

# INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

Africa

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the Americas

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## FOREIGN DEBT CRISIS



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# Imperialist debt trap

By Doug Jenness

If there were ever a clear reason, simply on moral grounds, for canceling Mexico's mammoth foreign debt, it is the devastating social and economic effects of the two earthquakes that hit that country in mid-September.

More than 5,500 people were killed and tens of thousands made homeless by the disaster. Hundreds of millions of dollars will be needed to restore what was destroyed.

These gigantic costs come on top of Mexico's already grave economic crisis and the drastic lowering of the living standards of the country's workers and peasants. (See article on page 620.)

Making matters worse, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), on the eve of the earthquakes, suspended \$900 million in pending loans because the Mexican government was not fully complying with austerity measures imposed by the IMF. Mexico needed the loans to cover other debts that were coming due.

In spite of these difficulties, which were aggravated by the earthquakes, there has not been even a whisper from Wall Street bankers or their hirelings in Washington about canceling Mexico's \$96 billion foreign debt. To the contrary, they are busy figuring out ways to keep the payments from Mexico rolling in.

The IMF has so far rejected releasing the suspended loans. Instead, Mexico's principal creditors deferred for six months \$950 million in principal payments due on October 1 and November 4. This brief respite, however, does not exempt Mexico from paying interest. Those interest payments are estimated at between \$800 and \$900 million a month.

Two weeks after the earthquakes, the IMF finally got around to offering Mexico \$300 million from its disaster-relief program. Yet, even this piddling amount — just one-third of the country's monthly interest payments — is no grant. It is a three-to-five-year loan on which Mexico will have to pay 7 percent interest, thus adding to its already onerous debt burden.

In the face of the critical situation in Mexico and growing opposition throughout Latin America to the gigantic foreign debt, Reagan administration officials came up with what has been widely acclaimed in the big-business press as a "new approach."

U.S. officials took their "new approach" to the joint IMF-World Bank conference in Seoul, South Korea, in early October. The U.S. proposal aims to convince bankers to increase their new lending to debt-burdened Latin American countries. It calls for getting the World Bank, which specializes in organizing loans for long-term development projects, to play a major role in this effort.

According to the hype in the big-business media, Washington has shifted its emphasis from austerity programs to "economic growth"

as the way forward for the debtor nations of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. The tough belt-tightening measures the IMF demands as a condition for its loans have made it especially hated by hundreds of millions of people, not only in Latin America, but throughout the world. In the past year these imperialist-imposed austerity measures have sparked popular rebellions in Egypt, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and other countries.

But Washington's proposal will not ease the situation for the debtor countries. It will actually deepen their indebtedness, increasing the amount of natural resources and wealth produced by the labor of working people that is pumped out of these countries for the benefit of a tiny handful of bankers.

In an interview last March with Congressman Mervyn Dymally and Professor Jeffrey Elliot from the United States, Cuban President Fidel Castro explained why Latin American countries don't need new loans if their current debts and interest are canceled.

Castro pointed out that Latin American countries are currently paying \$40 billion per year in interest on their debts, "and they'll have to pay \$40 billion every year if the debt doesn't continue to grow — that will mean \$400 billion in ten years." If more loans are made on which more interest has to be paid, the debt will increase and the interest will exceed \$40 billion a year.

The Cuban leader cited Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina, whose current annual interest obligations are \$12 billion, \$10 billion, and \$5 billion respectively. "No one can lend those countries such enormous sums for development," he said; "if anybody did, in a few years, the three of them would be paying \$60 billion a year for interest instead of the \$30 billion they are now paying. . . . The economy

will grow just to pay the interest to the banks."

The Latin American countries, Castro said, "don't need new loans." Instead, the gigantic sums currently being drained from their economies to fill the coffers of international bankers should be used to advance their own economic growth and development. For example, he said, "if Brazil is paying \$12 billion a year for the interest on its debt, it doesn't need any loans; if it invested that \$12 billion, it would have \$120 billion for development programs in ten years."

The big bankers in New York, London, Paris, Tokyo, and other international finance capitals not only adamantly oppose canceling the debts; they also want to keep the Latin American countries in a permanent state of indebtedness. They don't want these countries to ever get free from debt, any more than a dope pusher wants his clients to break their habit. The bankers profit handsomely by keeping their debtors hooked on debt.

The editors of the *New York Times* welcomed the Reagan administration's proposals, but asserted that expanding commercial credit "will take time." Meanwhile, the debtor countries, they say, "will have to discipline themselves."

"Self-discipline" plays a weighty role in Washington's plans. According to the October 3 *Wall Street Journal*, "The administration also will seek tighter procedures at the World Bank and regional lending institutions . . . to maintain pressure on borrowers to make economic changes."

These proposed changes include, among other things, making business more profitable for foreign investors, transforming state-owned industries into private companies, and slashing government spending.

So, when all is said and done, there is nothing new about Washington's "new approach." It is simply the same old policy of helping the big bankers to exact as much tribute as possible from their oppressed and exploited debt slaves in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. □

## Israel's outrageous raid

By Steve Craine

The Israeli regime has once again struck a murderous blow at Palestinians fighting to regain their homeland. This time the attack came some 1,500 miles outside Israel's own borders.

On October 1 a squadron of Israeli jets flew to Tunisia to destroy the international headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which has been located there since it was forced out of Beirut in 1982.

The U.S.-built war planes, which had to be refueled in flight to complete the 3,000-mile round trip, spent just six minutes over their target in the Tunisian city of Borj Cedria, 21 miles south of the capital. The surprise attack

left nothing but a pile of crumbled concrete and a deep water-filled crater where the PLO's headquarters building had been.

By the next day, estimates of the casualties had reached 67 dead and more than 100 injured. Of the dead, 22 were Tunisians and the rest Palestinians.

As with its June 1981 destruction of an Iraqi nuclear reactor on the outskirts of Baghdad and its many raids into Lebanon, Tel Aviv demonstrated its complete contempt for the sovereignty of the Arab countries. Israel's rulers claim for themselves the right to intervene anywhere in the world if they feel they can get away with it.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin called the

slaughter in Tunisia a warning to "terrorists" that "the long arm" of the Israeli military "will reach them wherever they are." When asked if his forces might also strike at PLO offices in Amman, Jordan, Rabin replied that "no PLO target is immune."

Both major parties in the Israeli government — Rabin's Labor Party and the Likud Bloc of former prime ministers Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir — wholeheartedly approved the plan at a cabinet meeting nearly a week beforehand.

The attack did not kill PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat as Israeli strategists undoubtedly hoped. He had been scheduled to hold a meeting in the headquarters building that morning from 9 to 11. The attack began at 10:07 a.m.

Like Israel's repeated invasions, air and naval bombardments, and three-year occupation of Lebanon, the October 1 bombing was part of an attempt to decapitate resistance to Israeli occupation of Palestine. The Israeli government is determined to cripple the Palestine Liberation Organization because for two decades this organization has led the revolutionary struggle for a democratic, secular Palestine.

The Israeli rulers waged a costly three-year war in Lebanon with the primary aim of destroying the PLO. While they dealt the Palestinian movement a severe blow, they did not succeed in wiping out the PLO.

The 88-day siege of Beirut and the subsequent occupation of much of Lebanon forced the PLO out of its last refuge in territory contiguous to occupied Palestine. And the destruction of the PLO's base in Lebanon facilitated the Syrian regime's criminal intervention into Palestinian affairs. Damascus fomented the armed mutiny in the PLO ranks in 1983, further weakening the fight against Israel.

But, as the recent air raid on Tunisia shows, the PLO is not dead and the Israeli rulers still consider it a threat.

The continuing insecurity of the Tel Aviv regime is also indicated by its escalating repression against Palestinians in the territories it occupied in the June 1967 war — the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights. The government is stepping up its program of building settlements on Arab land in the West Bank.

In August several members of Israeli parliament provocatively staged an unauthorized week-long occupation of a house in the Arab quarter of Hebron. The action was designed to pressure the government into opening the center of that West Bank city to Israeli settlement.

The bombing of Tunisia was universally condemned by Arab governments and many others around the world. The Egyptian government called it a "heinous criminal action," and broke off negotiations with Israel over a disputed strip of land on the Gulf of Aqaba. Tunisian Foreign Minister Beji Caid Essebsi called the attack an act of "state terrorism."

Other Arab governments, including Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Libya, joined in condemning the aggression. Even several imperialist governments voiced their strongest criticisms of Israel in many years.

Washington, on the other hand, jumped to

the defense of its Israeli allies. An official White House statement October 1 referred to the raid as a "legitimate response" to "terrorist attacks." President Ronald Reagan strongly endorsed the use of military force. He said his "great faith in [Israeli] intelligence capabilities" made him confident that the victims of the Israeli raid were actually responsible for "terrorist" actions.

The next day, the White House attempted to tone down its initial enthusiasm for the murders in response to the worldwide outrage against them. It stated that the Israeli action "cannot be condoned." But even this carefully considered statement called the raid "understandable as an expression of self-defense."

By threatening to veto a resolution on the raid, the U.S. government forced the United Nations Security Council to drop a call for sanctions against Israel and to delete references to Israel's "policy of state terrorism."

Even after pulling the teeth from the resolution, however, the U.S. delegate was the only member of the Council who refused to vote for it when it was passed October 4.

Israel's latest atrocity met with an angry response in Tunisia and in Palestine itself. In Tunisia, demonstrators directed their protests against Washington's support for Tel Aviv's aggression. They carried banners denouncing Reagan as a "Zionist collaborator." The General Union of Tunisian Workers called a mass rally for October 6 to protest the U.S. role in the raid.

In the West Bank and Gaza, young people marched with Palestinian flags and portraits of Yassir Arafat, in defiance of Israeli occupation authorities. In Nablus and Ramallah on the West Bank, Israeli troops fired guns to disperse the crowds.

These voices of outrage should be joined by protests from working people throughout the world. □

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# Earthquake worsens foreign debt crisis

*\$12 billion will leave country this year in interest payments*

**By Will Reissner**

Two earthquakes hit Mexico on September 19 — one geological, the other financial. As people in Mexico City began to dig out of the rubble caused by the ground tremors, Mexican officials learned that the International Monetary Fund would not release new loans totaling more than \$900 million, which had been agreed to under a three-year loan agreement between the Mexican government and the IMF, signed on Jan. 1, 1983.

The International Monetary Fund, which functions as the guardian of the interests of big banks in the United States, Western Europe, and Japan, was expressing its displeasure with the Mexican government's inability to keep within economic guidelines the IMF had set when the loan agreement was signed.

Mexican authorities had been forced to approach the IMF, hat in hand, in August 1982, when it became clear that Mexico could no longer pay even the interest on the country's foreign debt, which then stood at \$80 billion.

In return for new loans from the IMF, the Mexican government had been forced to implement IMF programs designed to cut Mexico's domestic consumption and investment to the bone in order to free up maximum resources to repay the foreign bankers.

Since then, the IMF and the bankers have pointed to Mexico as a model for the rest of the heavily indebted countries of Latin America.

Under pressure from the IMF, the Mexican government cut its spending drastically, devalued the peso, reduced imports sharply, and attempted to boost exports. As a result, living standards of Mexico's already impoverished workers and peasants dropped dramatically. Since 1982, living standards have declined 30 percent.

A new package of austerity measures implemented in mid-1985 dashed hopes for any economic growth that could put a dent in the rate of unemployment and underemployment, which is over 40 percent of the work force.

But the IMF viewed the program as a model because since signing the Jan. 1, 1983, agreement, Mexico has paid out more than \$30 billion in interest to foreign bankers.

In a more fundamental sense, however, the IMF's policies have been as ineffective as they have been savage. Even before the devastating earthquakes struck Mexico, it had become clear that without new loans the country again could not pay the interest on the foreign debt, which had by now risen to more than \$96 billion.

On August 29, the Mexican government and representatives of the creditor banks had signed an agreement rescheduling repayment

of nearly \$49 billion in outstanding loans over a 14-year period.

But Mexico cannot pay the more than \$14 billion in interest and principal that falls due in 1986. Before the earthquake, Mexican officials indicated they would need at least \$2.5 billion in new foreign loans in the coming year.

## Growth of foreign debt

The magnitude of the economic crisis in Mexico can be glimpsed from the following comparisons:

- In 1971, 12.5 Mexican pesos could be exchanged for one U.S. dollar, and Mexico's total foreign debt stood at \$4.5 billion.
- Five years later, at the end of 1976, it took about 20 Mexican pesos to buy one U.S. dollar, and the foreign debt had climbed to \$24 billion.
- By the end of 1980, huge oil discoveries had propelled Mexico into the front ranks of oil-exporting countries, but the foreign debt had grown to \$40 billion.
- Now, as 1985 draws to a close, it takes 368 Mexican pesos to purchase one U.S. dollar, and Mexico's foreign debt stands at more

than \$96 billion.

Between 1980 and the end of this year — a period during which Mexico's foreign debt rose by \$56 billion — the country will have paid out more than \$52.5 billion in interest payments to foreign bankers. In other words, Mexico has paid out \$12.5 billion more than the total it owed in 1980, yet the foreign debt has more than doubled.

Mexico's economic problems are far from unique. The same forces buffeting the Mexican economy are also buffeting the other countries of Latin America and the rest of the semicolonial world.

If anything, Mexico has some advantages that most of the countries of the semicolonial world lack. It is, for example, one of the biggest exporters of oil in the world. Due to its close proximity to the United States, it can earn large amounts of dollars from U.S. tourism. That proximity also gives Mexico an advantage in trying to sell goods to the U.S. market.

Despite these advantages, Mexico has been unable to escape the debt crisis that is rocking the semicolonial world.

## Unequal terms of trade

The roots of this crisis lie in the unequal terms of trade and the exorbitant interest rates imposed on the semicolonial countries by the leaders of the advanced capitalist states.

The prices that Mexico and the rest of the semicolonial world receive for their export products have dropped sharply in the past decade, while the prices they must pay for the manufactured goods they import have continued to rise.

With the onset of the international capitalist economic crisis in 1975, world demand for natural resources such as oil dropped. Declining demand led to a drop in the prices that Mexico receives for its oil, silver, copper, and coffee.

With export revenues falling, Mexico, like other semicolonial countries, had to borrow from banks in the imperialist countries to finance imports of machinery and other technology needed to maintain economic growth. Mexican officials expected that these loans could be repaid when export prices rose again.

But export prices did not rise. They continued to fall further. As a result, Mexico, like the other semicolonial countries, was unable to pay back those loans through export earnings.

## Interest rates

New loans had to be contracted. The borrowed money was used, not to develop the economy, but simply to repay previous loans.

But these new loans were contracted at far



Reading an early account of death toll.



Living standards of Mexico's workers and peasants have dropped 30 percent since 1982.

higher interest rates than the loans they replaced.

The sharp rise in interest rates was due, in the final analysis, to the Reagan administration's decision to finance the gigantic U.S. arms buildup through borrowing rather than increased taxation.

Washington's insatiable need for new loans drove up the interest rates that all borrowers must pay. Mexico, like the other countries of Latin America, Asia, and Africa, is therefore paying a heavy price for the U.S. arms drive.

A decline of only 1 percent in the interest rate would save Mexico about \$1 billion per year in interest payments.

The international capitalist economic crisis not only drove down prices that the semicolonial countries receive for their exports, but also restricted the market for those exports.

In many cases, sales of industrial products produced in the semicolonial countries have been restricted by protectionist legislation in the advanced capitalist countries.

In the past few years, more than 60 Mexican export items have been excluded from preferential treatment in the U.S. tariff system. Commodities like steel, glass, and textiles are subject to high tariffs that make it more difficult for them to compete in the U.S. market.

Since nearly 70 percent of Mexico's exports go to the U.S. market, protectionist measures can have a drastic impact on the country's economy.

Mexican exports of manufactured goods dropped 10 percent in the first half of 1985 compared with the same period of 1984.

#### Oil prices, income cut

At the same time, Mexico has been hit hard

by the declining demand and price for oil on the world market. Oil sales account for up to 75 percent of Mexico's exports and provide half the government's revenues.

In the past year, Mexico has twice been forced to drop its price for oil, in February by \$1.25 per barrel and in June by an additional \$2. Another price cut is expected in the near future.

As the price Mexico receives per barrel of

oil drops, the total volume of exported oil has also fallen. In the first half of 1984, oil exports averaged 1.56 million barrels per day. By June 1985, exports had dropped to 800,000 barrels per day, although they have again risen since the second price cut.

Because of the falling volume and falling prices of its exports, Mexico's current-account surplus (the balance of all its foreign sales and purchases) dropped from \$3.4 billion in the first half of 1984 to just \$24 million in the first half of 1985. Over the past year, the country's foreign-exchange and gold reserves have dropped from \$9 billion to \$5.2 billion.

In mid-August, the National Bank of Mexico made public an analysis predicting that the country's total 1985 exports will amount to \$23 billion. Mexico's scheduled interest payments for the same year are \$12 billion. This means that Mexico will have to spend more than half its total export earnings just on interest payments, leaving little left over to pay for vitally needed imports.

The cost of financing the earthquake recovery simply makes a grim economic picture even grimmer.

Commenting on the earthquake, Cuban President Fidel Castro proposed that the banks in the advanced capitalist countries write off Mexico's debt. Cancellation of even one year's interest payments would free up \$12 billion that could be used to begin reconstruction of the earthquake damage.

The International Monetary Fund announced a more modest contribution to the earthquake relief on October 4, when the executive directors of the IMF stated they would "look favorably" on a \$300 million loan to Mexico, if Mexican authorities ask for it. □

## DOCUMENTS

### October 23 antidebt protests

#### Latin American Fourth Internationalists urge support

[The following statement was issued in September. The translation from Spanish is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

The representatives of trade unions and popular organizations from our countries met in Havana, Cuba, in July 1985 to discuss the extremely serious problems that payment of the foreign debt is causing our peoples. Among other things, this conference decided to declare October 23 as the Continent-wide Day of Refusal to Pay the Foreign Debt and as a day of action against the International Monetary Fund's criminal policy toward our peoples.

Given the importance of this, the Latin American and Caribbean organizations operating in the framework of the Fourth International declare:

1. The offensive by the imperialist banks and governments against our peoples to force payment of the foreign debt has resulted in ever harsher implementation of austerity plans, rising prices, cutbacks in budgets for programs that benefit the people, massive layoffs of workers, wage freezes, removal of peasants from the land, and the inevitable policy of repression to destroy any popular protests and the organizations that sponsor them.

2. Imperialism's policy has been endorsed by the governments of our countries, or at best, they have taken only timid measures that, far from responding to the needs of the people they claim to represent, place them shamelessly and against national interests on the side of those who want to fill the imperialist coffers at the expense of our sacrifice. This is done not only for their own selfish interests, but also to lash the people and to de-

stabilize those governments, such as our sister Nicaragua, that dare to choose an honorable and sovereign path, placing the national wealth in the hands of the great majority that needs it.

3. Because of its size, the debt cannot be paid. Because it is an instrument of exploitation, it should not be paid. The native ruling classes, bound to imperialism's interests, cannot adopt a firm, independent position toward it.

Contrary to the servile path taken by the governments and bourgeoisies, Latin American trade unionists and peasants resolved to take the struggle against payment of the foreign debt into their own hands. Moreover, they have taken on the struggle, without quarter, for a new international economic order that will end imperialism's exploitation of dependent countries such as ours and will orient toward satisfying the basic necessities of all the exploited and oppressed. Such a new economic order will orient toward economic exchange among the countries of the so-called Third World. A new economic order would use the enormous resources of Latin America and the Caribbean for our own development and not, as has been the case thus far, for the further enrichment of the imperialists, who finance their economic development with resources from the dependent and exploited countries. Latin America will never recover these resources.

4. Given this situation, we make a fervent appeal to all workers, all peasants, popular forces, revolutionary parties, and democratic organizations to actively and combatively participate in the activities against payment of the foreign debt, October 23, by organizing assemblies, rallies, marches, protests, work stoppages, etc. Following the example of the Latin American Trade Union Conference, we call on the trade union federations to continue these sorts of meetings, creating greater possibilities to seek common initiatives and actions by the workers and peasants of Latin America and the Caribbean.

*Against hunger and misery. We will not pay the debt. This is the only way there will be a future for us and our children!*

*No to payment of the foreign debt!*

*Against austerity policies!*

*For defense of democratic rights!*

*Assure the success of the continent-wide protest October 23.*

Hugo Blanco G., Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), Peru; Margarito Montes P., Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), Mexico; João Machado, Revolutionary Marxist Organization-Socialist Democracy (ORM-DS), Brazil; Manuel Bedrán, Revolutionary Workers Movement (MRT), Ecuador; Antonio Moreno, Revolutionary Workers Party (Unified) (POR[U]), Bolivia; Gilbert Pago, Socialist Revolution Group (GRS), Guadeloupe-Martiniq; Tatiana Cartagena, Revolutionary Socialist Party (PRS), Colombia; Juan Robles, Socialist Workers Party (PST), Uruguay; Jorge Pérez, Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR), Chile.

## SELECTIONS FROM THE LEFT



*"United Left," a monthly newspaper published in Buenos Aires by the Praxis Group.*

An article in the inaugural issue of *Izquierda Unida*, dated August 1, described the July 30 opening of the Havana conference on Latin America's foreign debt as "a further step in the political offensive initiated some months ago by Fidel Castro."

The Cuban leader's aim, the article stated, is to put forward two points: that Latin America's foreign debt is impossible to repay and that there must be a new international economic order.

Castro's political offensive, the newspaper explained, takes place at a time of constant negotiations between the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the governments of Mexico, Peru, and Brazil. According to *Izquierda Unida*, the Argentine government feels that "the firmness of Fidel's position" can be used to "soften" the positions of the creditor banks" and win support from the White House.

In addition, President Raúl Alfonsín's government cannot simply ignore the Havana meetings because they "provide the opposition parties, and especially the left, with the opportunity to develop unified proposals around clear axes, on a continental level."

The newspaper predicted that the Alfonsín government will try to work with the governments of Mexico, Venezuela, and perhaps Brazil to get the "Cartagena" alternative operating. (Representatives of 11 Latin American debtor countries met in Cartagena, Colombia, in 1984 to seek a solution to the debt crisis.)

By playing the Cartagena card, Alfonsín hopes "to regain the political initiative from the Cuban premier, and from the whole opposition and the left," and "to fight them for leadership of the continent." The article added that Alfonsín also hopes "to increase his ability to apply pressure on the creditor banks."

While the Argentine government does not want to repudiate the Havana conference, *Izquierda Unida* pointed out, its participation will not go beyond rhetoric because it, like the other debtor countries, does not want to upset the present talks with the IMF.

Some people in the Argentine foreign ministry, the article reported, feel that "the hardline position of Fidel and the left" can be used "to 'soften up' imperialism and 'sensitize' the usurers."

The article expressed doubt that Alfonsín can gain much from that because "international capital's maneuvering room is becoming increasingly limited."

Whatever the Alfonsín government's view of the Havana conference, the article con-

cluded, "for the popular classes the Havana Conference means the possibility of regionally unifying their struggle against imperialism and extending their alliances with various sectors hit by the crisis. And, undoubtedly, unity for struggle is a fundamental gain."

## MANO DE OBRA

*"Labor," an "independent fortnightly of trade union information" published in Buenos Aires.*

The Trade Union Conference of Workers of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Havana, Cuba, "was an event of enormous importance for the political future of our countries," according to the early August issue of *Mano de Obra*.

For the first time, the publication continued, "the workers are taking an active part, presenting an alternative, with their own proposals regarding the economic-political crisis affecting the continent."

Going beyond words, the conference set the basis for united action by workers throughout Latin America and the Caribbean on October 23 by calling for a "Day of Continent-wide Action Against the Foreign Debt," the article said.

Noting that the idea for this conference had originally been raised by trade union conferences in Brazil, Uruguay, Bolivia, and Argentina, *Mano de Obra* hailed the Cuban Workers Confederation for having had "the political determination and organizational capability to convene the conference."

In addition, the way in which the Cuban trade union movement organized the conference "guaranteed the participation of all currents of the Latin American trade union movement, on a footing of equality and with absolute democratic guarantees of being able to express themselves and put forward their views."

"We must roll up our sleeves and organize the [October 23] continent-wide day of action against the foreign debt," *Mano de Obra* declared. "We should begin in the workplaces, organizing meetings, assemblies, and discussions to shed light on the foreign debt's effects on our daily lives: low wages, unemployment, superexploitation, constant threats against democratic guarantees, and so on.

"From the internal commissions and the delegates' bodies we should call upon the trade union leaders to join together to organize the October 23 Day of Action.

"We should demand that the highest bodies of the [Argentine] General Confederation of Labor (CGT) take on the task of carrying out a symbolic strike on that day. In the unions and locals led by militant comrades, we should push for meetings that will allow us to organize the protest and carry it out anyway in the event that the CGT declines to promote it."

# Upsurge deepens rifts in ruling class

## Businessmen meet with ANC leaders

By Ernest Harsch

Confronted by the greatest political challenge they have yet faced from South Africa's Black majority, the apartheid authorities are continuing to cast about for some way to preserve their racist system of rule.

The regime of President Pieter Botha has responded with a combination of repression and vague promises of reform. As that has proved ineffective in halting the upheaval, the tactical differences within the white ruling class have sharpened further. These rifts reflect the tremendous political pressures apartheid has come under.

The scope and severity of the repression itself indicate the scale of the challenge confronting the regime.

Since the imposition of the state of emergency in parts of the country in July, police have arrested nearly 3,600 political activists, of whom 1,400 are still being held.

These political prisoners include trade unionists, religious figures, and leaders of hundreds of local community organizations. The vast bulk are supporters of the 2-million-member United Democratic Front (UDF), the anti-apartheid coalition that has provided the main organizational leadership to the mobilizations that have been rocking South Africa for more than a year.

On September 20, Rev. Allan Boesak, a key figure in the UDF, was released on bail, but then placed under house arrest. He is facing trial on charges of "political subversion" after publicly advocating international economic sanctions against the apartheid regime. Such advocacy is a crime in South Africa.

More than a dozen other top UDF leaders are being tried on charges of "treason."

Police killings of demonstrators continue in scores of Black townships. Since the beginning of the upsurge, the death toll has mounted to well over 700, the vast majority of them Black.

In early September, Thabo Mokoena, a UDF activist as well as an organizer for the National Federation of Workers Unions, was murdered in the Durban township of Umlazi. He was dragged out of his home in the middle of the night by 20 men armed with sticks and spears, and found beaten to death the next day.

Umlazi, like other Black townships around Durban, is still in the grip of a reign of terror carried out by the police and gangs of armed thugs organized by the Inkatha movement, a Zulu-based tribal organization headed by Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, a prominent Black collaborator with the apartheid regime.

This rise in Inkatha's terrorist actions comes at a time of growing support among Zulu-

speakers for the UDF and for the African National Congress (ANC), the vanguard liberation organization.

### Opinion polls

An opinion survey of Africans, Coloureds (those of mixed ancestry), and Indians in the Durban area was recently conducted by the University of Natal's Institute of Black Research. According to the September 17 Johannesburg *Star*, the survey found that "support for jailed ANC leader Mr. Nelson Mandela and for the United Democratic Front has increased considerably since unrest began in Durban, while Chief Mangosuthu [Gatsha] Buthelezi and the Inkatha movement have lost ground among blacks."

Although 45 percent of Africans surveyed six years ago by the same institute said they supported Buthelezi, the number has fallen to just 4.8 percent today.

A broader survey of 800 Blacks in 10 major cities was conducted several weeks earlier by the Institute of Black Research and the Community Agency for Social Enquiry. It also found that Nelson Mandela was the single most popular figure among Blacks.

Confirming other recent polls that indicate mounting Black support for economic sanctions against the apartheid regime, this survey found that 73 percent of those questioned backed the call for a withdrawal of foreign investments from South Africa. (The London *Sunday Times*, in a poll conducted in August, found 77 percent support for divestment.)

According to the survey, 22 percent of those questioned favored a capitalist system, "in which businesses are owned and run by private businessmen, for their own profit. More than three-quarters of respondents favour socialism over capitalism, a proportion that applies across age, education, region, sex, and even between supporters of all the different political tendencies."

Sixty-six percent said they supported actions like strikes, consumer boycotts, and protests against rent hikes and unequal education. Thirty-six percent said they approved of armed struggle.

Especially significant was the finding that 80 percent "insist that compromise is no longer possible, and hold out for a unitary non-racial democracy." This comes in the context of President Botha's repeated promises to reform the apartheid system, short of granting the widespread demand for one-person, one-vote in a single state undivided by Bantustans.

Such surveys — conducted in a country where it is dangerous to speak one's mind — only dimly reflect the real depth of opposition

to the apartheid system.

The determination of Blacks to do away with apartheid is more readily apparent in the mass mobilizations around the country, which have persisted despite the severity of the police and military repression.

In defiance of bans on mass funerals, Blacks have continued to turn out in large numbers to bury those killed by the police. In Duncan Village, near East London, some 80,000 Blacks gathered for the funeral of 17 adults and a 16-month-old boy in early September. Addressing the crowd, UDF leader Steve Tshwete called for extending the protests. On September 21, about 40,000 assembled in Guguletu, a Black township near Cape Town; as they marched to the cemetery they sang freedom songs and chanted slogans.

The Black consumer boycott of white-owned shops — in which more than half a million Blacks are already participating around the country — has spread further. Despite opposition from some Black merchants in Durban, the boycott was extended to that city on September 2. Later in the month, some 40 white families in Grahamstown joined the boycott there.

In mid-September, Cape Town became the latest of the numerous cities that have been paralyzed in recent months by general strikes. For several days, beginning on September 10, major sectors of Cape Town's industry and services ground to a halt as hundreds of thousands of Black workers heeded a call by trade unions and the regional UDF leadership to stay away from work to protest police detentions and the imposition of the state of emergency. According to the local Chamber of Industry, more than half of Cape Town's workers participated in the strike.

On September 17, hundreds of teachers, parents, and students demonstrated in Cape Town to demand the reopening of African and Coloured schools shut down by the government. The Concerned Teachers Coordinating Committee demanded that the police get out of the schools, that the state of emergency be lifted, and that the current segregated education system be replaced by desegregated, free, and compulsory schooling for all.

Opposition among young whites to military conscription has also been growing. Speaking at a public rally in Cape Town, a leader of the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) revealed that 7,589 whites had failed to register for the draft in the January induction, compared with 1,596 for all of last year.

The ECC has launched a campaign demanding "troops out of the townships," which is to

include fasts by religious and other figures. Bishop Desmond Tutu, a patron of the UDF, joined the fast on September 27.

Tutu and other clergymen, both Black and white, have called for a one-day national protest strike for October 9. The UDF has supported the call. The strike's demands include lifting of the state of emergency, withdrawal of police and troops from the Black townships, and the release of political prisoners.

In a September 12 broadcast to South Africa over the ANC's Radio Freedom, ANC President Oliver Tambo called for further extending the mass protests in the Bantustans, the 10 impoverished rural reserves allocated to Africans. "Make them also unworkable!" he declared. "Destroy them! Build something in their places."

In the latest in a series of protests in the Transkei Bantustan, 250 students at the Umata Technical College were arrested in early September for refusing to end a boycott of classes.

### Botha's reform talk

The apartheid regime's political response to this unprecedented upheaval has been outlined in a series of speeches that President Botha has given since mid-August to several provincial congresses of the ruling National Party.

He repeatedly stressed that his regime would do everything in its power to uphold the foundations of white minority rule. It would never accede to one-person, one-vote in a unitary state, he said in a September 30 speech before the Cape provincial party congress, claiming that majority rule would "cause a greater struggle and more bloodshed than we are experiencing today."

Botha has at the same time made a number of apparent concessions, within the framework of the apartheid system.

Speaking to a provincial party congress in the Orange Free State September 11, he offered to "negotiate" a restitution of South African citizenship to those Africans assigned to the Bantustans of the Transkei, Ciskei, Venda, and BophuthaTswana, which had been declared "independent" states.

But South African citizenship would bring no more rights to those Africans than to any others in the country, Botha made clear. And the Bantustan system itself would remain, both as a mechanism to foster divisions among Africans along language lines and as an expression of the white expropriation of the vast bulk of the land.

A day after this speech, the President's Council, an advisory body, proposed some changes in the way African urbanization is controlled, including in the notorious pass laws.

In his speech to the Cape party congress, Botha declared at one point that "my party and I are committed to the principle of a united South Africa, one citizenship and a universal franchise." But he quickly qualified this. Political rights, he explained, would be exercised within "units" based on geography and race, not on the basis of a genuinely universal



Funeral of 80,000 in Duncan Village buries 18 victims of apartheid police.

franchise for a national government.

In certain respects, the "reform" idea Botha raised at the Cape congress is similar to the "federation" proposals that have been advanced for several years by the main white bourgeois opposition party in parliament, the Progressive Federal Party (PFP). They aim to preserve white minority rule by finding new ways to keep the Black majority divided.

### Divisions among capitalist parties

Not only have Botha's "reforms" been rejected by the vast majority of Blacks. They have also come in for criticism from other white capitalist political currents, under the pressures of the continuing upsurge.

On the one hand, the Conservative Party, the Hestigte Nasionale Party, and other ultrarightist groups oppose any modifications in the apartheid system, declaring that concessions would only encourage Blacks to fight for more. Such views are still expressed within Botha's own National Party as well.

On the other hand, the PFP and some South African and foreign corporations are pressing for greater "reforms." PFP leader Frederick van Zyl Slabbert declared that such measures are needed to undercut the growing support for the ANC.

Among South African businessmen in particular, there has been mounting unease over the regime's inability to crush the Black protests. They have also been directly hit by South Africa's growing international isolation, which has made it more difficult to raise foreign loans and has led to a drastic drop in the value of the South African rand.

In August, the giant Anglo American Corp. broke ranks with the other mining companies and negotiated a separate agreement with the Black National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), in order to avoid a costly strike. (The NUM struck some of the other mining companies September 1, but was forced to call off the strike a few days later in face of severe police repression.)

White merchants and store owners in the

cities most affected by the Black consumer boycott have urged the regime to meet some of the Black demands.

The British-owned Barclays Bank announced that it would shut down all its branch offices in South Africa for an hour and a half on October 9, the day of the national protest strike, and that it would not punish any workers who took part in the strike. This followed by several weeks a warning by ANC leader Thabo Mbeki that "branches of Barclays Bank [could] go up in flames" if Britain tried to bail the apartheid regime out of its financial crisis.

In late September, 91 representatives of South African and foreign companies signed full-page advertisements in South African newspapers calling for "abolishing statutory race discrimination wherever it exists, negotiating with acknowledged Black leaders about power sharing, granting full South African citizenship to all our peoples, and restoring and entrenching the rule of law."

### Businessmen meet ANC

The clearest indication of these businessmen's concerns over the regime's failure to overcome the crisis came with the decision of several of them to meet with leaders of the outlawed ANC.

They did so despite sharp warnings from President Botha not to meet with "the enemies of South Africa." Such meetings, government officials stressed, served to bolster the ANC's stature.

The meeting took place on September 13 in the nearby Black-ruled state of Zambia. The businessmen's delegation included Gavin Relly and Zac de Beer of the Anglo American Corp., Tony Bloom of the Premier Milling Group, Peter Sorour of the South African Foundation (a business organization), and three newspaper and magazine editors. Oliver Tambo led the ANC delegation.

Both sides emphasized that these were not negotiations, but simply an exchange of views.

Speaking after the meeting, Relly stated that there was "little community of interest be-



tween us. Our positions are very far apart. The real common ground is that we are all concerned that the next generation should inherit a viable economic and political system."

Back in South Africa, Relly called for the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and said, "A good number of business people in South Africa are of the opinion that Nelson Mandela should be released."

Oliver Tambo said the talks represented "a very important contribution to the process of seeking ways and means of ending the violence of apartheid."

Tambo also revealed that one of the businessmen's concerns was the ANC's pledge to carry out the nationalization planks of the Freedom Charter, the program of South Africa's national democratic revolution first adopted at a mass Congress of the People in 1955. The Freedom Charter states, "The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole. . . . All land shall be shared among those who work it."

Tambo noted, "No businessman is going to agree that his business should be nationalized." He then added, "We can't leave the large corporations operating as they do. They represent tremendous wealth in the midst of unspeakable poverty. Some move should be made toward bridging this gap and [creating] a more equitable distribution of wealth." Tambo said that the ANC envisions "a mixed economy" for South Africa.

Thabo Mbeki, who also attended the talks, pointed out, "Ninety-five percent of white South Africa doesn't own any property except houses and cars and swimming pools. So when the Freedom Charter says we nationalize the mines and all that . . . we are perfectly happy to let them keep those things."

A little more than a week after the Zambia meeting, Anglo American's Zac de Beer, PFP leader Slabbert, Chief Buthelezi, and other liberal capitalist figures formed the Convention Alliance. This new grouping stresses "the need for negotiation." It calls for a national convention involving all political forces, from Nelson Mandela to the ultrarightist Andries Treur-

nicht, to work out a "compromise."

In a statement rejecting this alliance, the ANC declared, "There is more that unites these personalities than [the convention] idea. They refuse to initiate or participate in any mass action. They are against the international isolation of apartheid South Africa. They are virulently opposed to armed struggle and are happy to justify the violence of the apartheid system in the name of law and order.

"The ANC would like to reiterate that there can be no negotiated settlement while our leaders are in prison."

Any negotiations, the ANC went on, "would have to be about the transfer of power to the democratic majority. The issue of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa is not negotiable.

"There is only one way forward," the ANC concluded, quoting the words of Nelson Mandela. "We must and will crush the apartheid regime between the hammer of armed action and the anvil of mass struggle. There is no middle road." □

## DOCUMENTS

# South Africa's 'revolt of the people'

'Der Spiegel' interviews ANC President Oliver Tambo

[The following interview with African National Congress (ANC) President Oliver Tambo was conducted in Lusaka, Zambia, by two correspondents of the West German weekly *Der Spiegel*, and appeared in its August 12 issue. We have taken this translation from the German from the August 13 issue of the *Foreign Broadcast Information Service* of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

*Question.* Mr. Tambo, South Africa's government had to impose a state of emergency in parts of the country to fight the constantly growing unrest. Is the ANC directing the revolt from its exile?

*Answer.* It is a revolt of the people. However, we convey messages and tell people what has to be done.

*Q.* Early this year, you demanded: "Make the country ungovernable." How do you reach your followers?

A. Through our radio broadcasts and our publications. Naturally, we also reach our members through other, more discreet channels.

*Q.* The ANC is prohibited in South Africa.

A. We have an underground organization there.

*Q.* Do you order individual underground fighters to blow up a specific public building by a bomb attack, for example?

A. That is impossible. It is true that the South African propaganda claims that we sit in Botswana with computers and tell everybody where he has to go and what he has to do there. But that is fiction. Our followers often decide for themselves what targets they want to attack. In this way they follow the goal set by us of destroying the structures of apartheid.

*Q.* Do you mean that every underground fighter acts alone, in other words, without assistance?

A. No, not everyone alone. They are organized.

*Q.* So is there a command structure in South Africa?

A. Yes, it was built by our people.

*Q.* Are they cells which are directed by the ANC leadership?

A. No, that is not done from here; however, we tell the people: Offer resistance on all fronts, against housing rent increases, for instance. We tell them: Join forces, set up units, and create organizations. The people follow our advice.

*Q.* A year ago, things were very bad for the

ANC. South Africa concluded the Nkomati pact with neighboring Mozambique, and the ANC had to leave its forward-based positions in Mozambique.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, unrest in South Africa has meanwhile grown to unprecedented proportions. What is your explanation?

A. The treaty of Nkomati virtually provoked the people's revolt. They wanted to show that the struggle continues — despite Nkomati.

*Q.* Are you supported by the churches in your struggle?

A. The churches at one time worked together with the apartheid system. However, that is over, and they are now an element of the people's movement against apartheid.

*Q.* ANC followers sing, "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" at meetings, "God Bless Africa."

A. The ANC introduced "Nkosi Sikelel'

1. The Nkomati accords, signed between the South African and Mozambican governments in March 1984, stipulated that neither government would provide any military assistance to opponents of the other. As a result, the Mozambican government asked several hundred South African refugees and ANC members to leave Mozambique. The South African regime pledged to cut off its support to counter-revolutionary forces seeking to overthrow the Mozambican government, but in fact it has continued its aid to these terrorist bands on a massive scale.

iAfrika." At first it was the ANC anthem, and finally it became the national anthem sung by everybody in South Africa. Many ANC meetings are opened with a prayer. Leading ANC members and an ANC president were clergymen.

*Q. On the other hand, the ANC also has Communist and atheist members. Is this not a contradiction?*

A. No, it is not a contradiction, because the ANC is not a party but a national movement. Our members are Communists and anti-Communists, Christians and Muslims. The ANC program laid down in our Freedom Charter unites us.<sup>2</sup>

*Q. How strong is the Communists' influence on the ANC?*

A. I do not know how strong their influence is. I can only say that the South African Communist Party members in our ranks have learned very well to differentiate between the Communist Party's policy and the ANC's policy. They are loyal and devoted ANC members. Possibly South African Communist Party members act in a different way than Communists usually do.

*Q. The ANC obtains its weapons from Communist states. This undoubtedly allows the Communists to exert influence.*

A. We do not have money to buy weapons. Therefore, we take them from wherever we can obtain them. We obtain weapons from Algeria, Tunisia, Nigeria, and the socialist countries. They do not find it hard to help us. If the United States gave us weapons, we could use them and not the Communist weapons.

*Q. There is a new generation in the ANC. The young people who joined in following the 1976 Soweto revolt are more radical and are inclined toward Marxism rather than the founders' generation that you belong to and that originates from the Christian-humanist tradition.*

A. What makes you think that the young people are Marxists?

*Q. We talked with them.*

A. There is probably indeed a shift in the direction of Marxism, if you compare the young people with the ANC generation that lived in South Africa in the '50s. We older people did not have much contact with the outside world. We did not know what America thought and what was going on in the socialist countries and in China. Since then, an educational process has taken place. The young people wanted to know more; they have read and adopted a stance on Marxist and anti-Marxist literature.

2. The Freedom Charter, adopted at a Congress of the People in South Africa in 1955, is a program for the national, democratic revolution against the apartheid state.

The struggle in South Africa has radicalized the people.

*Q. The crucial passage of the ANC Charter is this: "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white." But there are increasing anti-white resentments among the young people.*

A. This is a temporary phenomenon. What counteracts it are the Marxist influence and the traditions and positions of the ANC. There is no anti-white racism in the ANC, though there is in the Black Consciousness Movement.<sup>3</sup>

*Q. The anti-white Black Consciousness Movement gains constantly more followers in South Africa. The seed of apartheid seems to come forth.*

A. Humanly this is understandable, but this trend will be overcome. The young ANC members consider anti-white racism primitive.

*Q. But your rivals of the Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo), the militant organization of the Black Consciousness Movement, do not. An Azapo student leader, hinting at your Freedom Charter, announces: "It is a historical error to say that South Africa belongs to all, the oppressor and the oppressed, the robber and the robbed alike." Are you so positive that white racism will not some day be replaced by a black racism?*

A. Yes, whites and blacks some day will live like brothers and sisters in South Africa.

*Q. To many black South Africans the struggle against white rule is inseparably linked with the struggle against capitalism because apartheid is the form in which capitalism manifests itself in South Africa. What do you think are the relations between apartheid and capitalism?*

A. Capitalism exists all over the world. It is not white. There is also black capitalism. Capitalism exploits both whites and blacks.

*Q. But under the apartheid system capitalism offers more to the whites than to the blacks.*

A. This is true only because the blacks do not have any political power. If blacks had political power and capitalism prevailed, blacks would be exploiting blacks.

*Q. Which economic system does the ANC pursue for future South Africa?*

A. The Freedom Charter says that the riches of the country shall belong to the people.

*Q. That means nationalized banks and mines. Would there still be room for indigenous private enterprises and the American Ford Motor Company, for example?*

3. The Black Consciousness Movement was a Black political current that emerged in South Africa in the early 1970s.

A. Why not? Here in Zambia banks and mines are nationalized, and yet there are private and foreign enterprises in the country.

*Q. Just recently South Africa's most important entrepreneur associations demanded the abolition of apartheid. Are capitalists more farsighted than politicians?*

A. Yes. Politicians at best look as far as the next elections. Businessmen, however, want to plan farther ahead; they recognize sooner when trouble brews.

*Q. Most of the big foreign companies in South Africa voluntarily abide by a code of conduct: They pay blacks the same wages for a job as they pay whites and open high positions to non-whites. Does this not yield more to your people than your demand for economic sanctions which would deprive many people of their jobs?*

A. You have the individual white-collar worker in mind who would lose his job, but I am thinking of 25 million people who live under the cruel apartheid system. In the struggle for the abolition of this system it does not matter if 20, 120, or 22,000 people lose their jobs.

*Q. What makes you say 22,000, of all figures?*

A. The U.S. companies abiding by the code of conduct you described employ a mere 22,000 blacks, but their investments in South Africa amount to millions, if not billions, of dollars. And these investments wield an entirely different weight than some internal company reforms.

*Q. You mean to say that the investments support the system, and you accept the consequence that many people will lose their jobs if and when the world decides to impose sanctions on South Africa?*

A. Yes, it is a sacrifice for freedom — a small sacrifice, considering that more than 3 million blacks already are unemployed and that unemployment of those adversely affected by the boycott will contribute to the demise of apartheid.

*Q. Opponents of sanctions, such as Zulu Chief [Gatsha] Buthelezi, would tell you that it is not hard for those living outside to call for boycott measures as they are not affected by these measures.*

A. Neither would he, because as the chief of a "homeland"<sup>4</sup> he is highly paid by the South African government. But we should not concentrate on Buthelezi now.

*Q. Who gives you the mandate for demanding sanctions?*

4. The "homelands," also called Bantustans, are the 10 impoverished rural reserves to which most Africans are assigned.

A. The people in South Africa. Since last September 500 to 600 have lost their lives. The people in South Africa say that the killing would stop if the world would put the regime under pressure through sanctions.

*Q. Do you accept economic sanctions as a political weapon in general? Is it all right if, for instance, U.S. President Reagan announces sanctions against Nicaragua because he rejects the policy of the Sandinistas?*

A. Sanctions against South Africa are demanded by the majority of UN member-states, not only by us. It is sanctions against a regime that has become guilty of crimes against mankind. However, sanctions against Nicaragua, a country where people elected their own government, are, in my view, something criminal. It is saying a lot if Reagan orders sanctions against Nicaragua but not against the racists in South Africa.

*Q. Could sanctions actually bring the South African government to the negotiating table so as to talk about the future with the ANC, for instance?*

A. No, not sanctions alone. However, our struggle in South Africa will show better results if pressure is being added from outside. The regime will not necessarily be ready for talks with us. However, we do not rule out this possibility.

*Q. Does the ANC make conditions for talks with the government?*

A. It must be sure that discussions will not deal with any reforms whatsoever but with the modalities related to the abolition of apartheid and to the introduction of a democratic system. However, we do not believe that the government is already prepared for such negotiations. A token to this effect would be the unconditional release of our ANC leader Nelson Mandela, who has been incarcerated for more than 20 years now, and of the other political prisoners.

*Q. If such a meeting were to take place and the government were to show good will, would you then allow it some time for changing over from minority to majority rule?*

A. If you are the victim of a crime and if you may be killed, you certainly will not say: "Just go ahead with your killings and take your time for another four, five, or 10 years." This is why we cannot tell the regime: "We give you the time."

*Q. Thus, it has to be a changeover from today to tomorrow?*

A. Prior to a meeting, understanding must have been achieved on the subject of the negotiations. An agreement then ought to determine the procedure for the change from apartheid to democracy. To be sure, South Africa would not be a different country one day after such a meeting.



OLIVER TAMBO

Ernest Harsch/IFP

*Q. Do you see any chance at all for a peaceful change in South Africa?*

A. To go into full particulars in this respect would require that I know what is on the minds of President Botha, Police Chief Coetze, and Defense Minister Malan. They have created the violence of the apartheid system.

*Q. The ANC now wants to increase its counter-violence. Up to now you attacked, above all, military targets and industrial installations in South Africa. At its conference in Zambia in June the ANC decided to aim also at "soft" civilian targets now. Does this mean that attacks on farms, schools, and kindergartens will be waged?*

A. The conference has never made the decision to attack soft targets.

*Q. That sounds different than what correspondents were told at the time.*

A. The conference decided that the struggle must be intensified. This intensification, to be sure, will also have consequences for the civilian population. However, attacking "soft targets" deliberately is something done by the South African regime.

*Q. So there will be no attacks on schools and kindergartens? . . .*

A. We are intensifying the struggle. What is happening up to now in the townships of the blacks will spread over to all the country, also to the white areas. We are taking the offensive now.

*Q. Since September of last year there were only three white people among the more than 500 victims of the unrest. Will this change?*

A. We are not aiming at white people as such. We fight against those who defend the system, against those who are armed and kill us.

*Q. However, during the current unrest it happens more and more frequently that blacks are killing other blacks.*

A. This is not a confrontation of blacks against blacks. It is the confrontation between opponents of apartheid and those who defend it. Some of those who shoot people are blacks. They belong to the enemy forces although they are black.

*Q. Yet, also the black opponents of your enemy are fighting each other. There are bloody feuds between members of the United Democratic Front, the collective movement that is befriended by you, and the Azapo.*

A. This has stopped. They quarrel with one another but they do not fight each other.

*Q. And what about the mysterious assassinations to which time and again black activists fall victim?*

A. This was hatched by the police. Death squads that are controlled by the security forces are hunting for the leaders of the popular movement in South Africa.

*Q. Mr. Tambo, why do you always say South Africa and not "Azania" like many people in the townships? Isn't that the name for the future South Africa?*

A. No, but let me explain it: Prof. Dublin Bolofo, a black South African historian, had proposed "Azania" after the old name for an area that stretches across Eastern Africa, south of today's Somalia. He withdrew his proposal later on because he found out that the name Azania means "country of slaves." Slave traders had come to that area to get their victims there. However, South Africa is not a country of slaves, not even if the majority of its people are kept in slavery. Quite definitely, we will not name our state "country of slaves" after the liberation.

*Q. When, do you think, will you return to liberated South Africa? In 10 years from now, in five years from now, or earlier?*

A. Soon, I hope. However, you will not induce me to name you any date. □

## Profits, disease join forces

A recent report from the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment in Washington observed that the U.S. federal government spends less than \$100 million a year on tropical disease research. This is a tiny fraction of its total annual biomedical research budget of over \$4 billion.

The report noted that the reason research on tropical diseases, which afflict millions in Third World countries, is lagging is that there is a bigger market for drug companies in the United States. "Few new drugs have been introduced for human tropical diseases in the past two decades," the report stated.

# The 'big lie' raised to a fine art

*Slanders are integral part of Washington's anticommunist propaganda*

By Will Reissner

Half-truths, lies, and outright slanders are standard operating procedure for the Reagan administration's propaganda assaults against countries on its "enemies list."

Washington's anticommunist and antiterrorist campaigns are aided and abetted by the big-business media, which endlessly repeat the latest charge, however groundless it may be.

By the time one slander has been disproven, Washington is ready with the next one. And the unraveling of each slander receives only a fraction of the media attention lavished on the original charge.

The most recent charge made by Washington is that Soviet authorities have exposed U.S. diplomats in Moscow to a potentially carcinogenic, yellow "spy dust."

The "spy dust" claim is only the latest in a long line of Reagan administration charges, most of which enjoy a brief stay in the spotlight, only to be eclipsed by the next propaganda salvo.

Remember those disappearing "Libyan hit squads," supposedly dispatched to the United States by Libyan ruler Muammar el-Qaddafi to rub out President Reagan?

Or the charges that Fidel Castro of Cuba personally heads a ring smuggling drugs into the United States? That claim makes a flurry in the press from time, when it suits the administration's purposes. Sometimes Nicaragua's interior minister, Tomás Borge, is depicted as the man behind the drug ring.

Let's take a closer look at three of these propaganda campaigns that are in various stages of unraveling: the charges that the Soviet government and its allies used chemical warfare ("yellow rain") in Southeast Asia, that the Bulgarian government masterminded the attempt on Pope John Paul II's life, and that the Soviet military knowingly and willfully shot down an innocent Korean Air Lines passenger jet.

## Killer bees

The chemical warfare charge was first leveled by then U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig in a Sept. 13, 1981, speech in West Berlin at a time when the movement against placement of U.S. nuclear missiles in Western Europe was in high gear. Some 80,000 West Berliners demonstrated against Haig's visit.

Haig, the Sept. 14, 1981, *New York Times* noted, wanted "to point out weaknesses in the Communist world more actively." So he dropped a bombshell. "The Soviet Union and its allies," Haig charged, "have been using lethal chemical weapons in Laos, Kampuchea, and Afghanistan."

Haig added: "We now have physical evi-

dence from Southeast Asia which has been analyzed and found to contain abnormally high levels of three potent mycotoxins — poisonous substances not indigenous to the region and which are highly toxic to man and animals."

The following day, Haig's charge was front-page news throughout the capitalist world. The prize for the most lurid coverage goes to Rupert Murdoch's *New York Post*. "Torture Rain Kills 30,000" was emblazoned across the *Post's* front page on Sept. 15, 1981. The following day, the page-one headline warned "Germ Bombs Aimed at U.S.," while an "Exclusive" on page two was entitled "Top Secret: Cuba Has Death Rain Chemical."

For several years, the "yellow rain" theme was a prominent feature of the Reagan administration's campaign to brand the Soviet Union as the "focus of evil" in the world.

Despite Haig's sweeping accusation against the Soviet Union, the Armed Services Medical Intelligence Center at Fort Detrick, Maryland, had never found toxins in even one of the more than 80 samples it tested.

When independent scientists investigated the evidence used to prop up Haig's claim, they discovered that the supposed chemical-warfare agent was actually bee droppings.

An article in the September 1985 *Scientific American*, by Thomas D. Seeley, Joan W. Nowicke, Matthew Meselson, Jeanne Guillemin, and Pongthep Akwatanakul, summarizes the findings of the scientists. After providing nine pages of data, the scientists explain:

"We conclude that yellow rain is the feces of honeybees, not an agent of chemical warfare. This conclusion has emerged from many independent sources: from detailed laboratory comparisons of samples of yellow rain and bee feces, from field observations of the behavior of bees and from interviews with Hmong refugees. Bee fecal deposits account for all the consistently reported features of the deposits left by yellow rain, including their color, size and texture, their deposition in showers and their high pollen content. They also account for the results of our detailed pollen analysis and other laboratory tests."

The scientists add that "a single clear discrepancy between yellow rain and bee feces . . . would naturally have forced us to reconsider our hypothesis. No such discrepancy has been found."

But you won't find a report of those conclusions in the *New York Post* or many other newspapers that helped disseminate Haig's fabricated account.

## Pope plot?

The claim that the Bulgarian secret police, acting as a surrogate for the Soviet KGB, mas-

terminded the attempted assassination of the pope in May 1981 has also been played to the hilt.

The entire case of the "Bulgarian connection" rests on the unsubstantiated word of Mehmet Ali Agca, the Turkish ultrarightist serving a life sentence for shooting the pope in 1981.

In the course of the "Bulgarian connection" trial in Rome, which began on May 27 of this year and is still going on, not one piece of evidence has linked the two Bulgarian diplomats and one Bulgarian airline clerk to the attempt on the pope's life.

But the trial *has* revealed that Agca did not act alone in fingering the three Bulgarians. He was coached in prison by Italian intelligence agents and gangsters. They provided him with details about the Bulgarians. Other details were taken, Agca now admits, from news reports on Italian television and in the Italian press, which he then recycled as his own experience.

During the trial, the Turkish gunman has freely acknowledged making up large parts of his pretrial testimony and his statements on the witness stand.

The claim that the Soviet KGB, acting through the Bulgarian government, was behind the attempt on the pope's life did not originate with Agca. Rather it was first raised in an October 1981 *Wall Street Journal* article written by Paul Henze, former CIA station chief in Turkey.

In September 1982 the "Bulgarian connection" theory received international prominence with the publication of an article in *Reader's Digest* written by Claire Sterling, a Rome-based U.S. "journalist" with long connections with the CIA and right-wing circles.

Sterling's article, published more than one year after Agca had been sentenced, was largely based on information fed her by Henze.

Henze also passed "information" on to Marvin Kalb of NBC Television News, who used it as the basis for his September 1982 special report: "The Hand Behind the Attempt on the Pope's Life: Moscow."

Agca himself began implicating the Bulgarians only in May 1982, after he was visited in his prison cell by agents of the Italian secret services, who reportedly offered to reduce his life sentence to 10 years' imprisonment if he cooperated.

Since the trial began, new information has emerged about the Italian secret services' use of jailed racketeers as go-betweens to the Turkish gunman.

The U.S. press has, throughout the "Bulgarian connection" case, been an active partici-

pant in the frame-up of Bulgaria and the Soviet Union.

Paul Henze, the former CIA official who initiated the story, has been hired as a consultant on the case by the *New York Times*, NBC News, and *Newsweek* magazine.

Kalb and Henze are both members of the Center for Strategic and International Studies' "steering committee on terrorism," chaired by Zbigniew Brzezinski, former national security advisor to President Carter. That committee issued a December 1984 report entitled "The International Implications of the Papal Assassination Attempt: A Case of State-Sponsored Terrorism."

Claire Sterling, who provided the framework for the case that was adopted by the Italian authorities, has been given extensive space in the *New York Times* to "report" on developments. She has also been featured as an expert commentator by network news programs.

### Flight 007

On the night of Aug. 31, 1983, as the Soviet Union was about to test-launch its new SS-X-25 missile, an unexpected blip appeared on Soviet radar screens near the test site.

Korean Air Lines Flight 007, on the final leg of its New York to Seoul flight, had entered Soviet air space more than 200 miles west of its reported position.

Before the plane was shot down by a Soviet SU-15 fighter over Sakhalin Island, the South Korean airliner passed over the missile target area, as well as close to the Petropavlovsk naval base, which is home to one-half of the USSR's strategic missile submarines, and over a Soviet air base.

The Reagan administration used the downing of KAL 007 as proof of the president's 1981 assertion that the Soviet leaders "reserve unto themselves the right to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat."

Recalling that statement in a radio broadcast on Sept. 10, 1983, less than two weeks after KAL 007 was shot down, Reagan told his audience, "I was charged with being too harsh in my language. Well, I hope the Soviets' recent behavior will dispel any lingering doubts about what kind of regime we're dealing with."

Reagan charged that the Soviets had known full well that KAL 007 was a civilian airliner and that the plane had innocently strayed off course. U.S. Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations Charles Lichenstein described the Soviet action as "wanton, calculated, deliberate murder."

Washington has always steadfastly denied any knowledge of KAL 007's whereabouts until it was destroyed. "We did not know that the airliner had deviated from its course or that it had been shot down until several hours after the tragedy," said Richard Burt of the U.S. State Department.

But from the very beginning there were big holes in Washington's presentation of the incident. And in the two years since the South Korean plane was downed, new facts keep turning up to punch holes in the Reagan adminis-

## Agca and the pope: who's crazier?

Mehmet Ali Agca, the Italian court's star witness in its attempt to implicate the Bulgarian government in the shooting of Pope John Paul II, claims that he is Jesus Christ reincarnated.

Agca has testified in court that he is willing to prove his claim by performing the resurrection of a clinically dead person in the presence of President Ronald Reagan and the secretary-general of the United Nations.

Furthermore, Agca has testified that his attempt on the pope's life was connected to papal suppression of the third message that the Virgin Mary supposedly gave to three Portuguese farm children in Fátima in 1917.

Two of the Virgin Mary's messages to the world were revealed by the Portuguese children: the world should repent its sins and regularly recite the rosary; and the world, and particularly Russia, should be consecrated to her Immaculate Heart.

A third message, however, was never revealed publicly by the pope, and this, according to Agca, led to the shooting.



Pope forgives Agca.

All these delusional statements may well indicate that Mehmet Ali Agca is crazy. But if Agca is crazy, what does that make the pope?

After all, the pope, who habitually wears outlandish costumes and is apparently addicted to kissing airport runways, believes in equally strange things. John Paul II, for example, agrees with Agca that the Virgin Mary actually did come down to earth at Fátima in 1917.

The Pope is convinced that he is infallible and that God speaks directly through him.

Furthermore, John Paul II believes that bread and wine are *literally* turned into the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ during Holy Communion, and that people should eat this human flesh and drink this blood regularly.

The pope also believes in the existence of a whole catalog of fanciful beings and creatures — angels, devils, and a holy ghost — inhabiting the skies. He is sure, for example, that there are such things as cherubim, winged creatures who are the celestial attendants of God and have the unenviable task of eternally praising him.

The pope also believes in seraphim, the highest ranking celestial beings in the hierarchy of angels. The seraphim, the pope would assert, are the guardians of God's throne, each having three pairs of wings.

If the pope lived in Asia or Africa, the western press would dismiss his rantings as picturesque mythology and exotic superstition. But as head of the Roman Catholic Church and a strong ideological prop of present-day capitalist exploitation and oppression, John Paul II is treated as a world statesman and his comings and goings are reported with great deference.

—Will Reissner

tration's version.

What was KAL 007 doing over Soviet territory that night?

The Reagan administration claims it had innocently strayed off course.

The Soviet government charges that the South Korean airliner was on a U.S.-sponsored spy mission.

David Pearson, writing in the Aug. 18–25, 1984, issue of the *Nation* magazine, made a strong case for the possibility that the South Korean jet liner deliberately flew over Soviet territory in order to set off Soviet air defenses, so they could then be monitored by U.S. spy agencies.

A similar hypothesis was put forward by Sugwon Kang in a long article in the April–June 1985 *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*.

Washington continues to claim that no U.S. agencies knew where KAL 007 was until it was shot down. But attorneys representing families of passengers on the ill-fated plane contend that someone in a U.S. air traffic control facility can be heard on a tape recording saying, "We should warn him," as the South Korean 747 began to move off course.

U.S. government lawyers contend that the tape recording is too indistinct to determine what was said. But the attorneys for the families respond that this question could easily be cleared up if the government revealed who is speaking on the recording.

"The government knows the identity of the person who said those words and is concealing it," charged Milton Sincoff, representing the families of the victims.

In the course of the same lawsuit, the government admitted that it had "routinely" de-

stroyed all Air Force recordings of the radar tracks of KAL 007's course, even though it knew the plane had been shot down.

If the Pentagon had not been monitoring KAL 007's course, how could President Reagan be so sure that the plane had flown a "straight-line course" for more than two hours before it was shot down?

In addition, one day after the jet was shot down, the Soviet delegate to the United Nations asked U.S. Deputy Representative Charles Lichenstein if Washington had tracked the airliner's flight.

Lichenstein responded: "No. I would assure the representative of the Soviet Union: We followed you following the flight."

Either way, Washington would have known where the airliner was.

Is it possible that KAL 007 could have flown over two major Soviet military bases — one of them the site of a Soviet missile test scheduled for the same time — without U.S. radar being aware of the plane's location?

In the course of its five-hour-and-26-minute flight, the South Korean jet passed through the fields of many U.S. radar installations and listening posts.

According to Sugwon Kang:

In a position to monitor some phases of the flight were at least one P-3 Orion Navy reconnaissance plane, several RC-135s, the frigate USS *Badger*, the reconnaissance ship USS *Observation Island* with its radar "Cobra Judy," and, of course, the land-based facilities in Alaska, on Shemya Island ("Cobra Dane" and "Cobra Talon"), in Hokkaido (the phased-array radar at Wakkanai) and main-island Japan (the mighty NSA listening post at the U.S. air-base at Misawa, near the northern tip of Honshu, the largest American listening post in Asia). Of these, "Cobra Dane" is capable of tracking an aircraft flying 400 miles away at 30,000 feet or higher, and "Cobra Talon" has an astounding range of 2,070 miles, missing the first 575 miles. This means that the Shemya facilities alone should have enabled us to track the flight of 007 from coast of Alaska to Sakhalin.

In addition, shortly after KAL 007 was shot down, a Pentagon officer told a reporter "Nothing flies from, over, or near Sakhalin that we don't monitor."

Besides the U.S. facilities, 28 Japanese listening posts were also monitoring the area through which KAL 007 flew.

Is it possible that not one of these facilities noticed that KAL 007 was more than 200 miles off course and over Soviet territory near the Soviet missile range on the very night a Soviet missile test was scheduled?

As David Pearson noted in his *Nation* article, "far from slipping by unnoticed, K.A.L. 007 had flown onto center stage."

Even if the U.S. electronic eyes and ears had missed the South Korean liner, Pearson added, "they certainly had to be alerted by the scrambling of the Soviet interceptors over Kamchatka. When that happened, radar screens must have been ablaze with converging images of the four Soviet fighters, the RC-135 and K.A.L. 007 near the [Soviet] Commander Islands."

Pearson observed that "if such unusual activity went unnoticed, one of the most serious

failures imaginable of the U.S. early warning system occurred that night."

Other bits and pieces of the puzzle have slowly dribbled out. Soon after the incident, Washington was forced to admit that a U.S. RC-135 spy plane *had* been in the area at the same time as the South Korean jet, as the Soviet authorities had charged.

Later, Washington also admitted that its transcripts of exchanges between the Soviet fighter pilot and his ground controllers had been incorrect and had obscured the fact that the Soviet pilot repeatedly attempted to communicate with the South Korean airliner.

Interestingly, the government never released the Soviet ground controllers' side of the exchanges.

Then last May, the Japanese government released data from the Japanese Defense Agency

showing that the South Korean airliner had, as the Soviets have consistently stated, made evasive changes of course, altitude, and speed while over Sakhalin Island, while reporting quite different movements to Tokyo air-traffic controllers.

The plane's two sharp turns and its changes in altitude demolish President Reagan's claim that the airliner had been innocently flying a "straight-line course" for more than two hours before it was shot down.

Many questions remain unanswered about the flight and destruction of KAL 007. But the last place to look for the truth is in Washington.

From "yellow rain" to yellow "spy dust," the U.S. government's motto seems to be, "throw enough mud and some of it is sure to stick." □

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## Kenya

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# Asian women at UN conference

*'Women suffer most from violations of democratic rights'*

### By Vibhuti Patel

[The following statement was presented to a workshop organized by the Asian Women's Research and Action Network at the Forum '85 conference in Nairobi, Kenya. The United Nations-sponsored conference for non-governmental organizations met July 15-26 marking the end of the UN's Decade for Women. Vibhuti Patel is a leader of the Inquilabi Communist Sangathan, the Indian section of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

The decade has witnessed increasing violations of democratic and human rights in Asia. While accepting that both men and women are victims of it, we would like to emphasize that women suffer even more.

Growing militarization in the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia and jingoism in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka have their own implications for the lives of women. Conditions of women political prisoners and those under trial are shocking. Heinous tactics of rape and other perverted forms of sexual abuse and torture are used to humiliate and terrorize women in these countries. Nepalese women fighting against the monarch are brutally tortured and abused by the state.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the states in Asian countries have institutionalized violence against women. Mass rape of women by military men in the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia and police atrocities against women in India, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan are glaring examples of this phenomenon.

In the constitutional, parliamentary democracies of India, Japan, etc., the masses have limited democratic rights. Conditions under dictatorial regimes are even worse. Most of the

regimes in Asia are becoming increasingly authoritarian with the worsening economic crisis that has forced people to come out in the streets demanding basic necessities of life and with the national liberation struggles gaining ground in some of the Southeast Asian countries like the Philippines, Thailand, etc.

During the decade, because of pressure from women's groups in some of the Asian countries, liberal legislation on questions like equal pay for equal work were granted on paper, but at the same time basic democratic and trade union rights for women workers were taken away as a result of the establishment of free trade zones and expansion of the informal sector.

During the decade most trade union struggles have been defensive struggles — employers close down factories and treat women workers as easily replaceable commodities. Women workers are expected to suffer in silence in spite of getting precarious wages and deteriorating physical and mental conditions due to occupational diseases and hazards.

The state has a double standard as far as women's struggles are concerned. If middle-class women demand liberal legislation, preferential treatment, and reserved quotas, the state, at least sometimes, obliges. But if the toiling women start organizing themselves, the state ruthlessly represses them. In Pakistan, when martial law was declared in 1977, Zia ul-Haq took it upon himself to bring about the new Islamic Order, and the women of Pakistan bore the brunt of the Islamization policies regarding punishment of "adulterous women," rape victims, etc. Horrifying methods of torture in the name of religion were devised mainly to sidetrack the burning problems of

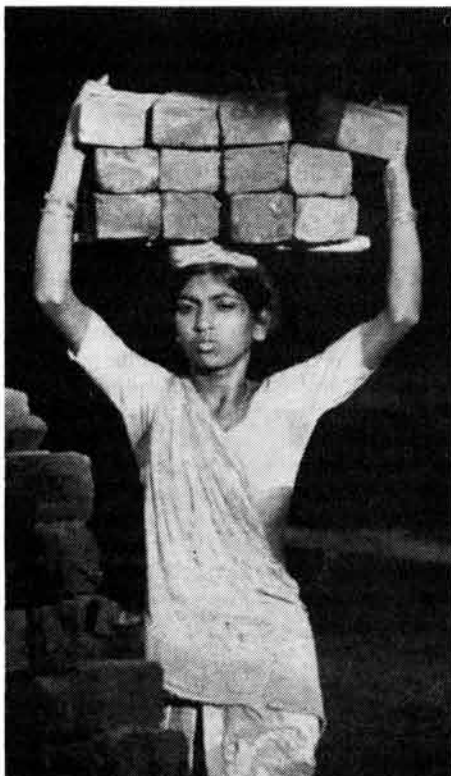
the masses and their democratic aspirations.

All states in Asia grant personal laws based on religious codes and customary laws. The laws are not only discriminatory against women, but have a deep-rooted prejudice against women. None of them recognize women's individuality in its own right, and they see women as dependent on fathers, husbands, or sons. Because of personal laws, the legal status of women in different religious groups is not the same. Women's groups in Korea, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and India have demanded abolition of personal laws and formulation of uniform civil codes.

Asian women don't have land rights. Even land reforms have deposited land rights in the hands of men. As a result, in many countries agrarian women's struggles demanding land rights have emerged.

The worsening economic crisis has given rise to religious fundamentalism and ethnic revivalism that has culminated in religious, caste, and ethnic riots in Asia, and women are the worst victims of these. They have not only resulted in merciless massacres and mass rape but general curbing of women's access to education, employment, and movement. Orgies of violence against Tamil women in Sri Lanka, Dalit, Muslim, Sikh, and tribal women in India, and women of Pakistan bear witness to this process. Insecurity of minority communities makes them even more conservative about women.

The decade has sensitized women's groups to fight against some of the worst forms of violence against women. Issues like rape and wife beating are taken up by women's groups all over Asia. The Women's Forum's fight against lynching and other brutal punishment



Female construction worker in India.

of women in Pakistan and Indian women's struggles against "bride-burning" are some of them. In India, the old practice of female infanticide is replaced by the modern technique of female feticide — amniocentesis. It has posed a threat to the survival of women, and as it is, women are a declining sex in India.

State-sponsored population policies have snatched away the basic reproductive rights of Asian women, who are used as guinea pigs for contraceptive research. Drugs that are banned in the imperialist countries are dumped in the Asian countries. The Malaysian state wants women to produce five children to meet the projected 70 million population in 115 years time so that a large labor force can be provided

for heavy industrialization. The state in Singapore wants its educated women to breed more babies so that a superior race is generated. In South Asia, the rulers want women to produce not more than two children. Contraceptive measures like sterilization and abortion are not seen as means for women to have greater control over their bodies, but rather for the reshaping of demographic policy.

The only force that can counter attacks and violations of the democratic rights of Asian women is grassroots movements of women working hand in hand with other movements of the toiling masses, because it is the interplay of state interference, patriarchy, and class that creates these conditions. □

## DOCUMENTS

# Stop police terror in India!

## Fourth Internationalists call for protests to free victims

[The following statement was issued in Santipur, West Bengal, by the West Bengal State Committee of the Inquilabi Communist Sangathan, Indian section of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

The Nadia district of West Bengal has been passing through a reign of terror under the police, antisocials, and some shadowy forces for quite some time. We would like to draw your attention to the recent phase of the unsavoury situation in the Santipur town.

On Sunday, August 4, 1985, Dr. Gyan Bhowmik, a local leader of the Congress (I), was murdered by unknown assailants. The party called for a "bandh" [general strike] on the next day. From Tuesday, a massive action was started by the police, allegedly led by Mr. Rajat Majumdar of the Detective Department. About 40 persons have been picked up by the police so far. The whereabouts of them remain unknown. Among them are Comrade Amiya Mondal, member of the Inquilabi Communist Sangathan, and a local youth named Sona.

These two persons, at the time of arrest, were hawking *Protibadi Chetana*, a registered and well-known district newspaper, at the marketplace near Shahpara. The Santipur Police Station officials disclaimed responsibility for the arrests, and were unable to trace anybody whose names were given as arrested persons. They seem to have simply disappeared. The wife of Comrade Amiya has made an appeal at the Ranaghat Court for information regarding the whereabouts of her husband and nine others. No result has yielded so far.

Meanwhile, areawide combing operations are continuing. Many incidents of destruction of property, heckling, assault, and humiliation of innocent people are taking place every day. Comrade Bulu Chatterjee, an activist of the Tant Shramik Sangram Committee, had his house ransacked and his loom destroyed. The

police raided the house of Comrade Kesto Ghosh, a leader of the Indian Peoples' Front, and threatened his wife with "dire consequences."

The operations are being conducted jointly by uniformed policemen, plainclothesmen, and BSF [Border Security Force] personnel, all heavily armed with rifles and Sten guns. In several instances people have reported that a person clad in "burgua" accompanied the police and directed them.

Economic activities and normal life in Santipur have come to jeopardy. People are afraid to come out after dusk, which is the usual time for the weavers for their transactions with cloth merchants.

The Nagarik Committee, Santipur, has called a protest rally on August 13 and a public convention on August 16. Various organisations working in the area have been campaigning against the police atrocities.

We urge all democratic-minded people and organisations to come out with protests against this blanket violence of the State forces, to stand by the people of Santipur in their struggle for democratic rights, and to put pressure upon the Government to end these arbitrary acts.

At least issue press statements and send telegrams/letters to the Chief Minister and the Inspector General of Police, West Bengal, expressing concern for the whereabouts and well-being of the "disappeared" persons, and demanding their release. *This is urgent.* □

## Death toll near a million

In the five years since Iraq's military forces invaded Iran, nearly 1 million people have been killed. Intelligence officials from Britain and other NATO countries estimate that from 420,000 to 580,000 Iranians have died in the Persian Gulf war. The number of Iraqi dead is put at 300,000.

# The democracy movement in China

*Hong Kong magazine reviews course of antibureaucratic struggle*

[The following article is reprinted from the August issue of *October Review*, a Chinese socialist monthly published in Hong Kong. The magazine publishes articles in both English and Chinese.]

\* \* \*

Five years ago, Solidarnosc announced its formation. At the same time, in the People's Republic of China, the National Association of Unofficial Publications of China (NAUPC), a coalition of 21 unofficial publications all over China, also announced its formation. The NAUPC published an organ named *Duty*. It was a milestone in the development of the democracy movement, which had been unfolding, with frequent interruptions, since the end of 1978. *Duty* continued publication, at first as a bimonthly and quickly changed to a biweekly, up till the national wave of clampdown in April 1981.

The democracy movement of 1978-81, usually referred to as the Beijing Spring Democracy Movement, developed from the 1976 Tian An Men Square Riot in which over 100,000 people spontaneously gathered at the square in the capital to express their indignation for the ruling regime. Similar riots took place in other cities such as Nanjing and Zhengzhou.

The historical significance of the riots is that they were spontaneous mass mobilizations spearheaded at the whole bureaucratic rule and were unlike the mass mobilizations during the Cultural Revolution, which were controlled by different CCP [Chinese Communist Party] factions and served factional needs and interests. Yet the riots were violent emotional outbursts, lacking in clear programmatic goals, organization, or a nucleus. It was why the riots were quickly repressed brutally. Still, the mass rejection of the ruling regime indirectly brought about the downfall of the so-called Gang of Four — Mao Zedong's protégés.

By the end of 1978, the Deng Xiaoping faction gained control of the top leadership. A series of rehabilitations took place which included the official recognition of the Tian An Men Square Riot as a revolutionary, spontaneous mass action. While the Deng Xiaoping faction attempted to resort to certain mass support to consolidate its power in the top leadership and to seize power in lower level leadership positions, the people also made use of the opportunity to voice their grievances and put forward their demands. Wall posters began to appear on the Xidan Wall in the capital, mass political discussion meetings took place (some with thousands of people participating), and unofficial publications began to appear.

By the beginning of 1979, tens of unofficial

publications had surfaced all over the country. The unofficial publications, despite repressions, survived until April 1981 when a national wave of arrests of the editors and chief contributors put an end to their semilegal existence. The movement was forced to go underground since then.

From November 1978 to April 1981, titles of unofficial publications known to the outside world numbered over 120. About two dozen were from Beijing, and the others from most of the provincial capitals. Some were able to sustain for over 40 issues, some were repressed after the founding issue. Some issues were over 100 pages, some were of 4 pages, and many ranged from 40 to 80 pages. Since the state controlled all means of publication, the unofficial publications had to be mimeographed on low-quality paper.

Due to technical limitations, most of the issues were published in several hundred copies, though a few managed to secure support from some printing press and were able to put out more copies. For example, *Beijing Spring* got the support of the Foreign Language Press and printed 10,000 copies for its combined No. 1 and 2 issues. Then there was pressure from above and no more printed copies came out. *Our Generation*, a joint project by the students of 13 universities all over China, also encountered the same problem. Its founding issue only had half of its contents in printed form, and pressure from above forced it to come out in incomplete form and even to stop publication after its founding issue.

Due to the conservative publication ordinance (still the one of 1952, which made application for legal publication impossible), unofficial publications attempted many times to get legally registered, but in vain. Hence, they had to remain "unofficial."

The unofficial publications were the characteristics of the Beijing Spring Democracy Movement. They served as political and organizational centers grouping together young activists. The unofficial publications were of two main types. One type contained mostly political essays; the other type contained mostly literary pieces.

Most of the publications of the first type were published by young workers who had been the red guard generation during the Cultural Revolution; they felt they had been betrayed by Mao, and after a period of rethinking they came out with clear demands for democracy and a legal system. They formed the core of the Beijing Spring Democracy Movement. The second type was mostly published by students or young workers with literary pursuits, but they had close links with the first type and also with some writers in official literary pub-

lications.

The Beijing Spring Democracy Movement was in the beginning rather atomized. Activists with similar viewpoints regrouped around a certain publication for discussion of political ideas and propaganda of their viewpoints. Yet there were few links among the publications. The inexperience and lack of conscious pursuit for unity were some of the reasons, but the organizational division stemmed mainly from the different ideological trends of the publications.

Roughly speaking, in Beijing, *Exploration*, with its chief editor Wei Jingsheng, was the most radical of all, for it advocated democratic election of all leaders and democratic self-management by the producers. It was very critical of the "liberal" stance of Deng Xiaoping. *Beijing Spring*, which grouped together mainly heroes of the 1976 riots, most of whom had been recruited into the party or the youth league, served more to support the Deng Xiaoping faction against Mao Zedong's supporters. *April 5 Forum* was more moderate than *Exploration*, for it assessed the Deng Xiaoping faction as reformers, but it also stressed the importance of mobilizing the people for democratic demands. *Human Rights in China* demanded respect for human rights and expressed aspirations for western-style democracy.

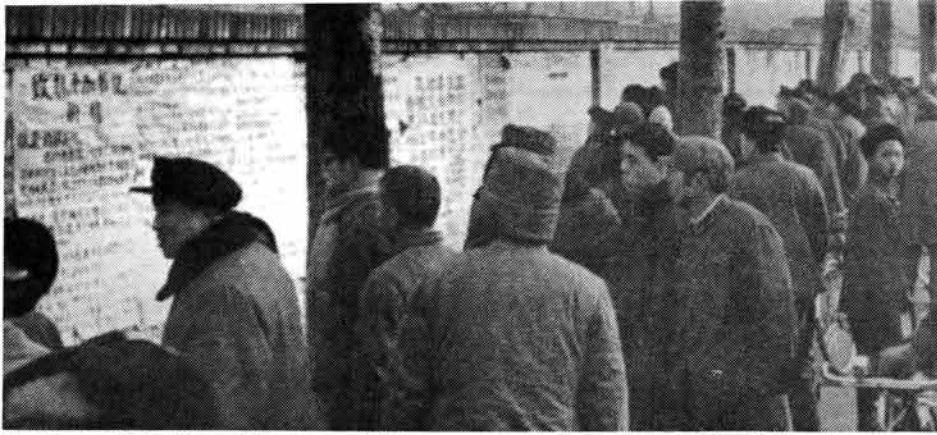
These differences in assessment of the Deng faction and in the radicalness of the demands led to organizational divisions and lack of cooperation. Yet the objective situation compelled a regroupment of the forces fighting for democracy.

In March 1979, Deng Xiaoping changed his stance on the democracy wall. A few months before, he said the democracy wall was useful in that it could let the people voice their grievances. However, in March, he said that the democracy wall was a source of instability.

Wei Jingsheng at once reacted by posting up a wall poster titled "Democracy or new dictatorship," in which he called for the people to beware of Deng becoming a new dictator. Wei was promptly arrested. Before Wei, several others had been arrested, including Fu Yuehua, a woman who led thousands of peasants on a parade in the capital on January 8, 1979, with the central slogan "against persecution, against hunger, for democracy, for human rights"; two members of the Human Rights Alliance had also been arrested. The change in the political atmosphere in March caused a reevaluation of the Deng Xiaoping faction's sincerity and readiness for democratic reforms. The need for more coordination among the activists was also being felt.

In December 1979, the trial of Wei Jingsheng took place. Though his radical ideas





In March 1979, Deng Xiaoping said democracy wall was source of instability.

were not popular, his right of freedom of thought and expression was supported by the activists. Wei Jingsheng, for his dissidence, was given a sentence of 15 years in jail. Liu Qing, editor of *April 5 Forum*, was arrested for distributing a transcript of the "open" trial.

Liu Qing's arrest helped bring together more activists. In August 1980, 16 publications joined to form a National Committee to Rescue Liu Qing. This quickly grew into the National Association of Unofficial Publications of China composed of 21 publications, and more joined later.

The formation of the NAUPC was a significant breakthrough. It took less than two years from the emergence of unofficial publications to their nationwide coalition. Such a rapid development was not a surprise. The downfall of the Gang of Four and the rehabilitation of the Tian An Men Square Riot were the result of strong pressure from the masses. The Deng Xiaoping faction carried out its half-hearted reforms under serious economic difficulties and ideological crisis of the CCP. When the Deng Xiaoping faction began repressing the people's democratic rights, discontent quickly grew. Some illusions in the reforming faction broke down.

Repression of the democracy movement forced the divided publications to draw together for more support and strength in order to counter pressure from the regime. At the same time, since most of the activists had gone through the Cultural Revolution years, they were experienced in the ways of struggle; when they discarded illusions in one wing of the bureaucracy, their critical appraisal of bureaucratic rule and the social contradictions caused a further radicalization. While they continued to carry out political and theoretical debates among themselves, they consciously opted for closer organizational unity.

The Polish example was another source of stimulus. The democracy movement greeted Solidarnosc with enthusiastic fraternity, reprinting the 21 demands and the Charter of Workers' Rights, and assessed that the Polish workers' movement had tolled the death knell for bureaucratic rule and set the beginning for a pluralistic party system. The need for international links was much emphasized.

At the end of 1980, when deputies to the county level People's Congress were for the first time open to election, many students (such as Tao Shen, Hu Ping) and worker activ-

ists (such as Fu Shenqi, He Defu, Gong Ping, and Wang Yifeng) ran as candidates to use the campaign as a forum for political debates. Interventions by the authorities were then exposed to show the hypocrisy of such elections.

In early 1981, the party central issued several circulars preparing for a clampdown on the "illegal publications" and "illegal organizations." The activists also started to prepare forming political parties. Starting from April 10, arrests took place on a nationwide scale.

Those arrested known to the outside world numbered over 30, including Wang Xizhe of *People's Voice* (Guangzhou), He Qiu and Wang Yifei of *People's Road* (Guangzhou), Xu Wenli, Yang Jing, and Chen Erjin of *Waves* (Qingdao), Xing Dakun of *Forum of Fraternal Comrades* (Qingdao), Liu Liping of *Correspondence of Ideals* (Changsha), Zhang Jingsheng of *The Republican* (Changsha), Chun Yongmin and Zhu Jianbin of *The Bell* (Wuhan), Zhong Yueqiu of *Voice of the Masses* (Shaoguan), Yang Zaixing and Chun Xiaoxiang of *Enlightenment* (Guizhou), Peng Guangzhong of *Biweekly Review* (Guizhou), Liu E-an of *Brick of Democracy* (Anyang), Wang Tanyuan of *Review* (Tianjin), Ye Zhongwu of *Zhi River* (Hangzhou), Zheng Yulin of *Shouts* (Wenzhou), and other activists like Tao Shen (Changsha), Xu Shuiliang (Nanjing), Yang Guoliang (Beijing), Yu Huimin (Nanjing), Yang Xiaolei (Hangzhou), etc.

The democracy movement activists were detained without trial for about a year. Later, it was known that Wang Xizhe and He Qiu were sentenced on May 28, 1982, to 14 and 10 years imprisonment, and Xu Wenli was sentenced on June 18 to 15 years. It was also reported that Chen Erjin was sentenced to 12 years, Fu Shenqi to 7 years, and Yang Zaixing to 5 years.

The court verdict on Xu Wenli revealed that Xu Wenli was leader in coordinating with Wang Xizhe, Sun Weibang, Liu E-an, and Fu Shenqi to form the Alliance of Chinese Communists in June 1980 and later the Association to Promote Democracy and Unification in China in the spring of 1981; the draft of a program of the latter had also been done.

In December 1981, Liu Shanqing, a supporter of the Beijing Spring Democracy Movement from Hong Kong, went to the mainland to visit relatives of the arrested activists and was himself arrested and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment.

The Beijing Spring Democracy Movement was suppressed with naked force. Yet it was a significant development in the movement for democracy in China. In 1957, during the Hundred Flowers Bloom Campaign, the 1 million critics of CCP policy were largely intellectuals. The fervent red guards that radicalized in the later years of the Cultural Revolution (represented by the 17-year-old red guard Yang Xiguang's manifesto "Whither goes China?") were mainly secondary school pupils. The 1974 Li Yi Zhe Wall Poster (Wang Xizhe being one of its writers), a manifesto demanding democracy and a legal system, symbolized more independent thinking of the red guard generation, but it still had illusions in Mao Zedong. The 1976 Tian An Men Square Event was a prelude to the antibureaucratic political revolution, participated in by tens of thousands of people, yet it was unorganized.

The Beijing Spring Democracy Movement represented a more profound development in programmatic positions and organizational practice. Just before it was repressed, it had arrived at the stage of drawing up a program, developing into a political party, and the vanguards, mostly young workers, became conscious of the need to go into the masses. Participation in the election campaigns and conscious links with worker struggles (such as the strike of 3,000 Taiyuan steelworkers) in late 1980 were the first steps. As for the political program, the demand for socialist democracy and Paris-commune-type workers' control over production and distribution was the predominant trend. This socialist alternative is quite distinct from dissident movements in the Soviet Union, for example.

With the most outstanding activists of the democracy movement still in jail, the democracy movement stays underground. Now the consequences of Deng Xiaoping's reforms, especially the offensives on the living standard of the urban working class, are becoming clear. The objective conditions favour a revival of the democracy movement. It can be expected that the new stage of the democracy movement will see a more mature political consciousness and a closer link between the vanguards and the masses. □

## Toxic chemicals on the loose

A recent U.S. government report documents that at least five accidents a day since early 1980 have released toxic chemicals killing more than 135 people and injuring nearly 1,500 in the United States. Nearly three-quarters of the 6,928 accidents were at plants and the rest in transportation.

These figures are based on only a partial survey, however, according to the report commissioned by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Had the entire country been surveyed, the total number of accidents would be two and a half to three times higher. The report was prepared in response to last December's disaster in Bhopal, India, where a toxic gas leak at a Union Carbide plant killed more than 2,000 people.

# Sales of special 'IP' going well

## Much interest shown in SWP split from Fourth International

By Dave Deutschmann

SYDNEY — Sales of the special expanded issue of *Intercontinental Press* (September 23) on the split of the leadership of the Australian Socialist Workers Party from the Fourth International are very brisk here. In the first two weeks of sales, 250 copies were sold, and sales continue at a steady pace. Normally 150 copies of each issue are distributed in Australia.

Distribution of the 40-page issue includes copies mailed to subscribers as well as sales in bookstores and at political meetings and demonstrations. Twenty-one copies were sold, for example, at a September 21 demonstration in Sydney in solidarity with the liberation struggle in the Philippines. The Communist Party of Australia bookstores in Melbourne and Sydney quickly sold out of their regular bundles and ordered more.

More than a half dozen requests for subscriptions have come so far as a result of an advertisement placed two weeks running in the Communist Party's paper, *Tribune*.

Two former SWP members — one in Melbourne and the other in Adelaide — ordered copies to distribute. The reader in Melbourne sold out a bundle of 5 and ordered 10 more. The Adelaide reader, who was until very recently a supporter of the SWP, was planning to photocopy quantities of his personal copy to sell. When he learned that he could get a bundle sent to him, he ordered 10.

Ron Poulsen, a representative of Pathfinder Press, which distributes *IP* in Australia, went to Adelaide from Sydney to meet this reader, help him get out *IP*, and discuss with others who may be interested in the Fourth International. Poulsen was one of several central leaders of the SWP who were purged two years ago for opposing the leadership's political course out of the International.

Supporters of the Fourth International here, who have been helping to circulate *IP*, especially found a lot of interest in the article on Vietnam by U.S. SWP leader Steve Clark. This article describes the Australian leadership's inability to recognize why the Vietnamese Communist Party was capable of leading the national liberation struggle to victory over U.S. imperialism in 1975. This victory was the result of the Vietnamese Communists' break a quarter of a century earlier from the Stalinist course of subordinating the independence struggle to the class-collaborationist diplomacy of the Soviet government.

Some in the left here, who are familiar with the SWP, did not realize that its leadership was now defending the Stalinist policies that led to the defeat of the Vietnamese independence struggle in 1945-47. They were especially in-

terested to learn that it even goes so far as to justify the murder of Fourth Internationalists and other proindependence forces who refused to submit to this betrayal of the national liberation struggle.

After reading the issue, several people who have had some experience with the SWP here commented that they thought the treatment of the political degeneration of the SWP leadership was well documented and thorough.

Here in Sydney many had not seen the interview with SWP National Secretary Jim Percy reprinted from the May 1, 1985, *Melbourne Sun*. The interviewer's portrayal of Percy as a "hard-talking" man with "a touch of the union boss about him" and a bent toward Australian nationalism ("I'm Aussie all right. You can't take that away from me.") rang true to those who are familiar with Percy and the leadership methods and views of the current SWP leaders.

Single copies and bundles of this special issue can be ordered from Pathfinder Press, P.O. Box 37, Leichhardt NSW, 2040. □



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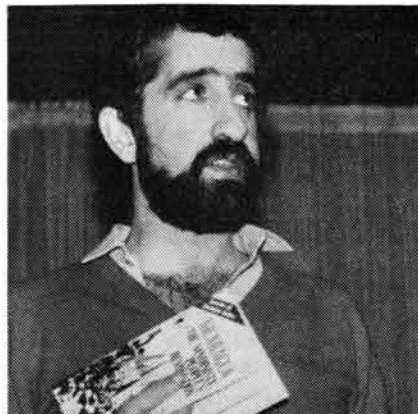
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## Castro book to be launched in 3 cities

SYDNEY — Three meetings have been scheduled to launch the recently published *Fidel Castro Speeches 1984-85: War and Crisis in the Americas* in Australia. The book was published by Pathfinder Press in New York.

The meetings, set for Australia's three largest cities — Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane — were initiated by Pathfinder Press, Australia. All three meetings are also cosponsored by the local affiliates of the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society.



NICK BOLKUS

The meeting in Sydney is being built around the theme, "The debt is not only unpayable, but it is uncollectible." The speakers will include Nick Bolkus, a Labor Party senator in the federal parliament and a participant in the first Australian work brigade to Nicaragua last year; Jim Levy, lecturer in the Latin American Studies Department at the University of New South Wales; Michael Gleave, acting president of the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society; and a representative from Pathfinder.

The meeting will take place October 23 at 7:30 p.m. at the Trade Union Club, 111 Foveaux St. in Sydney.

Speakers at the Melbourne meeting will include Peter Milton, a Labor Party member of parliament; Steve Gibson, Australia-Cuba Friendship Society; and a Pathfinder representative. The meeting will be held November 1 at 7:30 p.m. at the YWCA on Elizabeth St. in Melbourne.

The meeting in Brisbane is scheduled for October 30.

For more details on these meetings or on ordering the new book of Castro speeches write: Pathfinder Press, Box 37, Leichhardt, Sydney, NSW 2040.

# Workers discuss fight against austerity

## Interview with members of Militant Socialist Organization

[The following is an interview with Sigurlaug Gunnlaugsdóttir and Gylfi Páll Hersir, members of the Militant Socialist Organization (BS), Icelandic section of the Fourth International. The interview was conducted in August in Oberlin, Ohio.]

\* \* \*

*Question.* Can you describe the present ruling-class offensive against the working people of Iceland, especially since the election of the present government in 1983?

*Sigurlaug Gunnlaugsdóttir.* The present government is truly the government of the ruling class, the capitalists. It works closely with the central organization of employers, and is trying to improve conditions for the capitalists by lowering wages — particularly the wages of union members and wages set by contract.

It has decided to solve the problems of the economy — especially the problem of inflation — by freezing wages for a period of time and forbidding the unions to negotiate new contracts.

*Gylfi Páll Hersir.* Inflation is very high in Iceland. It has been increasing, and in the beginning of 1983 it was reaching 200 percent. Therefore, of course, it was very important for working people to have a good system of cost-of-living adjustments. And they got this through strikes in 1977.

But a new government came to power in May 1983. It consisted of the Conservative Party, which is the main bourgeois party, and the Progressive Party, which is a bourgeois party that claims to represent the farmers. The government started by not paying the cost-of-living adjustment when it was supposed to be paid. This resulted in a 30 percent reduction in real wages. Ever since, wages have been 30 percent below where they should have been.

*Sigurlaug.* The response of the union officials to these attacks was limited to asking the government to give them back the right to negotiate. They did not discuss the attack on wages very much. They just wanted the right to negotiate, because this was a question of their own role.

*Q.* How did the People's Alliance respond to the austerity drive?

*Gylfi.* The People's Alliance is the main workers' party in Iceland. It originated from the Communist Party and it came out of a fusion between the Communist Party and the left wing of the Social Democratic Party. About half the union officials in the Icelandic Federation of Labor (ASÍ) are in the People's Al-

liance. And in the last election, the party won about 20 percent of the vote.

But the bourgeoisie has managed to weaken the party in preparation for the big attacks that are coming now.

The People's Alliance has been in the government off and on for more than a decade, since 1971. While they have been in power they have compromised. And the union bosses have compromised. So they are not now able to provide a credible answer to the attacks.

Now there are people in the party who are mainly interested in getting a job in the state sector, the union bosses do not attend meetings of the party, and some working people are dropping out of the People's Alliance. So there's a lot of confusion in the party.

We have the union bosses in one corner, the elected leadership of the party in one corner, the parliamentary group a third corner, and so on. The more radical party members, especially young workers, would like to carry on political discussions, but this is not possible.

*Sigurlaug.* The People's Alliance has made an agreement with the Conservative Party that the participation of both parties in the leadership of the unions be conducted in such a way that they won't have a fight.

This agreement creates political problems for both the People's Alliance and for the unions. They have to limit their defense of the working class and avoid talking about politics.



Public workers rally during 1984 strike.

*Q.* Is there any kind of fightback, even outside the structure of the People's Alliance and the union bureaucracy?

*Sigurlaug.* It was clear that the workers were very dissatisfied with the lack of response by the union leaders. This came up when the unions finally got permission from the government to negotiate new contracts. And the new contracts they negotiated were worthless. There were big fights about this in union meetings when these contracts were to be voted on.

It very seldom happens that a contract is voted down, but the biggest union of unskilled workers voted the contract down. It was a very big thing at that time. That was in January 1984.

Our members were able to provide leadership in that meeting and in the union for a few days. The bourgeois press noted this and held us responsible for the defeat of the contract.

We gained a lot from this. We had big public meetings. We had classes which a lot of young people came to, and we won new members. But this was, of course, an isolated happening, because the union leaderships were not going to carry on a serious struggle. And this was only one union.

So it didn't develop any further. Not for the industrial working class, not yet.

*Q.* Did the workers win anything by voting down this contract proposal?

*Sigurlaug.* Yes. Some weeks later, they won some improvements, but nobody remembers that. You know, it was just small things. It was not possible to gain more because the leadership was against it. They never did call a strike.

But white-collar public employees went on strike about six months later. This was a very good thing.

They stopped the country for four weeks. There were no ships coming in, no customs, nothing coming into the harbor, no buses, no schools.

But the industrial unions were passive, and they did not come out in support of the white-collar workers' strike. There were even a few confrontations between industrial workers and the strikers.

This strike caused a big crisis for the government. It was crucial for the existence of the government. I'm sure that if the industrial unions had done anything the government would not have lasted. But the People's Alliance was not helping. Its parliamentary fraction was not interested in getting into the government at that time.

The prime minister took advantage of the

gap between the industrial unions and the white-collar unions and declared that whichever union would negotiate first would make an example for the other. This meant that if the blue-collar union negotiated an agreement it would be legally binding on the white-collar union as well. This was a bad thing. Because the bosses of the blue-collar union were more interested in making tax reform agreements with the government than fighting for a real agreement on wages and questions like that.

*Gylfi.* This was a tactic by the government to divide the working people. Let the white-collar people be on strike and keep the ASÍ at the table discussing tax reform.

The strike by the public employees was an exemplary one. It was very democratic and did an excellent job of reaching out to other workers in the country.

At the same time that these people were striking, the printers had already been on strike. So once the white-collar workers came out, there were no newspapers, no radio or TV, no bourgeois press. The unions printed their own paper, and the postmen, who were also on strike, delivered it to every house.

And they had lots of meetings. Always when they had negotiations with the government they had meetings with all the members to discuss what to do next. So the leadership was not isolated. People went on demonstrations. Teachers held meetings, and so on. There was lots of activity.

*Q.* Is the leadership of the public-employees' union different from that of the industrial unions? Do you think the example the public employees have set will help industrial workers break with their reformist leadership?

*Sigurlaug.* It's a younger union. There's not such a big difference between the leaders and the members. It is a union of teachers — people who are used to speaking — and they know what they want. The health workers have for a period of time been quite active, quite militant. And they fought for the right to strike in 1977. They got that right, and they used it.

In fact the leadership was expected to be more conservative. I think the mobilization of the strikers was so big that it actually took care of the leadership somehow.

*Gylfi.* It's clear that this strike won't be forgotten. I don't think we have many strikes in the world that issue their own daily paper, for example. And the number of meetings they held with all other segments of society — it's clear that this is an experience that won't be forgotten.

The working class will benefit from this experience, though it is not certain that the next strike will be similar to this one.

*Sigurlaug.* And I think the strike had a radicalizing effect on women. The majority of the people actually on strike were women, and they organized many of the picket lines.

This has had its influence on the People's

Alliance, and might deepen its crisis. The People's Alliance had a mid-term congress a month after the strike. Half of the people speaking were women, half the delegates were women, and half of the Central Committee (actually a little more than half) elected were women. And they have been acting as an opposition to the right wing up till now.

*Q.* A large percentage of the workers in the fishing industry are also women. Will this have a special impact there, and will the experience of the recent strike carry over there?

*Sigurlaug.* When the government decided to devalue the krona and cause an immediate rise in prices and fall of real wages, it counted on exploiting divisions in the labor movement. It campaigned around the country saying that the white-collar workers had caused problems for the economy by their strike action. This was a massive campaign, and it was in fact aided in some ways by the union bosses as well.

And workers in the fishing industry were, of course, affected by this campaign. They didn't support, or understand, the white-collar workers' strike, and, in fact, became demoralized and inactive.

*Q.* *Sigurlaug,* you work in the fish-processing industry. Can you describe conditions in the industry and how it is organized?

*Sigurlaug.* Only men do the fishing. And it is a very dangerous job — they have a very high death rate. It is the highest of any occupation in Iceland and the highest I know of among fishing industries in other countries.

In the processing plants about 75 to 80 percent of the workers are women, and the jobs are quite strictly divided by sex. It's men who mainly operate the machines that decapitate, skin, and bone the fish. Women get a chance to do these jobs only when the men are on vacation. (The fact that women can fill in for the men, by the way, shows that women are capable of doing these jobs.)

The next step in the processing — cutting the fish into pieces, removing small bones and parasites, and packing — that is a job that is only carried out by women.

Every job in the factory is now paid by piece rates.

Women in the plants have been discussing health conditions, and it is their opinion that since piece work was introduced on a massive scale 15 years ago, a lot more women have become sick and died because of the work.

But it's hard to do anything about it. You can't just say, "We don't want to do this job any more because it is unhealthy." You have to be able to explain it much better. But it has reached the point where the majority of women in the fishing industry want to get rid of piece work.

The union leadership had been in favor of piece work, but now they are changing their opinion. They say that piece work is bad. But they point out that we have to be productive. So they ask the workers, "How do you expect

Iceland's economy to be well off if you want to abolish piece work?" But that's not our problem; it's not our job.

*Q.* How does the party do its political work among industrial workers?

*Sigurlaug.* We have decided we should be where the workers are — in the unions, the work places, and the People's Alliance. At present, most of the work is through the People's Alliance, because it has the most meetings where we can talk to people. The unions have fewer meetings.

I also sell our newspaper. Not in the plant itself, but at a coffeeshop that a lot of the workers go to.

*Gylfi.* We also have a member on the local committee of the People's Alliance in Reykjavik. And at the People's Alliance national convention last year five members of our group were delegates.

We are participating, and we see that as important, especially because of the confusion in the party, especially among young people who are coming into the party for the first time. They look around, and no one knows what to say and people have very different opinions.

*Q.* Is there a left wing in the People's Alliance at this point, or a group of individuals who are moving in a leftward direction?

*Gylfi.* There is no organized discussion going on in the party now. The left wing of the party, if you could call it that, consists of young people — workers and women — but it is not organized in any way, and they don't present an alternative to the leadership, except for what we have been proposing.

We have been proposing that there should be a meeting where the party members who are in the unions could meet along with the leadership and decide what to do. And then the union leaders would go out and help build this line that everybody agrees on. When the majority of the party makes a decision, the union officials, the party's daily newspaper, and the parliamentary fraction should all carry it out. This is what we propose.

But there is a long way to go on this. The old tradition of the party is Stalinist, so democracy does not function in the way we think it should. But I think some people are beginning to see that this is what should be done.

This is what the party needs. And it needs clear programmatic discussions about what to do. This is what we are fighting for. And there are more and more people who agree.

The union bosses, of course, want to do things their way. They want to be able to collaborate with the employers.

*Sigurlaug.* I think the basic problem of the People's Alliance is that its program is a reformist one from the beginning. Of course, it needs a new program which has to be adopted for a new situation. It's pretty impossible to make a new program in the situation the party is in today because it has so many different elements. □

# 'Collecting debt is politically impossible'

## Part II of Castro's speech to closing session of Havana conference

[The following is the second half of Cuban President Fidel Castro's August 3 speech to the final session of the Meeting on the Foreign Debt of Latin America and the Caribbean in Havana.

[The first half was printed in the October 7 issue of *Intercontinental Press*. In it Castro explained the scope of Latin America's debt crisis and demonstrated why many of the proposed solutions are inadequate.

[Of the 1,200 delegates attending the meeting, some 100 represented trade unions or peasant organizations, 115 were heads of parties or political organizations, and about 50 were members of various women's groups. A total of 31 countries were represented.

[The presidents of both Argentina and Bolivia sent personal representatives, and the Ecuadoran government had an official delegate. The Nicaraguan delegation was headed by Vice-president Sergio Ramírez.

[From El Salvador, Guillermo Ungo, president of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), and Fermán Cienfuegos, a commander of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) attended.

[Also participating were numerous trade union leaders, religious figures, military officers, businessmen, academics, artists, and journalists.

[The countries of the Caribbean, including the English-, French-, and Dutch-speaking islands, were well represented.

[The August 19 issue of *Intercontinental Press* carried a report from Havana by Mary-Alice Waters on the conference.

[This meeting was part of a series of conferences in Cuba that have drawn together broad forces from the region to discuss the debt crisis.

[Since the first of June, meetings have been held in Havana of nearly 300 women from 27 Latin American and Caribbean countries, 150 journalists from 20 countries, and more than 300 union and peasant leaders from 29 countries.

[Documents from these meetings have appeared in *Intercontinental Press* in the issues of July 22, August 5, August 19, and September 9.

[The text of the following speech is taken from the August 18 issue of *Granma Weekly Review*, the English-language newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party. Footnotes and bracketed material are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

But how can this be solved? It's clear that there is a cancer, it's clear that the problem must be handled surgically, and one wonders where the money to pay for this operation will come from. That was the first thing I asked myself: where's the money?

It's clear that the resources exist in this world to cure this cancer, which is threatening the lives of billions of persons, and which kills! I'm sure that it kills more people than the cancer that infects humans, given all the children who die in the Third World in the first year of life, all those who die before the age of five, and those who die from age five to age 15, if we calculate the life expectancy in many countries, as a consequence of undernourishment and malnutrition. And that doesn't include something terrible, the number of physically and even mentally disabled. Yesterday there was talk of the hundreds of millions of children who grow up with limited mental faculties because of poor nutrition.

Does cancer cause that much damage? In any case, doctors recommend removal of cancer when it is detected. And this kills much more than cancer!

So, are there resources? Yes, there are resources. What are they used for? To create the means for killing people, for war, for the arms race. A trillion dollars for military spending! In just one year, the world squanders a trillion dollars playing war and on military spending — more than the whole foreign debt of the combined Third World.

Isn't there a basic logic here? Couldn't any human being understand

it? Couldn't any citizen, no matter what his ideology, understand that it's worth the trouble to eliminate this debt with a small part of what's used on military spending? Because we're not talking about Latin America's debt; we're talking about the Third World's debt. At the most, depending on the interest, 12 percent of current military spending would be sufficient.

Furthermore, within the military budgets there is enough money for the New International Economic Order, to establish a system of just prices for all Third World products, to put an end to the ignominious mechanism of unequal terms of trade.

How much could all this cost? Roughly 300 billion dollars a year. The purchasing power of the Third World countries would increase; they're not going to hold back the money. They're too hungry and too needy to hold back the money; they'll invest it on industry or spend it in some way. There would still be 700 billion dollars left over for military spending, enough to destroy the world several times over, unfortunately, all of which amounts to a terrible madness. This spending goes on in the world.

We should become aware that the resources exist to cure this terrible cancer, which kills so many millions of people and leaves so many others disabled every year, which hurts so many millions of people. That's why I associate these two things.

It's not enough to solve the debt problem by annulling or abolishing the debt. We would wind up in the same place, because the factors that determine the situation would still be present. And we have made close associations between these two things — the abolition of the debt and the establishment of the New International Economic Order.

We've brought up some other ideas, because this has to be implemented. How can it be implemented? We must create an awareness, first among ourselves, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean; but we must create an awareness not only among ourselves, but also in all the countries of the Third World. That's what can give us strength.

We must create an awareness even in the industrialized countries; we must send a message to the people in the industrialized countries, showing that what's going on is a terrible madness. We must send a message to the workers, the students, the intellectuals, the women, the middle

## 600 youth meet on debt

Some 600 youth from 32 countries met in Havana September 11–14 for the Latin American and Caribbean Youth and Student Dialogue on the Foreign Debt. Nearly 100 delegates addressed the conference, offering a number of different points of view.

The conference was opened by Carlos Lage, first secretary of Cuba's Union of Young Communists. He stated that the mammoth foreign debt undermines the development of youth in the region and stressed that it is unpayable. He said that by transferring the debt to future generations, each child will be born in debt.

Cuban President Fidel Castro attended the conference and held a four-hour question-and-answer period with the participants during the closing session.

Shortly after the youth conference, journalists and economists from Latin America and the Caribbean gathered in Havana to participate in the Latin American Press Forum on the financial crisis in the region. The meeting, which began on September 17, was organized by Prensa Latina, the Havana-based news agency.

sectors. They have other problems, and perhaps the cure for our problem can help solve some of their problems.

It's very important to tell the people in the industrialized countries that these formulas we're suggesting will not hurt them. They won't raise taxes, because if we take the resources from military budgets it won't be necessary.

We must send a message to bank depositors. When they say that any of these formulas would ruin the world financial system, we must tell them, "No, that's a lie!" If the resources to solve the debt problem and create the New Economic Order are taken from military spending, then no one with a bank account would lose any money.

We mustn't forget that there are millions of them in the industrialized capitalist world, including workers, middle sectors, professionals, many people, and they're being told that the formulas proposed will

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## **We must send a message to the people in the industrialized countries, showing that what's going on is a terrible madness . . .**

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bankrupt the banking system and that those who have money deposited in the bank will lose it.

We must send a message to the workers, whose scourge is unemployment, which is the scourge of Europe, the scourge of the United States. And we must tell them that this formula would increase the purchasing power of the Third World, factories will be better utilized, and there will be more employment in the industrialized countries.

Someone over there had an article which said, "Castro, Keynesian." I don't know if it was a question or a statement. I'm going to tell you the truth: I didn't even remember that Keynes had existed when I began thinking about these things.

There could be some coincidence in the fact that the increase in purchasing power for that enormous group of needy in the Third World will, of course, increase trade, exports, and employment in the developed capitalist world. It won't save capitalism, because capitalism cannot be saved! The problem for the Third World is to not die before capitalism does. (APPLAUSE) That's the problem.

If they go on starving the Third World, if they go on investing those huge sums in arms, they can wipe out all life on earth in a matter of days. It's possible that before capitalism is ended humanity will come to an end, and it would be well worth it putting them in a straight jacket, a small straight jacket, and telling them: "Don't spend 1 trillion, spend just 600 billion, 700 billion. You'd still have money left for madness, for many of the crazy things you're now doing."

I believe the underdeveloped world, the Third World, could impose that on them, yes indeed. Are we going to give up the idea of struggling? Are we going to be pessimists? Are we going to believe that our opinion, our conscience, our will, even our ability to win over the industrialized countries' public opinion are not worth anything?

For they have two problems and two big fears. A man in the Third World has practically no time to think about war because he's dying virtually every day; those in the affluent world who have many beautiful, wonderful things, excellent cities, a lot of comfort, are more or less well fed. They, however, have two big worries: war and unemployment.

I believe it is absolutely correct, it is the correct tactic, to link our problems — underdevelopment, poverty, all these social evils that have been mentioned here — with the concerns of the industrialized world — in the first place, the danger of war, because if they have the time to think what a war may mean they will clearly see that all this madness of accumulating tens of thousands upon thousands of nuclear weapons may lead, and no doubt will lead unless it is stopped, to great disaster.

We can link our concerns with the concerns for peace and unemployment that prevail in the industrialized world. We must be capable of conveying that message.

And there are a lot of people in those countries who think. Not all of them own transnationals, not all of them are warmongers; I believe this struggle may help to isolate the warmongers, the advocates of war.

Of course, imperialism needs arms. Someone asked here — I don't

know whether it was [former Colombian President Alfonso] López Michelsen or perhaps Capriles — whether we advocate disarmament, an end to the arms race, just for the West or also for the socialist countries. When Ecuadoran President Febres Cordero visited our country and I was telling him about these problems, he asked me, "Does that mean that only the West must disarm?" "No, no," I told him. "Look, if I really were advocating this with the idea that the West unilaterally disarm while the socialist countries continue to arm themselves, what I would be saying would not be honest, what I would be advocating would not merit any respect." (APPLAUSE)

What is happening is that I know how the socialist countries think; the socialist countries have known the truth about war much more than U.S. public opinion. The Soviet Union sustained 20 million dead during World War II; Poland, 6 million dead; Yugoslavia, 1.5 million dead. The territory of the United States was not the site of war; it sustained only a few hundred thousand dead, it doesn't even have an idea of what war means, while the memory of war is still quite fresh in the minds of the countries of the socialist camp.

They never wanted war. They were surrounded with nuclear bases, battleships, submarines, bombers, all the weapons, and then some wonder why they arm themselves. It's as if we were asked why we arm ourselves, with a neighbor such as we have threatening us every day. Actually, I tell you it's the least a country like ours can do to prepare itself to put up a good fight. And not just to put up a good fight, but to ensure the failure of an attack on the country! (APPLAUSE)

Unfortunately, in our case, a uniform was also viewed with a lot of distrust, with open reserve and, generally speaking, with fear and hatred.

Today every man and woman in this country has military training. I recall what the Bolivian priest said, with an extraordinary and impressive honesty, on his impressions or preconceived ideas about Cuba. Naturally, that reminded me of the poison that Méndez Arceo was talking about, for they are specialists in producing toxins with what he termed the worst form of biological warfare. What a fitting image to convey what imperialist propaganda really stands for! It's spreading poison everywhere in large quantities.

Yet nowadays our people respect, more than that, love uniforms; every man and every woman wears one because now the use of arms is no longer confined to a group; it is the province of all the people, all the men and women able to fight in this country, and the arms are in the hands of the people. They're also in the factories and places of work! (APPLAUSE) No one here has to fear uniforms or arms because the enemy has imposed that need on us.

I also say that if at times the role of a military man is dishonorable, at other times the role of a fighter, a soldier, is quite dignified and honorable, particularly and solely, we could say, whenever the cause of the soldier and the cause of the people are one and the same. (APPLAUSE)

We also know what can be done with what is invested in arms and how tough it is to invest huge sums in trenches, fortresses, tunnels, fortifications of all kinds, and to use tens and tens of thousands of men in the prime of their youth and of technicians, equipment, and resources in defense tasks. We know how many homes can be built with what we must set aside for all that, and how many schools.

We've built thousands of schools: elementary schools, high schools, and technological schools. There are schools for every child and young person in this country, but we also want to build art schools — one in each province — as well as vocational and other professional schools.

Our program is making progress, little by little, because our needs are never met in full; they're unlimited. There's always something to take care of. You solve the problem of schools or of hospitals, medicine, etc., but you run short of houses, recreation centers, and it's necessary to invest in that direction. With an almost ninth-grade educational level like we have today it's natural for our people to aspire to further cultural development, and, as a result, every province wants to have its own art school and theater, music, and dance groups.

Wouldn't it have been much better to spend on all these things the resources that we've been spending on weapons? What use does a socialist country have for weapons? What use can a socialist country have for arms buildup or war? The way I see it, the way every socialist sees it and the way every real revolutionary sees it, socialism has nothing to do

with armament. You have to be crazy to think that in today's world the socialism-capitalism contradiction can be solved through the use of weapons.

It's the imperialists who need weapons, since they are completely devoid of ideas. (APPLAUSE) They need weapons and they must stockpile them against everybody's will in order to maintain their opprobrious system, to maintain all the situations that have been described here.

But when there are ideas, these ideas can be defended and they can be made to prevail. Ideas don't need weapons if they can win the masses over to their cause. No one can think that the contradiction between socialism and capitalism can be settled by force. You'd have to be out of your mind to think that way, and that's the way the imperialists think. That's why they have military bases all over the world, threaten everybody, and interfere everywhere.

Where are the socialist countries' military bases? The United States has hundreds of military bases and a fleet in every ocean. Diego García Island was mentioned in this meeting and so were the Malvinas, where the United States has set up a military base, and now it's trying to open another base on Easter Island, 4,000 miles from Chile, as part of that insane star wars program.

Finding an island, a small cay, a piece of land that will contribute to its system of domination by force, of worldwide plunder, has become an obsession. It's actually a philosophy of worldwide plunder, and since such plunder can only be sustained by force, this explains such a blind faith in weapons.

Since socialism does not want to deprive anybody of anything, even a piece of land, or to exploit anybody's work and sweat, really, what use can socialism have for weapons? Only imperialism, with its continuous attacks and threats, can be blamed for our expenditures in armament.

I base my statements on this idea, and I know that every socialist country is aware of how much they could accomplish with the resources that are being devoted to arms.

I'm saying this with absolute certainty, not because I wrote letters to the leaders of the other socialist countries asking for permission to talk this way or wanting to know if they agree with me in this matter. It's simply that the most elementary logic tells me that this is the way socialists think, and I'm certain that socialists — who don't have the problems the Third World has, although there are several socialist countries in the Third World — are also seriously concerned over the danger of war.

I haven't the slightest doubt, given the statements they've made and the way they think, that the socialist countries will also support the Third World in this struggle to solve the problem of the economic crisis, the foreign debt and the New International Economic Order. (APPLAUSE)

When I speak of abolishing the debt, I mean all the Third World's debts with the industrialized world, including the socialist countries.

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### **It's the imperialists who need weapons, since they are completely devoid of ideas . . .**

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(APPLAUSE) When I speak of the New International Economic Order and fair prices I'm not excluding the socialist countries. And I'm sure that for them this will mean sacrifice, but they will understand and will give their support.

I've referred to the Law of the Sea. I remember that when this struggle was begun by Peru, Ecuador, Chile, and Mexico the socialist countries already had large fishing fleets operating on the high seas and we, too, had developed quite a large fleet. As a rule, we had been doing our fishing off the coast of Mexico, the United States, and Canada, everywhere, when the jurisdictional waters limit was 12 miles. A 200-mile limit was unfavorable for us, yet we didn't hesitate to support the Latin American countries and the Third World in their demand, and we spoke with the socialist countries asking for their support, and they supported the demand for a 200-mile limit.

The Peruvians know this, and so does [former Peruvian Prime Minister Edgardo] Mercado Jarrín and all those who formed part of those gov-

ernments. And those countries, which had spent billions building up large fishing fleets, were seriously affected. We were affected, too, and we were among those who most fervently defended the 12-mile limit.

Finally, an agreement was reached, but now the United States wants to be the lord and master of the seabed outside the 200-mile limit and demands that its transnationals be given the privilege with their sophisticated technology to wantonly exploit some of the seabed's resources in order to obtain chrome and other minerals at even lower costs than they're being obtained now, in order to push the Third World deeper into ruin, for it doesn't have the technology to go to the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, or the Atlantic in search of minerals. What does the future have in store for us?

According to the agreements on the Law of the Sea, every country is supposed to benefit economically from them. But the United States and some of its allies don't want to accept it.

I haven't the slightest doubt that the socialist countries will support this cause. But it's very important that we realize that this is not Latin America's struggle alone but rather the struggle of the entire Third World, because unity is what gives us strength. The Third World countries have the same problems, some of them worse than ours, but Latin America is the only one that can lead this struggle given its social — and also political — development, a better social structure, millions of intellectuals and professionals, tens of millions of workers and peasants, a high level of political awareness, and the same language.

The Africans' situation is more desperate. They owe almost 200 billion, but they're worse off because they're more dependent on the food that's sent to them once in a while, especially in periods of famine. Their situation is even more terrible than that of Latin America. But all the Third World countries, those that are struggling in the United Nations and in the Group of 77 [organization of underdeveloped countries] and those that have struggled for the New International Economic Order, are aware of these problems.

Practically every country in Latin America speaks the same language. It's true that in this meeting the speeches were translated into French, English, and Portuguese. Those who speak Portuguese and constitute an important part of Latin America's population understood those who spoke in Spanish, and we understood them when they spoke in Portuguese. In fact, even the representatives of some of the English-speaking countries, among them Belize and Curaçao — in the latter I believe they speak what is known as Papiamentu — and the one from Haiti, spoke in Spanish.

Therefore, the communication that exists in this area doesn't exist in any other area of the Third World — not in Asia, Africa, or anywhere else. It's evident that Latin America is the region most capable of waging this struggle. It would be very difficult for Africa or any other Third World area to hold a meeting like this one.

In short, Latin America has a greater political development and a better social structure as well as a greater economic and political potential to carry out this struggle.

These are fundamental principles. It's not simply a single idea, the idea of abolishing the debt. This is closely linked to the idea of establishing the New International Economic Order.

As far as Latin America is concerned, it's also closely related to the idea of integration, for even if the debt were abolished, even if the New International Economic Order were established, without integration we'd go on being dependent countries. If Europe cannot conceive of living without integration, how could these countries, a large number of countries of different sizes and different levels of development, do without it? Brazil, of course, has more possibilities, but it still needs integration, Brazil needs the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean, and the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean needs Brazil. Every country in this hemisphere is in need of integration.

This is why we speak of economic integration, another of the points to which we have drawn attention. This is essential, elementary. These are basic ideas. The problem of when and how this whole thing is to be organized is another story. I believe that as these ideas emerge from the ivory towers, as they are taken up by the masses, by public opinion, by the people; as they become the ideas of the workers, peasants, students, intellectuals, and the middle-income sectors of Latin America, sooner

or later they will prevail, among them the idea of economic integration. (APPLAUSE)

It is evident that when, in a historical stage, those who have the responsibility to move in one direction fail to do so, the masses will pass them, move forward, and achieve their historic objectives. (APPLAUSE)

Another fundamental idea is the idea of unity that we've been talking about from the very beginning. Unity within the countries and unity between the countries. Within the countries, where the minimal conditions for unity exist, and fortunately, they do exist in most of the Latin American countries now.

Not in all of them. This is something that I've taken pains to explain. No one would ever think of unity with a tyrannical regime such as that of Pinochet's [in Chile], or Stroessner's [in Paraguay], and there are several other cases, although not too many.

The idea is unity within each country, because this struggle calls for internal strength, and unity among the countries of Latin America, among all the countries of the Third World, because external strength is also necessary. The idea also includes seeking unity with certain industrialized countries, and I'm sure that this struggle could even count on the support of numerous industrialized countries, those that do not constitute the core of world power and are also to some extent the victims of the current U.S. administration's monetarist and adventurist policies.

I'm inclined to believe that if this struggle is carried out in a consistent fashion it will result in the isolation of the United States and its few partners, the same ones that are opposed to sanctions against apartheid in South Africa, the ones that refuse to sign the agreements on the Law of the Sea. I'm sure that if this struggle is waged to the last consequences they'll be isolated.

And that's why they'll make every possible effort to sow division, to threaten, and to intimidate. It's not surprising that in their nervousness they dropped the banana peel on Peru's path with that act of provocation.

Now then, a very important matter was brought up here, and that's why I've had to speak to such length. Diaz Rangel said — and this is the second time he has laid a trap for me, because he did the same thing at the trade unionists' meeting, by interpolating a question in his speech. (I use the term "trap" in the best sense of the word, not in the imperialist sense.)

The question was whether or not a dialogue should take place. I decided to review what I had said about that topic. I knew what I had said, but I wanted to have an even clearer image since I had spoken at length about it.

This is what I said about these problems in the interview for *Excelsior*. You have the text, since you've been provided with a great deal of material. There are many of those pamphlets, and you had access to them, although I'm sure you had no time to read them. As far as I know, neither did Rangel. Otherwise, he wouldn't have brought up that issue here, he wouldn't have asked the question. (LAUGHTER)

I said, "It is absolutely impossible for them to blockade the Third World economically or take over our countries because of the debt, as they did in Haiti and the Dominican Republic and other countries in the first few decades of this century. They can't divide up the world again to assure their supplies of raw materials and markets, as they did in other eras. . . ."

"The struggle for demands as rational as the solution of the problem of the foreign debt and fair economic relations between the Third World countries and the industrialized world is so essential for the survival and future of the Latin American peoples that it would doubtless be supported by all social strata and would generate great internal unity in all the countries. It would also strengthen the unity among all the Latin American countries and would receive the unhesitating, enthusiastic, determined support of all the developing countries in Asia and Africa.

"I have no doubt that many industrialized countries would also support these demands. Nor do I doubt that the ideal, most constructive thing is for these problems to be solved by means of political dialogue and negotiation, which would promote essential solutions in an orderly manner.

"If this is not done" — and this is very important — "desperate situations will doubtless force a group of countries to take unilateral meas-

ures. This isn't desirable, but, if it occurs, I am sure that all the other countries in Latin America and the rest of the Third World will join them." (APPLAUSE)

That idea was reiterated in an interview with an academician and a U.S. congressman.<sup>6</sup> A book will come out soon based on the interview, especially the parts dealing with economic problems. The text of the interview has also been printed.

It said, "... the industrialized countries have no rational, effective formula with which to face the crisis at present. None.

"I believe the main difficulty lies in a lack of understanding about the nature and seriousness of the problem . . . it would help even the foreign companies that have trade relations with those countries, the companies that produce goods for those countries. And, in the creditor countries,

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## **I believe this struggle may help to isolate the warmongers . . .**

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the state wouldn't be hurt economically. To the contrary, they would raise their levels of employment and use of industrial capacity; their banks wouldn't have any losses; and their taxpayers wouldn't have to pay any additional taxes.

"If this is understood, if there is an awareness of this, I believe that the path toward a solution would be made much easier, by means of dialogue, through agreements between the industrialized and the Third World countries. And, as I was saying before, the only thing that would suffer would be the irrational arms race, the frantic madness of weapons and war — and that, unfortunately, to only a very small extent.

"This would be a healthful measure, since we would begin to overcome the most shameful and dangerous disease of our times. If the New International Economic Order, which has been proclaimed and agreed upon by the United Nations, is implemented as an indispensable complement to the cancellation of the debt, that would really imply a greater reduction of military expenditures. . . ."

"If we don't succeed in this, what will happen? Instead of there being a negotiated agreement between the parties, the Third World countries will impose this agreement. Let there be no doubt about it. Essentially, the situation is as follows: it is materially impossible to pay the debt and its interest; therefore, due to this very elementary and understandable reason, the debt cannot be paid.

"It would take rivers of blood to force people to make the sacrifices this would imply — for which they would receive nothing. No government would be strong enough to do this. This is worth analyzing, discussing, and solving in common agreement between creditors and debtors. We should never forget, even for an instant, that the initiative has passed to the nations that are being pressured to make this monstrous sacrifice.

"If the debtor countries of the Third World are forced to decree a suspension of payments unilaterally, the industrialized countries will be left without any possible alternative for action. An economic blockade; an invasion of the Third World; a new distribution of the world, as in past centuries, in order to guarantee raw materials and markets or to collect the debt is simply impossible. Any rational person can understand this. They couldn't impose an economic blockade on any country or group of countries that declared a suspension of payments, because this would immediately lead to expressions of solidarity by all other countries.

"We are one big family, and times have changed a lot. Some madnesses have already been left behind, and others — such as several of the ones analyzed in the course of this interview — are on the way out."

In other words, we are not declaring war on the industrialized countries. We're only telling them what's happening and what's going to happen. I say that it's preferable for them to realize what's going on and sit down to talk things over, but not to talk about paying the debt — let this be clearly understood — but rather to talk about the New International Economic Order. (APPLAUSE)

6. U.S. Congressman Mervyn Dymally and political science professor Jeffrey Elliot interviewed Castro in Havana in late March. Portions of the interview were also published in the August issue of the U.S. magazine *Playboy*.



The abolition of the foreign debt doesn't necessarily call for any prior discussion, but establishing the New Economic Order necessarily calls for dialogue, and if the bases for the dialogue are clearly understood then it's possible to talk about both things: how the debt is to be abolished, in what way, and so forth. We've offered them the remedy for themselves, for their banks, and they should thank us for telling them what's going to happen and for offering the solutions to their problems.

I still believe that the ideal thing would be for them to become aware. The question is whether or not they will. Of course, they're now more worried than ever before. They've really begun to think things over, and that's good. What would be very bad would be for them to remain indifferent amidst this tragic situation.

If they're aware of the problem, if they really understand what's happening, and if they recognize that the debt is unpayable, then we can sit down and find out what elegant, merciful form can be given to the abolition of the debt.

If they don't become aware, if things keep going the way they are, what's going to happen — there are already indications — is what we've been saying all along. Some countries, driven by desperation, will take unilateral measures, and they'll have the solidarity of the rest of Latin America and the Third World. I'm absolutely convinced of this.

The memory of the Malvinas is still fresh in our minds: how in spite of the terrible internal political situation in Argentina, the peoples of Latin America, and even of the Third World, did not hesitate to support the people of Argentina. In those days of the Malvinas War a Non-Aligned Movement ministerial meeting was being held in this very hall, and we discussed that problem with all of them. The Argentine foreign minister came, and we spoke with all the representatives of the Third World countries and, almost unanimously, they supported the people of Argentina on the Malvinas issue.

In the Malvinas War nobody had a thing to gain or lose from an economic standpoint. It was a matter of feelings, of affection, a question of principle, a rejection of colonialism.

However, in this problem, which has to do with the life and death of all the peoples of Latin America and the Third World, if a group of desperate countries or even a small group of countries with a certain degree of economic power start the battle, I'm convinced that they will have the support of the rest of Latin America and the Third World, 10 times over the support that was given Argentina in the Malvinas War. (APPLAUSE)

As part of this struggle, we've been in contact with the countries of Africa and the Third World. All these materials you've been swamped with were sent to the United Nations, many of them were sent to heads of state, to the heads of state of the industrialized countries and the heads of state of the Third World countries. We've been working and struggling, trying to develop an awareness that would ensure solidarity.

Just today some signs were seen, solidarity with Peru was about to be launched. For let no one harbor the slightest doubt, not even the tiniest doubt, that if the imperialists take steps of that kind against Peru or any other country forced into a situation of having to adopt unilateral measures, even if these measures are not radical, and adopt economic measures against that country or any other country in similar conditions, those countries can count on our complete solidarity, and I'm certain they can count on the solidarity of all of you, of Latin America and the Third World. I have no doubt about that. (APPLAUSE)

We've got nothing up our sleeves. This is an open, clear, strategy, and part of this strategy has been to develop an awareness; one of the main goals of distributing these materials is to develop an awareness for solidarity. And I'm certain, I'm fully confident, that this course won't fail. The imperialists may play around with banana peels, but at any moment the imperialists themselves will slip on their own banana peels. (APPLAUSE)

There's another essential idea, and Capriles showed here that he understood the essence of the problem when he said: "If we impose a suspension of payments or a moratorium on them, they will have to sit down and talk." He actually saw the essence of the idea.

So, then, how is this going to be implemented, how will it evolve? Formulas are beginning to emerge. It was even mentioned here that some theoretician of imperialism has already mentioned a Marshall

Plan. I laughed when I read that, and I said, it's such a big problem that not one but at least 20 Marshall Plans are needed. And they don't even have the money for that, unless they give up their warmongering madness. Already formulas of every type have begun to turn up.

Naturally it is an essential idea that if they are not willing to discuss the problem they must be forced to do so. What this means is that the initiative belongs to the Third World countries. I recall that when I went to the United Nations — the debt was 335 billion dollars then — we were asking, in line with United Nations formulas, for resources equivalent to an additional 300 billion dollars for development in the '80s. At that time we were asking: "please, look how serious the situation is, we need resources, these problems have to be solved." But they refused to listen, until this untenable situation arose.

Now, as I explained on one occasion, we are not asking but instead giving out, and it isn't so hard to keep one's arms at rest, not putting your hands into your pocket to take out resources and refusing to go on being looted.

But weapons are not needed for that, not at all. They can't use them for this against the Third World countries, not even star wars will do them any good to collect the debt. They won't collect the debt even with space weapons, nor with nuclear weapons; there's nothing they can use to collect the debt. As I said at the United Nations, bombs can kill the starving, the uneducated, the sick, but you can't kill hunger, ignorance, disease, poverty. (APPLAUSE)

This struggle again becomes one of the spirit, of awareness against technology, and all their technology in the face of the reality of over 100 countries that find themselves in this situation, entitled to all their rights and all their reasons, actually won't do them any good to counter our concerted action. This is what I am talking about.

And, naturally, it'll be solved. The ideal thing would be a prior consensus. But will a prior consensus among Latin America's debtor countries come before the crisis breaks out? The ideal thing would be a prior consensus and a discussion with the creditors, but will that happen?

The most likely evolution of events is that serious crises will break out and because of these crises they will show some interest in negotiating; that's what's most likely. No one can predict this accurately, but I've never really thought that there'll be a consensus before the crisis, although I don't deem it impossible. It may be that to the extent the situation becomes worse a prior consensus is reached among the debtors, it's possible; it's not impossible, although I don't find it very likely.

Now, if this struggle continues, if the masses develop an awareness, if every citizen from our countries understands the problem, then the chances of influencing and creating favorable conditions would be increased. No government acting alone can wage this struggle, so perhaps it would be possible to emphasize the idea that they all meet, that a policy be adopted and that a firm and correct decision be adopted.

In short, I've explained all this so that you are familiar with the way we think and that it is not a previously declared war, but we know quite well how selfish the exploiters and plunderers are, and we are getting a glimpse at how events may evolve, but no one can be sure. However, we must be prepared for anything, we must be prepared, that's very important.

I've talked mainly about the economic aspect of the problem; I won't deal with it much longer because really there are three more very important aspects left.

We are saying that it is unpayable. Yet being unpayable for mathematical, economic reasons does not imply a moral, legal, or political judgment of the problem. However, we're also saying that it is a political impossibility.

No government in any Latin American country is in the position to apply the [International] Monetary Fund measures, none of them, no matter how ruthlessly they try. Pinochet is trying and has gotten all tangled up in a growing crisis. Announced today was the news of the resignation of the head of the Carabineros [riot police], who had held the post for many years, prompted by the brutal murder of three Chilean citizens who were kidnapped and beheaded.

Coincidentally, three days ago I received a letter from the relatives of one of the victims, who left four children aged 11, six, four, and two. They sent me an impressive letter with his self-portrait and a moving poem that he wrote, seemingly for himself. These factors, yes, three

victims, but already Pinochet is trembling, his regime is being shaken by the protest of world opinion and, above all, the protest of the people, the wrath of the people, the irritation of the people. (APPLAUSE) He won't be able to stay in power much longer.

The governments where there are democratic openings, how could they apply those measures in conditions where living standards have been reduced by half in many places? From Mexico, a country with a stable constitutional regime, the news has reached us that the population's purchasing power has dropped by 33 percent over the past 18 months, and 50 percent over the past 30 months. We all see the heroic efforts of the Mexican government to try to overcome the crisis and pay the debt; however, throughout 1985 the minimum amount of its trade balance has steadily decreased.

The trade surplus of the three main exporting countries — Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina — which came to nearly 30 billion in 1984, will hardly reach 20 billion in 1985, while all the time they must go on paying interest amounting to 12 billion for Brazil, approximately 12 billion for Mexico, and 4 to 5 billion for Argentina. It is a very difficult, unmanageable situation.

The democratic governments find it quite difficult to go on applying the measures, the increasingly worse measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund, indefinitely. It would mean a political crisis for the countries to try to apply them. If Pinochet, through killing people, can no longer do it, how could a democratic government do it without destroying itself in the process? It is simply a political impossibility collecting that debt, demanding that the people make the sacrifices needed to pay that debt.

I said it was morally impossible. It is almost unnecessary to delve deeper in that element so often mentioned here, so strongly raised here by all, particularly the Christians. It's one of the points I've been raising.

There may indeed be some cases — I admit it — in which some useful investment was made with those credits, where a small portion of the whole debt was invested in useful things; but we all know that a large part was invested in arms, was squandered, embezzled, wasted, and we also know that a large part went abroad, it didn't even reach Latin America.

I think it was Comrade Liber Seregni who said that Latin Americans had 160 billion dollars deposited abroad, and that's a conservative estimate, it could be more. Money invested abroad under such economic conditions, with constant inflation, a weakened currency, overvalued dollars, high interest rates in the United States, and not a cent remains, nothing is left.

Still at present 10 billion dollars are invested abroad every year, 10 billion dollars! But in those years there was a country — I believe it was Venezuela — where over a period of time, according to the World Bank, for every dollar received in loans, one dollar 23 cents went abroad; that is, not only did the dollar going to Venezuela, or that failed to reach Venezuela, leave again, but one dollar and 23 cents from Venezuela's reserves or exports were deposited abroad.

Will that money ever return? What appeals can be made so that it does? In this context, will it return? And who can dream about setting up such ideal, perfect, attractive conditions so that the money generously returns to the country all by itself, walking, swimming — even swimming against the Gulf Stream? (LAUGHTER) No one can believe that, no one can imagine it. It's utopian. All these things are indeed idealistic, all these things are indeed utopian, and not what we are advocating.

What was done with that money? Who will they collect it from now? Some heartbreaking examples were given here, like when Edgardo Enriquez, [former minister in Popular Unity government in Chile] asked at this forum whether he had to repay the money given to Pinochet to murder his children, to murder his grandchildren, and to murder and kidnap other loved ones.

The Indian comrade from Ecuador also spoke eloquently, asking what had they received in their communities — a school, a hospital, or something like that? And now they all had to pay.

Many people here dealt with all these moral aspects. Someone said — I think it was the man from Belize — that under British law gambling debts do not have to be repaid, thereby introducing an element of a legal nature. I've quoted the example of someone who borrows 1,000 dollars

to go to a casino and spends it all, and then his five-year-old son is forced to repay the 1,000 dollars. This, from a moral viewpoint, is untenable, and this is very important because it's not just a question of not being able to pay.

"It can't be done" is a pretty strong argument, but "it shouldn't be done" is a much stronger argument. (APPLAUSE) It was also mentioned and repeated here that it goes against the most elemental human rights.

There's so much talk in the West about human rights, and it turns out that with their methods — and I've said this to some people from the United States — they murder thousands of people every day.

Who should be held responsible for the one million children who die in Latin America in less than one year, before their first year of life?

Right here in this auditorium at a meeting of pediatricians, the director of UNICEF [a UN children's relief agency] said that if Latin America had the levels of sanitation and health care available to Cuban children, an infant mortality rate [could be achieved] no greater than 15 per 1000 live births — we reduced that index to 15 last year — in their first year of life.

We have also considerably reduced the mortality rates of children one to five years old and five to 15 years old; we have prolonged the life expectancy, now at par with the United States; we are competing with them in health indices despite the fact that Cuba is a Third World country, thanks to the efforts of our doctors, of our nurses; (APPLAUSE) because the Revolution has concerned itself about the health of our people and because we don't have malnourished children, or barefoot children, or beggars, or drugs, or prostitution, or gambling in our country. These successes are well known. (APPLAUSE)

In a conversation with Frei Betto [of the Brazilian Catholic Church] not long ago, I was telling him that if the Church were to establish a society governed by its own principles it would set up a society more or less like the one we are now building, because I don't think it would accept prostitution or gambling or drugs. (APPLAUSE) What could have greater moral force than the human accomplishments of a revolution that saves women from the tragedy of prostitution, a terrible scourge in our countries, just as drugs, gambling, and begging are? We, the by-product of a Revolution that has brought justice to the people, have eradicated such social evils, in addition to unhealthy conditions, illiteracy, and unemployment.

And so, what did the director of UNICEF say? That if the countries of Latin America had the health levels of Cuba, the lives of 800,000 children would be saved every year. Eight hundred thousand! And if the di-

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## **In Venezuela, for every dollar received in loans, one dollar 23 cents went abroad . . .**

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rector of UNICEF, an agency of the United Nations, says that, I ask: Who is it that kills those 800,000 children under one year of age every year? (APPLAUSE) Who is it that kills countless other millions of children between one and 15 years? Who is it that reduces life expectancy to 40, 45, 50 years in so many places throughout the centuries? This has happened and goes on happening, to the shame of all of us.

The answer is exploitation: colonialism yesterday, imperialism now. And what about those lives, don't they count? And as to the millions who are growing up mentally retarded or physically disabled, who is causing all of that, who is the guilty party, who's responsible for it?

If we analyze these problems with logic and principles, the answer is imperialism.

The fact that there are 110 million unemployed and underemployed, who is to blame for that? We must start looking for the guilty party. It isn't enough to go on giving figures and statistics; instead we must ask ourselves why and also how long can we go on enduring that situation.

The collection of the debt and the prevailing unjust system of economic relations are the most flagrant and most brutal human rights violation that can be conceived of. It has been said here that the debt has been repaid who knows how many times with what they are stealing from us.

Just last year they robbed us of 20 billion dollars by way of unequal terms of trade, 10 billion by way of capital flight, 37.3 billion in interest and 4 to 5 billion in overvalued dollars. This comes to 70 billion dollars in just one year, 70 billion dollars looted. Ten billion in investments plus some loans came in, and 70 billion that can be accounted for went out.

Not accounted for, however, is the harm caused by their protectionist measures, the dumping, and all those practices they carry out to the detriment of our countries.

Can a continent under such conditions have a future? Can such a system be justified? Besides, from a moral standpoint, it was the Third World, particularly Latin America, that financed the development of Europe and the United States for centuries. From those gold and silver mines that Guayasamín spoke about here, from the Potosí [Bolivia] and many other mines, where there weren't just 4 million — as he said — who died during centuries in Potosí.

In Mexico alone, during the first years of the conquest, from 6 million inhabitants the population shrank to 2 million; 4 million died just during the first years following the conquest, due to exploitation, mistreatment, slavery, and even diseases that the Europeans brought with them. Not just 4 million, but tens and tens of millions have given up their lives working as slaves, not just the sons and daughters of Latin America, but also of Africa.

In the United States slavery lasted nearly a century following that famous Declaration in which they solemnly and hypocritically proclaimed that all men are born free and equal and that the Creator endowed everyone with the right to freedom and life.

Rights, yes, but only for white Europeans. There were no rights for the slaves, the free men brought from Africa and enslaved in this hemisphere; no rights for the Indians who were wiped out even after the famous Declaration of Independence and after their self-evident truths.

Who financed the development of the United States? It was the slaves and indirectly our peoples, the Indians and blacks of Latin America and the Caribbean, who in financing Europe also financed them. And even now we go on financing them.

The Third World countries have historically financed the developed capitalist world. So why can't this debt be abolished? They are now demanding that we pay. It reminds me of what the comrade from Haiti said here, that the slaves had to indemnify the slaveowners for their freedom.

They brought the slaves from Africa, they separated them from their families, treated them in the worst possible form that a human being can be treated, exploited them, killed them in a thousand different ways, and then the slaves spent about 100 years buying their freedom from the colonizers. Well, I believe we must win our freedom and not pay any of our oppressors any indemnification whatsoever. (APPLAUSE)

There were even legal arguments presented here. López Michelsen spoke of impossible fulfillment, and *force majeure* [superior force] was mentioned on several occasions. But in short, all the moral, political, and economic arguments could be complemented with a whole series of legal arguments.

For example, who incurred the debt and who exercises sovereignty? On what grounds can anyone say that the people promised to pay, received or made arrangements for those credits, when most of the credits were granted to repressive military dictatorships without consulting the people? Are debts or commitments incurred by the oppressors of people supposed to be met by the oppressed? Where are the philosophical moral foundations for such an idea?

Parliaments were never consulted, and the principle of sovereignty was violated. What parliaments ever had anything to do with this indebtedness or know about it? Who ever heard anything about the arrangements that were made? Who voted on this?

They mortgaged our countries' economy to such an extent that now Latin America and the Caribbean owe 17,000 dollars for every square kilometer. And who took out the mortgage? We could ask, did the people mortgage the economy? Who exercises sovereignty? How can commitments be made without consulting the people? (APPLAUSE)

We have spoken here about the continuity of this effort. Yes, it will be continued, not because we're going to set up an organization here, because here we did what we had in mind, down to the last detail, including no final declaration. There have been many statements made by

many countries, but the purpose of the meeting was strictly complied with. This is a movement.

Members of parliaments will be meeting in Uruguay on October 10-13 to discuss the foreign debt. What a magnificent opportunity for unity, for integration, when the legislators go there to discuss a debt they never approved. It's a chance to analyze the problem.

To begin with, taking into account its great importance, I think we should strongly support that parliamentary meeting. I think that meeting will be the next event of extraordinary importance that will contribute to arousing an awareness regarding these problems.

No matter from what angle these problems are analyzed, the arguments are sound, strong, and irrefutable. Moreover, this problem concerns everybody, more than any other problem. This was the opinion

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## **No country that has consulted with the International Monetary Fund every month about what to do in its own home grounds can call itself independent . . .**

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given here by the women, the workers, the peasants, the middle-income sectors, everybody. They all made it clear how this situation affects every one of them.

We're not advocating subversive ideas. We're not advocating, as I have said, a social revolution. On the contrary, we can't wait for socialism to appear before we solve the problem. This is a pressing, immediate problem and it must be solved.

And in order to solve it it's necessary to bring everybody together, all the social sectors except the insignificant minority that has sold out to international finance capital, to imperialism. There's room for everybody, including the industrialists who spoke in this hall, bankers, businessmen, farmers, there's room for all of them. That's precisely one of the greatest assets of this struggle, the fact that it can be, and should be, a broad struggle designed to solve these problems, whose solution cannot wait for our peoples to develop a socialist awareness, for all the subjective factors, which lie behind the objective factors at this moment.

Even though we might make progress rapidly, I don't think it would be advisable to wait, given the decisive battle that is being waged for the independence of our peoples. Because no country that has consulted with the International Monetary Fund every month about what to do on its own home grounds can call itself independent. Such independence is a figment of the imagination, and we see this struggle as a struggle for national liberation that can really bring together, for the first time in the history of our hemisphere, all the social sectors in a struggle for real independence.

We cannot suggest socialism as a prerequisite. We're not recommending socialism, but of course neither are we advising against it. (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE) You understand, don't you? What I don't think is correct is to make this the core of the struggle. I'm sure that in one way or another, this will arouse a great awareness among our peoples. I don't believe we'd be drawing away from socialism as the masses' awareness increases. I do believe that we're on the threshold of a more just society.

But it would be a mistake to set socialism as the objective now. This is an urgent problem that must be solved. I believe that when workers, peasants, students, intellectuals, and businessmen have a clear concept of the problem it is possible to isolate the turncoats, those who are at the service of imperialism, and win this battle.

I imagine that governments will take steps to prevent a single cent from escaping, I can say that in this country, in 26 years of Revolution, not a single cent, not a single unit of foreign exchange has escaped. (APPLAUSE) There are no such things as underinvoicing or overinvoicing here. Anyway, that's not what we're talking about.

What we're saying is that in keeping with the existing conditions, every possible measure should be taken to prevent squandering, the flight of foreign exchange, and so forth. But as a rule we have tried to avoid analyzing issues related to each country's internal affairs.

We're advocating the general principle of unity, of unity among countries, of unity among all the Third World countries, but we always

try to avoid suggesting any measure of an internal nature, and this is the right thing to do. It would be senseless as well as indiscreet to make recommendations as to what should be done in each country.

This does not mean that we're rejecting our revolutionary ideals and socialist concepts, but rather, I repeat, that we look on this as a struggle for national liberation being waged against powerful forces, and I believe that we can generate the strength necessary to carry on with this struggle.

We'll see what happens in the next few months, how events develop, because this crisis can't go on like this much longer. I believe it's imperative that everybody become aware of the problem quickly.

Admirable speeches were made here, and many encouraging messages were also received. For those who say that our statements are radical, there's the letter from Cardinal Arns of São Paulo. You all heard it. If you allow me I'd like to devote a few minutes to reading the basic points, for I believe that after all the speeches they have even greater validity.

"First, there are no real possibilities for the Latin American and Caribbean peoples to take on the responsibility of paying the colossal debts incurred by our governments. Nor is it viable to continue paying high interests at the expense of our development and well-being.

"Second, the problem of the debt, rather than financial, is fundamentally a political one and should be viewed as such. What is at stake is not the international creditors' accounts but rather the lives of millions of persons who can't stand the constant threat of recessive measures and unemployment that cause poverty and death.

"Third, human rights demand that all men of goodwill in this continent and the Caribbean, all responsible sectors, join efforts in an urgent search for a realistic solution to the problem of the foreign debt, as the way to preserve our nations' sovereignty and safeguard the principle that our governments' main commitment is not to the creditors but to the peoples they represent.

"Fourth, the unwavering defense of the principle of our peoples' self-determination demands an end to interference by international agencies in our nations' financial management. Considering that government is a public entity, every document signed with those agencies must be known to the public immediately." Yes, and we can ask even more: that

the discussions of the Monetary Fund and the World Bank be broadcast on radio and television for the world, just as we have done with this dialogue. (APPLAUSE)

"Fifth, there's pressing need for the reestablishment of sound foundations for a New International Economic Order, in which unequal relations between rich and poor countries would be eliminated and the Third World's inalienable right to decide on its own future, free of imperialist interference and plunderous measures in international trade relations, would be assured."

They say that the theses I'm defending are radical. Very well, I'm 100 percent in favor of the five-point program presented by that illustrious son of Brazil, Paulo Evaristo Cardinal Arns! (APPLAUSE) I hope they'll stop saying that these ideas are extremist.

And I would add a sixth point to that program: Latin American economic integration. And a seventh that is implicit in the latter: this is a struggle for the peoples of Latin America and the Third World, a struggle for the lives of 4 billion people suffering the consequences of this unfair, inhumane, and unjust economic order.

No document has been issued, and none is needed. This meeting was not convoked to issue documents but rather to arouse an awareness, to develop an awareness. And this was the main purpose of this dialogue.

I really believe that we have developed an awareness, a strong awareness. Even those of us who have been dealing with these problems for such a long time feel stronger, more convinced, more assured of the justness of our cause, after having listened to scores of brilliant speeches by talented personalities. And it was really a great prize, an unprecedented gift for our people to be given the opportunity to follow this dialogue day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute. We are really grateful for this.

What we need is that awareness we've been talking about. No document ever gave rise to a church, neither did Latin America's independence come from a document, but rather at a certain point in time the churches, the great spiritual and political movements, emerged from a spiritual or political crisis and an awareness. Now we're amidst a crisis, and we have developed an awareness.

I'm certain, just as you are, that our movement, our struggle, will move forward, and that we will win.

Thank you very much. (OVATION)

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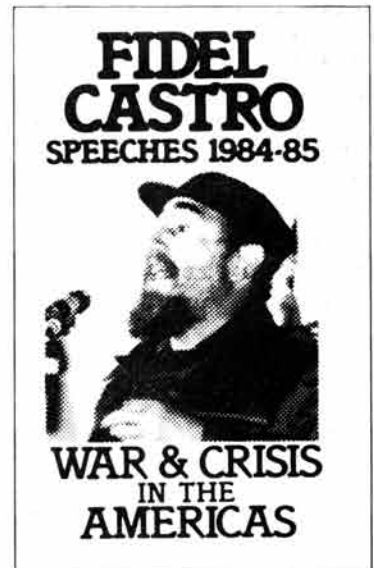
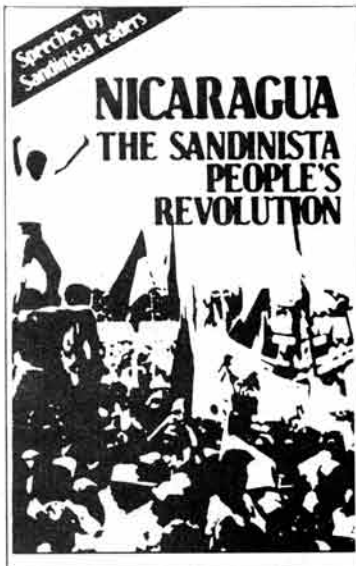
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# Sandinistas fight racist oppression

*Promote rights of indigenous peoples in framework of national unity*

[The following document was drafted in July by the Autonomy Commission on the Structure and Powers of the Autonomous Regions within the Nicaraguan National State. It is titled *Principles and Policies for the Exercise of the Right to Autonomy by the Indigenous People and Communities of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua*. The document has been printed in large quantities in four languages: Miskito, Sumo, Spanish, and English. The version reprinted here is from the English-language pamphlet published by the Autonomy Commission.

[Backers of the document are taking it door to door on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast to initiate discussion and solicit ideas on it. Once this process is completed and further contributions from the peoples of the coast are integrated into the document, it will be presented to Nicaragua's National Assembly for adoption.

[This autonomy proposal is the product of six years' experience with the revolution on the Atlantic Coast. When the Sandinistas triumphed in 1979, the peoples of the Atlantic Coast had not been involved in the mass struggle against Gen. Anastasio Somoza's tyranny. Nor did they think of themselves as Nicaraguan, since they had never been treated as citizens of the nation by previous Spanish-speak-

ing governments in Managua.

[Eliminating the backwardness and racial discrimination imposed on the Coast — and unifying Nicaragua as a single sovereign nation — had been part of the Sandinista National Liberation Front's (FSLN) program since 1969. But the Sandinistas did not initially propose autonomy for the region as the road to overcoming these problems. As they now explain, they had assumed that the gap between the Atlantic and Pacific could be bridged primarily through economic and social development programs.

[The revolution did bring real material gains to the peoples of the Atlantic Coast, but there were also difficulties, including some errors by the FSLN. So the FSLN reassessed its approach to the national question on the Coast, arriving at the proposal for regional autonomy as the best means to defend the rights of all the peoples there and to strengthen the self-determination of Nicaragua as an independent nation.

[Nicaragua's revolutionary government established the Autonomy Commission in 1984 and assigned Sandinista leader Tomás Borge to head it up. The commission has now been expanded and includes representatives of all the racial groups on the Atlantic Coast, reflecting diverse political perspectives.]

specific regions and within the context of the nation.

## Historical considerations

1. The contradictions caused by the colonial and imperialist domination of the country, as well as by practices of tyrannical and oppressive governments, created a Nicaraguan nation based on regional separation and ethnic divisions between the Pacific and the Atlantic regions, under a dominant system which exploited all workers. These are the historical roots of the ethnic problem inherited by the Sandinista People's Revolution.

2. At the base of this regional separation was the inability of the ruling classes to create a national economy which included the Atlantic region; the inability to defend national sovereignty against colonial and imperialist interests; and the inability to grant equal participation as Nicaraguan citizens to the indigenous peoples and ethnic communities of the Atlantic Coast. This incapacity produced provincialism and ethnocentric positions among the population, which, along with colonialism, explain the mutual distrust and prejudice which developed between the population of the Atlantic and Pacific regions.

3. In the context of colonial and imperialist conflicts, the particular history of each of the indigenous peoples and ethnic communities of the Atlantic Coast, as well as their social and productive relations, power structure, languages, religion, and symbols, shaped a body of indigenous peoples and communities with their own highly differentiated identities within the Nicaraguan nation.

4. In the face of a historical process of the formation of the Nicaraguan state, which originated in the Pacific regions *mestizo*, Catholic, Spanish-speaking population, the indigenous peoples and ethnic communities of the Atlantic Coast developed their own particular needs and demands.

5. Thus, upon the triumph of the Revolution, the communities of the Atlantic Coast, like the rest of the exploited and oppressed of the country, demanded an improvement in their living conditions. In addition, they presented demands related to the use and development of their languages, for defense of their traditional forms of social organization, for security in the possession and use of their lands, and for participation in decisions affecting their lives.

6. The revolutionary triumph allows for the first time the emergence and the reactivation of militant organizations of the indigenous peoples and communities of the Atlantic Coast, with the support of the FSLN and the Revolutionary Government.

However, taking advantage of historical

## I. General considerations and historical background

1. In order to understand the situation of the indigenous peoples and communities of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, it is necessary to begin with the following premises:

a. The legacy of a dependent Nation State.  
b. The existence, within this state, of historically oppressed indigenous peoples and ethnic communities.

c. A revolutionary project which asserts the Nicaraguan people's right to self-determination in the face of U.S. aggression, and the establishment of equitable relations, fraternal cooperation, and a true equality within the nation.

2. Within the context of a socio-economic system that exploits all workers, the colonial and neocolonial powers, in association with the local ruling classes, molded a dependent Nicaraguan nation, which did not allow all the indigenous peoples and communities to participate on an equal basis.

3. As a result of their historical development, the indigenous and ethnic communities of the Atlantic Coast acquired specific traits, such as in their language, culture, forms of or-

ganization, and economic relations that differentiate them from each other and from the rest of the Nicaraguan people. The former governments did not recognize their rights, nor did they allow these peoples and communities to fully participate in the country's socio-economic and political activities and abandoned them to the transnational corporations, which exploited the natural and human resources in this part of Nicaragua. This experience deepened their isolation from the rest of the nation.

4. The historical claims of the indigenous peoples and communities of the Atlantic Coast are part of the struggle of the Sandinista People's Revolution to affirm its popular and anti-imperialist nature and to broaden democratic liberties.

5. The Autonomy Commission believes, given that there is no magical solution to the ethnic question, the necessary conditions for resolution can be created only within the framework of the Sandinista People's Revolution.

6. In Latin America, the ethnic question has been dealt with from various points of view. The Autonomy Commission concludes, given our historical reality, that the exercise of the right to autonomy can best be expressed within

contradictions and the Revolution's limitations and mistakes, the imperialist forces were able to distort the ethnic question against the Revolution, confusing the legitimate claims and aspirations of the indigenous peoples and communities of the Atlantic Coast and diverting many toward the goal of destabilization. In this way, the ethnic question in Nicaragua acquired a military aspect which now complicates its resolution.

7. The indigenous peoples and ethnic communities who presently live on the Nicaraguan Atlantic Coast are the following: approximately 80,000 Miskitos (including those who are in Honduras), some 30,000 Creoles, 8,000 Sumos, some 1,500 Garifonos, and approximately 800 Ramas; 120,000 *mestizos* also live in this region and compose the majority of the inhabitants of the Atlantic Coast.

## II. Principles and objectives of regional autonomy

1. Nicaragua is one indivisible nation, and the sovereignty of the Revolutionary State extends throughout the national territory.

2. Nicaragua is a multi-ethnic country, struggling against all forms of discrimination, racism, separatism, ethnocentrism, localism, isolationism, and hegemonism, in order to advance in the achievement of harmony, cooperation, and brotherhood among the entire population. The indigenous peoples and other communities of the Atlantic Coast are an indissoluble part of the Nicaraguan people.

3. Having won full national independence for the entire Nicaraguan people and by eliminating the power of the unpatriotic bourgeoisie, the Sandinista People's Revolution has created for the first time in history the conditions which can guarantee participation in the construction of a new society to the indigenous peoples and communities of the Atlantic Coast on an equal basis with the rest of the Nicaraguan people.

4. The unity of the Nicaraguan people in their revolutionary objectives combined with

diversity of language, culture, and religion, are unforsakeable goals of the Revolution.

5. The defense of national sovereignty and of the nation's territorial integrity is the supreme duty of every Nicaraguan citizen. The exercise of the rights of autonomy will contribute to the strengthening of national unity and will increase the participation of the indigenous peoples and communities of the Atlantic Coast in the task of defending national sovereignty.

6. The Sandinista People's Revolution recognizes that the indigenous peoples and communities of the Atlantic Coast have the full right to preserve their own cultures and historical and religious heritage; the right to the free use and development of their languages; the right to receive education in their native language and in Spanish; the right to organize their social and economic activity in accordance with their values and traditions. The culture and historical traditions of the communities of the Atlantic Coast form part of and enrich the national culture.

7. The rights of autonomy of the indigenous peoples and communities of the Atlantic Coast will be exercised in the geographical area they have traditionally occupied. This right is recognized and guaranteed by the Revolutionary Government.

8. The Sandinista People's Revolution recognizes that the indigenous peoples and communities of the Atlantic Coast must have their own material base in order to preserve their own identity. The indigenous peoples and ethnic communities of the Atlantic Coast have the right to individual or collective possession of the lands they have traditionally occupied. Similarly, the procedures for the transfer of property and for land use established by the customs of the peoples of the Atlantic Coast should be respected. These rights will be legally and effectively guaranteed by the proper authorities.

9. The indigenous peoples and other ethnic communities have the right to the use of the lands, forests, and surface, subterranean, and

coastal waters of the areas they inhabit.

10. Planning the use of the region's natural resources should benefit the economic and social development of the population of the Atlantic Coast, envisaging a balanced national economy. A portion of the profits derived from the sale of resources will be reinvested in the region as determined by the people of the Coast through their own authorities. The indigenous peoples and communities of the Atlantic Coast will determine the rational use of the natural resources of the region.

11. All peoples of the Atlantic Coast have equal rights, regardless of their numbers or level of development.

12. The autonomous rights of the indigenous peoples and communities of the Atlantic Coast do not diminish or reduce any of their rights or obligations as Nicaraguan citizens.

13. Regional autonomy, national unity, and the Revolution are sustained by an economic strategy favoring the interests of the working people, both in the domestic economy, which makes regional equality possible, and in foreign trade which allows for the nation's economic independence.

14. The historical reality and the complex ethnic makeup of the Atlantic Coast necessitate the formation of an autonomous government which exercises all these rights and administers all matters of local and regional interest, without prejudice to those rights which are the prerogative of the central government.

## III. Organization and functions of the Autonomous Regional Government and the National Government of Nicaragua

1. There will be one Autonomy Law for the indigenous peoples and communities of the Atlantic Coast. It will be exercised in the autonomous regions within demarcated boundaries, and the autonomous regional governments will be responsible for their representation before the Central Government.

2. In each one of these territories a regional government will be established, composed of a Regional Assembly and a Regional Executive Branch, charged with representing and guaranteeing the exercise of autonomy with the support of the Central Government.

3. The highest representative body will be the democratically elected Regional Assembly, in which the region's indigenous peoples and communities will have guaranteed representation. The representatives elected to the National Assembly will be members of the Regional Assembly in their respective autonomous territories.

4. The regional government will be empowered to ensure the observance of the rights of the indigenous peoples and ethnic communities of the Atlantic Coast, as well as to exercise those rights, powers, and obligations established by the laws of the nation, which include responsibility for the administration within the region of the affairs of a national character assigned to it.

5. The autonomous regions will be governed by three bodies: 1) the Regional Assembly, 2) the Regional Executive elected by the

## Who are the Atlantic Coast peoples?

Nicaragua's original inhabitants were Indians whose lands were invaded on the Pacific Coast by Spanish colonizers and on the Atlantic Coast by the British. While most Indian tribes disappeared as such on the Pacific, the British, for their own reasons, allowed Indian tribes on the Atlantic Coast to remain intact. The British also brought in African slaves.

As a result, the Atlantic Coast population is distinctly different in its racial composition, language, and culture from that on the Pacific. On the Atlantic Coast there are six racial groups each with its own history and tradition.

There are three groups of indigenous peoples each with their own lan-

guage:

- Miskitos — 80,000, including those currently living in Honduras;
- Sumos, 8,000;
- Ramas, 800.

There are two groups descended from African slaves:

- Creoles (or Blacks), 30,000;
- Garifonos, 1,500.

Many Creoles speak English as well as Spanish. The Garifonos have their own language.

There are also about 120,000 *mestizos* on the Atlantic Coast. The *mestizos*, who are of mixed Spanish and indigenous descent, are the majority in Nicaragua's total population of 3 million.

Assembly, and 3) the National Government, which will recognize the regional authorities and ensure the application of the law throughout the entire nation.

**The powers of the Regional Assembly are the following:**

1. Elect one of its members to be the head of the executive branch of the region's autonomous government.

2. Ratify the heads of regional institutions proposed by the head of the Regional Executive Branch and present nominations to the National Executive Branch for ministerial delegates whose functions have to do with the rights of autonomy.

3. Actively participate in the development of economic, social, and cultural policies.

4. Guarantee and implement the normative national laws for which they are responsible. Present bills to the National Assembly which will adapt national laws to the particularities of the region through their representatives before the National Assembly.

5. Write the statute which will regulate the functions of the Regional Government in the autonomous region.

6. Ensure, in coordination with the national police force, the maintenance of law and order within the autonomous region and attempt to ensure that the members and officers of this force are inhabitants of the autonomous region.

7. Contribute to the execution of resolutions concerning peace and defense to confront aggression.

8. Promote, within the autonomous regions, participation in the defense of national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

9. Participate in the planning, elaboration, and implementation of economic strategy for all aspects concerning the autonomous regions of the Atlantic Coast, such as:

- a. Land possession and tenure
- b. Economic programs
- c. Development programs
- d. Investment projects
- e. Organization and administration of enterprises
- f. Profits generated by natural resources and production
- g. Others

10. Ratify the regional budget elaborated by the executive branch to be presented to the Central Government for approval.

11. Apply and regulate national policies for the domestic market according to regional particularities.

12. Establish policies for the use of a special fund for development and social progress of the autonomous regions of the Atlantic Coast, which will be drawn from donations and other special funds for that end, respecting the aims established by the participating institutions within the framework of the National Constitution.

**Powers of the head of the Regional Executive Branch**

1. Represent the autonomous region before

the central government in all matters.

2. Supervise and coordinate dealings with the entities under it, in the areas of politics, economics and culture.

3. Collect the regional taxes as established by law.

4. Coordinate the activities of local police authorities and judges.

5. Draft the regional budget and present it to the Regional Assembly.

6. Administer the Special Fund according to the policies established by the Regional Assembly.

7. Petition the president of the Regional Assembly to convoke said body to extraordinary sessions whenever necessary.

8. Establish coordination with the Sandinista People's Army and the Ministry of the Interior to support the task of defense and to be properly informed about the military situation of the autonomous region.

**Powers of the Central Government**

The Central Government defines the poli-

cies, lines of work, and norms which must be carried out in the entire national territory and has the following powers:

1. Defense of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Nicaraguan nation.

2. Internal security of the State and regulation of citizenship.

3. International relations and foreign policy.

4. Foreign trade and customs operations. National foreign trade policy will establish the necessary mechanisms for the autonomous regions to maintain their traditional trade in the Caribbean region, according to the laws which govern such matters.

5. National economic strategy (planning and budget, fiscal and financial system, production, energy and construction, national investment, collection of goods for foreign trade, transport and communications).

6. Establishment of norms for the administration of justice. Trials will be held in the language of the litigant as well as in Spanish.

7. Guarantee that the autonomous regions implement national policies according to the principles and rights of autonomy. □

## 10 AND 20 YEARS AGO



**October 13, 1975**

Despite attempts to negotiate a "détente" with the heads of some African states, the apartheid regime in South Africa has not loosened its grip at home. In addition to launching a new wave of repression against political dissidents, the Vorster regime has continued its ultrareactionary campaign to suppress "subversive" literature, films, and phonograph records.

The regime in Pretoria lives in fear not only of "terrorist" poets, priests, and academics, but of a broad range of "terrorist" ideas also.

According to a report in the October 5 *New York Times*, 17,000 books, recordings, magazines, and films have been banned.

## WORLD OUTLOOK

PERSPECTIVE MONDIALE

(Predecessor of *Intercontinental Press*)

**October 15, 1965**

The Indonesian revolution has suffered a grave setback. The bourgeois army, while still maintaining Sukarno in nominal power, has taken over control and launched a nationwide witch-hunt. Communist party members are being hounded and arrested. Communist party papers are being suppressed, its leaders forced underground.

The brunt of this stinging defeat has been suffered by the biggest Communist party in the

capitalist world. It claims 3,000,000 regular members, a People's Youth wing of 3,000,000, and a following of 20,000,000 in mass organizations of the workers, peasants, women, students and people working for the government. How could such a massive political force undergo a mauling at the hands of armed forces totaling 350,000?

It is due to the strategic line of "revolution by stages," of forming blocs and coalitions with the "national bourgeoisie."

In Indonesia, the masses have surged forward repeatedly. Industrial and agricultural wage earners and poor peasants have occupied factories and plantations, seized the holdings of the big landowners, and poured into the streets in great throngs urging a decisive struggle against inflation, exploitation and imperialism. Several times the situation has been propitious for a government of the workers and poor peasants to take power.

Each time the masses surged forward, the Communist party sought to channel their militancy against the single target of foreign imperialism, failing to organize systematic, nationwide struggles against the semifeudal landowners, the money lenders, rich merchants, and corrupt administrators of enterprises that serve as seed beds of a new industrialist bourgeois class.

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## Anti-apartheid strike in 15th month

*Dublin shop workers refuse to handle South African produce*

By Liam Davitt

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On Friday, September 13, Ruari Quinn, Irish minister for labor, announced an agreement for the phased withdrawal of South African produce from the four major supermarket chains in the 26 counties. The statement noted that the action may be extended over some time because of an apparent difficulty in finding a replacement supply. This announcement comes as a direct result of a 14-month struggle waged by a small group of Dublin shopworkers, who are members of the Irish Distributive and Administrative Trade Union (IDATU).

While welcoming this announcement, the strikers noted that they will not return to work until there is a total ban on South African produce in Dunnes' Stores, the chain with which they are in dispute, where management has warned that they will not be exempted from handling South African produce while a new supplier is being sought. Below we trace the history of the heroic and exemplary strike.

On July 19, 1984, Mary Manning, a young Dublin shop assistant, was dismissed for refusing to handle South African fruit. Mary was working at a city center branch of Dunnes' Stores, the largest multiple chain store in Ireland. Twelve of the other 17 full-time workers at the store walked out in support of Mary's unique action, and since then 11 workers have maintained a picket on the store.

This, the first strike in support of the op-

pressed Black masses of South Africa outside of the African continent, began when an individual worker followed a standing recommendation of her Trade Union. In remaining on strike for 14 months these 11 young workers (10 of them are women) have taken a firmer stand on the question of a trade boycott of the racist South African state than any European government.

The workers have received support from large numbers of Irish workers who refuse to pass the picket line, but, more importantly perhaps, they have also increased popular consciousness of the situation in South Africa and of the call of Black South African leaders for a ban on South African produce. Popular support for the strike has also been motivated by news coverage of the events in South Africa over the last year and the Irish people's own direct experience of imperialism and racism.

The leadership of the Irish trade union movement acknowledged the principled position of the strikers by placing an Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) picket on the store. Practically however, the ICTU has done little else, and it has been left to individual activists and local trade union branches to organize collections for the strikers and/or join the picket lines at the store.

Earlier this year the strikers approached Dublin dock workers who had been handling Dunnes' goods. The response of these workers in support of the strike forced the Dunnes' management to import South African produce through the Northern port of Belfast.

The strike at Dunnes' Stores has also highlighted the hypocrisy of the Dublin government on the issue of collaboration with the South African ruling class. Many individual members of the Fine Gael-Labour coalition have spoken out in support of the courageous

stand of the strikers. Others have vacillated on this issue by questioning the validity of the boycott tactic because of the possible effect it could have on the living standards of Black South African workers, a stance which ignores the fact that the call for a boycott originated in the Black South African community.

But no matter what the "theoretical" positions of the Irish ruling class and the government parties have been, none of them have taken any action in support of the strike. The Irish minister for labor, Mr. Ruari Quinn (a member of the Labour Party) supported the ruling of the Labour Court (the 26-county Employer/Trade Union conciliation body) which advised the strikers to return to work.

Quinn hypocritically remains a member of the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement (IAAM), some sections of which have played a very supportive role during the strike. The Irish minister for foreign affairs, Mr. Peter Barry, in his discussions with the other foreign ministers of the EEC countries, has failed to follow the lead provided by the strikers on the question of sanctions.

A key point in the strike was reached in July of this year when, approaching the first anniversary of the strike, some of the strikers set out on a tour of South Africa on the invitation of Nobel Peace Prize winner Bishop Desmond Tutu. On arrival at Johannesburg airport, the strikers' delegation, which included a member of Action from Ireland (Afri), an organization which has vigorously supported the strikers, was turned away by the South African authorities, who doubtless feared the publicity which the tour of the strikers would bring to that state.

Throughout the strike, the strikers have received support from many left groups in Dublin, including People's Democracy, Irish section of the Fourth International. The strikers themselves admit having become more politically aware during the course of the strike, and they now insist that no matter what course their union (IDATU) or the ICTU take on the boycott, they will never handle South African produce again.

Thus their minimum demand has been for the inclusion of a "conscience clause" into employment contracts with Dunnes', whereby shop workers will be allowed to refuse to handle South African goods as an act of individual conscience.

The political maturity of the strikers has been underlined by the fact that they have led this strike through 14 morale-sapping months during which the Dunnes' management's response has been to point out that the strikers may not be employed again by Dunnes' Stores. In this historic struggle 11 young workers from one of the lowest-paid sectors of the Irish work force are leading a fight on behalf of the entire Irish trade union movement against an intransigent management who are exploiting the inactivity of the Dublin government.

All messages of support for the strikers and donations should be sent to the Dunnes' Strikers' Support Fund, c/o IDATU, 9 Cavendish Row, Dublin 1. □



Cathryn O'Reilly and Mary Manning receive support from Tom Hartley of Sinn Féin.