his fellow workers who are here today, claiming that they are afraid to speak up. This revolution was made so that the people could speak out. And the first task of the revolution was to teach them to read and write. So that they could speak, and write, and discuss, and criticize. That is why the revolution was made. And not so that we would have a population that was terrorized, that did not dare to speak up, that did not dare to say a word.

Why would they be afraid? Will they be fired if they say something that is not in agreement with what is being proposed? Will they be put in jail? Will they be killed? In that case we would be back in the times of the Somoza dictatorship, when a worker who spoke out would be exposed to all of that.

I think that the *compañero* knows perfectly well that in this country nobody is repressed for expressing their opinion, clearly and frankly, even when they disagree with the line of the government or the revolution.

In fact, this revolution is so open that we

give our enemies the chance to speak. Imperialism and the CIA have their mouthpieces here in Nicaragua, presenting their opinions every day. And many of those people who now speak up so bravely against the Sandinistas' policies, before, in the time of Somoza it seems that they had their lips shut tight. They did not dare to protest, or to question, much less to fight against the Somoza dictatorship.

So I think it is incorrect to try to manipulate the workers in that way, since I would call that manipulation. The workers here can say whatever they think; that is why we are here. We are here to discuss frankly, to exchange opinions, to clarify things. Because it is one thing to speak frankly, and it is another thing to inject this element of manipulation. It surprises me to hear that in what the worker says. Because it is manipulative to accuse the workers, saying, "Well, you are afraid to speak up now." Why would they be afraid to speak up now?

And if the majority of workers were arguing that it is necessary to keep the payment in kind of 15 yards, then we would have to continue the discussion as long as necessary until they persuaded us — because they might persuade us that perhaps it is beneficial to give the 15 yards as payment in kind, perhaps it is the right measure — or until we persuaded them that there cannot be payment in kind.

That is proper. But it also seems like manipulation to me when the *compañero* says that I asked what the 15 yards of cloth means. I did not just ask what the 15 yards of cloth means. I asked what it means compared to the situation of thousands of Nicaraguan combatants who are risking their lives every day at the front, and dying every day. That is the comparison that I made.

I know perfectly well what that 15 yards of cloth means from the economic point of view. It is a supplementary wage that workers here used to have.

But what could happen? If we continue the payment in kind, it poses, or it continues to pose a threat to the whole economy. Because even if you have that payment in kind, that does not bring down the price of goods — it goes into speculation. And what we have to fight above all is speculation. How do we have to fight it? First of all by putting in order the sources of speculation. And the workplaces have become sources of speculation.

It is true that the workers use speculation to defend themselves. But it is still speculation. So it is a strategic threat to the workers' economy. In the short term it is a defense against inflation. But in the long term, speculation increases inflation. It makes cloth, or shoes, or whatever more expensive. And it is the economy, it is the revolution, that tends to be undermined.

So these are extraordinary measures that have to be taken so that the economy is not undermined. Because if the economy collapses it would not be a question of having no payment in kind, it would be a question of having no Fanatex functioning. Do we want to close Fanatex because the economy has collapsed?

Which is better, that Fanatex continues to operate at the cost of the workers not getting extra pay in the form of payment in kind? That makes it possible for the factory to keep going, although the conditions in terms of pay are not the best, we realize. Or, on the other hand, should we give the 15 yards, the 30 yards, the 50 yards, and have everybody applaud us? But you are going to complain later, when the factory cannot operate because the economy has collapsed.

It is not just a problem of Fanatex. It is a problem of all the businesses that have the same policy. It is a problem of the Nicaraguan economy as a whole.

What is at stake here is the future of the Nicaraguan economy. We are looking for a way to survive. Despite the aggression, despite the blockade, despite all the damage that the United States is doing to Nicaragua, we want to survive. And to do that we have to go through some serious difficulties. What other road is open to us?

There is the road that the right-wing, proimperialist parties offer us. What is that? Simple. No Sandinista revolution. Let [right-wing leaders] Pedro Chamorro take power here, or Alfonso Robelo, or Arturo Cruz, let them form an army like the one they have got with Enrique Bermúdez in command, with the traitor [Eden] Pastora. Would that solve Nicaragua's economic problems?

It would certainly mean the surrender of Nicaragua's sovereignty, because that government would be a puppet of imperialism. But would it solve the economic problems?

Has the U.S. by any chance solved Honduras' economic problems? The Hondurans have given their territory — the government, not the people of Honduras, has given up their territory — to the United States in the hope that the U.S. would solve their economic problems. And are their economic problems solved? Or are Costa Rica's economic problems solved? The Costa Rican government, too, has opened up its territory to the mercenary bands, thinking that the United States was going to solve its economic problems.

Do you think the government of Costa Rica enjoyed it when they killed a dozen workers in the banana plantations last year? Did they do it because the U.S. government was solving their economic problems? If their problems were being solved, there would not have been a strike in the banana plantations of Costa Rica. And then the government of Costa Rica would not have found it necessary to defend their interests by killing banana workers. And the Honduran government would not be repressing the workers of Honduras if the United States were solving their economic problems. The United States is not even solving the problems of the Costa Rican and Honduran capitalists.

All the United States wants in Costa Rica and Honduras are military instruments. They do not care if the workers die of hunger. They want to occupy Central American territory as military bases with which to destroy the Nicaraguan revolution.

And they give Honduras arms, and send

U.S. troops, and build military airports. But how many factories have they built? How many factories has the United States given to Honduras? How many schools or hospitals? Or in Costa Rica? All they have offered to build are military projects. So that is not a solution for Nicaragua's economic problems either, even if Arturo Cruz and Alfonso Robelo and that whole gang of traitors and criminals were in power here.

That would not solve the economic problem. This would be a country of slaves dying of hunger. When have there been slaves who were not dying of hunger? It is always that way for slaves.

We are undergoing a trial by fire, so that in the future we can have a better economic situation. This trial by fire means that there are restrictions. We do not impose them on ourselves; they are imposed on us by the aggression.

Would it not be better if the 300 and some workers — I think there are that many from here mobilized for the battlefield — were here working at Fanatex, and not off there fighting? But then what would happen? In order to keep Fanatex working we need those 300 and some workers fighting, together with the thousands of other combatants from all over Nicaragua. That is the situation that the aggression puts us in.

Now, are the workers at Fanatex going to quit because the payment in kind was taken away? I do not think they are going to leave. If so, what would that mean for the day when things here get really bad; if, for example, the gringos invade and destroy Fanatex? What would the workers of Fanatex do when faced with a much greater difficulty like that, because that would certainly be a much greater difficulty than this is? If the Fanatex workers are going to leave now because they have lost 15 yards of cloth, on the day that the Yankee troops arrive, the devil himself could not stop them.

I do not believe that the Fanatex workers are cowards. There are no workers who are cowards. There are workers who are confused, but they are not cowards. A worker can be confused and misguided, but cannot be a coward.

So the compañero told us a story. I could tell him a lot of stories. Long, long stories. If we had stopped to think about those stories when the struggle against Somoza was going on, nobody would have fought against Somoza.

Fighting against Somoza meant you had to leave your family. There were a lot of FSLN combatants who were the sole support of their families. In other cases there were sons whose parents were old, and we too were the only support of our families.

And if we stopped then to think, of course everybody could stop and say, "Well, to go underground, to join the struggle, I will have to leave my family alone. And we are going to leave our families with nothing."

It is necessary sometimes to leave one's wife and kids and mother and father. How did the families survive? Often our families survived mostly on charity. That is how they got

by, asking for charity. Or better, I would say, by asking for solidarity from the people. That is how they survived. But that was the only way to confront the Somoza dictatorship, by sacrificing the family a little.

Now we are defending the revolution. It is a revolution that in its fundamental content and principles is a revolution of the workers and peasants. The defense of the revolution is based above all on the conviction, the consciousness, and the determination to be willing to give up everything to defend the revolution. Because the struggle is not over. We are still facing the same enemy.

We had a bit of a rest, and that is part of the problem. We had a rest in the first year of the revolution. Expectations were raised. In the second year the enemy had already begun the war against Nicaragua, but it still did not have much force. There continued to be expectations that the country could have a favorable economic situation in the short run. But the reality has been different, because the enemy has been building up a criminal army, stepping up actions against Nicaragua, striking more and more at our economy and at our lives. That demands of us that we must be more and more willing to defend this revolution.

And willingness to defend the revolution means that the workers cannot waver now. They have to say, "It is necessary to go fight." They cannot at this point begin to think, "Well, what about my family, my kids?" Clearly, of course, we have to appeal to the consciousness of those who remain not to forget the workers who went to fight and in doing so left their families.

All revolutions have difficult times. All of them. There has not been a revolution in the history of humanity that has not gone through difficult times.

There are examples of heroism in human history that are incredible. This year commemorates the 40th anniversary of the defeat of fascism. In the Soviet Union there were battles that were truly heroic, battles without parallel in the history of humanity. There were cities that were besieged, with millions of people in them, like Stalingrad, for example. There were cities that were besieged for as much as 900 days, and there was real hunger.

And what made it possible for them to resist Hitler's fascist troops in those besieged cities? The consciousness of the people, the consciousness of the workers. There, in the most difficult situation, suffering from hunger, they continued to fight and to resist that enemy until they defeated the enemy.

So, in these difficult times, we have to remember those heroic moments in the struggle of the Nicaraguan people and other peoples.

Today, June 4, is the sixth anniversary of the call by the FSLN for a general strike. Not a passive general strike like the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie wanted, but an active strike, a combative strike. That was the kind of strike that was required at that moment of the Nicaraguan revolution. That was the kind of strike the FSLN led.

Many people doubted at that time that we

would defeat the Somoza dictatorship. Among the doubters were the right-wing parties and the ultraleft parties. They said it was insanity to call for the strike and the final insurrection. Basically, they were cowards and opportunists. Because they knew what it meant to call for a combative strike. They knew what it meant to call for the insurrection. It meant a confrontation with the system, in which we had to risk our lives.

We are now in a similar situation. Clearly we are not going to call for a strike now, but we are calling for a combative mobilization of all the Nicaraguan people. What is this combative mobilization? It is the willingness to take up arms to defend the revolution. It is the effort at work to produce more. Speculation and the problems of prices and wages will only be overcome in this country as we produce more, and more efficiently.

A combative mobilization is more and more organization of the workers, united under a single leadership, along a single line, against attempts at division. I repeat, there can only be two contestants in this fight: on one side the people of Nicaragua, the workers and peasants, with the FSLN as their vanguard; and on the other side imperialism and the ultraright groups trying to destroy the revolution.

There is no middle ground. Anyone who tries to assume a middle position will really be helping imperialism, or will be crushed between the two forces.

An on-going, combative mobilization of the people, since we are being threatened by the enemy, threatened even with invasion, as I explained at the beginning. We need to maintain the spirit of June 4, 1979, when we kept up the combative strike and the general insurrection until the Somoza dictatorship fell.

We have to keep our consciousness up and the feeling of solidarity among the workers strong. Because the key to victory is there.

If the workers and the peasants and the youth are able to keep ourselves more and more united, the enemy will have no possibility of defeating us.

If all of us — workers, peasants, youth, women — are willing to sacrifice in the spirit of the insurrection that led to the revolutionary triumph of July 1979, then we can be confident that we will overcome everything we have to endure to consolidate our revolutionary process.

Then we will have better times, and imperialism will have to accept an established Sandinista People's Revolution, an independent Sandinista People's Revolution, a workers' and peasants' revolution. A Sandinista revolution with Fanatex functioning and its thousand and some workers working.

Free homeland! (shouts of, "Or death!")

## Correction

An incorrect photograph appeared along with the interview with Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto, on page 507 of our August 19 issue. The picture was of Arturo Cruz, not D'Escoto.

# Castro answers question on debt

*'We're in a position to create the greatest force we've ever achieved'*

[The fourth congress of the Federation of Latin American Journalists (FELAP) was held in Havana, Cuba, July 5-8. Central to the discussions at this congress were the Cuban government's proposals for united action by Latin American countries against the problem of their unpayable foreign debts.

[Reprinted below is a question posed to Cuban President Fidel Castro by Venezuelan journalist Eleazar Díaz Rangel, followed by Castro's response, given to the congress on July 7. They are reprinted from the July 21 issue of *Granma Weekly Review*, the English-language edition of the Cuban Communist Party newspaper. Footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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## Eleazar Díaz Rangel

Commander-in-Chief and President of the Republic of Cuba Fidel Castro; Comrades of the Presidium; Comrade Delegates; Comrade Delegates to the Women's Congress in Nairobi:

I shall be very brief, but I want to divide my address into two parts. The first as a delegate to this, the Fourth Congress, and the second as president of FELAP and vice-chairman of the Congress.

My views differ from most of those expressed here regarding the problem of the debt and Latin America's stand. Ten days ago, on Friday, June 28, the head of state of a Latin American country was asked for his opinion on Commander Fidel Castro's views and the Cuban theses on the unpayable character of the foreign debt of the Third World, particularly Latin America.

The head of state said he was familiar with them, that he had received a letter from Commander Castro enclosing the text of his conversation with a representative of the U.S. Congress and an academician<sup>1</sup> — the text that was given to us last night — and that he viewed it as a realistic analysis of this so pressing problem facing the Third World.

He said that despite the fact that from a mathematical standpoint Commander Castro was right that the debt was indeed unpayable, he did not agree with his opinion because he thought that there are other factors that are bound to have a bearing — and are, in fact, having a bearing — on this process, since the economies of Latin America are not only interfered with by the U.S. economy but are also very dependent on one another; and that a worsening of this crisis, a crash, or bankruptcy of these economies would inevitably have unforeseeable effects on the U.S. economy. For these reasons, he said the gradual solution to this serious problem affecting the majority of Latin America's countries could be found through rescheduling and the granting of new credits.

This seems to be the position taken by other Latin American governments. A few days later, the Argentine foreign minister stated a more or less similar position. Moreover, the Socialist International is promoting meetings and talks between main debtors and creditors, seeking solutions to the problem.

Therefore, my doubt, or shall we say my question — which might be answered tomorrow at the press conference — is whether it's possible to gradually solve the problem through negotiation, agreements, and so forth until it becomes a relatively manageable problem, and whether in that case the idea of finding the solution through continental unity in the refusal to pay the debt would be interrupted. I'm simply expressing my concern, based on the opinion of a Latin American head of state, hoping that Commander Castro will comment on it tomorrow at the press conference.

1. The interview was conducted in Havana in late March by U.S. Congressman Mervyn Dymally and political science professor Jeffrey Elliot. Portions of this interview were also published in the August issue of *Playboy* magazine in the United States.

In the second place, as president of FELAP and conveying what I consider to be the unanimous feeling of the delegates to this Congress, I would like to express our gratitude for something unheard of regarding heads of state's relations with events of this kind. I believe that even in those cases of closest affinity and relations between heads of state and international events, the presence of a head of state is limited to the official close.

Yet, despite his many activities and obligations, Commander Fidel Castro has been with us, paying more attention than many delegates to all that was said yesterday afternoon and this afternoon in connection with this problem which is so important to the area.

Therefore, I repeat, I would like to convey the unanimous opinion and feeling of the delegates, and especially of the Presidium, and reiterate our gratitude for your receptiveness and patience throughout these two days and also express our thanks to your comrades in the Cuban state, government, and Party who also accompanied us in this conference of Latin American journalists.

Thank you.

## Fidel Castro

Comrade Díaz Rangel, like the good journalist he is, has asked a question about this thorny problem. This is a very thorny problem, with thorns sticking out all over the place. (LAUGHTER)

I was also listening to the Uruguayan and the Brazilian comrades, who presented very interesting reports. I think all the speeches have been good, and some have been exceptional, really very good, and they have enlightened all of us on this problem. Now there is a constant process, because we have held several international events, with the labor union meeting still to come in the middle of this month. At the end of the month is another which will have a very broad political and social spectrum. The invitations have been sent and are now being delivered, but we see a constant element in all this, like a long line alongside an idea, the idea that the debt is unpayable.

Some time ago nobody dared say that the debt was unpayable. There were some, as was recalled here; first the workers in Uruguay and elsewhere began to say it, but many people felt it was immoral to say the debt couldn't be paid, there was a mystical respect for the words "non-payment" or "moratorium," although it is an institution as old and respectable as Roman Law. All those who know something about Roman Law know this.

Let me tell you a story. I remember that at home everyone would speak very badly about what was referred to as pawning something, and within the moral standards that we were raised by, we were told that this was very bad. The person who pawned something was guilty of a grave offense, it was something terrible. And, well, I grew up with the notion that the most perverse person in the world was the one who pawned something, who asked for a loan and gave something as a collateral. Then I started my first year of law school, and in second year I studied Roman Law, and as you know nearly all current civil legislation dates back to the era of Rome, civil contracts of all kinds. We had to study a lot of that.

Well, studying law and looking at some interesting things in a book, I saw a contract with a collateral guarantee. When I saw that for the first time in a book, which was something that existed 2000 years ago and the jurists and legal philosophers raised those issues, I said: Wow, pawning something is not really so sacrilegious. In fact it even seems something honorable and necessary that was invented long ago. Of course, worse things happened in that era, because those who were given loans without collateral or guarantees and then didn't pay back the loans were enslaved, and if they gave over their homes or objects they lost them. Many people had nothing to give over and they gave themselves. Then

they would be taken to the circus before the Romans got into the habit of amusing themselves by taking Christians to the circus.

Then the business of credits and pawning became honorable in my mind. I still remember, because there were certain needs, and the money sent from home wasn't enough. It was enough to live moderately, but you know what a student is like — there are always needs. And since the institution took on such a respectable cast in my mind, I also went to the pawnshop with some things, including a gold watch they had given me at home. Driven by youthful needs, I was forced to resort to loans with collateral. Well, that was worse than the foreign debt, let me tell you. The interest rates were higher, if there can be any higher than those on the foreign debt. But a myth had been shattered in my mind.

Roman Law also spoke of moratoriums, which were sometimes decreed by the individual and other times by the state. States have declared moratoriums so many times! It would be hard to find a Latin American country that hasn't declared a moratorium at one time or another. It happened in Cuba in the '30s, during the crisis. It is a venerable institution and one of the most just which has ever existed under certain circumstances.

The Mexican delegate recalled that [Benito] Juárez [president of Mexico in 1861] decreed a moratorium on the foreign debt — and what a time to do it! The warships and gunboats were dispatched to surrounding areas. I've thought a lot about that, if that can be done now.

There is no need to talk to you about this, because if you read this material you will see I discuss in detail the possibilities open to the industrialized world to do something similar now.

These last 40 years have not passed in vain. The heroic struggle of the Algerian people for independence against one of the most powerful nations in Europe was not in vain. The 30 years of war of the extraordinarily heroic Vietnamese people was not in vain — 30 years fighting against the most powerful countries in the world! The struggle of the Portuguese colonies was not in vain, and they were the last. The Cuban struggle and resistance was not in vain, nor is that of Nicaragua, the Salvadorans, the Saharawis in northern Africa. The struggle of so many peoples hasn't been in vain, and that has taught all of us and the whole industrialized world that we are worthy of a little more respect and that the greatest powers are unable to cope with even a small country determined to defend its independence and rights. (APPLAUSE)

I am convinced that they can't invade or blockade us, nor can they carve us up as they did repeatedly in past centuries, because if they were crazy enough to try something like that, then capitalism would come to a quick end all over the world. They can't do it and they know it.

If the Latin American governments were to take a strong, tough stand, I know what they would do right away. If two or three desperate governments decree a moratorium and do so openly, not quietly, because as long as they are silent the almighty creditors will also remain silent, since they don't want an uproar and they don't want the example to spread; but if some desperate countries do so and announce they have a right to do so, that it is just, and not only because they can't pay, because the inability to pay is part of the reason for not doing it, but also because it is unjust and criminal to pay in the way that is being demanded. (APPLAUSE)

Then when this happens, they won't impose an economic blockade or confiscate ships and planes from those countries, I am sure. If they did they would be benefiting the movement, the huge Third World liberation movement, because they would unleash a wave of solidarity that would make the Malvinas look insignificant by comparison with what would develop in response to something like that. At the time of the Malvinas, no money was at stake, but now the life and death of our peoples is at stake. Blockading would be like throwing gasoline on a fire, I am convinced of that. I know they're imbeciles but every so often they think. (APPLAUSE)

In addition to being imbeciles, they have always demonstrated their contempt for our peoples. Of course they view us with contempt. For example, how many years have they been blockading us? For nearly 26 years they've looked down on us, and now we say compare how we are doing in all fields with countries that have much more economic resources than Cuba; compare us with those they tried to present as political and social models in this hemisphere, and I'll show you many things.

When I talk to people from the United States they are quickly caught off guard. I ask them what the prostitution rate is in such and such place and how many are there here, the number of beggars there and here, how much drugs are consumed there and here.

I also ask them how many casinos there are there and here; how many unemployed there and here; the educational level there and here; school enrollment for ages 6–12 there and here; school enrollment for ages 13–16 there and here; how many academic institutions there and here; how many teachers per student there and here; how many health institutions there and here; how many doctors there and here; the infant mortality rate, how many die in the first year of life, in the second, and in the third, etc., etc. How many unemployed there and here? How many millionaire thieves, looters of the public treasury, there and here?

There is no possible comparison. I am almost shamed by the lack of arguments with which they must respond to elementary questions. (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE) They can't resist, they've spent their whole lives talking garbage, idealizing some things and slandering others in a desperate effort, using all their mass media to prevent the spread of revolutionary ideas. We have been blockaded for 26 years, but they have nothing they can use against us in any field. Nothing.

Our trade is insignificant, our trade with the Western world; 85 percent of our trade is with the socialist countries. This crisis only affects 15 percent of our trade, we are the least affected. That is exactly why we can carry out this campaign and speak with full freedom. In a horrifying

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### **The greatest powers are unable to cope with even a small country determined to defend its independence and rights . . .**

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way they have resorted to the most absurd and ridiculous claims. They are even saying we are the best at making payments. Never before had they praised Cuba so highly. Previously, they would go to the bankers and tell them, "Look, don't lend them money because they won't pay."

Our debt is not with U.S. banks, it is with various Western countries other than the United States. Part is with Third World nations such as Mexico and Argentina, sister nations of Latin America. Our foreign exchange debt is insignificant, the smallest per capita foreign exchange debt in Latin America, and none of it is with U.S. banks.

In their desperation and helplessness they speak in provocative terms. What gives us more moral force is that we can say that this is not our problem, that we are fighting a battle for the others. And we haven't just started now. We started some years ago! This is not something that was invented overnight, nor is it a public relations campaign. That's what the U.S. government thought for months, that we wanted to improve international relations, use the subject to promote ourselves. They didn't realize that a genuine battle was taking place and that it was the right time for it.

We have been dealing with the problems of underdevelopment on the international scene for 15 years, its origins, its causes, the responsibility of capitalism, colonialism, and neocolonialism in this tragedy. Cuba was actively involved in approving the principles of the New International Economic Order and the Charter on the Economic Rights and Duties of States, along with Algeria, Mexico, and other countries of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Third World.

After the 1979 Summit Conference [of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries] I went to the United Nations and gave a speech. We were able to get the text and run off enough copies so you could each have one before you leave and see that it isn't new, it isn't something we have invented now, a Cuban invention, like something that has just been discovered or dug up now.

In 1979 at the UN we posed the need for an additional 300,000 million dollars to invest in the development of Third World nations over the 1980–90 period, because it was proven that there was no program to deal with underdevelopment, and that there was an ever wider gap between the rich world and the poor world. There was no development, there was a process of relative underdevelopment, and rather than developing countries we were actually underdeveloped countries. Because Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, and Denmark, for example,

have a gross domestic product of 10,000 dollars per capita, and many Third World countries have 200, 300, or 400 dollars per capita. And when those of the Third World registered a 50-dollar increase per capita, the industrialized nations increased by 500 dollars. We have euphemistically been called developing countries, but we are in fact underdeveloped countries, countries which are being underdeveloped, which are increasingly distant from the others, from the economically and industrially developed countries.

What is the future of our world? What is the future of the 4,000 million human beings who live in underdevelopment? This subject is not new for us, although there have been some changes in our proposals. As I was explaining, in 1979 we were already calling for cancellation of the poorest countries' debt and broad payment facilities for the others. In 1983 we were still saying the same thing.

The change is that now we are demanding cancellation for the entire Third World, since there must be a united front if we want to win the battle and because even countries with significant natural resources, who are oil exporters such as Venezuela, Mexico, and Ecuador, also have many social problems. In Venezuela, with all its resources, there is an unemployment rate of 14 percent which is growing. We are aware of the grave economic and social problems which exist in countries with resources, and we must say: We must also think of the peoples of those countries who are, in the last analysis, the ones who must pay the debt on money that wasn't loaned to them.

I will give you an example: it's like a father who is loaned money and then goes to a casino and loses it playing roulette and then efforts are made to have his five-year-old child pay the debt. That is the situation because those who didn't get anything are being made to pay. As was said yesterday, a lot of that money left the country. There were countries where 126 percent of the money loaned ended up abroad: that is, they sent out the money loaned plus the country's reserve. In other cases, 40 or 50 percent of the amount loaned ended up in private accounts abroad, in some cases more and in others less, depending on the country.

There are some big debtor countries where 40 to 50 percent of the money ended up abroad. So who is being made to pay and for what? What is the moral basis for such an unjust and cruel procedure?

There are now many people who say, almost everyone says, it can't be paid. I have seen religious people say this clearly. Before it was virtually a sin not to pay and now there are cardinals, bishops, scores of priests, and Christians from many denominations who say it can't be paid, it shouldn't be paid, and we won't pay.

Recently I saw a nun from Bogotá who was here and explained how a large portion of Bogotá's population, hundreds and thousands of abandoned children, barefoot and hungry, roamed the streets, while another nun showed slides and explained all this. When I heard this eloquent explanation and the forceful language at the meeting of Latin American women saying they weren't willing to pay the debt, I concluded that this debt is not only unpayable but also uncollectable. (APPLAUSE) All the Latin American women had the same idea.

Here we have rightly spoken of government statements, and there is a certain logic, because I know the views of nearly all the governments, with few exceptions, and the great majority of governments know they can't pay, they are convinced they can't pay and that they shouldn't pay. A few have hopes of paying because their situation is less desperate and

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## **We are now demanding cancellation for the entire Third World, since there must be a united front if we want to win this battle . . .**

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they export oil, but should the price of oil drop four dollars, good-bye hopes! Oil is already at four dollars under the price set by OPEC [Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries], because the imperialists have been doing all they can to drive down the price of oil, exporting oil from the North Sea and other places, in different ways, using the reserves which have piled up, doing all they can to cut the price of oil for their own benefit since they are the major consumers.

Already a situation exists in which a few more Latin American and Third World countries are plunged into crisis by a simple four-dollar price cut — now that OPEC exports are down from nearly 40 million

barrels daily to 14 million. And this doesn't solve the problem for anybody else, because if you tell Jamaica or the Dominican Republic, "Listen, oil has gone down four dollars a barrel," it doesn't solve anything. The problem is so serious and the crisis so far-reaching that it won't solve anything. But for the few that may still have hopes of paying, with another four-dollar price cut in oil, their hopes would be dashed.

Well, the great majority is convinced it can't pay. Of course, then, the Latin American governments are unable to say so since they are re-negotiating, and this is done virtually every month. They aren't in the same situation as Cuba, of being able to speak freely and with impunity as Cuba does. They can be pressured and problems will develop. They don't say what they think, but they know they can't pay.

Some of the information transnationals have utilized the tactics of asking concrete questions about the issue, seeking opinions about our theses, and trying to create conflicts among us. This is because before they thought it was a matter of public relations, but now they've realized that this is a serious movement, that a real battle is being waged, so they're desperately trying to find some way to take some impetus out of this struggle.

And one of the tactics they use, whenever they have the opportunity, is to ask such concrete, direct questions as, "Hey, what do you think of Cuba's proposal?" With these questions they sort of trap the governments which must negotiate and renegotiate their debts every month. To tell the truth, generally speaking, these governments have been very careful, have shown a lot of respect for Cuba and, naturally, have been very cautious in their answers. These governments are asked — paraphrasing the question put to Christ — whether they should render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's.

Needless to say, the spokesmen for the U.S. administration are turning on the heat everywhere, desperately inventing all sorts of tricks to belittle Cuba's ideas and weaken the powerful movement that has developed.

As a result, a number of Latin American politicians have become alarmed about Cuba carrying out this campaign. Ah, because Cuba not only must be a blockaded country, a country that can be attacked, that can have a piece of its territory occupied, and that can be deprived of its sugar quota and have it distributed all over, the way they did in the first years of the Revolution. Oh no! Cuba hasn't the least right in the world, it must stand alone face to face with the United States, and it must resign itself to everything. It has no right to express an idea, to sponsor a campaign or expound on that idea, despite the fact that we've been talking about these problems for more than 15 years.

There are others who react with a certain degree of jealousy, with a ridiculous envy because the campaign is sponsored by that "terrible" country. They are more worried about Cuba's campaign than about the debt they must pay. There are some who express such ridiculous and shameful concerns. That's true, isn't it? That's absurd, sheer vanity, foolishness, and envy. We'd be glad to turn over our campaign to anyone who wishes to carry it on. We'd renounce all rights to another Latin American government or governments or leaders, as long as they do what they have to do and do not betray it.

Why have we carried on this campaign? Because others didn't. (APPLAUSE) We're not doing it for the sake of glory or prestige. No real revolutionary pays attention to such things. [José] Martí said that all the world's glory fits into a kernel of corn, and that's one of the first things we learned. And there isn't much room in a kernel of corn.

Only hack politicians and vain persons are worried about these things. Nothing could be more incompatible with the nature, special character, mentality, and thinking of a Cuban revolutionary than a question of prestige. Some people are concerned over these foolish things, others are afraid because this is such a serious matter.

There are some who assert that my theses are radical and maximalistic. They aren't radical. They are realistic. That's what the figures show. We could tell those who call us maximalists that it's their day-dreams that are maximalistic, but not in connection with the maximum but rather with Maximilian, that Hapsburg idiot that Napoleon III had crowned Emperor of Mexico in the days of Juárez and couldn't even hold on to his head.

Now then, this movement has gained strength. It's like a snowball, rolling with irresistible force and aided by the law of gravity — drawn





Granma

May Day rally in Havana, 1982. "Every time we've defended the independence and sovereignty of our country, we have also been defending the independence and sovereignty of the Latin American peoples."

not by the ground but by a planet whose size is proportionately much greater than that of the debt that asphyxiates us. Therefore, it's a snowball rolling and growing, growing and increasing in speed, and nothing can stop it now. That's a fact and everybody knows it. The battle is already producing some benefits. Now that the masters who suck our blood and our sweat are scared, they're beginning to handle things more carefully and are showing signs of using more anesthesia in order to sacrifice their lambs.

On July 4th — and this is quite unusual — the U.S. secretary of state met with all of Latin America's representatives in Washington. This happened on Independence Day, marking the signing of the famous declaration of the inherent and inalienable rights of all citizens — white citizens, of course. Those rights did not extend to the Indians, who were exterminated after this splendid declaration, or the black slaves, who were held in bondage for almost a century after independence, producing surplus value to finance capitalism. The U.S. secretary of state said, "Boys, relax and behave. We're really worried about you, and we're going to give some thought to the debt. Your problems are just in Cuba's head. Cuba is always inventing things to use against the United States. Don't pay any attention."

However, some of the most intelligent people in the United States have also started to raise the problem. Mr. Martin, U.S. under secretary of the Treasury, talked about it. Twenty-four hours later his boss, the secretary, came out and criticized him severely for what he had said. [Henry] Kissinger, who is without a doubt one of the empire's most talented individuals and a politician of great intellectual ability, has already come up with formulas quite similar to those we have proposed and has given the warning signal. There's hesitation and confusion in the enemy ranks. These are the first fruits of this movement, this struggle. And when they concede a little more time, 10, 12, 15 years, to pay the principal, that is also a result of this struggle. When they start making some concessions, that's a result of this struggle, not of love letters. All these things must be very clearly understood. (APPLAUSE)

Therefore, Díaz Rangel, of course there are no such things as technical formulas. These technocrats who believe that technical formulas do exist are daydreaming. When a family has an income of 50 dollars a month, spends 100, needs 200, and owes 1,000, I'd like to know what technical formula can solve that problem. Well, yes, in fact there is a technical formula — very technical — and that is to cancel the 1,000-dollar debt and give the family the 200 dollars they need. That is the only technical, arithmetical, mathematical formula there is.

The miraculous remedy that will settle the problem of the alleged debt that cannot be paid, the inflated interest rates, the overvalued dollar, the protectionist measures, unequal trade, dumping, the flight of loans, the new economic order, and underdevelopment and its causes will never come out of a hat or a technocrat's brain. It can only be the result of our people's struggle, and this is what Latin America's political leaders must realize: whether the problem can be solved by simply canceling the debt; whether this is possible without the establishment of the New International Economic Order approved by the UN 10 years ago; whether it's possible to achieve these goals without writing and taking a firm

stand. I'd like to know if this is possible.

If we are going to think of the future of our countries with a minimal sense of responsibility, we must first ask ourselves, given the present state of affairs, what's going to happen in the next 10 years, what's going to happen in the next 20 years. Because there are still some people obsessed with technical solutions; they believe that mental exercise will bring about solutions. No strictly technical formulas will emerge, it's not possible. There are no technical solutions for this economic, political, social, and historical problem, not even for those few countries which, having a few more resources than others, hope they will be able to pay, even though this means the continuation of plunder and enormous sacrifice for their peoples.

Naturally, the imperialists will try to dilute the struggle. They'll try to deactivate the bomb and forestall the rebellion. Rather than lose everything, rather than having a solution imposed on them, they'll make some concessions. They may even go so far as to agree to reduce interest rates, prolong the installments, and lend part of the money needed to pay the interest, but that means violating their own economic principles and giving up certain political goals, so it's quite likely they'll do nothing like this spontaneously.

They can't pour trillions of dollars into the military sector, have an annual budget deficit of over 200,000 million and a trade deficit of 100,000 million, as in the case of the United States, without having to print money or buy dollars or sell government bonds. That's what they're doing to collect money from everybody, because they've robbed even their own developed capitalist allies to finance all the crazy things they're doing.

How can they possibly spend so much and incur such budget and trade deficits without raising interest rates? They can't. They'd have to begin by canceling the capitalist system itself. They wouldn't dare print money as they did to pay for the Vietnam War for fear of unleashing a new catastrophic inflation spiral that would mean a very high political cost to the government of the United States. One of their slogans, one of the things they brag about most is holding down inflation to a tolerable level, even though they've achieved it at the cost of the world economy, without which they'd have never been able to engage in such a colossal arms buildup without raising taxes.

The truth is that they're involved in a series of contradictions which they can't solve. Moreover, they're clashing with their Japanese and European allies in a real dogfight. They have little time or space to worry about the fate of our peoples.

Not so long ago, when Kissinger said in Brussels, or maybe it was in the Netherlands, that Latin America was in need of a Marshall Plan, I laughed because I thought that one would not be enough, that at least 25 Marshall Plans were needed — 25 at least. The problem is just too big.

But the imperialists will try to dilute this struggle, gain time, solve a small problem for some country that is liable to go into a crisis soon, give it some aid, lend another one a little money to enable it to pay some of the interest. But as long as the interest keeps piling up — according to my calculations — the debt will go on growing and growing and be-

come increasingly unpayable.

If they charged 6 percent increase instead of 10 and granted a 10-year moratorium, 10 years from now Latin America would have to begin to pay not 360,000 million, but over 800,000 million. If the interest were higher and kept on piling up, in less than 20 years Latin America alone would have to pay 1,400,000 million. Supposing they seek every technical formula there is and say, "All right, forget about the interest now. Don't pay any interest, and we'll agree to your starting to pay off the principal and interest 10 years from now." Well, that's nothing short of cancellation. A 10-year moratorium on the principal and interest — that's cancellation by another name; it's repudiation, pardon, or wiping the slate clean. Otherwise, in the next 10 years the Third World will owe 2 U.S. trillion, that is, 2 million million, a debt which is much more impossible to pay.

Therefore, I really think that being content with 10, 15, or 20 when it's possible to obtain 100 would be tantamount to betraying the Third World people's hopes. We're in a position to create the greatest force we've ever achieved, because now we're not asking for 300,000 million for the whole Third World as we did at the UN in 1979. Now we're tell-

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### **When they concede a little more time to pay the principal, that is a result of this struggle . . .**

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ing Latin America, "Don't be foolish; don't hand over those 400,000 million in interest alone in the next 10 years," and we're telling the Third World, "Don't be foolish, don't pay 1 million million in interest alone in the next 10 years."

That's the difference. The initiative is in the hands of the Third World. Faced with a greedy, selfish, insatiable world, we have a tremendous weapon: unity through this cause and also imposing the new order. And I believe that we'll have many allies in this struggle throughout the world, including allies among the industrialized countries if we can convince them that this is in their interest because it will mean more employment, greater use of industrial facilities, more world trade, and capitalism can emerge from this cyclical crisis. All its crises are cyclical, but each new one is longer than the preceding one, and this will go on until it disappears, because capitalism won't survive, that's for sure. What we don't want is for capitalism to wipe out the Third World peoples before it disappears. We want to be around the day capitalism disappears. (APPLAUSE)

Therefore, Comrade Díaz Rangel, I don't think there's any room for technical solutions. A simple cut in the price of oil would dash the last hopes of those few who are still making calculations and thinking that they might be able to pay, although with enormous sacrifice for their peoples.

The imperialists will try to find conciliatory formulas, try to deactivate the bomb. That there are some risks involved in this? Yes, of course. Let them make some concessions and some will be content with them, because some government will reason that it's got only a couple of years to go and the one that comes after it can take care of its own problems.

The imperialists are helping Chile in this situation by lending it a little money to pay part of the interest. And the World Bank, which is controlled by the United States, is lending Chile 100 million for one project and 150 million for another. It's obvious that they're trying to help Chile because they also want to deactivate the bomb of revolution there, without realizing that nothing can save that regime, just like nothing can save apartheid. It's only a question of time, but they're maneuvering to lengthen the lives of those horrendous regimes.

Hence the importance of the masses taking part in this struggle. This is the most important reason for heightening the people's awareness. Even in the case of those governments that are convinced they can't pay, when the people champion the cause, this will increase the chances for reaching a consensus of opinion in the case of governments which don't dare express it for one reason or another, if only because the elephant is very close by and is sneezing in the hole, as the Mexican said here. Then it'll be easier for governments and peoples to coincide in their awareness

of the problem.

We're not proposing that the masses be aware of the problem in order to put pressure on their governments. On the contrary, what we're saying is that the people's awareness of the problem would help those governments that must take a difficult decision. And we're also saying that it's very important that the masses be aware so that they can join this struggle, as a guarantee of the success of the struggle and also to forestall behind-the-scenes maneuvers and conciliatory formulas behind the people's backs.

Someone said that parliaments have nothing to do with the agreements reached with the International Monetary Fund on the debt. Countries are committed, peoples are committed, and the parliaments don't take part. Even the way the debt is scheduled and rescheduled is undemocratic. The people, the parliaments, the trade unions, the political parties, everybody should participate. It is decisive to winning this battle that the message reach the masses.

Any self-respecting government would be gratified to know that if it had to make a difficult decision it could count on the people's support. In other words, any politician really concerned over his country's future, over his own and his party's future, would be gladdened by that support. The opposite would be politicians who are terrified of the masses, technocrats who fear the masses and who believe they are prophets, magicians, or sorcerers who can come up with marvelous formulas born of their fanciful imagination; politicians who are horrified that the masses might be thinking and have awareness. This would be the only explanation for such behavior.

For the same reason it is ridiculous that there could be feelings of jealousy toward Cuba. For 26 years we've been defending sacred rights, and the first right is that of independence and sovereignty. We have defended them with the courage of our people, with the heroism of our people. Every time we've defended the independence and sovereignty of our country, we have also been defending the independence and sovereignty of the rest of the Latin American peoples. (APPLAUSE) We've been defending a hope.

What was our first achievement for Latin America, the very first? The distribution of our sugar quota, taken away from our people and given to a sister country as a reward for its act of treason. Our country was deprived of its sugar quota, which was distributed throughout Latin America. "I'll give you so much of Cuba's quota, and you, and you." And every sugar-producing country was in on this. "But you'll have to go to Punta del Este<sup>2</sup> and here and there. Cuba must be expelled from the OAS and from everywhere else. If you can move Cuba to the moon, do it." They haven't done this because they haven't been able to. Anyway, that was our first revolutionary achievement, winning a sugar quota for others. That was the first gain for Latin America.

And someone was saying that we still purchase sugar. This is because on occasion we have purchased sugar on the world market for our own consumption, in order to meet our commitments to other countries when our country was hit by drought or to meet long-standing commitments. That person wanted to know why we don't share around the benefits of Cuba's trade with the Soviet Union, a person from a country that doesn't even have relations with us, that never deigned to look our way, and that received a good share of our sugar quota in the past.

The second achievement: the Alliance for Progress. The 20,000 million that were distributed out of fear of Cuba. Now we'd like them to cancel the debt out of fear of Cuba. (APPLAUSE) Well, that's what we want, or that economic relations similar to those between Cuba and the USSR be established.

There are some who say that Cuba is one of the most deeply indebted countries and speculate about the size of our debt to the Soviet Union. I have said over and over again that our debts to the Soviet Union are rescheduled automatically every 10, 15, or 20 years, with no interest. Right, let's have our Third World countries come to an agreement with the developed capitalist world and reschedule the debt for 10, 15, or 20 years with no interest.

Now that's an excellent technical formula applied in practice by Cuba

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2. The Punta del Este, Uruguay, conference of August 1961 founded the Alliance for Progress, a program of U.S. loans and trade agreements with 22 Latin American countries.

in its relations with the socialist countries. That's what we want. But they have no arguments because they can't hide their greediness, their selfishness, their plundering nature. Pirates can't hide their mentality and their crimes, and that's their big problem. But they can't stop this snowball, they can't. And they will never be able to stop it, especially if you and all patriotic and aware people, if women, students, workers, journalists, intellectuals, democratic and progressive politicians carry this message to the masses. They won't be able to stop it, and this will really be the only guarantee for true victory! (APPLAUSE)

Besides, we've worked hard within the non-aligned countries, with the African and Asian countries. We've talked to the socialist countries.

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## **The link is now being made between our battle against this economic crisis and our battle for world peace . . .**

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We've talked to a lot of people, even in the industrialized world, laying the groundwork for an enormous amount of firm solidarity and unrestricted support for those countries in such desperate straits that they must declare a moratorium.

The ideal thing would be, indeed, that we sat down to talk about all these things and that they meet to discuss it, on TV and even by satellite, if they want to. The ideal thing would be for all the interested parties to sit down and find a solution. That's the ideal thing, it would indeed be the ideal thing, Comrade, but it's something quite difficult, really, to bring about.

Afterward, following all that, the ideal thing would be to bring all the debtors together, in the first place all the Latin American countries, to reach consensus on what should be done; that's the ideal thing but still very difficult. It seems to me this is going to come undone, because one or several of them, in desperation, will have to decide to stop payments, declare a moratorium and proclaim it. Ah, then full support and solidarity must be given to them!

We know that a blockade can't prevent anything, and that's why I cite the example of Cuba. Other countries would have greater support. Cuba got no support because they started out by giving our share of the market to others and we were very bad, something "terrible," a socialist country, that "diabolical" thing. How's that? All those people must be quickly condemned to hell, liquidated; just as now they want to liquidate the Nicaraguans and they want to liquidate any revolutionary country; the classic imperialist formula. Yet there's nothing they can do, I'm convinced of that.

So then I said, nothing is going to happen immediately. If one or several countries of certain economic importance rebelled, imperialism would try to intervene to prevent it — something possible only when the masses lack an awareness. But when the masses are aware, if they try to collect the debt come hell or high water, then we'll be on the threshold of revolution, on the threshold of revolution in this hemisphere. And I say this quite clearly so that it be understood by those who can do something to solve this problem.

It is in these terms that we see the problem, quite clearly, and we know it's like an incurable cancer. Unless the cancer is removed it will kill all democratic processes, there's no question about it; the breakdown comes quickly, very quickly, gentlemen.

Peru is a clear example. The outgoing administration that lasted five years got over 50 percent of the vote and endeavored to pay the debt and follow the Monetary Fund's directives. How many votes did this party get now? It got 4 percent, 3 to 4 percent of the vote; I think that perhaps it got 4.5 percent after five years in power, five years. And now the breakdown is even more rapid. These things are very clear and we all understand them.

A journalist understands them better than anyone else; a revolutionary, a politician understands them better than anyone else. These are laws inviolable, and no one because of his pretty face or because he happens to be a nice guy will remain popular with simple phrases and words when the people are living through a tragedy every day. He won't last long, he'll last less time than it takes to bat an eye.

There are also some people who view publicity as a magician's trick

and, of course, there are governments that win elections through publicity. They hire Yankee experts, get a good image on TV, spend hundreds of millions of dollars, and get elected. Yet it is easier to fool the people for one day — election day — than to fool them for 30 consecutive days once you're in power and solve nothing. It was Lincoln who said you can fool all of the people some of the time but you can't fool all of the people all of the time.

And then comes the election, the supreme moment, election day. That guy is an angel, an apostle, a saint, incorruptible, a magician, he's going to solve all the problems of the masses, so they voted for that man. How many times? Indeed, we can say that a people can be fooled many times for one day, but what never fails is that on the 30th or 45th day support begins to erode; sometimes they make a small comeback and then they decline once more, but while in the past they used to slide down all the way, now they plunge headlong. The problem is different now, the slope has now turned into an abyss.

I don't want to go on much further. I feel I've taken too much of your time. It seems to me there's only one idea left unsaid, and it's an important idea. I think that everything we've discussed here today stands on two pillars that have been mentioned: repudiation of the debt, that is, liquidating the debt; and the New International Economic Order. Economic integration is a third pillar; we need all three of them. Because if in Europe, in England, the country where industrialization was born, it was discovered that they couldn't develop without a European Common Market, how can one of our small Central American or South American countries develop without Latin American economic integration?

So then I believe there are three basic ideas: wiping out the debt, achieving the New International Economic Order, and bringing about Latin American economic integration, in that order of priority. These ideas must be defended as of now. The whole world is talking about integration, and I believe that this battle can mean a big leap along the road to integration.

And finally, one idea, not a pillar but one basic idea in this struggle is that the link is now being made between our battle against this economic crisis to solve all these problems and our battle for world peace. The cause of peace is very strong, particularly in the industrialized countries of Europe, Japan, and the United States. It isn't as strong in the Third World countries because they don't have time to think of peace, given that they're dying of hunger, disease, and everything, in peacetime; they're waging a daily war.

But the peace banner is strong throughout the world, among all people of conscience in Europe and other industrialized countries. We're discussing things in terms of linking this struggle waged by the Third World for its economic interests with world peace, given that all the interest we're paying on the debt is invested in weapons, invested in military expenditure, invested in the arms race, invested in rearmament.

All that money being taken away from children, depriving them of food, medicines, everything else, jobs for their families, what is it being spent on? It is the 300,000 million dollars that the United States spends every year on rearmament and militarism, it is the hundreds of thousands of millions of dollars spent by the industrialized capitalist countries and that, in addition, force the socialist countries to spend another heap of millions. What need would the socialist countries have for an arms race or a war industry? Absolutely none. It is a need imposed on the socialist camp right from the moment that the first socialist state emerged. That's a fact, and everything else is sheer fantasy.

I believe that's what we're paying for with the interest rates and the unequal exchange, with those 20,000 million they stole from us in 1984, when our export values were 95,000 million dollars and they paid us 20,000 million less than what it was worth in 1980 — for every time we give them more and they pay us less. We do our best, we go all out to export, and what we do export is worth less every passing year. So then, what is all that being invested on? Rearmament, the arms race.

The idea then is for all this to be linked together in the manner set forth in those theses; linking up the struggle against the foreign debt and for the New International Economic Order and development closely to peace will increase our strength; because even there in the heart of the industrialized countries, millions and tens of millions and hundreds of

millions of persons would be willing to give their support, and we must fight to have them support this cause.

A woman from the United States spoke here very clearly and eloquently, promising to wage her battle there. There are millions and tens of millions of persons like her in the United States, Europe, Japan, Canada, in that same industrialized world whose voracious system is plundering us and wants to starve us to death.

It seems to me that after all the discussions we've had, after listening

to the excellent speeches delivered here — generally speaking, all the speeches have been very good — the only thing left was simply, in my opinion, the need to grasp these basic ideas, which constitute basic points in this battle.

I'm convinced that this meeting and this debate we have had will have a historical importance in this struggle and in the victory that we can achieve, that we must achieve, that we will achieve.

Thank you. (APPLAUSE)

## Comoro Islands

# Interview with opposition leader

## Regime unleashes wave of repression

[The following interview appeared in the June 20–26 issue of *Rouge*, weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International. The interview was conducted by Jean-Jacques Laredo. The translation from French and information in brackets are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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The Democratic Front of the Comoro Islands (FDC) has just been hit hard by repression. In France, FDC members have taken part in activities in support of the struggle of the Kanak people [of New Caledonia]. One of the front's leaders, Youssouf Moussa, assistant general-secretary of the executive bureau of the FDC, passed through Paris. We were fortunate enough to interview him.

*Question. Many people in France know very little about the Comoros. Could you describe them in a few words?*

*Answer.* The Comoro archipelago is made up of four islands, Grande Comore, Anjouan, Mayotte, and Mohéli.

On July 6, 1975, the Comoros achieved independence [from France] through a unilateral declaration by the Comoros Chamber of Deputies, overturning its status as [a French] Overseas Territory. But as you know, France seized upon this declaration of independence to organize the secession of Mayotte. As a result, Mayotte is not part of the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros and has the status of a "territorial collectivity" in the French Republic.

The economic activity of the population is based on agriculture because, according to the French experts, the Comoros subsoil does not contain riches. In addition to market agriculture there is also subsistence agriculture on a soil that rapidly becomes exhausted.

All manufactured products are imported. But that is not all. Meat and even fish are imported from South Africa, including to Mayotte. That is crazy when you realize that the waters around the Comoros are among the best fishing grounds in the world.

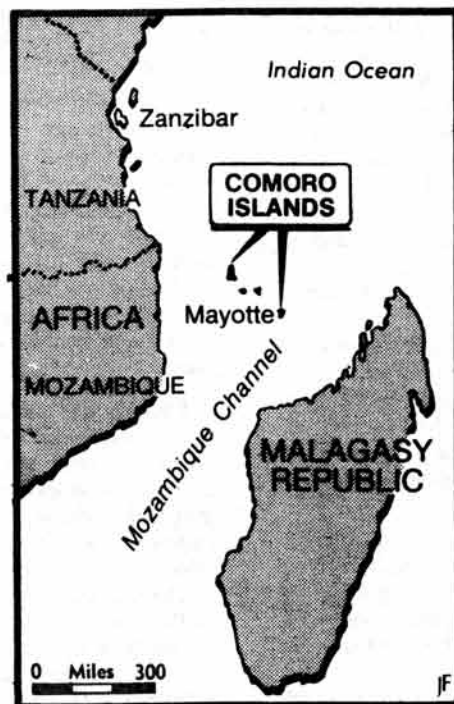
It should be stressed that in spite of all this some people in the Comoros live in opulence. That is the case with [President] Ahmed Ab-

dallah and the mercenaries led by Bob Denard, who insure the defense of Abdallah's regime. These mercenaries have lucrative businesses in the import-export field, tourism, or land. You can also imagine the degree of corruption that reigns in the highest spheres of the state.

Meanwhile, the population faces serious problems of malnutrition, and the Comoro Islands are in the group of 35 least developed countries (LDCs). This is one of the causes of the Comoro emigration, which is estimated to number 20,000–30,000 in France. [Total population is estimated to be 400,000.]

*Q. You could say that France made and unmade the present regime.*

*A.* After the referendum on self-determination, the government of [then French President Valéry] Giscard maneuvered to count the votes on an island-by-island basis and to provoke the secession of Mayotte through the vote on the July 6, 1975, law.



Less than one month after independence, Abdallah was overthrown by a coup fomented by France. Three years later, France organized a new coup that placed Ahmed Abdallah back in the saddle. In both cases, the coups were carried out by Bob Denard's mercenaries.

*Q. What kind of regime was put in place?*

*A.* Ahmed Abdallah's view is that the Comoros are not mature enough for democracy and that therefore there has to be a one-party regime for a whole period. We have already heard this said of other countries in Africa. This has not succeeded in reducing all opposition to silence.

The Democratic Front of the Comoro Islands was set up for the 1982 legislative elections. But before that, there was already activity around the distribution of a bulletin called *La Voix du Peuple* (The Voice of the People), embodying a more radical opposition to the regime of the big bourgeoisie and the mercenaries.

*Q. Last March 8 there was a mutiny of the presidential guards. What was behind that?*

*A.* The events of March 8 were simply the culmination of a sharp crisis that has been racking the regime, especially since the reelection of Abdallah on Sept. 30, 1984. It took one month to set up a government, and Abdallah dismissed it after three months and set about to revise the constitution to concentrate power in his hands and prevent the splintering of his base of support.

What is certain is that these elements of the presidential guard revolted against the treatment they were subjected to by the mercenaries leading them. Their objective was to get rid of the mercenaries, without having any further political plan whatsoever.

The regime seized this opportunity to unleash large-scale repression against the opposition, and particularly against the FDC. During this repression, the people of the Comoros saw a real state of siege in which the mercenaries made all the decisions.

*Q. Did the repression hit the FDC hard?*

*A.* Most of the FDC leaders who were in

Moroni [the capital city, on the island of Grand Comore] were arrested, as well as the intermediate cadres and the activists present in the three islands. It is estimated that some 60 people were arrested. We have learned that these prisoners were beaten, tortured, and held under especially hard conditions of detention — in darkness, without food, without being able to wash.

*Q. What is France doing in the Comoros?*

A. France is involved not just in Mayotte. The proof of this is that France is present everywhere in the Federal Islamic Republic. France provides leadership for the gendarmes and the Comoros army. In other words, France does what it wants, and you cannot speak of Comoros sovereignty at the present time.

Each minister, and even the president, has his own French technical adviser. Teaching and programs are set up by France. Everything continues as in the times of the direct colonization. The only difference is having a national anthem and a flag.

As a whole, the islands are a strategic point in the Mozambique Channel [between Madagascar and the mainland of Africa], and France is absolutely determined to hold onto them. That is the reason for its hostility toward the FDC.

Instructors from the DST [Defense and Security of the Territory — the French national police] developed Abdallah's repressive apparatus. France is ready to change presidents but it is not keen on a change in the system.

*Q. What kind of political change does the FDC want?*

A. We reject a simple palace revolution. We want a change that leads to true democracy for the population, the end to the single-party system. The opposition is still disunited and this is the thrust of our battle for an alternative. We think that the mercenaries could not keep their businesses in the Comoros if such a change took place, nor Abdallah his import-export monopoly. One of the economic priorities must be to significantly raise the living standards of the population.

Regarding Mayotte, we should recall that the referendum planned for December 1984 did not take place before the French government adopted a new law on the status of the island. The government justifies its refusal to reintegrate Mayotte into the archipelago on the basis of the lack of freedoms in the Federal Republic, although the French government itself accommodates to it without problem.

*Q. What are your aims in terms of foreign policy?*

A. The FDC is for nonalignment. Concerning relations with France, the FDC hopes that they continue, but on a healthy basis, while exercising our full sovereignty. Far from being anti-French, we support the just struggles carried out by the French people, and we take inspiration from their rich revolutionary traditions. □

## Australia

# Human rights conference

## Solidarity activists hear Salvadoran speakers

By Ron Poulsen

MELBOURNE — Some 200 people heard representatives from El Salvador speak at a conference here on human rights in Central America. The conference, held July 20–21, was organized by two Melbourne-based solidarity groups, the Latin American Information Centre (LAIC) and the Trade Union Committee on Central America (TUCCA).

This First Pacific and Australasian Congress on Human Rights in Central America attracted participants from Sydney, Adelaide, and Canberra, as well as Melbourne, including many newcomers to Central American solidarity activity.

The Salvadoran speakers were Miguel Castro, a Catholic priest; Beatriz, a spokesperson for the Mothers of the Disappeared; and Antonio Hernández, a representative of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front—Revolutionary Democratic Front (FMLN-FDR).

Castro explained that military repression had increased in El Salvador, especially in the countryside. He also pointed to recent attacks against hospitals. President Napoleon Duarte demagogically presents these attacks as “legal actions,” he said.

Castro pledged that the Christian people he represents would “never renounce armed defense of the people.” He called for an end to U.S. military aid to the Salvadoran regime and supported efforts for a negotiated settlement in El Salvador and in Central America.

Beatriz pointed out that in the past five years 55,000 people had been assassinated, 6,000 had disappeared, and countless others had been taken political prisoner and tortured, often with the help of “North American and Argentine advisers.”

For the first time at such a solidarity conference in Australia, the FMLN-FDR was able to have a leading spokesperson present the situation in El Salvador.

Hernández explained the “historic and systematic” nature of the violation of human rights in El Salvador, brought about by the “the desire of the oligarchy and the military to repress the struggles of the workers and the people.” Under Duarte, he said, repression, “far from having decreased, has increased.”

This repression, Hernández noted, has been accompanied by a campaign to attempt to manipulate international and internal public opinion. “Not only was this to confuse the people of El Salvador and world governments,” he

## Nicaragua book launched in Melbourne

MELBOURNE — Promotion of the recently published *Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution* was launched here July 19 at a function to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the Nicaraguan revolution.

Nick Bolkus, a Labor Party senator in the federal parliament and a participant in

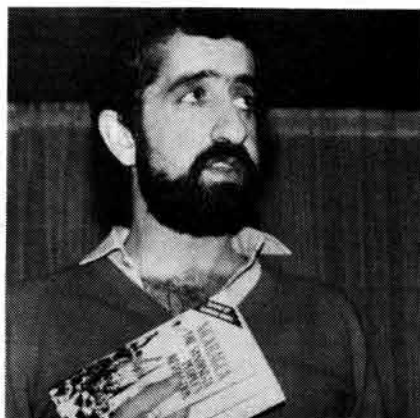
the first Australian work brigade to Nicaragua last year, launched the book.

He pointed out that it was a “dual launch.” He also initiated Tools for Peace, a national campaign by several solidarity organizations, trade unions, and aid groups to raise funds to send tools and equipment to Nicaragua.

Bolkus told the 60 people present that the publication of the new book by Pathfinder Press in New York was opportune given “the war of words emanating from Washington against Nicaragua.” The book includes speeches and articles by top Sandinista leaders of the Nicaraguan revolution.

The book was sold at a discount to participants in the conference on human rights in Central America. More than 30 copies — all that were available — were sold.

*Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution* is to be formally launched in Brisbane, Sydney, and Adelaide at public meetings in September and October. It can be purchased at \$14.95 by writing to: P.O. Box 37, Leichhardt, Sydney, NSW 2040.



NICK BOLKUS

said, "but to create a situation which would allow a brutal intervention by the U.S."

He emphasized that "the strong desire for peace by the Salvadoran people is also a strong desire for justice." In the context of the struggle for a political settlement, "justice for El Salvador requires fundamental changes."

In relation to the possibility of U.S. intervention on a greater scale, Hernández stated, "If the will of the U.S. government is absolutely unchangeable and they deny a political solution, if they are determined to carry out their aggressive military policies . . . we are strengthened in our will by the legitimacy of our struggle, the unity of our people. We express the will of our people. No one and nothing will stop these people."

In conclusion, Hernández appealed for broader and more unified solidarity action by supporters of the Salvadoran people internationally. "Do not permit El Salvador to become another Vietnam . . . to be dragged deeper into the holocaust of war," he urged.

Other speakers at the conference included Steve Niblo and Barry Carry, Melbourne university professors, both well known for their support of Central American struggles.

Bill Hayden, minister of foreign affairs in the Labor Party government, was scheduled to speak. However, he did not show. He sent his apologies and a written speech that was presented by David Charles, a Labor Party member of parliament.

Hayden's message criticized the U.S. economic boycott of Nicaragua and the U.S. Congress's approval for aid to the counterrevolutionary forces attacking Nicaragua. At the same time he criticized the Nicaraguan government for alleged instances of political repression. He contrasted this to "a downward trend" in human rights abuses under the Duarte regime in El Salvador.

Niblo took issue with the "diplomatic voice of the Australian government with its 'balanced' criticisms." He pointed out that "the U.S. government could have a Contadora solution anytime it wants to, but it clearly doesn't want to." He drew strong applause for pointing out that it was Washington, not Managua, that was behind the state terrorism being waged in Central America.

Carr explained that Washington's strategy in Central America includes the "very real threat of the introduction of U.S. ground troops." The U.S. government, he said, could not but be opposed to the Contadora proposals for an end to all foreign military interference in the region.

Joan Coxedge, a prominent left-wing Labor Party member of parliament in Victoria, responded to Hayden's message from the floor. She called it "offensive and simplistic" and criticized it for lumping together the regimes in El Salvador and Guatemala, which are "terrorizing the people," with the popular Sandinista government, which replaced the Somoza dictatorship. The Somoza regime was more like the current government in El Salvador and Guatemala, she said.

Of special interest for the development of the solidarity movement in Australia were remarks by David Grove, the national industrial officer for the Food Preservers Union and secretary of the TUCCA.

Grove, who chaired much of the conference, pointed out that "outside Nicaragua, the situation for trade unions in Central America is an unmitigated disaster."

"Although it has taken time," Grove said, sections of the union movement in Australia "have begun to see a role for themselves in helping to protect Nicaragua and El Salvador from U.S. intervention."

He said that arising out of some unions' concern to take action against the U.S. embargo of Nicaragua, research was being carried out on the role of U.S. corporations in both Central America and Australia. In the event of U.S. escalation, these enterprises and U.S. shipping would be targets of union action, he said.

Grove stated that "the Australian government had been relatively quick to criticize the U.S. embargo, but it was necessary to pressure the Australian government to criticize the whole U.S. policy in the region." In his view, "in the end the only solution will be to defeat U.S. imperialism in the region."

The conference also included workshops on the situation in the different Central American countries. □

## 10 AND 20 YEARS AGO

### Intercontinental Press

September 8, 1975

Under the cloak of a "peace-keeping mission," the Indonesian, Portuguese, Malaysian, and Australian governments were readying their forces for intervention in the Portuguese colony of East Timor in the final days of August. Their preparations followed three weeks of fighting between the nationalist Revolutionary Front for Independent East Timor (Fretilin) and the pro-Portuguese Democratic Union of Timorese (UDT).

Jakarta was prepared to send in troops, Acting Foreign Minister Muchtar Kusumaatmadja said August 30, but was holding back until final agreement was reached with Lisbon on the four-government mission. The London *Daily Telegraph's* correspondent in Singapore reported that a fleet of four Indonesian warships and five cargo vessels were heading toward the island. Two Australian destroyers were sent to Darwin, 400 miles southeast of Timor.

The civil conflict in Timor was sparked by an abortive UDT uprising August 10-11. After a weekend of UDT demonstrations on August 9 and 10 in the capital, Dili, UDT members seized control of the police station, the radio station, the airport in Baucau, and other key installations. According to most reports, the Portuguese troops in Timor were ordered by Lisbon to remain "neutral."

## WORLD OUTLOOK

PERSPECTIVE MONDIALE

(Predecessor of *Intercontinental Press*)

August 20, 1965

When President Johnson signed his "voting rights bill" on August 6, he said that the action struck away "the last major shackles of those fierce and ancient bonds" of the Negroes.

Exactly five days later the Black Ghetto of Watts in the heart of Los Angeles exploded. And from August 11 until August 17 television screens in the United States showed scenes reminiscent of Vietnam or Santo Domingo. Johnson's Emancipation Proclamation was forgotten.

Another cup of bitterness in the Black Ghetto has been the endless war propaganda — about the American Way of Life and the need to fight for it in distant places like Vietnam and Santo Domingo. One may well believe the Negro reporter who quoted one man as saying: "We want to set a fire right here on Broadway rather than go to Vietnam and fight. We'd rather fight for the Negro here." And another man as saying: "This is the Negro revolution, we want the world to know."

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# Trials target abortion clinics

## Interview with a leader of Ghent Contraception Center

[The following article is reprinted from the June 21 issue of *La Gauche*, French-language fortnightly newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party (POS), Belgian section of the Fourth International. The interview was conducted by Ida Dequeecker. The translation and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

On June 14, 52 people were called to appear at the Ghent Council Chamber on charges of complicity in performing abortions. The 52 people (doctors, aides, and patients) are connected with the Ghent Contraception Center, which performs abortions for women on demand.

The directors of the center have decided to lift the silence regarding the center's existence and practices. The center opened in September 1980 and worked without hindrance until November 1983. Then the first search was carried out by the Ghent prosecutor, in the presence of the chairman of the physicians' organization.

Medical materials and files were seized. Doctors, aides, and patients were questioned. In April 1985 an investigation for tax fraud was initiated, which continues to the present.

*La Gauche* interviewed Marijke Colle about these events. Colle is a cofounder of the Ghent Contraception Collective and a member of the Political Bureau of the POS.

*Question. What is the verdict of the Council Chamber?*

*Answer.* The hearing was postponed to October 4. The defense had only 14 days to familiarize itself with the cases of 52 people.

*Q. You are one of the founders of the Ghent Contraception Collective. Why?*

A. The POS (and under its previous name, the Revolutionary Workers League) has always been involved in the movement to decriminalize abortion. In 1977, 1978, and 1979, we helped to organize national demonstrations. The coordinating body of the abortion committees now has a five-point platform. The first point is to remove abortion from the penal code.

As a result of the women's movement, that position was embodied in a draft law proposed by Léona Detiège (Socialist Party member of parliament). At the same time, since 1978, the Ghent committee was working to set up a good abortion center. In my view and in the view of the POS, this has always been a key aspect of the struggle against a completely outmoded law.

But we never were under the illusion that the establishment of such centers would make the struggle to decriminalize abortion superfluous. I helped in the establishment of this center, and various members of the POS are affiliated with the "Friends of the Contraception Collective" (Ida Dequeecker, Ernest Mandel, François Vercammen, Eddy Labeau).

*Q. The centers perform abortions based on the principle "the woman decides." They say that decriminalization of abortion is the only correct solution. Why?*

A. The data gathered by the Ghent collective confirms the data gathered by all the other centers: the majority of abortion requests stem from a danger to the health of the woman or the embryo. What counts for us is what the woman wishes. And no one can decide that for her!

If a law were adopted authorizing abortion solely for certain reasons or up to a certain time limit, there would still be the problems of control (by whom?) and application of the law (refusal of abortion in certain cases).

Women would then return to the dangerous practice of clandestine abortions. In addition, abortion must be a medical procedure carried out under safe conditions. It is only then that women will dare to go without fear to a doctor, a hospital, or a center, to reveal their problems.

*Q. For a whole period, actions no longer took place; the centers were functioning without problems. Were people under the illusion that they could decriminalize abortion through a fait accompli? What does the POS think about this?*

A. We always said that the struggle for the Detiège bill should be pursued. In the 1980s the movement drew back into practicing abortions and aiding women. It must be said that an important obstacle remained, one we have always pointed to. That is the link between the Christian Workers Movement and the PSC/CVP.<sup>1</sup>

1. As a result of organizational measures begun by the government some 15 years ago, Belgium's political life has increasingly been divided along linguistic lines between the Flemish-speaking section of the country and French-speaking Wallonia. Since that time, most political parties have divided along linguistic and regional lines.

This division is reflected in the main bourgeois party, the Social Christians. In Wallonia it is organized as the Parti Social Chrétien (PSC), while in Flanders it is the Christelijke Volkspartij (CVP).

The Christian Workers Movement (MOC/ACW)

*Q. The judiciary is knocking again. All methods seem to be fair game, including charges of tax fraud. Why now? Are they preparing a limited reform of the law?*

A. Beginning in 1981, with the decision of the general prosecutor Van Honsté, the trials began again. The first objective was apparently to scare certain doctors and certain centers. This did not work. For two or three years they had "salami-style" trials, carried out one slice at a time. The penalties were light. No one was yet sentenced to prison.

Now we are seeing an escalation in the repression. The trial against 52 people in Ghent is a new stage.

Abortion will therefore become a burning political question after the summer, when the election campaign is in full swing.

Undoubtedly some people in the French-speaking and Flemish-speaking Socialist parties are aiming for an adjustment of the law with the Party of Freedom and Progress (PVV) and the Liberal Reform Party (PRL). They hope for the support of groups like the French-speaking and Flemish-speaking ecology parties for this.

For our part, we continue to explain that decriminalization is the only good solution.

*Q. Are the consequences of the renewal of trials being felt?*

A. This is not clear. It is possible that some doctors are again starting to send more women to the Netherlands. The centers, in any case, continue to function.

*Q. With the approach of the elections, the centers are waging a campaign to "vote only for someone who would decriminalize abortion." Some members of parliament from the CVP and PVV are also for decriminalization today. Is this action enough?*

A. This action is not enough. For example, some members of parliament from the French-speaking Socialist Party make no attempt to hide the fact that they view abortion as a minor question in the context of negotiations on forming a new government. In my view, a parliamentary majority for the Detiège bill will not emerge until the Christian Workers Movement supports this proposal. This would involve a break with the Social Christian Party.

In Wallonia [the French-speaking region],

is an umbrella organization for the Christian organizations in the workers' movement — the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (CSC), the Christian mutual-aid societies, cooperatives, etc.

we see that Solidarity and Participation (SeP),<sup>2</sup> which is politically aligned with the Christian Workers Movement, has already come out in favor of decriminalization. Therefore the French-speaking and Flemish-speaking Socialist parties, as the biggest parties, should work to encourage this break. They should support the Christian activists who are working for the formation of an independent party of Christian workers.

In this way a large political front could be set up, based on the union movement, and the demands of women could be achieved.

*Q. The contraception committee mobilized for the June 14 trial. There were 150 people present. Are other actions planned? What do you think about a demonstration?*

A. This mobilization was a real success, even though it was prepared on short notice. The people were very militant. We demonstrated in the center of town. This shows that the possibility for mass actions exists. The press gave a lot of coverage to the action.

I think it should be possible, for example in late September, to organize a national demonstration against the trials and for the decriminalization of abortion. The forces exist that could take the initiative. □

2. Solidarity and Participation Movement (SeP) was established in February 1982 by the Christian Workers Movement. In March 1985, the SeP decided to establish itself as a political party.

In the April 5 issue of *La Gauche*, the POS defined its attitude toward the new SeP party. The POS noted that the new group's program aims to reform and manage capitalism. But it also noted that the SeP "expresses the tendency of the Christian workers to break with the PSC/CVP and to set up their own party within the perspective of a 'government of the laboring people,' with the SP and without the right-wing parties." The POS "supports this fight," *La Gauche* added.

## New pamphlet on abortion rights available in Spanish and English

A new pamphlet *Abortion Is a Woman's Right!* has just been published by Pathfinder Press in New York. Available in both Spanish and English, the 48-page pamphlet includes articles and interviews that have previously appeared in the *Militant*, a U.S. socialist news-weekly, and *Perspectiva Mundial*, a Spanish-language biweekly published in New York.

The authors are Pat Grogan, staff writer for the *Militant*; José G. Pérez, former editor of *PM* and a member of its Managua bureau; and Evelyn Reed, a Marxist political activist who wrote extensively on women's liberation.

The pamphlet includes articles explaining why the central issue involved in the debate around abortion is women's rights, why Marxists champion abortion rights, and why the Catholic Church hierarchy opposes the right of women to choose abortion.

## United States

# Abortion rights actions planned

### NOW approves campaign to defend 1973 legalization

By Diane Wang

[The following article appeared in the August 2 issue of the *Militant*, a socialist weekly published in New York City.]

NEW ORLEANS — The 2,300 women's rights activists meeting here at the annual conference of the National Organization for Women (NOW) July 19–21 launched a major national action campaign to defend women's right to abortion.

"We will never go back!" was the chant that rang out at the conference sessions, reflecting participants' determination to act to defend abortion.

The "Reproductive Rights Strategies" resolution, passed by the big majority of delegates, had as its centerpiece the call for NOW to "organize a massive march and rally in Washington, D.C., in 1986 of our supporters to show — dramatically — the overwhelming majority support for legal abortion and birth control." Although the date hasn't been set yet, the target for the demonstration is early spring.

The resolution also calls on NOW to organize a campaign to involve college students in fighting for abortion rights.

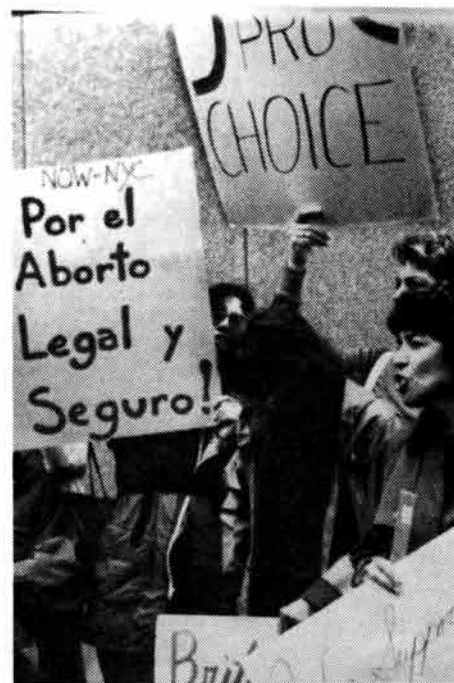
Four days before the NOW conference opened, the Justice Department asked the Supreme Court to overturn the 1973 *Roe vs. Wade* high court decision that legalized abortion. This direct attack by the Reagan administration on legal abortion is part of the government's unrelenting offensive against abortion rights.

There is also an interview with Dr. Henry Morgentaler, who is one of the most prominent fighters for abortion rights in Canada.

The preface by Grogan points out, "This pamphlet is intended to be part of the effort to defend abortion rights. It is designed to be circulated broadly — on the job, among unionists, Blacks, Latinos, family farmers, and students."

She states that the pamphlet "answers the antiabortion propaganda of the ruling class and provides a basic explanation of why working people should support abortion rights."

The pamphlet is available for US\$0.95 from Pathfinder Press at the following addresses: 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014, USA; 47 The Cut, London, SE1 8LL, Britain; or P.O. Box 37, Leichhardt, Sydney, NSW 2040, Australia.



Pat Grogan/IF

June 1985 abortion-rights protest in New York.

At the NOW National Board meeting the day before the conference opened, NOW leaders had launched a "Campaign to Save Women's Lives: One Million Strong." It includes a petition drive to collect a million signatures in defense of abortion rights.

The petitions are to be presented at a major event in Washington, D.C., on the January 22 anniversary of the legalization of abortion. The national board also called for abortion-rights rallies at the Supreme Court and federal courthouses in cities across the country on October 6, the day before the Supreme Court opens its fall term; speaking tours and public forums on abortion rights; and a continuation of vigils and escort services at abortion clinics.

In a major new policy decision, the conference also put NOW on record against U.S. intervention in Central America.

The anti-intervention resolution condemns the U.S. government's funding and directing of the war and government repression against the people of El Salvador, which has claimed 55,000 lives. The "Reagan administration is threatening an illegal invasion of Nicaragua, where attacks by CIA-backed *contras* have already caused over 8,000 casualties in their effort to forcibly overturn the 1979 revolution, which with the active participation of women has achieved important feminist goals..." says the resolution. □