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U.S. war drive sets stage for Reagan-Gorbachev summit

By Doug Jenness

The preparations for the summit meeting between U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev have generated a massive outpouring of articles in the big-business press in the United States.

The negotiating styles of the two government leaders have been dissected in tedious detail. Every statement has been scrutinized for microscopic shifts in position. And there has been endless speculation about the outcome of each preparatory exchange. Just the volume and banality of the coverage make it difficult to figure out what the talks are really all about.

Actually the central feature of the nuclear arms discussions, set for Geneva, Switzerland, on November 19 and 20, is not particularly complex. The Reagan administration has agreed to the talks for the same reason previous administrations — both Republican and Democratic — have participated in arms discussions. In the face of massive international opposition to nuclear weapons, Washington is attempting to present itself as a supporter of nuclear disarmament and a champion of peace.

It has adopted this stance in order to try to camouflage what it is really doing — conducting the most massive arms buildup in world history and waging reactionary wars against the progressive liberation struggles of oppressed peoples throughout the world. It presents itself as a peacemaker to divert attention from its role as the world's chief warmaker.

One would think that if the White House and Congress wanted to prove their sincerity as proponents of peace, they would take some initiatives — even small ones — to demonstrate it. But in just the past year, since the discussions to prepare the summit meeting began, Washington has done exactly the opposite.

The U.S. government, for example, has stepped up its military support to the counter-revolutionary scum that are attempting to overthrow the popular revolutionary government in Nicaragua. In addition to Washington's considerable covert assistance, Congress voted in July to give the *contras* another shot in the arm by appropriating \$27 million for their dirty war.

Moreover, Honduras has been virtually turned into a massive "unsinkable aircraft carrier" as part of the Pentagon's preparations for invading Nicaragua. Washington's squeeze on Nicaragua also includes the military training U.S. Green Berets began giving Costa Rican Civil Guardsmen earlier this year.

Missiles aimed at USSR

Since the preparations for the arms summit began, Washington has continued placing nuclear-tipped cruise and Pershing 2 missiles in Britain, West Germany, Italy, and Belgium.

The Dutch government is also expected to give final approval by November 1 to stationing 48 U.S. cruise missiles in that country.

As of March 1985, the Pentagon had deployed 143 intermediate-range missiles in Western Europe. It plans to have 572 missiles in place there by 1988. From their sites in Europe, the missiles can hit Soviet targets in about six minutes.

The Reagan administration is also going full speed ahead with its plans to take Washington's arms buildup into space. On September 13, the Pentagon tested its first antisatellite device. Just researching and testing this "Star Wars" program, initiated during Gerald Ford's administration and continued under the Carter and Reagan administrations, are expected to cost \$70 billion by 1993.

In the past year Congress appropriated \$245.3 billion for the Pentagon, a whopping 14 percent increase over the previous year. For the coming year Congress has approved an even bigger jump — 19 percent — bringing military expenses to a record \$292 billion.

Part of this mammoth expenditure is to help beef up Washington's conventional forces for the military adventures it is currently engaged in and those it is preparing.

Following the provocative U.S. aerial operation that forced an Egyptian passenger plane down over Italy on October 11, top Pentagon officials boasted that this action proved the value of the money spent on new equipment and combat readiness during the last four years.

To round out Washington's military readiness, Congress voted in June to end a 16-year moratorium on production of battlefield nerve gas. Army officials estimate the program will cost \$2.3 billion over the next five years.

Rebuff Soviet initiatives

Washington's failure to take any concrete steps, other than talk, to show that it takes arms limitation seriously stands out all the sharper after it turned down several initiatives by the Soviet government.

On July 29, Moscow announced a unilateral five-month moratorium on nuclear testing and urged Washington to do the same. The Soviet moratorium began on August 6 and is scheduled to continue at least through December 31. Moscow says it will go longer if Washington joins in.

But the Reagan administration cynically responded to this offer the very same day by announcing its next nuclear test and inviting Soviet officials to observe it. A total of two U.S. nuclear tests have been carried out since the Soviet offer.

The White House called the Soviet moratorium a "propaganda move." But rather

than joining the moratorium on nuclear testing, the Reagan administration plunged ahead with its scheduled tests.

Washington's rebuff served to reinforce the view of millions of people around the world that the U.S. government doesn't give a tinker's damn about nuclear disarmament or peace.

Likewise, when the USSR declared a unilateral moratorium on antisatellite tests in August 1983, the Reagan administration barreled ahead with the "Star Wars" program. And both Democrats and Republicans in Congress have approved billions of dollars to finance it.

Reagan refuses to even consider "Star Wars" as negotiable at the coming summit meeting. He has dubbed this monstrous program "a great protector of our people and the people of the world."

On April 7, 1985, the Soviet government announced a moratorium through November on the deployment of medium-range missiles in Eastern Europe and the reduction of the number on standby alert from 264 to 243.

This reduction brings the number of SS-20 missiles the USSR has in Eastern Europe back to what it was in June 1984. That was when it began deploying more missiles in response to Washington's placement of medium-range missiles in Western Europe.

Gorbachev announced in early October that housings for the inactive missiles will be dismantled in a couple of months.

Responding to the Kremlin's moratorium, Washington again accused the Soviet government of attempting to make political hay before the summit meeting. It kept right on placing missiles in Western Europe. And it pressed the Dutch government even harder to keep its promise to allow cruise missiles to be stationed in the Netherlands.

The U.S. government is not the only one that has snubbed initiatives from Moscow. When Gorbachev visited Paris in early October, President François Mitterrand bluntly declared that his government needs to keep arming, not to disarm. "France doesn't have a margin to be above the threshold of sufficiency," he stated. "We're not just talking about intermediate nuclear forces," the French leader added. "We're talking about strategic forces, conventional arms, chemical weapons, and missiles."

Moreover, despite wide opposition from Pacific islanders, the French government adamantly refuses to halt its nuclear tests in the region.

No road to peace

Previous arms talks and agreements have not proven productive from the standpoint of slowing down or reversing the nuclear arms buildup or in bringing peace.

The first agreement on nuclear weapons came in 1963 with the ban on atmospheric testing. This treaty between the U.S., British, and Soviet governments followed massive protests in North America, Britain, and Japan and served to significantly reduce hazardous

radioactive fallout in the atmosphere.

But the 1963 agreement did not curtail nuclear testing, which has continued underground at a stepped-up pace. Between 1963 and the end of 1984, 967 nuclear devices were exploded compared with 526 tests between 1945 and 1963.

Besides the hazards created by these tests, which the protests of tens of thousands of Pacific islanders have spotlighted, their purpose is to improve and expand nuclear arsenals.

Arms talks were resumed in 1969, and in May 1972 the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I) was signed in Moscow at a summit meeting between U.S. President Richard Nixon and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. At the time, Washington was waging a major war against the Vietnamese people. Typically, the imperialist rulers talk the loudest about peace and disarmament when they are carrying out a war or preparing for one.

SALT I was aimed primarily at placing limits on defensive, antiballistic weapons. The reasoning was that if one side were to completely safeguard its cities with defensive weapons, it could be interpreted as preparation for a first strike. Washington rejects even this approach today by refusing to limit development of antisatellite weapons which are also seen as defensive weapons.

The SALT I accords put a temporary ceiling on the number of offensive missile launchers that could be built. But the treaty also allowed for a major expansion of offensive nuclear weapons, especially MIRVs (multiple-warhead missiles), which were not included in the agreement.

The Pentagon, which had tested MIRVs for the first time in 1968, had a big jump on the USSR, which did not test its first MIRV until 1973. As has generally been the case with nuclear arms systems — and the "Star Wars" program will be no exception — Moscow is forced to develop and expand new weapons systems in order to defend itself from threatening imperialist armaments.

Between 1972 and 1979 the number of nuclear warheads in the Pentagon's arsenal increased from 4,600 to 9,000. The Soviet stock of warheads went from 2,100 to 4,000.

The Reagan administration, in preparing for the coming arms talks, is trying to assume the posture of a peace advocate. But this is sheer hypocrisy.

The U.S. government is financing a mercenary war against the people of Nicaragua — a war in which tens of thousands of Nicaraguans have been murdered, maimed, or raped. Hundreds of homes, schools, and hospitals have been destroyed. Without Washington's supplies of food, weapons, and logistical support, the counterrevolutionary bands could never hold out against Nicaragua's armed workers and peasants, who are defending their revolution.

Moreover, this imperialist-spearheaded counterrevolution has a dangerous dynamic

that heads toward an invasion by U.S. ground forces.

The U.S. government is also the main prop of the dictatorship in El Salvador, which is engaged in a savage war against the workers and peasants of that country.

In recent weeks Washington's peace stance has particularly been exposed for the sham that it really is by its actions in the Middle East. It praised the Israeli regime's terror attack on the Palestine Liberation Organization's headquarters in Tunis, killing six dozen people. Then the White House carried out its own act of terror by sending U.S. fighter planes to force down an Egyptian passenger plane. And it continues to whip up a massive

chauvinist campaign against Palestinian "terrorists."

Washington also bulldoggedly continues to support the South African apartheid regime's repression against the Black majority in that country and its war against Angola.

By struggling against the war policy that the imperialists are engaged in day in and day out, week after week, working people throughout the world can strike the strongest blow for peace. Within that framework we should demand that the imperialist warmakers halt all nuclear testing, cease development of antisatellite weapons, stop production of nuclear weapons, and scrap their nuclear arsenals. □

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Workers and farmers protest austerity

Government tries to make them pay for militarization, capitalist competition

By Théo Misailides and Bobbis Misailides

THESSALONÍKI — Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou, speaking at the opening of the 50th World's Trade Fair here August 30, vowed to intensify his government's economic program of austerity for working people.

In a clear statement of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) government's program, the recently reelected leader tied the country's future and the workers' standard of living to the achievement of a more competitive, more efficient capitalist economy compared to that of the other members of the European Economic Community (EEC) with which Greece's economy is being increasingly linked. Greece became the 10th member of the EEC in 1980. Although the PASOK originally opposed Greek entry into the EEC and was voted into office in 1981 on the promise that it would take Greece out of the Common Market, it has since changed its line.

Improving Greece's competitive position in relation to the rest of the EEC, Papandreou said, is necessary in order to maintain the country's national, social, political, and economic independence. To achieve this, he set as immediate aims of his government a substantial decrease in the inflation rate — officially now running at 18 percent, or three times the average of its EEC competitors — and a drastic reduction in the growing balance of payments deficit.

The latter is a chronic symptom of Greece's relatively weak capitalist economy. It is largely dependent on earnings from tourism, remittances from Greek emigrants, investments in the Arab world, and profiting off the trade of the semicolonial countries, through its huge merchant shipping industry — the biggest in the EEC.

\$10 billion arms deal

The weakness of the economy is reflected in the country's growing foreign debt, which stands at \$13.5 billion and is projected to double by the middle of the next decade because of the loans needed to pay for PASOK's decision to implement NATO's militarization drive. A key component of the militarization drive is what has been called the "purchase of the century" — \$10 billion worth of jet fighter planes, advanced tanks, and navy destroyers from the United States and France.

In order to implement this program, Papandreou attacked the workers' "excessive consumption" of imported goods and their cost of living adjustments, known as the AKA. The AKA was won by the workers during the previous term of the PASOK government, but it

was based only on a government decree. Since its promulgation workers have fought with strikes and mass demonstrations to have it codified in the law.

Prime Minister Papandreou called on workers to "readjust" their wage demands to their productivity and to take into account the social benefits they have won under his government. Such benefits, including ones gained for the first time by many sectors of the workers and peasants, are unemployment compensation, health insurance, and retirement benefits. In an undisguised attempt to split the workers, Papandreou further focused his attack on the generally better-paid public-sector workers, who make up 25 percent of the working class and account for 35 percent of the economy.

The prime minister stated that he will continue to reject real wage increases and work toward a "more just distribution of national income in favor of economically weaker social groups" to the disadvantage of higher-paid workers. Public-sector workers owe their higher wages to past struggles and to their continued militancy.

Papandreou insisted that unless Greece's decline in competitiveness can be halted, unemployment (which stands officially at 8.3 percent and is climbing, especially among the youth) will continue to increase, and "our standard of living to decrease."

In contradiction to his stated goal of creating "a modern welfare state with extension and improvement in public health services, education, social welfare, and security of humane conditions of housing and retirement," Papandreou warned of cuts in social services. He threatened to streamline services to achieve a "lower cost of production" and increase the cost to the beneficiaries.

He called on the capitalists to "at all costs increase investment" as an absolute requisite for his program and promised them government incentives and backing. He promised the development of an Industrial Holding Company to deal with the increasing number of "problematic," that is, failing, enterprises by "revitalizing the viable ones" and paying the "necessary compensation," as determined by the banks, to the others.

The prime minister's speech was discussed in the following days in the capitalist press and in the labor movement. The government took advantage of the inability of the pro-Moscow Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and the much smaller, Eurocommunist Communist Party of Greece-Interior (KKE-Interior) to propose a credible alternative by continuing to implement its program.

It announced a 50 percent increase in the

price of public transportation, coming on the heels of 15 percent increases in the prices of bread, sugar, oil, and gas only days before. It also stepped up its anti-imports campaign in the big-business press. A few days later the government announced that the ATA for the previous four months would be a paltry 2.1 percent — representing an annual increase of only 6.3 percent, well below the 18 percent inflation rate.

At the same time, in a manner typical of the last three years of PASOK's austerity drive, the government bared its teeth to the fighting workers by sending more than 300 cops to break a militant economic strike by about 100 biscuit workers. It also chose this moment to reopen under state control the huge, previously "problematic," Skaramanga ship-building works — after generously compensating the company's former owners. Only 600 of the 3,600 workers who had been employed there got their jobs back.

The Union of Greek Industrialists (SEB) was quick to hail the government's policies and urged it "to start implementing them now." The capitalists' mouthpiece *Economikos Tahidromos* urged the government to take bolder steps along the lines Papandreou outlined, warning that "time is money" and that "it's good to avoid additional delay" in implementing the austerity program.

At the same time Papandreou's government has launched a campaign of slander against the workers, accusing them of being "privileged" and "motivated by petty craft reasons." Government officials have charged that the workers undermine the economy and "change" — the PASOK's term for what it considers a "process of socialist transformation."

Unions discuss government's attacks

It is in this context that the Executive Committee of the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) met for many hours on September 6.

The three main factions in the workers' movement presented their proposals for a response to the austerity plans. The Panhellenic Trade Union Movement (PASKE), which follows the government party, PASOK, stated that "no decision can be taken at this time," before its leaders could meet with the minister of economics. It favored postponing a decision until the Executive Committee's meeting the following week. The KKE-affiliated Greek Fighting Union Movement-Supporters (ESAK-S) proposed that the GSEE call "a six-hour warning work stoppage" on September 16 "with the axis on the problems of the high cost of living, unemployment, and protection of the



Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou.

workers' incomes." And, unions should "intensify the struggle" if the government takes any additional measures against the workers.

The Renewed Workers Front (AEM), which follows the KKE-Interior, proposed that the GSEE call a four-hour general work stoppage to protest "the making of economic policy without its consent."

None of the leaders of these factions linked the austerity drive with the government's participation in NATO's imperialist military modernization drive. They failed to denounce the inflationary "purchase of the century" — the \$10 billion to be spent on technologically advanced military hardware in the name of "strengthening national defense." And they failed to take on the government's reactionary anti-imports campaign.

Protest actions throughout country

The discussion in the GSEE, however, opened the door for sections of the working class to respond to the attacks.

On September 11, 300 workers in the Air Force camped outside the Greek Pentagon demanding collective bargaining and a new contract.

The next day textile workers called a one-hour national strike. On September 12, a general strike was proclaimed in the province of Dráma.

The Confederation of Industrial Workers (OBES), with 500,000 members, called a 24-hour strike for September 25, demanding among other things the enactment of ATA into law.

The anger of the workers was reflected in a 12-hour public meeting between more than 250 leading activists of PASKE and three government ministers, all members of the Executive Office of PASOK. *Eleftherotypia*, a major Athens daily, wrote that the workers "refused to even consider a discussion" of weakening ATA. It reported they were "angry at austerity proposals" and demanded a "change in the leadership." *Thessaloniki*, a capitalist daily

here in Greece's second-largest city, quoted the president of the electrical workers as telling the government representatives, "you have failed and have to resign." It also reported on speeches by the general secretary of the industrial workers union and a water and sewage trade union member along the same lines. "Many of the PASKE members underlined that the governing party, while using leftist phraseology, is administering capitalism," the paper noted.

The government representatives sought to win their faction's support for the government's measures. But as an editorial in *Eleftherotypia* observed, "a dialogue on a higher and more honest plane inside PASOK" is needed to convince the workers, "who need to be won over in order to convince the others."

Over the next few days, the government sought to isolate the incident as part of a "hard-line Marxist-Leninist minority" that, according to the September 10 issue of *Eleftherotypia*, "in a democratic party has the right to voice its opinion." The majority, the paper contended, agrees with and supports the government's "stabilization and development policy."

The KKE and KKE-Interior tried to take advantage of this apparent split in PASKE. In the following days their papers, *Rizospastis* (KKE) and *Avgi* (KKE-Interior), focused on the government's attacks on the workers' movement.

Rizospastis on September 10 called for "a workers' united front" and "a fighting initiative" against "the one-sided policy of the government." It criticized the pro-government majority in the GSEE for refusing to call any actions.

On September 11 *Avgi* carried an interview with KKE-Interior General Secretary Yannis Baniyas, which had been recorded after a meeting of the Central Committee the previous day. He pledged that the KKE-Interior, which has up until now slavishly supported the government, "will contribute decisively to the de-

velopment of the struggles of the working class."

Without making any concrete proposals, both CPs have tried to channel the workers' anger away from struggle and into the safer outlet of the municipal elections of 1986. They pictured the elections as "the beginning of another march for political life against the stagnation that PASOK and New Democracy [the main bourgeois opposition party] are leading the country to," as KKE General Secretary Charilaos Florakis put it in a recent speech to a party youth festival.

The large majority of workers in Thessaloniki responded to the government's attacks with a five-hour work stoppage September 15 called by EASK-S and AEM-controlled Workers Center of Thessaloniki.

Two weeks later, tens of thousands of workers rallied in the central square of Athens denouncing the government's policy. They marched to Parliament demanding that the monopolies pay for the economic crisis. The protest was called by the Organizing Committee Against Inflation, which is made up of industrial unionists.

Over the next several days, work stoppages, protest rallies, and public meetings were held in many provincial towns, including Lárissa, Pátraí, Thebes, and Komotíní, against further attacks that the government announced will be made in October. These measures, announced October 11, included a 15 percent devaluation of the dracma.

On October 1, 180,000 workers out of Thessaloniki's total work force of 235,000 participated in a one-day general strike. Large factories, construction, small and medium businesses, the port, all transport and communications, banks, large stores, and restaurants were shut down for 24 hours. The World's Trade Fair, the university, technical schools, and colleges were also closed by the strike. Many store owners, craftsmen, housewives, unemployed, and students joined the workers in marching in the streets outside the Workers Center.

Farmers join protests

In face of low payment for their produce, a big rise in the cost of machinery and fertilizers, and lack of compensation for crops ruined by dry weather, working farmers joined the workers with militant protest rallies and tractorcades in most of the towns across the country. Farmers were also angry with new EEC guidelines under which 2 million European working farmers, including tens of thousands in Greece, will be forced out of farming.

In Thessaloniki, working farmers planned to gather with their tractors on October 9 in a mass protest rally called by the Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives.

Despite the growing mass mobilizations, the PASOK government has dug in its heels. On September 28 the government announced a 25 percent cut in many social services including education. At the same time mass opposition is on the rise and the potential is building for greater class battles in the near future. □

Military regime prepares for elections

Constructing civilian facade to continue reactionary policies

By Steve Craine

Guatemalan dictator Gen. Oscar Mejía Víctores has promised to step down early next year in favor of a civilian president to be elected November 3. In the meantime, the military regime is seeing to it that there will be no substantial change in the political direction of the country regardless of who is in the presidential palace.

In recent months, Mejía Víctores has wavered between repression and concessions in confronting the demands of the Guatemalan people.

In early September, for the second time in five months, the government was forced to back down on instituting austerity measures designed to cope with the country's economic crisis. This time, despite the military regime's recent attempts to clean up its image abroad with its so-called democratization process, it also resorted to its traditional use of repression to quash opponents of its economic plans.

Ten days of intermittent protests in Guatemala City greeted the announcement in late August of a 50 percent increase in city bus fares. Well over 1,000 protesters were arrested, and nearly a dozen were killed. The army set up roadblocks, shut down marketplaces, and surrounded government office buildings. Troops occupied the country's major university for the first time in 12 years.

By September 4 General Mejía Víctores rescinded the fare increase and offered a small pay raise for public employees and a price freeze on some major consumer goods. These concessions reflect the government's new strategy of replacing direct rule by the military with an elected civilian government.

Since the CIA-backed coup in 1954 that ousted the Jacobo Arbenz government, which was carrying out a series of progressive measures, Guatemala has been ruled by a succession of right-wing regimes, directly or indirectly controlled by the military. The current head of the government, General Mejía Víctores, came to power in an August 1983 coup.

He and his immediate predecessor, Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt, brought much of the unorganized right-wing terror of earlier years, when death-squad killings reached as many as 500 a month, under the control of the army. They instituted a counterinsurgency program in the countryside that puts all aspects of life there in the hands of the army.

This program is aimed at wiping out the guerrilla resistance movement, led by the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG), which has a strong base among Guatemala's impoverished Indian peasantry.

In the past year Mejía Víctores has begun a

new approach to the same goal of normalizing capitalist rule in Guatemala. He has allowed the election of a Constituent Assembly and promised to give up the presidency to a civilian in January 1986.

This democratization process is in part a response to the generals' inability to deal with the chronic economic problems facing Guatemala.

In April, an earlier attempt by Mejía Víctores to impose economic austerity provoked such a sharp outcry from leading capitalists that his package of new taxes and import duties was quickly shelved. Instead, the government set up a commission known as the Technical Commission of the Great National Dialogue to draw up economic policies acceptable to the capitalists and to sell them to the people as part of the democratic opening.

Stagnating economy

Although Guatemala is the largest and most industrialized country in Central America and has considerable natural resources, it faces the combined problems of high unemployment, inflation, and rising foreign debt familiar throughout the region.

In recent years the economy has stagnated, with total production declining an estimated 52 percent between 1983 and 1984. Income per person has also dropped, from US\$589 in 1980 to \$498 last year. Unemployment and underemployment this year may be as high as 78 percent.

The declining output of the Guatemalan economy has led to a 20 percent rise in foreign and domestic debt this year alone. The foreign debt problem is greatly aggravated by the recent devaluation of the Guatemalan currency, the quetzal.

For 30 years the quetzal was officially on a par with the U.S. dollar. But earlier this year it was devalued to three to the dollar, and it is expected to drop still more before the end of the year.

Like the moves toward elections and civilian government, the Technical Commission of the Great National Dialogue was instituted to line up all sectors of the Guatemalan capitalist class behind a single policy. The commission included representatives of several capitalist political parties, the Catholic Church hierarchy, the employers' associations, the university officialdom, and a government-sponsored labor federation. Its report was published with great fanfare on July 2.

The commission proposed a sharp reduction in the national budget. It called for paring 44 million quetzals, especially in the area of social services. Earlier budget cuts, along with

the big drop in real value of the quetzal, ensured that the new budget would have a devastating impact on the living standards of the Guatemalan working people.

Bus fare protests

The first attempt to implement the commission's recommendations was to move to increase city bus fares. The announcement was answered immediately on August 29 with eight hours of demonstrations in Guatemala City.

About 2,000 secondary school students, who initiated the protests, virtually occupied the downtown area for much of the day, until riot police moved in on them, arresting hundreds. At least six buses were burned on the first day of the protests.

As demonstrations spread to other sectors of the population, including workers, housewives, and market vendors, Mejía Víctores dropped his earlier stance of ignoring the protests and on September 4 declared the fare hike annulled.

But new issues were being raised, and the protest activities did not die down. The Guatemalan Workers Trade Union (UNSI-TRAGUA) called a peaceful public demonstration for September 6, but had to cancel it when the government threatened to repress it.

The union announced that together with student organizations it would draw up a plan "to put an end to the situation we face due to unemployment, low wages, the high cost of living, and the violation of the most basic human rights, which have been endured by the people of Guatemala since 1954."

The union demanded: "An immediate end to the repression by the army and the country's repressive forces, and the immediate release of those arrested and kidnapped," as well as "a decrease in the price of our staples and medicine, and the implementation of a price ceiling for these products."

On September 10 government employees staged 30- to 60-minute work stoppages at the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Public Finance, and the Bank of Guatemala demanding pay increases. University professors marched for price cuts and salary increases for all government-employed teachers.

Government concessions rejected

A few days later Mejía Víctores tried to defuse these protests by promising all public employees a pay increase of 50 quetzals per month. He also announced price freezes and reductions on 45 staple goods.

But the National Teachers Council (CNM) rejected the wage offer as "too small" and criticized the price measures as well. "We re-

ject the percentages that the prices of staples have been reduced and the wage increase decreed by the government," the CNM stated, "because they are not in accord with the social and economic reality of the Guatemalan family."

The CNM, which represents some 40,000 teachers at various levels, called instead for a 200 percent wage increase and reduction of prices for basic food items to their 1950 levels.

Particularly damaging to Mejía Víctores' stance as self-appointed champion of democracy was the two-day army occupation of the University of San Carlos. Five hundred soldiers, dressed in camouflage fatigues and assisted by a light tank, broke through the locked gate of the campus on September 3 and sealed the university for 44 hours.

During the occupation, many offices were broken into, and desks and file cabinets ransacked. The records of 1,500 students were taken, and about \$1 million in physical damage was inflicted.

The university, with 50,000 students, has long been a center of political opposition to the government, but it was granted autonomy in 1944, and military personnel have not openly entered its grounds in 12 years. This has not prevented the school from suffering its share of repression. The previous two rectors of the university were shot to death in 1981 and 1983, and in the last two years at least 36 students and 10 teachers have been killed or have disappeared — 12 of them in the past six months. The police have not solved a single case.

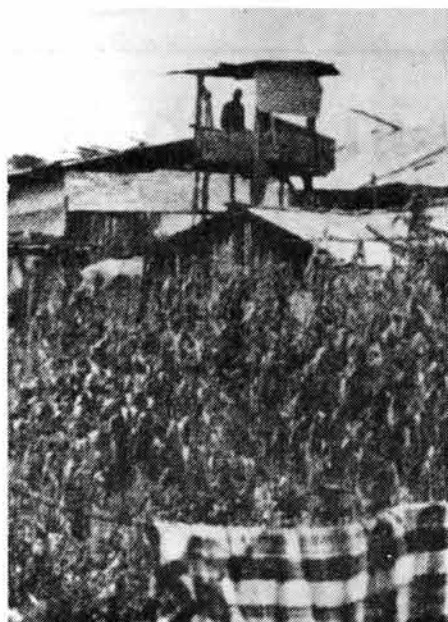
During the occupation, the Oliverio Castañeda de León Association of University Students and the General Assembly of University Students Associations issued a joint statement condemning the occupation and solidarizing with the workers' demands for 200 percent wage increases and meaningful controls on prices.

The students also explained the connection between the regime's repression and its democratic pretenses. "The de facto government," they said, "has been intent on maintaining a machinery to deceive the people. We are referring to the so-called democratization process. Millions of quetzals have been spent on publicity campaigns while the people go hungry. . . . This process is a smokescreen, the purpose of which is to secure foreign aid."

In fact, concern about Guatemala's access to foreign aid is a major motivation for the scheduled transition to civilian rule. Washington has signaled its desire to give more support to the Guatemalan government to strengthen it as an ally against the rise of revolutionary movements throughout Central America. But the blatantly repressive record of the military regimes there has for several years been an embarrassment to Washington.

Aid tied to civilian rule

Last year, for the first time since 1977, the U.S. government sent the Guatemalan generals direct military aid. Nonmilitary aid has also grown rapidly in the past two years, and



Guatemalan Church in Exile

Guard tower at Acul Model Village.

Guatemala's rulers want to see the trend continued.

The U.S. Congress has approved a 1986 allocation for Guatemala with the condition that none of the funds can actually be released until a civilian government is installed. The regime in Guatemala City has conveniently scheduled the inauguration of its civilian replacement for Jan. 14, 1986.

U.S. Treasury Secretary James Baker stated in late July that Washington "is prepared to grant a high and sustained level of aid to Guatemala."

The Reagan administration has observed, Baker said, a "fortification of the respect for human rights [that] augments the ties between Guatemala and the U.S." He added that "we have followed recent political developments in Guatemala with interest, and the United States fully supports Guatemala's democratization process."

The Guatemalan regime is also trying to whitewash its recent record of repression. It set up another commission, known as the Tripartite Commission, to stage a six-month investigation of political murders and disappearances. Although the Mutual Support Group for Families of the Disappeared (GAM) submitted more than 700 cases of people who have disappeared at the hands of the police and armed forces, the commission dismissed them all in a three-page report. The same report flatly denied the existence of political prisoners or clandestine jails in the country.

Another Guatemalan human rights organization, based in Mexico City, recently documented cases of 578 civilians murdered by the Guatemalan military and police in a six-month period. Almost half of the victims had been tortured, the group said, noting that its figures were far from complete due to the difficulty in gathering information.

These ongoing repressive actions by the re-

gime set the stage for the November presidential elections. The 14 parties participating in the elections range from the Christian Democrats, who aspire to a role similar to that of the Salvadoran Christian Democrat José Napoleón Duarte, to extreme right-wing parties with direct ties to Guatemalan death squads.

The 14 parties have formed a series of blocs backing a total of eight presidential candidates. None of these parties represent a political break with the policies of the military governments of the past.

To further ensure that its effective control of the country is not challenged by any changes in government, the army has expanded its counterinsurgency program. In the name of combating the URNG, the army now supervises virtually all aspects of life in Guatemala.

In the countryside, more and more peasants are forced to live in "model villages" where they are kept under armed guard and made to work in slave-like conditions.

Nearly 1 million of Guatemala's 8 million people have been inducted into "civil defense patrols," run by the army to control and terrorize the rural population.

The army also administers development funds, approves programs of the National Agricultural Development Bank, supervises private enterprises, and disburses international aid.

All these activities are organized through the National System of Interinstitutional Coordinators for Reconstruction and Development, established by a decree of Mejía Víctores in November 1984 that has become, in effect, the real constitution of the country. It will not be affected by the installation of a civilian president in January.

As a statement of the URNG published in the September issue of *Informador Guerrillo* put it, "The maneuver of the opening . . . does not aim to change the unjust and oppressive framework of the political and economic system, nor does it provide a solution to the problems of the Guatemalan people."

A spokesperson of the Mutual Support Group explained the reason for the generals' recent crackdowns. "Before handing over power," said Nineth de García, "they want to sweep things up a little." □

U.S. bars Cuban travelers

President Reagan has imposed new restrictions on the entry of Cuban officials into the United States. In a proclamation signed October 8, the president barred trips by Cuban government and Communist Party officials unless they are exclusively to conduct business at the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, the Cuban Mission to the United Nations in New York, or the United Nations itself.

The action was in retaliation against Cuba's suspension of an immigration agreement with the United States made last December. The Cuban government took that action in May in response to the Reagan administration's decision to begin operation of Radio Martí, an anti-Cuban radio station.

Reign of terror in Durban

Buthelezi plays Pretoria's game

By Ernest Harsch

In Durban, South Africa's second major industrial center, anti-apartheid activists have been subjected to a brutal crackdown that has taken scores of lives since early August. This is despite the fact that Durban is not one of the areas officially covered by the state of emergency.

Some of those killed have been shot down by the police. But more often than not, they have been the victims of reactionary goon squads organized by Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, a key Black collaborator with the apartheid system.

Buthelezi heads the KwaZulu Bantustan, one of the 10 impoverished rural reserves set up by the apartheid regime. He also leads the Inkatha YeNkululeko YeSizwe (National Cultural Liberation Movement), a Zulu-oriented tribal organization commonly called Inkatha.

The main targets of this terror campaign have been supporters of the United Democratic Front (UDF), the 2-million-member anti-apartheid coalition that has been at the forefront of the current Black upsurge. In the Durban area, most of its members are themselves of Zulu background.

In early August, as demonstrations by UDF supporters in Durban mounted against the regime's apartheid policies, Buthelezi's Inkatha members, armed with sticks, knives, and spears, went into action. After one memorial meeting in Umlazi township for an assassinated UDF leader, 12 people were killed by Inkatha thugs, as police looked on.

Then Indians were attacked in the township of Inanda, which had previously resisted government efforts to incorporate it into KwaZulu.

'South Africa is at war'

In late August, Winnington Sabelo, an Inkatha leader and member of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, warned all UDF supporters to get out of Umlazi or "face the consequences." Inkatha *impis* (Zulu for "regiments") mounted round-the-clock patrols of the township.

Around the same time, speaking at a conference of the Inkatha Youth Brigade, Buthelezi explicitly attacked both the UDF and the African National Congress (ANC), the vanguard liberation organization, accusing them of engaging in an "unholy duet of violence." Michael Morris, of the government's Institute of Terrorism Research, called on the Inkatha youth members to mobilize "as warriors" to combat the ANC. "You must think South Africa is at war," he told them; "it must be saved."

In early September, Thabo Mokoena, a



Chief Gatsha Buthelezi directs his thugs against anti-apartheid demonstrators.

UDF activist as well as an organizer for the National Federation of Workers Unions, was dragged from his home and killed. A few days later, James Ngubane, a member of the Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo), whose name had been on an Inkatha "hit list," was beaten to death in Mpumalanga township, near Hammarsdale.

In KwaMashu township, Inkatha members have burned down houses of supporters of the UDF and of its local affiliate, the KwaMashu Youth League, forcing residents to flee for their lives.

On September 28, at a rally of Inkatha supporters addressed by Buthelezi, an *impi* left the Umlazi stadium and marched across the street to Lamontville, another township that has resisted incorporation into KwaZulu. Residents were attacked, and six people were killed in the fighting.

According to a report in the October 11 *New York Times*, a three-week-old infant died two nights earlier "after a group of blacks threw a gasoline bomb into a private house in the township of Umlazi, near Durban, according to the police. Two other blacks died in similar incidents in the township." The houses belonged to UDF supporters.

Propaganda campaign

The progovernment South African press, like the big-business news media in the United States and other countries, generally portrays such clashes as examples of "Black-on-Black violence," as seemingly inexplicable "tribal conflicts" and "faction fights" that the police are simply trying to bring under control.

This propaganda theme attempts to absolve

the white minority regime of responsibility for the death and destruction in South Africa's Black townships, shifting the blame onto the oppressed Blacks themselves. It seeks to cover up the fact that the conflict is between those who are fighting to end the racist apartheid system and the white authorities, who, with the help of some Black collaborators, are trying to maintain it.

As a minority regime, Pretoria has long found it expedient — and necessary — to recruit Blacks to carry out some of its dirty work, for instance in the police force and apartheid administration. And ever since the original conquest of the indigenous African peoples, it has also followed a policy of divide-and-rule toward the Black majority, seeking to pit Africans, Coloureds, and Indians against each other, as well as to keep Africans of different language groupings further divided.

For Pretoria, the Bantustan authorities play a key role in this. And of all the Bantustan leaders, Buthelezi has been especially effective, from the regime's perspective. By fashioning a false image as an opponent of apartheid, he has been able to build up a certain base of support, a feat other Bantustan leaders have been unable to accomplish.

Buthelezi gives militant-sounding speeches and plays on his past membership in the ANC Youth League. He uses ANC songs and symbols and often dons the black, green, and gold colors of the ANC. He claims to support the same goals as the ANC, differing "only" on the ANC's adoption of a strategy of armed struggle to achieve them.

But Buthelezi's actual political course runs directly counter to the ANC's overall strategy of mobilizing the Black majority for the revolutionary overthrow of the apartheid system and the establishment of a democratic, nonracial state based on majority rule.

By administering the KwaZulu Bantustan, he is helping implement one of Pretoria's key apartheid policies. The ANC, like the UDF and other progressive groups, calls for the Bantustans' complete dismantling.

Fomenting disunity

Buthelezi claims to favor Black unity, but in practice acts against such unity. Inkatha leaders have launched virulent attacks against Indians and Coloureds, as well as against anti-apartheid whites. Most recently, Goodwill Zwelithini, the Zulu paramount chief, claimed that Africans were being used "as a ladder" to advance the interests of a "cartel of Indian, Coloured and white activists in the UDF."

Through the Inkatha movement, Buthelezi has also hampered the process of forging unity among Africans of different backgrounds.

First launched in 1975, following a major strike wave in Durban, Inkatha was designed to channel and control the mass ferment among Zulu-speakers in the region. Inkatha demagogically played on the heroic traditions of the Zulu resistance to the original white conquests in order to win support. When this was insufficient, intimidation, threats of eviction, and promises of material privileges were employed

to further build up Inkatha's membership, which is now claimed to be more than 1 million. Though formally open to all Africans, Inkatha's political appeals are in fact directed almost exclusively toward Zulus; as a result, it has few non-Zulu members. In addition, its leadership overlaps with the KwaZulu administration. Inkatha's orientation has served to deepen frictions between its Zulu supporters and Xhosas, Sothos, and other Africans.

While actively fomenting disunity among Blacks, Buthelezi has at the same time been moving closer to the main white bourgeois opposition party, the Progressive Federal Party. The PFP says that it is opposed to apartheid, but makes it clear that it is also against majority rule, based on the principle of one-person, one-vote in a single state. Buthelezi himself has recently urged Blacks to soften their insistence on this demand. Both the PFP and Inkatha likewise speak out against calls for international economic sanctions against the apartheid regime, and Buthelezi frequently tours other countries to campaign against sanctions.

In late September, the PFP, Inkatha, and other liberal white groups and individuals formed the Convention Alliance, which has the declared aim of promoting "compromise" and negotiations among all South African political groups.

Although the ANC had issued a statement strongly criticizing the Convention Alliance, PFP leader Frederick van Zyl Slabbert visited Lusaka, Zambia, October 12-13 to raise the negotiations proposal with ANC leaders. ANC Secretary General Alfred Nzo told reporters af-

terward, "The ANC does not consider that there has come into being a conducive climate to reach a negotiated resolution of the crisis." Nzo added, referring to the Convention Alliance, "This is an area where the ANC strongly feels that Buthelezi ought not to have been involved."

As the South African struggle has deepened, Buthelezi's true role as an opponent of the liberation struggle has increasingly become exposed. This has been borne out by the growing support for the UDF and ANC among Zulus themselves. While just a few years ago African opinion polls in the Durban area indicated significant support for Buthelezi, this has since declined considerably. A recent survey conducted in Durban ranked Buthelezi a distant fourth in popularity, behind imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela, UDF leader Rev. Allan Boesak, and Bishop Desmond Tutu.

More and more Zulu-speakers are agreeing with the ANC's assessment, as expressed in the September 1984 issue of its monthly magazine, *Sechaba*, that Buthelezi is "proving by word and deed to be an efficient instrument of the racist minority and illegal regime of South Africa in its futile attempts to confuse and mislead the people of South Africa in their struggle for national and social liberation. These attempts are in the long run aimed at disrupting the efforts being made to achieve the broadest unity in action amongst our people, as well as diverting them from the path of the revolutionary armed struggle as led by the vanguard of the South African liberation movement — the African National Congress." □

Protests in U.S., Europe boost anti-apartheid struggle

Thousands of people across the United States marched and rallied on October 11 and 12 demanding that the U.S. government, corporations, and universities break all ties with the racist apartheid regime in South Africa.

The actions marked "the largest coordinated protest ever against U.S. investment in South Africa," according to Josh Nessen of the American Committee on Africa.

About 2,000 people took part in the protest in Los Angeles, and 1,000 each in New York; St. Louis; Berkeley, California; and Eugene, Oregon. Hundreds demonstrated in dozens of other cities.

"What we are struggling for is the dignity of 22 million people, for their right to vote, to have land," Reverend Jesse Jackson told demonstrators at the New York protest on October 11.

Jackson added, "We are struggling to free Nelson Mandela," the African National Congress leader who has been imprisoned for more than two decades. "What we're talking about is Mandela for president and Pieter Botha in jail!"

In a number of cities, officials of major industrial unions shared the platform with representatives of the African National Congress.

Most U.S. trade unions, including the executive council of the AFL-CIO, are on record against apartheid, as is the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists is playing an important role in working within the organized labor movement to deepen union involvement and leadership of the struggle.

In many cities, protesters raised the demand "Boycott South Africa, not Nicaragua," and supporters of the struggle against U.S.-backed aggression in Central America were visible at many of the October 11 actions.

The majority of participants in the October 11-12 activities were young, and large numbers were Black. Black rights organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) made an important contribution to building the demonstrations and protests.

A National Student Anti-apartheid Conference will take place at New York City's Hunter College on November 1-2. The gathering will

plan for further campus activities against apartheid.

Student protests on campuses across the country have forced a number of college administrations to withdraw at least a portion of their endowment funds from corporations doing business with South Africa.

In Europe, protests against apartheid have taken many forms.

Sweden's transportation workers declared a one-month boycott of trade with South Africa, to run from October 23 to November 24. Johnny Grönberg, president of the Swedish Transport Workers' Union, stated that the boycott is intended to press the demand that the Swedish government end all trade with the racist South African regime.

In early 1985, a big cooperative chain of Swedish retailers and distributors decided to stop handling South African goods.

In Britain, Co-operative Retail Services, with 800 stores throughout Britain, implemented an immediate ban on South African produce in early October.

The National Union of Seamen (NUS) has taken the initiative to organize a worldwide campaign by maritime unions to halt the secret trade of oil to South Africa.

Unions representing seamen and dockworkers from around the world are being invited to an October 30-31 conference in London organized by Maritime Unions Against Apartheid, formed in 1983 by unions in Europe and Australia.

NUS General Secretary Jim Slater said: "It is now up to unions to take direct action against apartheid because many governments throughout the world have ignored — deliberately or otherwise — demands from the international community for an end to oil supplies to South Africa."

A national demonstration against apartheid will take place in Britain on November 2, demanding that Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's government impose even the limited sanctions against South Africa agreed to by the European Economic Community.

In the Netherlands the main trade union federation has established a solidarity fund for independent Black trade unions in South Africa.

Two major Dutch supermarket chains have agreed to stop handling South African fruit.

In Dublin, Ireland, 11 workers at a branch of Dunnes Stores have been on strike for 15 months, refusing to handle South African products.

Four other major retail chains in Ireland agreed in September to begin phasing out their purchases of South African goods.

The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union negotiated a conscience clause with two major Dublin restaurant chains, enabling workers to refuse to handle "goods, products or services" originating in South Africa without being penalized.

In Derry, in British-ruled Northern Ireland, the Irish nationalist-controlled city council has decided to ban use of all South African products in services provided by the city authorities. □

Working farmers protest hard times

Plagued by interest, rents, unfair price supports, and sales taxes

By Solweig Ellström

KIRUNA — "Though we own businesses we feel like workers." These words by a leader of a local farmers' protest rally earlier this year both express the contradictory nature of working farmers and symbolize the need for an alliance between workers and farmers.

Like workers in Sweden, farmers are facing hard times. They are hit hard by the economic crisis. That is why spring 1985 was a season of farmers' protests in Sweden. Several dairies were occupied, and 20,000 farmers demonstrated in Stockholm, the country's capital.

They were protesting because tens of thousands of farmers currently live under the threat of losing their farms or face growing difficulties in trying to make ends meet.

Are farmers insignificant?

Many people mistakenly believe that farmers are not a politically important group in Sweden because the country is dominated by forests and, therefore, is not a typical farming nation. Only 8 percent of the country's total area is arable or grazing land, compared with 46 percent in the United States and 68 percent in Denmark.

Moreover, relatively few people are engaged in farming. Out of Sweden's population of 8 million about 3.5 million are employed, but only 6 to 7 percent of these are occupied in agriculture.

The absolute number of people working in agriculture — 240,000 — is not insignificant, however. And if we consider that they produce something as necessary as food, we can more easily see the important political and economic role of farmers and farm workers.

But isn't it enough to support farm workers and the small group of really impoverished farmers (if there are any), many people in the labor movement argue. Don't farmers and farm workers stand on opposing sides in the class struggle?

Support for farm workers, of course, is very important. But it's important to point out that most of the labor on Sweden's farms is done by 200,000 members of farm-owning families. The rest is done by 40,000 farm workers.

Every time food prices go up, politicians and top union officials add fuel to the misconception that the Swedish farmer is rich and lives in the best of health.

But the myth of the rich farmer lounging around on the sofa is not true for the overwhelming majority of farmers. To the contrary most farmers work from early morning until late at night, seven days a week, just to try to keep their heads above water.

Moreover, their farms are not large. Out of

the 114,000 farms in Sweden, three-fifths are small, that is they have less than 20 hectares (50 acres) of tilled land. Farms with more than 100 hectares (250 acres) make up only 3 percent of the farms. There are only 81 very large estates with more than 500 hectares (nearly 1,250 acres).

Most farmers do not use wage workers. It is important to know that, because it is precisely the farmers who are so well off that they can employ wage labor who come into conflict with small farmers and farm workers.

At the same time, the distinction between some farmers who use wage workers and some who don't is not always so clear. A farmer who employs a hired hand might very well live under similar conditions as the farm worker. For example, I have worked as the only farm worker on a farm and had a higher standard of living and better working hours than the farmer himself. But as the only farm worker on a slightly larger farm, I had a considerably lower standard of living than the farmer. He also identified more with employers than with working people.

If we look at the statistics, we find that on the big majority of Sweden's farms there are no steadily employed workers. While in all categories of farms wage labor exists, it only reaches an important level on the small minority of middle-sized and large farms.

The 10,000 farms with 50 to 100 hectares, for example, employ an average of one-half employee per farm. As this is an average figure, it means that many farms in this category employ no wage workers at all. Those that do usually have some livestock. Even here family members generally do the bulk of the work. Most farmers in this group are probably best characterized as middle farmers. In general they aren't faring too badly.

When it comes to the 3,000 farms with more than 100 hectares, wage workers as a rule perform the major part of the labor. On these large farms an average of 3.5 full-time workers are employed.

There are, of course, exceptions. One person can run a 100-hectare farm on his or her own if it has no livestock and if large machines can be easily used.

There are also some very large capitalist farms that are owned and operated by stockholding companies and other corporations.

So approximately 5 percent of Sweden's farmers are large farmers, generally employing wage labor, while a big majority till less than 50 hectares. The latter as a rule do not have a good economic situation. In fact, these farmers most often have a lower income than industrial workers.

By showing that farmers are not a homogeneous class of businessmen who exploit wage labor but actually are a set of antagonistic classes, we refute the prejudiced notion that all farmers are rich.

But there is another obstacle to establishing a common understanding between workers and farmers. That is the antipathy of many workers to people who own their own businesses. Farmers are often equated with factory owners and other businessmen.

Do farmers truly own their farms?

Let's examine then to what extent the farmer actually owns his or her farm.

Because of the "structural rationalization" in recent years to make Swedish farms larger and "more efficient," farmers generally rent land from one or more of their neighbors in addition to farming the land they hold title to. Fifty-two percent of all farm holdings are totally or partly rented, and the figures rise every year. Farm holdings that are totally rented make up 16 percent of all farms. The larger the farm, the more likely all or part of its land is rented.

Among farms with 5 to 10 hectares, for example, only 35 percent are totally or partially leased. Among the larger farms 30 percent are totally leased. Swedish agriculture is thus carried out mainly by families who only own part of the land they till. They pay rent for the rest.

On the other hand, most farmers normally own their machines and tools. But unlike the factory owner or capitalist farmer, their land, machinery, and tools are not put into use by exploited wage labor. They use family labor. Moreover, their incomes are hardly enough to provide a reasonable income for their families, let alone provide a profit from which capital can be accumulated.

That most working farm families cannot make enough to live on by working on the farm is shown by the fact that almost half the income on farms with 30 to 50 hectares comes from off-the-farm jobs — in industry, hospitals, and so on. Some farmers who own their own trucks get jobs hauling goods.

Farmers who work off the farm also put in many hours of work on the farm. They scarcely have any leisure time, despite the charges against them that they have a soft life.

Trapped by high interest

Why then are farm incomes so low?

A big reason is interest. Most farmers are deep in debt and are forced to work very hard to make the interest payments as well as repay the principal on their debts. In 1980 farmers paid an average 19,000 Swedish kronor [in March 1980, 1 krona = US\$0.23] in interest.



Productivity of working farmers has gone up, but they have more difficulties making a living.

Those with 30 to 50 hectares had interest costs that averaged 31,000 kronor.

After all costs, including interest, the declared taxable income from these farms was between 40,000 and 45,000 kronor for the entire family. This is only a little more than half of what most industrial workers earned that year. It is not completely reliable, of course, to estimate an independent producer's real income only from their taxable income. But a sure sign that incomes for working farmers is low is that such a large part of the families' incomes comes from nonfarm sources.

Because of the big debts, many farms are not truly owned by the farmers but by the banks. Most farmers are working very hard not only for themselves but also for the bankers.

This is related to why Swedish agriculture doesn't consist of large production units with many wage workers like modern industry.

It is possible that the merits of large-scale production may not be as strong in farming as in industry, but the main reason is that it is possible to squeeze more out of working farm families when they "own" the farm themselves than if they were wage workers. When farmers worry about the farm's finances and take all the risks, they work harder to make ends meet.

"Yes," some people will say, "I will concede that farmers have economic hardships like workers, but they have many privileges too. They do not work in dirty factories, they are able to be out of doors enjoying nature, and they can decide their own working pace."

This is both true and untrue. Let's take a closer look at what agriculture looks like today.

In Sweden the land is expensive because during periods there has been a large demand for it. This has led to intensive farming. The farmer simply tries to get as much out of every plot as possible. Today this means that the tilled land in Sweden is comparatively well

taken care of. For example, a third of the acreage is systematically drained by covered drains.

Adverse effects of intensive farming

But this intensive farming was forced by those who hold power in Sweden. It was developed in order to get more labor power into industry and push more capital into agriculture. But these developments have not been exclusively a good thing.

Large amounts of chemical fertilizers, for example, seep into lakes and rivers, disturbing the environment. And no one knows all the hazards the heavy use of pesticides has for the farmer who works with them or for the consumer who eats the food.

The mechanization of agriculture has also had contradictory effects. It has led to a considerable rise in the standard of living compared with the 1930s. It has also helped eliminate many of the most difficult physical tasks in farm work.

But mechanization has also led to the depopulation of the countryside and deteriorating service for those who stay, long-term damage to the soil because it is packed hard by the heavy machines, higher amounts of stress in the work for farm families, and greater loneliness when the farmer sits all day on the tractor doing the job formerly done collectively by a group of people.

The intensity in farm work also applies to livestock. Take milk cows, for example. The cows are seldom permitted to move freely in large pastures. Instead they graze intensively in smaller areas. In addition to eating grass, the cows also get a supplement of high-protein fodder (most often imported), which helps raise milk production. During winter the cows usually are kept inside and fed hay or ensilage that is cultivated in the fields during the warmer part of the year. Nowadays many cows

are also kept inside all year.

Great resources have been allocated to research about feed and breeding and control of the amount of milk each cow gives. As a result cows today give considerably more milk than those of earlier years. For example, the average cow gave 2,900 kilograms of milk in 1950, while the 1983 average was 5,600 kilograms. Nearly twice as much!

At the same time milking and fertilization have been mechanized. But if anyone thinks this means farmers have more time to lie on the sofa, then they are wrong. Farmers have been forced to increase their dairy herds in order to make the large investments worthwhile. Sometimes a single person takes care of 30 cows.

The cows haven't entirely benefited from this technological transformation either. They have certainly gotten brighter and nicer milking barns, but the breeding has been directed too much toward obtaining high yields and too little toward other aspects of husbandry. This, for example, has meant that many cows have to wear a bust-bodice to be able to carry their own udders. And udder inflammations are common. Many cows have to be sent to slaughter because of this illness, and of those surviving, many become difficult to milk for the rest of their lives.

According to a survey conducted by the Swedish Agricultural University a few years ago, a very large majority of farmers questioned were doubtful about modern farming techniques. They were concerned that in the long run these methods can have a harmful effect on the environment and do not take into account the well-being of the dairy cows.

From the study it was also shown that modern technology does not take human labor enough into consideration. Half of those questioned had trouble with their backs and joints and a third had suffered accidents at work.

Farmers don't lead lives of luxury. The wear

and tear from dust and noise is in many ways similar to the workers' toil in the factories. It is not the working farmers who have made big money from mechanization. Nor is it the consumers, who pay food prices that are much too high. No, the ones who have really profited from mechanization are, among others, the machine-producing companies like Alfa Laval and tractor producers like Volvo.

Farmers, workers have common exploiters

The farmers are pushed down by the same exploiting forces as the workers. The market economy in Sweden's highly industrialized society — where the banks, the fertilizer and chemical industries, the tractor producers, and others control things as they please — is responsible for speeding up the tempo for the working farmer as well as the industrial wage worker.

It is fertilizer and chemical corporations that make workers eat poisoned potatoes and force farmers to expose themselves to poisons while working. As long as there are privately owned chemical companies that profit from spraying fields, there will not be a reasonable or safe use of pesticides and herbicides. As long as the market laws dominate, every farmer will be driven to try to do whatever is necessary to maximize his or her harvest, because the interest has to be paid.

Government intervention

But let us go back for a moment to the high-yielding milk cows to get an example of how the government operates today in farming and environmental issues.

In 1983 Sweden's 661,000 cows were producing more milk than was consumed by the Swedish people. So a parliamentary investigating committee concluded that every sixth cow should be slaughtered.

This will harm many Swedish farmers because more than half of all farms have cattle. (About two-thirds of these farmers are milk-producers, while most of the others raise bull calves for meat.)

As a result of the relatively large number of animals on Swedish farms, 31 percent of the country's 3 million cultivated hectares are used to grow grass and clover. (The rest of the tilled land is used as follows: 46 percent for fodder crops, 10 percent for wheat, rye, and oil-yielding plants, 6.1 percent for potatoes, and 2 percent for sugar beets.)

The grass and clover fields are important for crop rotation, because animal pests, noxious weeds, and grain fungi seldom thrive in grass and clover. By shifting between hay and grain, the destructive organisms can be kept under control with a minimum of chemical pesticides. When the number of cows is reduced, the grass and clover fields are also reduced and the destructive organisms multiply in the single-crop grain fields which become the new norm.

This leads to more use of chemicals. This practice is economically detrimental to farmers and increases health hazards to consumers. But this is the government's policy toward the

farmers today and has led to large protests.

But before taking up today's political situation we must take a brief look at the historical development of farmers.

Historical evolution of agriculture

In Sweden serfdom never got a real foothold. There have always been free peasants here. This has also had important consequences on the political level. Sweden-Finland, for example, was the only state in Europe at the end of the 18th century where the peasants constituted an estate of their own in parliament. The other estates were the nobility, the clergy, and the burghers.

During the 19th century the population throughout Europe grew rapidly. In many countries where there were not many new lands that could be opened up for cultivation by free farmers, there tended to be an increase in the number of farm workers and seasonal workers.

But in Sweden there was still more soil to cultivate. The development of industry and population growth led not only to migration to the cities and emigration to the United States, but also to the clearing of new land.

Swedish agriculture until then had been pursued in the same way for hundreds of years. The houses in the villages were clustered together, and the land around the villages was divided so that every farmer had a little strip here and a little strip there. The land was cultivated under an old open-field system. Farmers had to harvest at the same time, leading to a high degree of collective productive activity in the village. But this also helped to preserve the old ways. The development of more modern farming methods was inhibited in much the same way as guild rules still hindered the development of industry in Sweden in the first half of the 19th century.

In 1827 an edict called Division Law was introduced that granted every landowner the right to demand the dissolution of the open-field system. The outlands, which until then had been communal land for pasturing, were now divided. All the land was redistributed so that the property of each farm was joined together in one compact unit.

Enclosures of lands, which took place throughout the 19th century, changed the face of the countryside. Villages were split up, and scattered farms became the predominant type of dwelling in Sweden. This opened the possibility of modernizing agriculture.

During its earlier history, Sweden did not trade agricultural products to speak of with other countries because of the high transport costs. But during the 19th century transportation was improved and freight rates became cheaper, even to distant areas. During the last half of the 19th century cheap grain came to Sweden from the vast grain belts of North America and southern Russia. This resulted in a domestic agricultural crisis.

Sweden's estate parliament had by then been replaced by a two-chamber parliament, and in the second chamber the peasant deputies dominated. They forced through some deci-

sions favorable to the farmers, such as ending the exemption of the church and the nobility from paying land taxes. Previously the peasants had borne virtually the entire burden of taxation.

The peasant deputies also started to deal with the agricultural crisis by demanding tariff protection, which they won in 1888. Following this, the peasants lost their domination in the second chamber.

Farm crisis deepens

After World War I a new agricultural crisis emerged. International trade boomed, and during the 1920s this led to a reduction in agricultural prices both on the world market and in the internal Swedish market. The value of farms went down while interest rates shot up.

Many farmers were forced to abandon farming during the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s. But there were not enough jobs to provide work for them. Unemployment during the years between the world wars never sank below 10 percent.

Government authorities then intervened to regulate imports as well as the Swedish market. The state, for example, established a monopoly on all grain imports and introduced an assessment on milk to support milk exports. The goal was to raise prices to the 1925-1929 level. This was finally achieved in 1939.

During this period the organized farmers' movement grew. The National Association of Rural People (RFL), an organization that mainly pursued the small and middle farmers' interests, was founded in 1929. And in the 1930s the cooperative movement was on the rise. The farmers learned that they were much stronger as sellers when they joined forces.

During World War II nearly a third of the working population was still employed in agriculture and had a low standard of living. After the war, when industry boomed and there was a need for workers in economically expanding regions, a stream of people from the countryside flowed into these areas.

But these regions could not yet absorb masses of new workers. Moreover, there was a risk that lumber exports would be reduced if too many people left the countryside. Added to this were worries that food production might fall too low if the country was blockaded in a war. So the government sought to slow down the internal migration.

The stated goal in the 1950s was to raise the farmers' living standards to the level of industrial workers and to get financially sound farms. The parliament decided to postpone the kind of tough rationalization measures that would eliminate many small farmers. But it was openly stated in the discussion at the time that such measures would be implemented later when there was enough industry to absorb the people thrown off their farms.

The parliament's 1950s policy, then, relied on price supports for farm products that were extensive enough that farms with even a modest degree of rationalization could keep ahead. In the beginning, the government also offered special assistance to smaller farms.

As time went on, however, it was shown that there was no risk of production being too low. The use of chemical fertilizers became more widespread. Horses were replaced by tractors, and land formerly reserved for growing fodder for horses was used for other farming purposes.

All this led to a situation where Swedish farmers produced more than the Swedish people were able to buy. From 1953 until the end of the decade, the amount farmers were paid for their products rose about 15 percent. Despite this, working farmers still averaged lower incomes than industrial workers. Moreover, employers in the cities were loudly asking for workers, especially former farmers, who would accept less pay and work harder and longer than more experienced workers.

Rationalization policy launched

In this context, the government issued a report in 1960 calling for a tough rationalization policy to make farming more "efficient." To accomplish this, "administrative means for rationalization and restructuring of the work force" were to be used. In other words: the small farms should be eliminated.

During the 1950s, 50,000 farms went under. This process accelerated in the 1960s, with 100,000 farms being abandoned. This operation was administered in every county by regional agricultural boards acting as representatives of the Swedish government. State functionaries decided which farms in every area should get state support and which farms should not. Then they went into the countryside and "persuaded" the owners of the small and "unviable" farms to sell out. Many of these farms were bought by farmers who were getting support from the government.

In the forest districts many of the small farms were abandoned when they couldn't get government assistance. And their economic situation was so bad that younger farmers did

not want to farm them either, and the forests began taking over the fields.

Stores, schools, and other services were soon closed down as people moved away from the countryside. Those who stayed had to travel far to go shopping or attend school. This period has been called "the time of the vanloads of furniture," and many remember it with bitterness.

Many also feel bitterness against the Social Democratic Party, which was governing at the time and forced through these policies. This contributed to a suspiciousness toward the labor movement by many farmers.

Farm leaders offered no alternative

But the leaders of the farmers' own organizations were not free from blame either. The producers' economic associations had grown bigger and bigger and were dominated by the big producers. Despite the associations' principle of "one man, one vote," the law of competition in the capitalist market reinforced the domination of the larger producers.

In addition to the economic associations, the farmers' movement included the RLF.

Initially this organization concentrated on the problems of the small farmers, but over time it started to cover up the contradictory class interests between big and small farmers.

When parliament was discussing the 1960s rationalization policy, the RLF strongly criticized the proposals to reduce Swedish self-sufficiency in farm products. But on the actual rationalization policies, which meant eliminating an enormous number of farms, the RLF said nothing.

This was not really so surprising, because in 1971 the economic associations, dominated by the big producers, fused with the RLF to form a single organization, the National Farmers' Organization (LRF).

The leaderships of the farmers' organizations were on the side of the big farmers and

clearly shared the guilt for the disastrous policies applied against small farmers. But how could the great masses of farmers tolerate these policies?

One farm leader cynically explained, "It was easy. If you say to 100 farmers that 99 will get a better situation if the 100th is forced to get out of business — then the 99 vote for the closure of the 100th farm. If you tell the 99 who are left that 98 of them will be better off if one is crushed, they won't protest even then. And so on."

But the campaign to make farms more "efficient" was not to last. The number of workers in industry reached a peak in 1965, and since then the number of workers has diminished. In the beginning of the 1970s the first signs of economic stagnation began to appear. The large stream from the agricultural work force slowed down, and parliament in 1971 decided to offer small farmers the opportunity to get assistance for investments.

The same year the amount paid to farmers for their milk also rose. The farmers had held a protest march to demand more money for their milk. They were in a strong position because there was a danger of a milk shortage. The rationalization measures had been so extensive that more cows had been slaughtered than the government authorities had planned.

Since the great majority of the milk producers are small farmers, this increase in their income was very welcome. This, along with the possibility of getting economic assistance for investments, made their future look brighter. Maybe they wouldn't have to sell their farms and move to the city, after all.

At the same time, however, the government raised milk prices to consumers — a very unpopular move. As a result there were protests. Housewives in the Stockholm suburbs, for example, boycotted milk.

In 1973, which was an election year, parlia-



Farm families who rely on own labor are majority of farmers.

ment decided to introduce a price freeze, which the farmers were to be compensated for with subsidies from the state. This meant that the price for milk in the store became lower than the real price and that the state paid the difference to the farmers.

New direction

These measures reflected the beginning of a new direction in agricultural policy. Subsidies rose each year and were largest in 1980 when they reached 3.7 billion kronor. In spite of this assistance, 25,000 farms were eliminated in the last 10 years.

The subsidies were not unequivocally good for the farmers, at least not for the small ones. One could even say that the subsidies, like the price control measures, have contributed to the closure of small farms. But without any form of support, large sectors of Swedish agriculture would be forced to close, above all, the small farmers. What is needed is another form of support. But before going into this, let's first examine how the current price regulation system works.

Prices to some degree have been regulated since 1888, when duties on grain imports were introduced. Over the years new rules and regulations have been adopted, and the system has become increasingly complicated.

To begin with it is the government that politically decides the food prices. Parliament makes overall decisions on agricultural policy every 10 or 20 years. In the interim they make more detailed decisions.

According to the latest overall decision, made in 1977, the current tilled area shall in principle be maintained and Swedish agriculture shall mainly consist of "family farms." The goal to rationalize farms is stressed less in this decision than it was in the 1967 decision. Instead, the importance of increasing farmers' incomes is emphasized.

Government officials use negotiations to work out the contents of the decision. Every three years a consumers' delegation and producers' delegation negotiate a price contract that is approved by parliament. Every six months the producer and consumer representatives meet with government representatives to discuss adjustments in the prices on agricultural products.

The farmers are represented in the negotiations by the LRF, their own organization. But the consumers are only partially represented by their own organizations. The unions participate, but the rest of the consumer groups are a dubious lot. For example, the Swedish Chemical Industry Office, which represents the chemical, fertilizer, and pesticide industries is part of the consumers' delegation. The rationale for this is that they also control the oleomargarine industry, which buys products from farmers.

During the negotiations, price rises are proposed according to an index based on the rising costs of farmers and the processing industry. There is seldom much dispute on this any more. But the delegations also discuss how big

a compensation the farmers should have. And it is here that the main disagreements occur.

After the negotiations the government makes the final allocations. The major part goes into supporting prices, while a smaller part goes to assistance for low-income farmers.

How prices are regulated

The import fees and duties play a decisive role in the price regulation system, and they are applied on all major imported agricultural products. For example, importers purchasing foreign cheese in 1981 paid 7.60 Swedish kronor per kilo to the Swedish government. When the importer sold the cheese, 7.60 kronor was added to the price, eliminating it as a price competitor to Swedish cheeses.

If import fees were abolished the price of Swedish cheese would actually have to be lowered in order to compete. It would lead to a reduction in what Swedish farmers are paid for their milk, resulting in big income losses and the elimination of many small farms. But there are, of course, other ways that the government could support working farmers and prevent them from going under.

Sweden is not alone in imposing duties on agricultural products. Most other West European countries have the same system. One would think, then, that prices would be high not only on the home market but also on the world market as well. But this is not the case.

In relation to meat, butter, and cheese the countries in question produce only slightly more than what they consume themselves. The surplus is dumped at very low prices on the world market.

The situation with grain is different. Here a few countries like Canada, Common Market countries, Australia, the United States, and Argentina produce enormous amounts for export, which tends to hold prices down. But occasionally, when there has been an especially large demand, the prices have naturally risen, sometimes even reaching a higher level than the Swedish internal price.

Now, back to the price control system. Money from import fees and duties goes to seven regulatory agencies. These are partly state-owned economic associations that are dominated by the big producers. Every sector of agriculture has its own regulatory agency. For example, there is the Swedish grain trade and the Dairy Products Board. These agencies also have responsibility for exports.

Let's take an example of how they operate. Swedish farmers produce more grain than is consumed inside the county. Every year the Swedish Grain Trade, in spite of this, sets a price considerably higher than the world market price. This is what farmers are paid for all grain, even for surplus production. Swedish Grain Trade buys the surplus at the determined price and sells it on the world market at a lower price. This results in a loss, which is made up by money from the import fees. But this is not enough to make up the difference. So the mills are required to pay a fee to Swedish Grain Trade for every ton of wheat they buy. The

government also provides subsidies to the regulatory agencies.

The other agencies function much like the grain board, though some are a little more complicated. The meat agency, for example, also has the task of keeping the surplus off the Swedish market to prevent prices from going down. They do this by subsidizing storage, which is covered by the fees that farmers pay when their animals are slaughtered.

The agency also sees to it that production does not grow too fast. If this happens the agencies can lower the payments to farmers for meat, thus forcing them to produce less meat or go over to producing other commodities, mainly grain which is more advantageous to export.

When the regulatory agencies drive down prices on certain products, the farmers who produce them suffer hard times. But at the next round of negotiations the whole farm population will be compensated by a general rise in price supports.

Price supports are unequal

One might think that after all this farmers in the 1970s were well taken care of and protected. But the crux of the matter was that price subsidies were given per unit produced. So those who produced many kilos of milk or meat got big subsidies and those with less got small subsidies. At the same time each kilo was more expensive for the small farmer to produce than for the bigger producer.

In this way the gap between rich and small farmers has widened. It is true that part of the funds allocated by the government went to support "low-income" farmers. But this part is so small that it is far from narrowing the gap.

During the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, a new situation emerged. Now, even rather large family farms began to be hit by severe economic problems. The government had put its stakes on these farms, and the farmers had taken large loans for additional building and mechanization. But interest rates rose sharply, and farmers had real problems paying back the loans and the interest on them. It was worse for new farms and many were threatened with bankruptcy.

As if these hardships were not enough, the conservative coalition government, established in 1976, began to cut back subsidies to farmers.

Discontent rose among farmers, and in March 1981, 1,500 farmers rallied in the northern town of Skellefteå demanding a reasonable income for their work.

It was not by chance that it was the northern farmers who reacted the most strongly against the shift in policy. Historically, when Swedish farmers have been squeezed, northern farmers have been most hurt. The climate for farming is harder there than in southern Sweden, and the farms are often small. The northern farmers began to worry that all farms in the region would disappear within 10 years if the income situation did not improve.

At the time of the demonstration, negotiations between the consumers' and producers'

delegations were taking place. The demonstrators were concerned about a compromise proposal that had just been presented, so they demanded that the LRF representatives stand fast for their demands.

Abolish sales taxes on food!

Another demand pressed by the demonstrators is especially important because it is a possible common demand of workers and farmers. It was the call to abolish sales taxes on basic foodstuffs. These taxes are an especially heavy burden for those with low wages. For example, one liter of milk, which today costs 4.30 kronor, would cost 3.30 if the sales taxes were abolished. That reduction would mean a lot for working-class families.

From a loaf of bread that costs the consumer 8 kronor the farmer only gets 0.70 kronor. The government gets twice as much and the rest goes to middlemen and retailers.

The farmers are today blamed for high food prices in order to justify reductions in the subsidies, but at the same time the government gets 11 billion kronor per year in sales taxes for agricultural products. When the farmer compares that figure with the 3.7 billion kronor that was the highest amount allocated in any year for food subsidies, the sales taxes are like waving a red blanket in front of a bull.

But in the 1980s there have not only been high interests and cuts in subsidies. High food costs and the drop in real wages have forced working people to cut down on how much food they buy, which, of course, hurts the farmers. The agricultural surplus, which is sold at low prices on the world market, has grown.

A committee was set up in the early 1980s by the conservative coalition government to deal with the surplus production. This committee presented its results last fall. Based on this report, the current Social Democratic government, which was installed after the September 1982 elections, has made a proposal to parliament. If this is adopted it will worsen the situation for farmers.

Curtailing production

The committee proposed that the surplus be eliminated in five years. This is not a question of a small reduction in agricultural production. It contends that some 300,000 hectares of arable land have to be withdrawn from production and one-sixth of the milk cows and more than one-tenth of the poultry have to be eliminated.

The committee was not agreed on what to do with the arable land. The representatives from the farmers' organizations favored continued cultivation of the fields, and there has been discussion about cultivating crops that could be used as an energy source or as protein fodder. But nothing is said about how this change could be made.

The committee also proposed greater reliance on market forces by not taking farmers' costs into account when negotiating food prices.

If these latter proposals are adopted, there will be no difficulty withdrawing the 300,000 hectares. They will disappear from production

as farmer after farmer goes under.

Perhaps it is the recognition of the difficulties these proposals will create for farmers that led the committee to propose that farmers in the north get some special assistance. So it's possible that a few farms may survive there. The committee also proposed that new farmers should get some help. If they don't, they won't be able to pay interest no matter how well their farms are managed.

If the committee proposal is forced through, it will mean something entirely new in Swedish agricultural policy. Today there is no industry waiting for a stream of workers from the countryside. Instead, there is a reserve army of half a million unemployed that will be significantly expanded.

If we count workers who produce the inputs needed for agricultural production and the workers in the initial stages of processing, another 20,000 will be hit by unemployment.

In response to the committee's proposal, the LRF talked tough about not accepting any new "1960s policy." But at the same time the chairperson of the "union" part of the organization, Erik Jonsson, proposed that farmers voluntarily limit their production of ham and meat. It remains to be seen what answer the LRF would give to a wave of closures of small farms.

Because of the critical situation, this year's negotiations on agricultural prices became very tense, broke down, and were accompanied by protest actions, mainly among farmers in the north. The farmers' aim was to inform the broader public about their plight. It was an appeal for help.

Following the occupation of several dairies in April, there were farmers' demonstrations on May 1 in the north. Among the demands was abolition of sales taxes on food. One hundred fifty farmers and a cow demonstrated in Kalix near the Finnish border just south of the Arctic Circle. Protesters chose May 1 in order to march with the workers. One participant, who had been active in organizing a dairy occupation earlier in the week, pointed out, "We thought May 1 was a suitable date. Though we are enterprise owners, we feel like workers."

But not everyone welcomed this step toward farmer-labor collaboration. In one area, where some 20 farmers demonstrated with as many tractors, the local newspaper reported that the Social Democratic organizer of the workers' demonstration had wanted "the farmers to stay in the fields or in the woods" on May 1.

In another area someone even called the police, claiming that the farmers planned to harass the Social Democratic-organized demonstration. The cops who came to the rally site, however, were convinced that this was not the case.

The nationwide rally in Stockholm that mobilized 20,000 people came a few weeks later.

Such is the situation for farmers today. They are hard pressed and need support, but at the moment they stand alone. They cannot even trust their own official organization, and they don't have a party that really promotes their in-

terests even if the bourgeois Center Party claims to do so.

No capitalist solution

But there is no capitalist solution for the farmers. They are victims of the overall crisis in the capitalist economy. It is this crisis that produces the high interest rates, the reduction in subsidies, speed-up, and the decline in real wages. It is the capitalist crisis that has made the forced rationalization policy produce more, instead of fewer, poor farmers. The percentage of farmers who are small and poor is as high today as it was at the end of the 1930s.

The farmers have to fight because only unemployment awaits them off the farm. They must demand support from the government, but support should be granted on the basis of each farm's need and not on kilograms of production.

Farmers also have to fight against exorbitant interest rates. Here they have a mighty enemy. Even if they generally borrow from a "farmer-owned" bank, this bank is forced to follow the rules set up by the commercial banks throughout the world. And the international commercial banks are bastions of capitalist exploitation. Against them the farmers are not able to fight alone.

Finally, the farmers have to fight for fair payment for their products. The middlemen take considerably more than the farmers because of the capitalist market.

The Swedish workers and farmers have several big issues around which they can fight in common. And even though farming is a relatively small part of Sweden's economic life, the farmers are politically important. Both workers' and farmers' positions would be strengthened by cooperation. United they can wage a fight against exploitation by the banks, against the sales tax on food, and against the current harmful effects of agricultural technology that are dangerous to humans as well as to livestock and only profitable for the chemical companies.

It is time to start fighting together. □

100 demonstrate in Grenada

About 100 supporters of the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement demonstrated in St. George's, Grenada, on September 22 to protest the ordered extradition of Chester Humphrey.

The Grenadian courts, at the request of the U.S. Justice Department, have ordered the jailed trade union leader to be extradited to the United States.

Humphrey is a former member of the New Jewel Movement, which led the revolutionary government that held power from 1979 to 1983. He is accused of smuggling guns from the United States that were used by the NJM to overthrow Eric Gairy's dictatorship in March 1979.

Humphrey is now waiting for a hearing before the Grenadian Appeals Court. On September 2, he had launched a hunger strike to protest his unjust imprisonment.

Farmers face bankruptcy, forced sales

Victims of big-business drive for more profits

By Rob Gardner

[The following article is reprinted from the October 4 issue of *Socialist Action*, a fortnightly newspaper published in Auckland, New Zealand, that reflects the views of the Socialist Action League, New Zealand section of the Fourth International.]

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It is becoming increasingly clear that hundreds of working farmers are facing bankruptcy and forced sales of their stock and farms.

As the "more market" policies being implemented under the Labour government have taken effect, large numbers of farmers have been devastated by soaring interest rates on their mortgages and other loans, big increases in on-farm costs, and now a dramatic slump in the prices they will be paid for their lamb, mutton, and beef. Many, especially in Otago and South Canterbury, are also still suffering from the effects of drought.

As farm land values slump 30 percent and more as a result of this crisis, many working farmers are being left owing more than their farms are worth.

Two recent surveys have highlighted the seriousness of the situation facing many farmers. They show that at least 25 percent of sheep farmers are in a marginal condition, if not in extreme financial difficulty to the point of having to sell up.

The results of the first survey, announced by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) on September 20, found that half the country's sheep and beef farms are in financial trouble or threatened with it.

Forced sales

At the bottom of the heap are 2,000 sheep farmers who are in such extreme financial difficulty that the MAF expects that many of them will be forced to sell up soon.

A further 5,000 farmers were in a very tight position, but would recover financially if farm incomes were to rise by 25 percent. If that did not happen, some of them would have to sell up within two to three years, the MAF predicted.

Another 8,000 farmers were "feeling the pinch," according to the MAF survey, and would be in some financial difficulty if their incomes fell.

Summing up the survey, MAF director-general Malcolm Campbell is quoted in the September 27 *Dominion* as saying that "some farm businesses in New Zealand are just not viable in the present economic climate and will have to cease operating."



Farmers suffer from effects of drought in South Canterbury.

The second survey, released on September 25 by the Stock and Station Agents Association,* also confirmed the bleak outlook facing many working farmers. The survey, based on a sample of 10,640 farmers, found that 20 percent were in a marginal condition and would need some form of help urgently, and that a further 5 percent were "unsound," with little hope of survival under present financial conditions.

"Clearly the 5 percent whose financial position is unsound are better to dispose of their properties," Tom Harper, the president of the Stock and Station Agents Association and also the managing director of Dalgety Crown, proclaimed when he announced the findings of the survey on September 25.

Incomes falling

Rather than the big increase in income that most working farmers desperately need to cover the effects of high interest rates and inflation, a big drop in income is being predicted for the coming year.

An article in the September 28 *New Zealand Herald* reported that there will be "an overall expected drop in [gross] sheep income this year of 47 percent." In response to this, it said,

*Stock and station agents are big capitalist monopolies that sell farmers fertilizer, seed, machinery, breeding stock, and many other supplies including food and household goods. They generally sell on credit in order to tie farmers to their particular company. — IP

"farmers are expected to cut back on fertiliser usage by 35 percent and spend 24 percent less on repairs and maintenance, reducing the overall fall in net incomes to 32 percent."

Lamb prices

According to the *Herald*, the new price schedule for sheepmeat, just announced by the Meat Board, will see the return to the farmer for an average PM-grade lamb fall from \$23 to between \$14 and \$16 — a fall of 30 to 40 percent [NZ\$1 = US\$0.55].

The new price schedule, the first in five years to be related to "market prices," is another blow to working farmers already reeling from the Labour government's "market-oriented" policies.

The September 18 *Straight Furrow* (the newspaper published by Federated Farmers) gave an example of the situation facing farmers as a result of this. Southland farmer Mervyn Cave explained that his debt servicing commitments for the year came to \$15.20 per stock unit — more than he is likely to get for each lamb!

He added that the value of the farm had fallen to \$300,000 from the \$470,000 he paid for it four years ago, and that he has a Rural Bank mortgage of \$236,000 and vendor finance of \$85,000 still owing.

"If this is a permanent situation then there's no living in the farm," he said. "The only solution seems to be to cut the workload down and work permanently off the place."

The September 30 *New Zealand Herald* ran

a feature article by Andrew Stone on a Northland farmer, John Platts, saying he was expecting an operating deficit of \$15,000 on his farm this year.

Labour philosophy

"Income from his Coopworth wool clip, lamb sales, and beef returns from the 135 head of Angus and cross-bred cattle will total about \$75,000 he estimates," Stone wrote, while "Costs, including wages, animal health measures, fertiliser, repairs and maintenance, and the \$22,000 Rural Bank interest bill, will run to about \$90,000. . . ."

"To stay afloat for the next 12 months," says Stone, "Mr. Platts is reducing stock, cutting out fertiliser, and reining in the family budget to \$6,000 a year. Mrs. Platts hopes to work twice a week as a nurse."

Stone remarked that Platts "is confused by economic policies which threaten to unhinge the farming sector and cause widespread upheaval yet which at the same time fatten the accounts of people who 'manipulate money.'"

"To me it is the opposite of Labour philosophy," Platts told him.

About one-third of farmers have more than 20 percent of their gross income committed to interest and principal repayments, according to the Meat and Wool Board's Economic Service — and some have as much as 40 percent.

And, in addition, the MAF is expecting an increase in on-farm costs of 18 to 20 percent this year. As Tom Harper explained when he released the Stock and Station Agents' survey of insolvent farmers, "This coming season, farmers will have to absorb substantial increases in fertiliser costs, road-user charges, fuel costs, electricity costs, killing and processing charges, and considerable increases in debt-servicing."

And, for the first time ever, farmers will have to pay a meat inspection fee for stock processed through the meat works.

In response to this crisis and the rising discontent it is generating among working farmers, the Labour government has promised a package to aid some of the worst-hit farmers.

[Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries Colin] Moyle has ruled out regulations to govern interest rates, or the reintroduction of supplementary minimum prices (SMPs) or other price supports, and has declared that the aid package will not interfere with the government's long-term free-market policy.

The main form of "aid" is likely to be additional loans, thus further deepening farmers' debts.

For instance, the October 1 *New Zealand Herald* reported that the government had approved Reserve Bank loans of up to \$50,000 to drought-ridden farmers in North Otago and South Canterbury. These would be interest-free until July 1, 1988, and would be written off if the property was sold before then.

Moyle, the *Herald* reported, said, "This will assist those who would realise little or no equity to re-establish themselves elsewhere or in another occupation."

In fact, Labour politicians have made it

clear that they expect there will be casualties among working farmers as a result of the crisis they are facing. The September 28 *Herald* quotes Labour's Under-Secretary for Agriculture, David Butcher, as saying, "We are going to help those people who have some long-term chance of survival but we are not going to help people limp through until they are actually in a worse financial position than they are now."

Victims of big business

But working farmers are not the victims of bad luck, or their own failings. They are victims of the big-business drive to restructure New Zealand capitalism as a whole and make it more profitable in the face of long-term crisis and stagnation in the world capitalist economy.

In recent years New Zealand big business has succeeded in placing the burden of this crisis on wage workers and the unemployed, along with working farmers. Under the Labour government, this attack on working farmers is escalating.

Making the capitalist economy more "competitive" on an international scale involves lowering the prices of agricultural exports and increasing the profitability of the big businesses based on agriculture. Driving "inefficient" farmers off the land is an inevitable part of this process.

Measures within the framework of present "free market" policies being pursued under the Labour government — such as granting more loans to already debt-ridden farmers — will not in fact address the real issues facing working farmers: high interest rates, increasing costs, and disastrous prices for farm products.

The gentlemen farmers who lead Federated Farmers have consistently defended the "more market" strategy and have sought to divert

farmers' protests away from the government and the big businesses based on agriculture that they themselves often have a big stake in. Instead, they have directed their fire (seeking to draw working farmers behind them) against other sectors of the business world — demanding, for instance, that the "more market" policies be implemented more ruthlessly on manufacturers.

And, in particular, they have sought to pit working farmers against the unions, through demands that wage rises be held to a minimum and social welfare spending reduced.

Unions

In this situation, the unions have a responsibility to champion the cause of working farmers, particularly those at the bottom end of the farming scale who are being driven to the wall. They could do this by:

- Supporting farmers' actions against their debts, such as the refusal to pay interest to the Reserve Bank proposed by Southland farmers earlier this year.

- Opposing forced sales of farms or stock.
- Demanding that farmers receive fair prices for their lamb and beef.

- Demanding that meat and other companies open their books, thereby exposing the myth that workers' wages cause the high prices farmers pay for goods and services and the low prices they get for their produce.

By voicing support for protests by working farmers that are directed against the big business operations that exploit them — from interest-gouging banks to profit-hungry meat companies and stock and station agents — the unions can begin forging an alliance between workers and working farmers to wage a common struggle in defence of their living standards. □

Reagan grabs some rotten fruit

President Ronald Reagan told an ABC interviewer recently that he often quotes the Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin to prove the Soviet government's global ambitions.

He says that Lenin once stated, "We will take Eastern Europe. We will organize the hordes of Asia. And then we will move into Latin America and we won't have to take the United States; it will fall into our outstretched hands like overripe fruit."

A *New York Times* editorial writer, Karl Meyer, curious about the origin of this juicy plum, conducted a full-scale sleuthing operation.

He found that TV commentator Alistair Cooke had once exposed this fraudulent quotation, but later couldn't recall the details. Cooke guessed that maybe the former actor had picked up the quote from an old movie script.

Meyer's hunt then led to the Library of Congress, which had an entire folder on the matter. Apparently others had asked about the quotation too. The folder included a *Chicago Daily*

News article dated Dec. 8, 1958, describing the quote as a fake but giving no source.

Undaunted, our detective from the *Times* kept on the trail. He ran into an indirect reference in a new book on South Africa by longtime *New York Times* journalist Joseph Lelyveld. Lelyveld wrote that he had heard right-wing generals in Pretoria attribute something like this statement to Lenin. They apparently got it from a book called *None Dare Call it Conspiracy*, published in 1971, which was popular in right-wing John Birch Society circles in the United States.

This led to *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, compiled in 1958 by founder Robert Welch. The *Blue Book* contains a remarkably similar version of the Lenin "statement" that Reagan says he often quotes.

So much for Reagan's source materials and the phony quote. Moreover, anybody with even an elementary knowledge about Lenin would know that neither he nor other leaders of the Russian revolutionary government could ever have made such a statement. □

Strikes draw line against concessions

Five important defensive battles reflect ferment in unions

By Tom Leonard

[The following article is from the October 25 issue of the *Militant*, a socialist weekly published in New York.]

* * *

There is some stirring in the ranks of labor in response to a decade-long government-employer offensive. A growing number of strikes are drawing the line on giving further concessions to what more and more workers recognize as corporate greed for profits. Five important defensive battles reflecting this ferment include:

- The Wheeling-Pittsburgh strike involving 8,200 members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia.
- The yearlong coal strike against A.T. Massey by 2,000 members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) in West Virginia and Kentucky.
- The General Dynamics strike by some 4,600 members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) in Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.
- The just-concluded strike at the Bath Iron Works shipyard by 4,500 members of the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers (IUMSWA).
- The Hormel meatpacking strike by 1,500 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local P-9 in Austin, Minnesota.

Years of concessions

All these strikes involve concessions, some so deep, as at Wheeling-Pitt and Massey, that if complied with they would erode the national strength of the unions.

A common feature of all these battles is that the workers involved are not strangers to giving concessions. They have all been hounded by increasingly hostile corporations backed by U.S. government agencies like the National Labor Relations Board — some since the 1970s.

Wheeling-Pitt strikers, for example, had already made three rounds of concessions to the company that included \$120 million in lost wages in previous negotiations. The company, with the support of a federal court ruling, declared bankruptcy and literally tore up its contract with the USWA, forcing the union to strike on July 21.

In the case of the General Dynamics strike, which began September 18, UAW members have been living with concessions since 1979, when the four war-industry tank plants now on strike were owned by Chrysler. They took the same cutbacks as Chrysler auto workers that



On strike in the coalfields.

year and more concessions in 1982 when the four plants were taken over by General Dynamics. The company is now demanding still more concessions.

Members of Local P-9 of the UFCW had made concessions over a seven-year period with the intention of keeping the company in business. During that time union members gave up \$20 million in wages, which helped Hormel finance a modern plant in Austin, Minnesota. The company is now demanding more givebacks. The workers went on strike August 17.

The owners of Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine, began pushing for givebacks nearly two years before the June 30 expiration of its contract with IUMSWA Local 6. This included an attempt to reopen the contract six months ahead of time to force early concessions and stepped-up harassment of workers on the job. The company, for example, installed a television system in the shipyard to spy on union members during working hours.

The concessions that workers were forced to accept to end their bitter 99-day strike were less than the company demanded earlier. Workers returning to the job are determined to maintain their solidarity.

The position adopted by A.T. Massey coal company was to get rid of the UMWA in its

mines by refusing to sign the national contract that the union had negotiated with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association in 1984.

These living experiences, and the lessons workers are beginning to draw from giving concessions to profit-gouging corporations, are the starting point for understanding the increased willingness of union members to organize to fight. As one steelworker explained at the beginning of the Wheeling-Pitt strike: "Each year we hear this from management: 'We need this. We're broke, but if you give us this we'll create jobs.' None of this was true. In 1979, 1,700 of us worked at Allenport [Pennsylvania]. Last weekend there were only 370 of us."

This is the kind of reasoning that led the overwhelming majority of workers to support strike actions against further concessions in these five contract battles, and in some cases to begin preparations for a possible strike months ahead of time. In Bath, Maine, workers began lining up alternative jobs before the BIW strike began. Local P-9 started stockpiling food supplies months before the Hormel bosses forced them out on the picket line.

There has been strong membership support in strikes initiated by union locals and later sanctioned by the Internationals, such as Hormel and General Dynamics, as well as in strikes that were sanctioned by national union leaderships from the beginning, such as A.T. Massey and Wheeling-Pitt.

More unity and solidarity

These increasing efforts to resist concessions are helping to unify the rank and file and are advancing rank-and-file democratic participation inside the unions. They are also a strong mandate to union officials to resist takebacks in negotiations. Such resistance is encouraging solidarity from other unions and allies who face similar attacks.

The 217-vehicle "Motown to Coaltown — Support and Solidarity" caravan is an example. Organized by the UAW, the caravan traveled 500 miles from Detroit to Belfry, Kentucky, on August 10, bringing food, clothing, money, and solidarity to the Massey strikers, and later participated in a rally of 6,000 strike supporters. UAW Regional Director Frank Rannels had organized a similar caravan during the 1978 coal strike but reported that this one was much bigger — with "more participation on both sides. It's amazing."

The UMWA returned this solidarity when UMWA President Richard Trumka took a "Coaltown to Motown" contingent of 200 coal miners to Michigan to participate in the Detroit Labor Day march and rally, at which Trumka

was a featured speaker.

The UMWA also reciprocated the support it has received from USWA members.

Early in the Massey strike, steelworkers in South Williamson, Kentucky, had taken out a one-third-page ad in solidarity with the coal miners.

At the beginning of the Wheeling-Pitt strike, western Pennsylvania coal miners were among the first to offer solidarity. Later in the strike Tony Bambico, an International representative for UMWA District 6, pledged his union's solidarity at a strike-support rally of 5,000 in Steubenville, Ohio.

Solidarity develops faster

An important new feature of the Wheeling-Pitt strike was the speed with which solidarity for the strike began inside the USWA, involving national union leaders as well as the rank and file. On the first day of the strike, International President Lynn Williams was out walking the picket line and some 300 USWA local union officials quickly and unanimously approved the strike.

District union leaderships have actively built and supported rallies and raised material support. In the Chicago-Gary area, District 31 — the largest in the steelworkers' union — raised over \$29,000 and sent a car caravan to the strike area to demonstrate support.

Hormel workers won solidarity for their struggle through a militant campaign beginning last December to expose Hormel's greed for profits.

When Local P-9's president recently attended a session of the Minnesota AFL-CIO convention with 200 Hormel strikers, they got a standing ovation from the delegates and a contribution of thousands of dollars.

International solidarity

These acts of solidarity in opposition to more concessions are inseparable from the growing international solidarity by U.S. trade unionists with the leading role played by Black South African workers in the struggle against apartheid.

The Hormel strikers exposed financial ties between Hormel and its financial backer, First Bank, which has holdings in South Africa. The UMWA has similarly exposed A.T. Massey's holdings in South Africa and expressed solidarity with Black miners in that country. One striking coal miner in West Virginia put his finger on the growth of this UMWA solidarity in a letter to a local paper when he explained, "Isn't it amazing how Lobata [West Virginia] now looks so much like the work camps in South Africa with the guards and the ten-foot chain link fences."

This same awareness was shown on a picket sign carried by a Detroit striker in the General Dynamics strike which said, "Stop two-tier at General Dynamics and in South Africa."

In addition to South Africa, a broad discussion on Central America is shaping up in the unions. This was most dramatically posed by the thousands of union members who demonstrated their opposition to apartheid and U.S.

Strike shuts Chrysler plants

Some 80,000 Canadian and U.S. auto workers began a strike against Chrysler on October 16, shutting the production facilities of the giant automaker.

The 70,000 members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) at Chrysler plants in the United States are demanding parity in wages and benefits with workers and retirees covered under UAW contracts at Ford and General Motors.

The 10,000 members of the Canadian UAW, which reached a tentative settlement on October 20, put forward similar demands. The Canadian UAW has been a separate union since March 30, 1985.

In 1979, Chrysler workers — under concerted pressure from the U.S. government, Chrysler management, and officials of the UAW — agreed to a far-reaching package of givebacks to the company. They were told that unless they accepted these sacrifices, the company would fail and all would lose their jobs.

The 1979 Chrysler giveback contract was hailed as a model by the employers throughout U.S. and Canadian industry.

Since that contract was signed in 1979, Chrysler workers have lost more than \$1.1 billion in wages and benefits. Despite these givebacks, the union work force at Chrysler has dropped by 45 percent.

Now, however, Chrysler is again booming, with profits at record levels: \$2.38 billion in 1984 and more than \$1 billion in the first half of 1985. Chrysler Chairman Lee Iacocca received a 1984 bonus of \$1.19 million and at least another \$5 million in stock options.

Larry Leach, president of a 4,000-member UAW local, stated that his members "are at the point where they say they won't take any more concessions. . . . They've seen what Lee [Iacocca] got. They are united."

One week before the strike began, Chrysler UAW retirees picketed the company's headquarters demanding parity with retirees from Ford and General Motors. All Chrysler pension plans have been frozen since 1981, and Chrysler retirees now receive as much as \$135 per month less than their counterparts at the other big U.S. auto companies.

Despite the corporation's record profits, Chrysler is demanding a new round of deep concessions from its work force.

The company is demanding a two-tier wage structure, in which newly hired workers would receive only 75 percent of full pay and fewer benefits. New workers would not reach full pay for three years.

Chrysler also wants changes in work rules that would increase speedup, eliminate thousands of jobs, and weaken the union.

In 1982, Canadian Chrysler workers, who were at that time still in the same union as U.S. auto workers, walked off their jobs to demand higher wages and the return of earlier gains that had been given up in the 1979 contract.

After 38 days on the picket lines, the Canadian workers forced Chrysler to agree to a contract providing higher wages and benefits to workers on both sides of the border.

government policies in Central America by actively participating in the sizable April 20 anti-war actions.

Union ranks more active

These changes occurring in strikes and other union actions go beyond immediate contract demands, important as they are. For one thing they actively involve the union ranks in more meetings, more discussion, and more actions, as in the Hormel strike. P-9 members walk picket lines, demonstrate at banks, speak to meetings of other unions, support working farmers, and participate in other activities that involve the majority of the local's members. These activities register important gains for union democracy and help workers see the importance of national and international solidarity with the political struggles of Black South African unionists and with working people in Central America.

It is in this light that the strikes referred to reflect a little more democratic participation of the membership, a quicker tempo in the development of solidarity, and a growth in polit-

ical awareness. The development of all these tendencies is critical for strengthening the trade unions after decades of weakness brought on by business unionism and declining rank-and-file participation.

The task of progressive-minded union activists is to join in this process and help strengthen labor by actively participating in the unions. This is the most effective way of advancing the fightback against a continuing corporate-government offensive. □

More aid to Afghan rightists

The U.S. Congress has approved \$250 million in further covert military aid to counter-revolutionary forces in Afghanistan. A Senate source said that the funds, approved in September, would be used for large quantities of ammunition, small arms, grenade launchers, and antihelicopter weapons. The money will be funneled to the rightists through the Central Intelligence Agency.

Growing North-South contacts

Family reunions across border highlight reunification issue

By Will Reissner

When the Korean War ended in 1953, an estimated 10 million people were permanently separated from their families when they found themselves on opposite sides of the military demarcation line.

For more than three decades since then, the border between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north and the Republic of Korea in the south has been hermetically sealed.

This division led to countless tragedies among Korea's 60 million people.

In all that time, personal letters and telephone calls were not permitted between the two sides of the divided peninsula.

But in September a first crack was opened, as 30 people from North Korea's capital, Pyongyang, and 35 from Seoul, the capital of South Korea, crossed the armistice line to meet with separated family members.

At the same time, troupes of entertainers from Pyongyang and Seoul also crossed the border to perform.

North Korean authorities had proposed that the initial, emotional reunions take place in private, allowing family members to greet each other without the glare of publicity surrounding them.

The South Korean officials, however, insisted that all meetings among family members take place in a large public room filled with spectators and reporters.

South Korean provocations

During preliminary meetings in Seoul in May to arrange the reunions, the South Korean officials displayed a provocative attitude. A cultural presentation for North Korean Red Cross workers turned out to be a film on the 1984 Olympics, which North Korea had boycotted. And an attempt was made to take the North Koreans on a tour of the Olympic Stadium in Seoul (see accompanying article).

In Pyongyang in August, South Korean officials staged a walkout halfway through a mass gymnastics event held in their honor at Moran-bong Stadium.

At the North Korean dance troupe's performance in Seoul, written instructions told the carefully screened audience to limit itself to "polite applause" at the beginning and end of the performance, and all the North Korean programs were confiscated at the door as the spectators left.

The South Korean dance troupe's performance in Pyongyang provocatively featured a backdrop photograph of the Seoul Olympic facilities.

The tensions that marked these exchanges



People's Korea

Min Kyong Ok of Seoul meets sons from north for first time in 35 years.

came as no surprise to anyone, given the level of hostility between the U.S.-backed military regime that rules capitalist South Korea and the workers' state in the North.

But the fact that these reunions took place at all marked a step forward in the development of relations between the two Korean states, a process that has been strongly pushed by North Korea for more than a year.

The first breakthrough took place in September 1984, when hundreds of North Korean trucks and 12 North Korean freighters delivered vast quantities of relief supplies to the flood-ravaged South.

North Korea had offered to mount similar relief efforts in 1956, 1957, and 1961, but had been rebuffed in each case.

Soon after the delivery of the North Korean relief supplies, the two sides set up a hot line between their respective Red Cross offices, the first direct telephone connection between the two countries since an earlier hot line had been disconnected in 1976.

One week after the hot line was reestablished, the North Korean government proposed talks with the South on trade and economic cooperation. This offer was grudgingly accepted by the military regime in Seoul.

The result has been steadily growing contact between the two governments in recent months. In August, a ninth round of Red Cross talks was held. On September 18, a fourth meeting of economic officials from North and South took place, followed by the September 20-23 family visits and dance performances.

On September 25, a second round of North-South parliamentary talks took place, and on October 8-9, officials from North and South met to discuss North Korea's proposal to co-host the 1988 Olympics now scheduled to take place in Seoul.

Little of substance has been achieved by any of these meetings. But the fact they take place at all represents an important change after the decades of total lack of contact across the military demarcation line.

These contacts are, in fact, the result of a

concerted North Korean effort to reduce military tensions on the Korean Peninsula. North Korea is threatened by hundreds of thousands of South Korean soldiers and nearly 40,000 U.S. troops backed by 1,000 nuclear weapons, poised on its border.

Each year the Pentagon organizes gigantic "Team Spirit" military maneuvers, involving practice air, land, and sea invasions of North Korea by hundreds of thousands of troops.

In addition, Washington has been pressing Japan, Korea's former colonial ruler, to join in a three-way alliance with South Korea and the United States against the North.

North Korean officials also fear that the Pentagon is preparing to deploy nuclear-armed missiles in South Korea, minutes from Pyongyang.

This military threat has forced the North Korean government to spend as much as 24 percent of its gross national product on military preparedness.

Call for pacts

In October 1983, in an attempt to reduce tensions on the peninsula, Pyongyang proposed three-way talks with Washington and Seoul to culminate in the signing of a nonaggression pact between the two Korean states and a peace treaty with the United States to supplant the 1953 armistice agreement.

Although Washington turned a cold shoulder to the North Korean proposal, Pyongyang has continued to make direct approaches to Seoul.

The military rulers of South Korea have been forced to agree to an ever-widening web of talks and exchanges with the North, despite their lack of any desire for improved relations.

Although the South Korean regime is determined to perpetuate the division of Korea, it must pay lip service to the idea of reunification, which remains the goal of the vast majority of Koreans on both sides of the military demarcation line.

In addition, Seoul must at least *appear* to be interested in better relations with Pyongyang because the South Korean military regime is anxious to insure worldwide participation in the 1988 Olympics.

The South Korean government sees the Seoul Olympics as an opportunity to gain international recognition and respect. Having committed huge sums and a great deal of their prestige to the success of the Olympics, the generals in Seoul worry that their plans could be ruined by a large-scale boycott of the games by the many countries that have diplomatic relations with North Korea but not South Korea. □

A boycott of Seoul Olympics?

North Korea proposes co-hosting solution

By Will Reissner

Could the Olympic Games survive a fourth consecutive boycott? The world may find out after the 1988 competition, scheduled to take place in the South Korean capital, Seoul.

In Montreal in 1976, 31 African and Asian countries withdrew from the Olympics because New Zealand's team was allowed to compete. They were protesting New Zealand's sports relations with the racist apartheid regime in South Africa.

Then in 1980, President Carter's administration in the United States organized a boycott of the Moscow Olympics, and in 1984 the Soviet government led a boycott of the Los Angeles Games.

The possibility of a major boycott of the Seoul Olympics increased when representatives of North and South Korea ended two days of talks in early October with no agreement on North Korea's proposal that Olympic events take place on both sides of the demilitarized zone that has divided Korea since the 1950-53 Korean War. The two governments will meet again in January.

Seoul's view of Olympics

The South Korean capital was selected as the site of the 1988 games at a 1981 meeting of the International Olympic Committee. Since then the South Korean government has made the Olympics a cornerstone in its drive to win international acceptance for a "two Koreas" solution to the status of the divided Korean Peninsula.

The Seoul government expects that teams will participate in the 1988 games from many countries that do not have diplomatic relations with South Korea. The South Korean military regime hopes that this participation in the Olympics, and the worldwide exposure it will get from the games, will then pave the way for formal diplomatic recognition.

Use of the Olympics is only one aspect of Seoul's multifaceted campaign for a permanent division of the Korean Peninsula and Korean people.

The South Korean government has also, for example, been urging simultaneous United Nations membership for North and South Korea, both of which now have observer status at that world body.

The North Korean government, on the other hand, remains committed to the ultimate goal of Korea's reunification. It opposes any change in UN status because that would formalize the existence of two Koreas, and has proposed that the 1988 Olympics be jointly hosted by North and South Korea as a step toward reunification.

North Korea has also proposed that a joint Korean team participate in the games.

Castro's letter

The suggestion that Olympic events take place in North as well as South Korea was first broached by Cuban President Fidel Castro in a Nov. 29, 1984, letter to Juan Antonio Samaranch, president of the International Olympic Committee.

The Cuban leader wrote, "we consider Seoul not to have been the best choice of venue for the 24th Games. The Korean nation has been artificially and arbitrarily divided into two. . . .

"The Olympic Games in Seoul, as they are conceived now, do not help the unity of the Korean nation, nor do they help heal the wounds of war or really promote peace, harmony, cooperation, and friendship among the peoples."

Alluding to the three previous boycotts, Castro expressed doubt that the Olympic Games can "withstand many more" crises. But, he argued, "a last and perhaps irreversible crisis can be prevented" by changing the character of the Seoul games.

In his letter to Samaranch, Castro suggested that the 1988 Olympics "be shared by the two parts of Korea." This suggestion, the Cuban president wrote, "is my strictly personal opinion. I do not know how the leaders of the two Korean territories and those of other countries view this issue, but at this point I see no other possibility of honorably saving the coming Games."

Other figures have also objected to the Seoul site.

The head of the Soviet Olympic committee, Marat Gramov, told visiting Japanese politicians in late 1984 that South Korea is not "an appropriate place" for the Olympics. Gramov pointed to the fact that many countries do not have diplomatic relations with South Korea and to the presence there of numerous U.S. military bases.

An Italian member of the International Olympic Committee also criticized the Seoul site and suggested that the games be moved to a neutral location.

The North Korean government initially proposed that the 1988 games be moved to Yugoslavia, a leading member of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries.

'Games will divide Koreans'

In March 1985, Fidel Castro reiterated his call for sharing the Olympics, in an interview with U.S. Congressman Mervyn Dymally. The Cuban government later distributed the

text of this interview widely.

When asked by the U.S. congressman if Cuba would send a team to Seoul in 1988, Castro responded: "There's been no decision in this regard." He noted that the Olympics are scheduled for "a country where a bloody war was waged — a war in which hundreds of thousands of people from many nations died" and "which inflicted deep wounds on the Korean people."

Under the present plan, Castro maintained, the games will divide rather than unite Koreans. "Rather than healing the wounds, they will infect them," the Cuban president told Dymally.

Castro also pointed to the fact that the country "is crawling with U.S. bases and U.S. soldiers." Nearly 40,000 U.S. troops are stationed in South Korea.

"To insist on holding the Olympic Games as these have been planned, totally disregarding these historical realities," Castro said, "will, I believe, create a very serious problem for the Olympic movement — no matter how much whistle-stopping Samaranch may do in Europe, in the socialist countries, and everywhere else."

Regarding participation in the Seoul Olympics, the Cuban leader argued that "the Olympic games, as they've been planned, are going to create some very embarrassing situations, morally speaking, for many countries — not just for the socialist countries but for many Third World countries, as well."

He also reported that leaders of many countries in the nonaligned movement had expressed support for the idea of sharing the Olympics between North and South Korea.

North Koreans endorse Cuban proposal

The Cuban leader's proposal for sharing the Olympics was formally endorsed by the North Korean government on July 30, 1985, when Vice-premier Chong Jun Gi proposed that North and South Korea "co-host the 24th Olympic Games."

Chong also suggested that the games be called the "Korea Olympiad" or the "Pyongyang-Seoul, Korea, Olympiad" and called for half the events to be held in the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, and half in Seoul.

On the other hand, he argued, "if the Olympiad is held in one part of divided Korea, it will further encourage the splitist moves to keep Korea divided" and would "aggravate the confrontation and antagonism between the north and the south and heighten the tensions on the Korean Peninsula."

Vice-premier Chong added that "socialist countries and many nonaligned and Third

World countries strongly opposed the hosting of the Olympic Games in Seoul." He warned that if the games take place "in disregard of such world public opinion, the socialist countries and many nonaligned and Third World countries will have no alternative but to neglect the Olympiad."

But "if our proposal for co-hosting is realized," Chong continued, "all the countries including those who have opposed Seoul and planned [to] boycott will participate in the 24th Olympiad and the Olympic movement will be saved from the crisis."

The North Korean official added that the co-hosting proposal would "contribute to the prevention of Korea's permanent division and the acceleration of her peaceful reunification."

The possibility of a boycott of Seoul was raised more explicitly by Fidel Castro in a July 10 press conference in Havana. There Castro stated: "I really cannot understand how a socialist country that abstained from going to Los Angeles could now go to Seoul."

Betray principles for gold medals?

Speaking of Cuba's own participation, Castro stated that although Cuba had not felt threatened by participating in the Los Angeles Olympics, it had not sent a team "out of solidarity with the socialist countries."

"What are we going to do now?," he asked. "Are we going to forget that Korea exists?"

Would that be moral? Would that be just? As a revolutionary state, as a socialist country . . . are we going to betray principles for a few gold medals? No way."

In the three years between now and the opening of the games, a solution may yet be found that will allow all countries to participate in the 1988 Olympics.

But as time passes, pressure will build for a boycott of the games by those countries that do not have diplomatic relations with South Korea's military regime.

On September 16, Soviet Communist Party chief Mikhail Gorbachev told a visiting delegation from the Japan Socialist Party that the socialist countries "must take joint action" regarding the 1988 Olympics. Gorbachev indicated that he had already held discussions with North Korean officials regarding Pyongyang's joint-sponsorship proposal.

The Chinese government has indicated that a Chinese team will take part in the Seoul Olympics. But it is possible that the close ties between the Chinese and North Korean governments, forged in their common fight in the Korean War, will lead China to reconsider if the North Koreans actively urge a boycott.

North Korea is also part of the 95-member Movement of Nonaligned Countries, while South Korea is not. A North Korean call for a boycott would receive a sympathetic response from a large number of nonaligned movement members. □

there will be any in Seoul under a repressive, bloody regime — a regime that is an exact replica of [Chilean dictator] Pinochet's, or which Pinochet patterned after the Korean one. You know of the horrible violations of civil rights that are being committed there; you know that South Korea is crawling with U.S. bases and U.S. soldiers, besides being the property of U.S. transnational corporations.

To insist on holding the Olympic Games as these have been planned, totally disregarding these historical realities, will, I believe, create a very serious problem for the Olympic movement — no matter how much whistle-stopping Samaranch may do in Europe, in the socialist countries, and everywhere else and no matter how many trips multimillionaire [Association of National Olympic Committees head Mario] Vázquez Raña may take in his swanky private jet to the African countries and the rest of the Third World, after having sold the venue of the 1987 Pan American Games to Indianapolis for \$25 million, thus depriving Cuba of that right.¹ In spite of their optimism, it won't be easy for them to extricate the Olympic movement from the enormous trap in which it has been placed.

Let's wait and see what the reaction of the Third World, of the non-aligned movement, will be; what the reaction of the socialist countries — which didn't attend the Los Angeles Games, because of lack of security — will ultimately be; and what China is going to do. (It should be kept in mind that 100,000 sons of the Chinese people died there, fighting against the U.S. troops that invaded what is now the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.)

Frankly, I believe that the Olympic Games, as they've been planned, are going to create some very embarrassing situations, morally speaking, for many countries — not just for the socialist countries but for many Third World countries, as well.

I've talked with several Third World leaders, and they like the idea; they feel it is fair and consider that the only possible solution for the situation that has been created is to share the Olympic Games. I believe it's the only thing that would avoid serious difficulties and a possible setback for the Olympic movement.

The Olympic movement was created in the time of colonialism. So far, the Olympic Games have served to parade the rich, industrialized countries' wealth, good nutritional standards, and excellent technique. It would be worth analyzing how many medals have been won by athletes from the Third World, from those countries that lack sports facilities, physical education and sports instructors, and proper nutrition for the children and young people from whose ranks the athletes must come.

How many medals have they won in the

DOCUMENTS

'UN should run Olympics'

Castro blasts International Olympic Committee

[The following is reprinted from the July 21, 1985, issue of *Granma Weekly Review*, published by the Cuban Communist Party in Havana, Cuba. Footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Last March, President Fidel Castro granted a long interview to Professor Jeffrey Elliot and Congressman Mervyn Dymally of the United States. Many economic, political, and historic matters were dealt with in depth in the course of the interview, which continued for several sessions.

As part of that talk, and in response to a question by the interviewers, President Fidel Castro stated Cuba's position regarding the present situation of the international Olympic movement and the next Olympic Games to be held in Seoul in 1988.

The complete text of that part of the interview follows.

Mervyn Dymally. One final question for me, and then Dr. Elliot has two.

Is Cuba going to send a team to the 1988

Olympics in Korea?

Fidel Castro. There's been no decision in this regard. We've addressed the Olympic Committee, raising the need to share the Olympic Games between the two parts of the Korean territory, because we feel that if the Olympic Games are held in a country where a bloody war was waged — a war in which hundreds of thousands of people from many nations died, which caused destruction, and which inflicted deep wounds on the Korean people — those Olympic Games, as they have been planned, will be sectarian. Rather than uniting, they will divide. Rather than healing the wounds, they will infect them. They won't serve the purpose of peace and cooperation among the peoples.

For this reason, we've proposed to Mr. [Juan Antonio] Samaranch, president of the International Olympic Committee, that the Games be shared between the two parts of the Korean territory, as the only possible solution.

The problems that cropped up [at the 1984 Olympics] in Los Angeles should be kept in mind. There wasn't any security in Los Angeles; it would be difficult to argue that

1. In 1982, Cuba requested that Havana be named the site of the 1987 Pan American Games in the event that Ecuador decided it was unable to host them. Mario Vázquez Raña, head of the Pan American Sports Organization, agreed to this arrangement in 1983. But in 1984, without consulting Cuban officials, Vázquez Raña awarded the 1987 games to Indianapolis.

Olympics that have been held, and how many have the United States and other industrialized countries won? On many occasions, those events serve to foster scorn for the countries of the Third World — the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America: so backward, so incapable, so impotent, so intellectually stunted that they hardly ever win a medal in the Olympics.

Every four years, those Games measure the inferiority of the Indians, Blacks, yellows, and mestizos and the superiority of white society, even though it is the U.S. Blacks who win most of the medals for the rich, white, industrialized society of the United States.

Samaranch has requested that the United Nations support the Olympic movement. I agree completely, though I don't think we see eye to eye on concepts, aims, and intentions. I feel — and I have thought this for a long time — that the United Nations should not only take an interest but also take a hand in sports, just as it does with science, education, culture, health, industrial development, and the economic relations among countries.

I definitely favor the United Nations having an agency like UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, or UNDP² that will advance, promote, and support sports and physical education. Sports and physical education are vital activities for the health, education, recreation, and well-being of man. Participating in sports and physical exercise could do more than a million doctors for mankind.

Nowadays, physical exercise is used as therapy to prolong life and combat many ailments. Sports and regular exercise educate, discipline, develop the will, and prepare human beings for life and work.

I think I owe it to sports that I was able to hold up under the difficult conditions of life in the mountains [during the Cuban revolution] and then tolerate 26 years of intensive political work without any hypertension or a heart attack.

Yet more than 4 billion people in the world have only a vague idea of what sports are. National and international sports organizations could go on operating independently of this United Nations agency to which I'm referring. Even the reformed Olympic movement could go on existing — but with truly democratic rules, whereby all countries would be represented by delegates elected in each of them — under the guidance of the United Nations. Even the Church was once reformed, so why shouldn't the Olympic movement be?

Perhaps it would be preferable for this United Nations agency to handle the Olympics. It's a matter not of the United Nations supporting the Olympic Committee but of the United Nations reorganizing and directing the Olympic movement.

The resources for sports events should be used to help the Third World countries —

2. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; United Nations Children's Fund; World Health Organization; United Nations Development Program.

South Korea repression

In recent months Gen. Chun Doo Hwan's government has carried out a string of political arrests and firings in an attempt to stifle opposition to military rule in South Korea.

Twenty college students were sentenced to up to seven years in jail on October 2 for having staged a four-day sit-in at the United States Information Service (USIS) building in Seoul last May.

The students had demanded a full investigation of the military's suppression of a 10-day uprising in the city of Kwangju in 1980. Korean troops killed an estimated 2,000 people there. The students had also called for a public apology from the U.S. government for the decision by U.S. Gen. John Wickham to allow Korean troops under his command to take part in the repression in Kwangju.

During the trial, one of the defense lawyers was disbarred for taking part in a student demonstration, leading to the resignation of the rest of the defense team.

In August, the military regime drafted a bill establishing "reorientation" centers for South Korean students judged to be radicals.

Students could be sent away for up to six months, without benefit of trial. Education Minister Sohn Jae Suk explained, "students should not be active in politics."

Although protests led to the withdrawal

of the bill, the camps are in place and the government warns that it will reintroduce the legislation if student protests continue. The government claims that the law is "designed not to control and punish students subject to its provisions but to properly guide and protect them."

In recent months, the government has charged that Sammintu, a national student organization, is procommunist and has arrested or charged 86 of its members. Thirteen were charged with violating the National Security Law and could be sentenced to death if found guilty.

In addition, since June, 88 people, most of them students, have been arrested on charges of spying for North Korea.

In August, the Education Ministry dismissed 15 elementary and high school teachers for having written "seditious" articles. The ministry also removed the president of Seoul National University for having refused to expel seven students who had taken part in the USIS sit-in.

Police placed dissident political figure Kim Dae Jung under house arrest for five days in August to prevent him from attending the convention of the main opposition party.

In a show of force, the government has also staged public military exercises during which mock invasions from the North are put down by heavily armed "defenders."

especially the ones with the least resources — to develop sports, so they, too, will have the right to host the Olympic Games.

So far, the Games have been held only in rich countries, with the sole exception of the ones that were held in Mexico. Who have won all the medals in the Olympic Games?

What use has been made of the fabulous amount of money that was collected in Los Angeles — the \$200 million? It's been said that the money will be invested in sports facilities in the state of California. There, as well as in the rest of the United States, is precisely where the greatest number of sports facilities already exists.

Why isn't it invested in a poor Latin American country — in Bolivia, Ecuador, or Central America? Why isn't it invested in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mozambique, or other African countries? Why isn't it invested in helping to build sports facilities in poor countries in Asia and other Third World countries?

The granting of \$200 million to the richest state in the richest country of the world shows the weaknesses and anachronistic ideas of the Olympic Committee, which is trying to bring professional sports into the Olympics.

This grant amounts to pillage, outright robbery, and is morally indefensible, since the proceeds of the Olympic games are the result

of the efforts of the athletes from all countries. Without them there would be no Olympic games, or any proceeds. They say they're going to return part of the expenses the Third World athletes incurred in Los Angeles. It's as insulting an act of charity as the little presents that Vázquez Raña takes the Third World sports leaders in his private plane.

I tell you: the Olympic movement was created in the time of colonialism, and many of its methods, its style, and its ideas are rooted in old ideas dating back from colonial times. We really aren't colonies any more. We don't need counts, marquesses, and millionaires to tell us what to do in the field of sports. That's why I'm in favor of having the United Nations take a hand.

Our peoples have more than enough physical and mental potential for sports; what we don't have is socioeconomic development, sports facilities, and food for the vast masses of the population — and, at times, even for the athletes.

I believe that the same thing is happening in sports as in the Third World countries' economies. Already, the big European cities — London, Barcelona, and Paris, the former colonies' capitals — are squabbling over which of them will host the 1992 Olympic Games, fighting over where the few athletes

from the neocolonial countries are going to play their role as also-rans.

What chance does Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola, the Congo, the Republic of Guinea, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, or any other African country have of hosting them?

What chance does Ecuador, Peru, Guyana, Panama, Nicaragua, or any other of the more than 100 Third World countries have of hosting the Olympic Games? When will one of these countries host them?

That's why I say, again, that the United Nations should step in. I think that, if this problem is discussed there, many interesting things will be brought out.

In short, I feel the same about this concept of the Olympic Games as I do about the relations between the rich industrialized world and the Third World.

You are asking me if Cuba is going to send

a team. There's plenty of time to think this over, reflect on it, and discuss it with friends in the Third World and the socialist countries. We have a lot of things to say about this.

If the Olympic movement is to be saved, I think they'll have to avoid the catastrophe of Seoul and share the Olympic Games. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea would be willing. I think this would help to save the Olympic movement and then transform it, because it can't keep on going from one crisis to another: a crisis in Moscow, a crisis in Los Angeles, and certainly a crisis, the way things are going, in Seoul. That crisis — which is institutional, not situational — must be overcome.

Once this is done, the Olympic movement must be transformed — reformed — because it can't go on like that. Some tiny European countries that have few athletes have two rep-

resentatives on the International Olympic Committee, while other countries that are more important in terms of sports have none.

This isn't an organization that represents different countries; rather, it is a self-serving, oligarchic, autarkic institution that names its representatives from the countries of the world.

In short, since you asked me, I'll frankly tell you it's an institution that was created and organized along lines dating from the past century — from the Middle Ages, if you wish — like the orders of chivalry during the Crusades. It's being manipulated by the big Western economic powers; politics is mixed up in this, and I think the most serious issue is Seoul. Where did the idea come from? Who inspired it? How could they make such an absurd decision?

In any case, as I said, we have a long time to think about it and reach a decision. □

Peru

Interview with Hugo Blanco

'The left should maintain its total independence'

[The following interview with Hugo Blanco, a leader of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) of Peru, appeared in the June–July 1985 issue of the PRT's magazine *Combate Socialista*. The PRT is the Peruvian section of the Fourth International. The translation from Spanish and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Question. What is your assessment of the election results?

Answer. The results of the election¹ show, on the one hand, that the Peruvian people were already fed up with being governed by the right wing, whose aim is to serve the big imperialist companies. Serving those interests, the right wing was drowning the national majority in hunger and unemployment.

On the other hand, the APRA's wide margin of victory shows us that the great majority of Peruvians still do not see that the only real solution to the crisis in which imperialism has sunk us is to energetically challenge im-

perialism and break our dependency.

The Peruvian people have voted for change, but not radical change. The APRA government's administration will show them that superficial reforms will not end the growing state of misery of the Peruvian masses.

Q. What should be the left's attitude toward the new APRA government?

A. The left makes up a significant minority of our people. Its obligation is to lead the great majority toward the understanding that deep-going, even costly and painful, transformations are necessary to end the situation of growing hunger and repression our people are suffering.

In order to fulfill this task, we must take several things into account. First, that the APRA will try to carry out superficial reforms. Second, that the majority of the Peruvian population have placed their confidence in APRA.

These points lead us toward independent activity by the left, aimed at consistently defending the interests of the masses of people through thoroughgoing reforms. Therefore, the left must clearly show itself as an alternative to the APRA's ineffective reformism. It should not support a government that it knows will not decisively confront the people's enemies in order to solve the people's problems, a government that will instead capitulate to those enemies.

However, this independent activity does not imply sectarianism toward the reformist measures of a government that has popular support. Not to recognize that there has been any change from the previous People's Action Party-Christian People's Party government

would cause the masses, who believe in the APRA, to have contempt for us and would needlessly alienate us from them.

We must try to march with these masses to make the reforms meaningful and deepgoing. The more advances in these reforms, the more advances for the people. When the APRA stops, the masses, if correctly oriented, will confront it.

Practice will quickly provide us examples of nonsectarian methods of working-class political independence.

Under this new government, one important question presents a serious challenge for the left: how to maintain the independence of the mass organizations from the bourgeois state.

The APRA is the oldest party in Peru, with broad experience in winning and holding onto the leadership posts of the mass movement. It knows how to combine peaceful, even democratic methods, with use of the club, chain, and pistol. Now it has the added advantage that many sectors of the people will think that the government will look more favorably on requests made by a pro-APRA leadership. The APRA also has the advantage of being in charge of the government, with a ministry of labor and police force that see to it that the mass organizations are in APRA's hands.

The left will be unable to protect these organizations from the APRA's appetite if it continues the competitive and divisive practices among left parties and if it continues to show very little respect for the democratic will of the masses.

Only by correcting these methodological shortcomings can the left avoid the harmful consequences of the mass organizations be-

coming coupled to the bourgeois government's engine.

Q. There are many who place sole responsibility upon you for the breakdown of the ARI.² Five years later, what really happened in the ARI? Why the split?

A. The ARI reflected the desire of broad sectors of the revolutionary left to unify in a single front.

Unfortunately, those of us in the leaderships of the parties that made up this front did not know how to rise to the level required by the ranks.

Disputes over candidacies led to an insoluble confrontation between the UNIR and the UDP.³ The PRT's fundamental responsibility lies in not having ceded its candidacies in order to calm those appetites and salvage the front's existence, because the masses viewed the front as something much more than a simple electoral front.

Once the front broke down, the bourgeois press, the reformist press, and the press of the other sectors that had been part of the ARI began to place all the blame on the PRT and on me personally, creating the myth of "divisive Trotskyism." That myth is now spread even by some who had always been enemies of the ARI.

The weight of mythology among our people is still powerful. We should recall that there are sectors that do not vote for the left because they believe that communists kidnap children, kill old people, and collectivize women and toothbrushes.

Q. Your proposal for the left was identified with the formula "without bosses or generals." Do you think that is still valid? What do you think about the presence of businessman Gustavo Mohme on the Executive Committee of IU [United Left]? Is it true that the Sandinista revolution had an impact in changing your position regarding alliances?

A. In the first place, it should be noted that this formula does not refer to individuals, but rather to social sectors. We can find some bourgeois figures or high-ranking officers who, as individuals, might be revolutionaries.

The formula means that the bourgeoisie as a class and the high-level officers as a caste are incapable of solving our country's problems. Even the national sectors of the bourgeoisie and their counterparts in the military — although they also see themselves oppressed by imperialism and sometimes take some defen-

2. The Revolutionary Left Alliance (ARI) was organized on Jan. 18, 1980, as an electoral coalition of a wide range of Trotskyist, Maoist, and centrist forces, all supporting the presidential candidacy of Hugo Blanco in the May 18, 1980, election. The coalition fell apart just before the February 28 filing deadline for its slate.

3. The Revolutionary Left Union (UNIR) and the Democratic People's Union (UDP), a coalition of centrist organizations, each tried to increase their share of spots on the ARI slate at the expense of each other and the PRT.



"The Peruvian people were fed up with being governed by the right wing."

sive attitudes alongside the oppressed sectors — in the final analysis capitulate to imperialism. They understand that the dynamic of the anti-imperialist struggle for national liberation inexorably leads to socialism, which means the elimination of all the bourgeois sectors and their military institution.

The history of anti-imperialist revolutionary processes throughout the world provides countless examples, year after year and on all continents, of how bourgeois sectors who often call for the "unity of the entire people against imperialism" then use the people's strength only to negotiate concessions from imperialism for their own benefit and end up allying with imperialism.

We could cite the cases of Chiang Kai-shek in China, [Gen. Juan] Perón in Argentina, the Republican Party in the Spanish revolution, [Víctor] Paz Estenssoro in Bolivia, the [Gen. Juan] Velasco current in Peru, etc.

For this concrete historical reason it is necessary to educate the exploited classes — the working class, the peasantry, the urban middle class — around the axis of class political independence in order to liberate themselves from imperialism, not to serve as a tool in the hands of bourgeois sectors. This concept remains valid.

However, without trying to negate this assertion, we have seen cases of revolutionary processes, such as the ones in Cuba and Nicaragua, in which, due to special conditions of strong imperialist oppression, including against bourgeois sectors, these sectors, in their hopelessness, have for a time been drawn along by the anti-imperialist struggle of the impoverished sectors.

Of course, even in those cases the bourgeois sectors have ended up in the expected place: alongside imperialism. That is the case with

people like [Alfonso] Robelo and [Violeta] Chamorro in Nicaragua, who wound up being part of the government junta that arose from the revolution. Now they militarily attack Nicaragua, putting themselves in the service of imperialism.

What these cases teach us is that that we must strengthen ourselves by marching together with the oppressed sectors who still believe in these bourgeois leaderships, going through their experience with them, as happened in Nicaragua, where the people's disenchantment with Robelo and Chamorro took place as a process.

One thing we must bear in mind is that the Cuban and Nicaraguan processes were armed. This means that the revolutionary sectors did not yield to the bourgeoisie's methods. The bourgeoisie found itself drawn toward the methods of the exploited. This marks a fundamental difference with the daily capitulations of the reformists in the cases mentioned earlier.

It is one thing for the revolution to march at its own pace while the bourgeoisie stays in the middle of the road. It is another thing for the leaders of the masses to march at the bourgeoisie's pace.

Regarding the case of Mohme, naturally, if the left allowed his current to determine the IU's path, that would be one more repetition of the history of processes held back by the bourgeoisie. But if the IU follows a revolutionary pace, Mohme will be the one who has to decide how far he will accompany it.

Q. How do you assess your own intervention as a member of parliament? Do you feel satisfied? Based on your experience, what should be the role of left-wing members of parliament?

A. I feel that at this stage it is correct for the left to participate in the parliament. I feel that participation in parliament is a very important task that complements the struggles of the Peruvian masses.

Unfortunately, although most of the left groups say they agree with this, in reality they place central importance on the parliamentary activity and use extra-parliamentary struggles to further their electoral and parliamentary interests. I think that this is a dangerous deviation that we must guard against.

Parliamentary work is important as a complement to the mass struggle. It is a platform that we should pay attention to. And we must give it the necessary technical and propagandistic support.

The members of parliament must reflect both the deepgoing needs of the popular sectors and the whole country, as well as the day-to-day struggles of our people, which they must take part in, sharing all the ups and downs.

In terms of my own experience, the fact of being a member of a weak party without the necessary infrastructure of technical and propagandistic support has very much reduced my ability to function in parliament.

Another cause of weakness in this task was

the fact that this was not my only task as a party member. I think that my role is not in parliament but rather as a mass leader through being a leader of the peasant movement. Being a member of parliament very much weakened my work in that field.

Q. What is your opinion regarding the IU? Do you think it should be transformed into a single party?

A. The IU brings together the majority of the activists, the militants who work day in and day out representing the immediate interests of the various sectors of the people (unions, neighborhoods, peasants, students, etc.).

Those militants not only reflect our people's most deeply felt needs today, but they also are clear that the only solution for our country is socialism.

This activist layer, these thousands of activists who have sprung up throughout the country, are the ones who are leading and are going to lead the Peruvian revolution.

Unfortunately, the leadership of the IU has a long way to go to reach the level required by this broad vanguard. Up to now the IU has been scarcely more than an electoral front with a profoundly antidemocratic method of functioning.

In terms of whether the IU should change from a front to a party, I think that the first task should be to try to make it into the front that it claims to be and that the broad vanguard hopes it will be. A front that provides orientation for the day-to-day struggle of the masses, that places itself at the head of that struggle, unifying and centralizing it. A front that practices the most thoroughgoing internal democracy and that presses democracy within the mass movement.

If that happens, we could then think about the possibility of it becoming a party. Meanwhile it is not worth worrying about.

Q. Do you think that it is possible for what are called the revolutionary sectors of the IU to come together in a single party? If so, who would you include and what conditions would have to be met to achieve it?

A. I think it is possible and necessary.

The APRA will have to try to take control of the mass organizations and place them at the service of the government, a bourgeois government that fundamentally accepts the imperialist order.

Reformist currents within the left are already providing plenty of examples of capitulation toward the APRA.

It is urgent that there be a unified resistance by the revolutionary left in order to maintain the independence of the mass movement and lead its ensuing struggle. This is a gigantic task, which goes beyond the powers of a single party.

I think that the PUM, the UNIR, plus sectors of the IU that are not part of the national leadership, such as the PRT and Voz Comunista, must get together to work out a close revolutionary alliance to struggle for the IU to

take on the role that the ranks hope for and that I mentioned previously.

If this alliance reaches convergence around program and convergence around important



Hugo Blanco addressing rally during 1980 election campaign.

actions, we will have established the basis for the formation of a strong revolutionary party.

Q. What do you think of SL [Shining Path] and MRTA [Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement]?

A. Peru is a country with a long tradition of mass movement organized in all spheres and with broad experiences in struggle, with developed democratic practices.

Taking this reality into account, the revolutionary task is to develop this movement while trying to improve it.

What SL and MRTA do is act without regard to this movement. This is an attitude that has no justification.

We cannot speak about SL and MRTA without mentioning the fierce bourgeois repression against these movements and against a great part of our people, using terrorism as a pretext. It is our obligation to develop a vast mass movement organized to stop this repression. Unfortunately, up to now, the revolutionary left is not taking on the task of encouraging the organization of this movement, which goes beyond solely denouncing the repression.

Q. Why did you move to La Convención?

A. I think it is healthy for us revolutionary activists to have a social base so that we can better understand and interpret the various needs of our people and can more precisely determine their opinions, their level of consciousness, and their level of combativity. That social base can be a work arena among workers, peasants, street vendors, or office workers. It can also be a residential area such

as a shantytown. It can be a study center, such as a high school or university.

Only a party rooted in the varied environments of the masses of people can draw out

and develop a correct political line. Of course, having such roots is not sufficient in and of itself, but it is necessary.

Although the vicissitudes of my political life have led to my being part of other spheres of society, such as a worker in Lima, Argentina, and Sweden, a member of an organized neighborhood community in Chile, etc., undoubtedly the social base with which I have had the most interaction and where I have been able to be most effective has been the peasant movement of La Convención.⁴

I have been a peasant in La Convención and a member of this movement at the most critical points in its history, when these peasants confronted the hacienda owners and eventually drove them off and took the land for themselves. This epic was the starting point for the elimination of the system of large-scale estates on a national level.

It pushed the peasants of La Convención into the vanguard of the country's exploited layers and had an international impact. It is natural that those of us who took part in this process should remain linked by deep ties.

Presently the movement in La Convención is going through a different stage. The basic problems pertain to commercializing produc-

4. Blanco was a leader of the peasant unions in La Convención, in the department of Cuzco, from 1958 until his arrest in May 1963. He was tried in 1966 by a military court and sentenced to 25 years in prison. In 1970 Blanco was freed under the pressure of an international campaign.

Blanco's experiences in the peasant movement in La Convención are described in his book *Land or Death* (Pathfinder Press, 1972).

tion and improving living standards through roads, schools, medical posts, satisfying the need for potable water and electricity, and so on. It is the continuation of the struggle for the land. Of course the national problems of the rising cost of living and repression are also problems facing La Convención.

Fortunately, the level of organization, the internal democracy, and the consciousness that the fundamental form of struggle is the broad mobilization of the masses continue to characterize this movement.

For these reasons, I feel that despite its deficiencies it continues to be, fundamentally, a model of organization and struggle. I feel that this increases this movement's responsibility to see that this methodology is spread on a national level.

From this vantage point, membership in La Convención is important, not as a romantic nostalgia for past struggles, nor with the intention of mechanically and naively reproducing attitudes of struggle that corresponded to a specific reality, but rather to take up the present tasks of La Convención for itself and for the country.

My role as a political leader is not separated from my role as a trade union leader. The PRT must establish itself as the standardbearer and spokesperson for this disciplined organization of the masses, for thoroughgoing internal democracy, and for collective struggle.

The PRT must work so that in practice, and not just verbally, the IU takes on the task of spreading this revolutionary methodology.

My return to La Convención does not mean abandoning my political responsibilities on a national level. Quite the contrary. Bearing in mind that Peru is not Lima, this return to my base strengthens my political functioning on a national scale. I don't think that the fundamental thing in the Peruvian revolutionary process takes place in the corridors of the parliamentary chambers or in Lima's intellectual circles, although these also fulfill a function.

I am a national political leader of my party as a peasant militant from La Convención.

It should be remembered that my prolonged absence from La Convención was not voluntary. So the question ought to be formulated in another manner: "Why did you only recently move to live in La Convención?"

My response is that my absence was due to my being jailed for nearly eight years. Then I was given my freedom but was not permitted to leave Lima. Within a few months I was deported.

When I was allowed to return from deportation in 1975, I was constantly followed and was captured after a trip to La Convención and deported a second time.

I was able to return to the country as a candidate for the Constituent Assembly. They only allowed me to stay in Peru 40 days before deporting me for the third time.

They had to let me return because I was elected a member of the Constituent Assembly. My later situation as a member of parliament prevented them from again deporting me.

Now, with my period as a deputy ended, I

think that the political situation in the country does not lend itself to their deporting me once again. It is true, as we all know, that the repression is taking on other features that are stronger than deportation. But the obligation of activists is to continue carrying out our tasks in our respective fronts whatever the dangers that brings.

Q. What would be your message for the left in this new period?

A. I think that in the previous answers you find the basic points. However, it is still necessary to stress our tasks:

- To work for the unification of the mass movement. For example, it is unacceptable that there continue to be three national peasant union federations led by the left, rather than a single federation.

- To really push for the centralization of the mass movement into a powerful, all-encompassing coordinating committee that answers the desires of the ranks, as shown through the National United Struggle Command, the People's Assemblies, the Meeting of Defense Fronts, etc.

- To maintain and strengthen the indepen-

dence of the mass movement with regard to the APRA government.

- To channel the combativity of the masses that is expressed in a thousand forms, taking into account that the central tool for our liberation is these actions of struggle.

One aspect, sometimes the most forgotten or underrated, the most underestimated by the left, is the deepgoing respect the masses have for democracy, for not imposing cadres as "leaders" of the mass organizations. Such cadres may be loyal to their party leadership but, not being leaders recognized by the masses, they voluntarily or involuntarily frustrate the development of these organizations.

The use of maneuvers to impose executive bodies is an illness that greatly weakens the movement. We must fight this bureaucratism. Gaining access to the political leadership of the mass movement must take place by convincing the masses, not by bureaucratic and administrative measures and maneuvers.

We must confront these gigantic tasks in a united and coordinated manner. This must be the IU's fundamental function. Therefore, we must establish and strengthen it in the most far-flung places in the country. □

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(signed)
Patti Iiyama
Business Manager

Nicaraguan unionists discuss war

Vow to defend power whatever sacrifices are required

[Nicaragua's Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) sponsored a national meeting of unions in Managua September 6-8. Some 1,300 delegates attended, the bulk of them from the CST, which organizes the big majority of industrial workers in Nicaragua, and from the Rural Workers Association (ATC). Both are led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

[The gathering was called the Second Evaluation of the Fourth National Assembly of Unions — "Leonel Rugama." Rugama was a Nicaraguan poet who fell in combat fighting with the FSLN forces in the struggle against the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza.

[Over the last year, there have been two other national union assemblies sponsored by the CST. The first took place in September 1984. The resolutions of that meeting were printed in the Nov. 26, 1984, issue of *Intercontinental Press*. The next meeting, held in February 1985, made a "first evaluation" of where the union movement stood in its campaigns of military defense of the country, increasing production, and defending the living standards of the workers and peasants. Two documents from that meeting appeared in the April 15, 1985, issue of *Intercontinental Press*.

[At the most recent conference, a second balance sheet was drawn. The assembly adopted a resolution that emphasized three main tasks of the labor movement: winning the war against the U.S.-backed mercenaries; producing with greater efficiency; and defending the political power of Nicaragua's workers and peasants. It also emphasized the importance of the worker-peasant alliance in Nicaragua.

[The resolution was published in the September 9 issue of the FSLN daily, *Barricada*. The translation and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

As working people we are clear: the principal conquest the people made on July 19 [1979] was the seizure of political power. This power, led by the FSLN, represents the fundamental interests of the workers and peasants. It is an example for all people fighting for their liberation.

Based on this, and conscious of the intensification of the mercenary aggression against all Nicaraguans, we are obliged to defend our power at the cost of whatever sacrifices are necessary, to allocate more than 50 percent of the national budget to defense of the country, and to redouble our efforts to play the combative role of active rearguard, guaranteeing human and material resources to the war fronts.

The interventionist war has decisively deepened the serious economic and social situation we are suffering. Working people understand the war not as a strictly military phenomenon, but rather as a political and social one.

The war has caused us material losses of more than \$1.35 billion and more than 12,000 people killed, wounded, or kidnapped, both civilians and soldiers.

In this struggle, we back the military strategy of our Sandinista Armed Forces, who have dealt the enemy more than 9,400 casualties — 2,500 of them in the first half of 1985 — advancing toward the strategic defeat of the counterrevolution.

To continue dealing blows to the mercenary enemy and to win the war, working people need to strengthen our conscious and combative stance, to continue to integrate ourselves into all the forms of defense of the revolution, both military and civilian.

We recognize the patriotic spirit of the youth who are conscientiously fulfilling their Patriotic Military Service (SMP).

Subsistence economy

We working people are conscious that the economic crisis we are going through is a product not only of the world economic crisis and the war of aggression, but also of our limitations as a poor and underdeveloped country. Our material resources are severely strained.

This difficult situation demands that we strengthen the centralization of the economy and maintain iron discipline to put in a full day's work and thus meet our economic and technical goals by achieving and surpassing



Innovator at a Managua factory.

the productivity standards we have set. In doing so, every work center is defending not only its own interests, but those of the Sandinista People's Revolution. We have to work harder, despite the limitations that exist, for the survival of the people and of the country.

The situation also obliges us to ensure that a realistic policy of survival is practiced that puts a brake on inflation and costly new projects. We must be conscious on all levels that we are a poor country under attack.

In addition, we must work for the efficient distribution of human and material resources, increased patriotic consciousness, and an extra effort by all the working people.

Strengthen political-ideological work and education on economics

The unions must continue to push forward political-ideological work among the ranks, raising their level of knowledge and understanding of social and economic developments.

In the same way, we need to continue the campaign of education about economics through systematic discussion of current problems. This will help the workers to approach production, establishment of labor norms, the innovators' movement, and emulation in a revolutionary way.¹

We will continue this campaign by explaining the decisions made by the union movement in this Second Evaluation.

We also need to work together to make the newspaper *Trabajadores*² an ideological and organizational tool of the union movement.

Strengthen the worker-peasant alliance and unity within the workers' movement

We consider the worker-peasant alliance the fundamental pillar on which the revolution rests.

To strengthen this alliance and make it real, the union movement supports the demand for land by those families and rural communities that have not yet benefited from the Agrarian Reform Law, just as we support the allocation of economic resources to the countryside, both for production and to supply basic consumer needs, thereby fighting speculation. For our part, we pledge with our labor to guarantee the industrial products, and through our incorpora-

1. The establishment of labor norms refers to setting productivity standards. The innovators' movement refers to workers who create new parts for machinery to replace broken and worn-out equipment, usually of U.S. manufacture, that Nicaragua is unable to import today.

2. *Trabajadores* is the fortnightly newspaper of the CST.

tion into defense together with the peasants, to contribute to the strategic defeat of the imperialist army.

And we support the steps being taken to build a single union leadership aiming for the unity of the workers' movement, with the goal of decisively consolidating the revolutionary process.

Given this situation, the Second Evaluation of the Fourth National Assembly of Unions — "Leonel Rugama" resolves the following:

I. Defense

Defense is the fundamental task of the union movement. Therefore we will work in an organized way to:

A. Mobilize working people for the war fronts, in the SMP and SRA.

B. Assure the consolidation of the Sandinista People's Militias (MPS), the Reserve Units, and the protection of strategic targets.

C. Decisively strengthen Civil Defense and Revolutionary Vigilance.

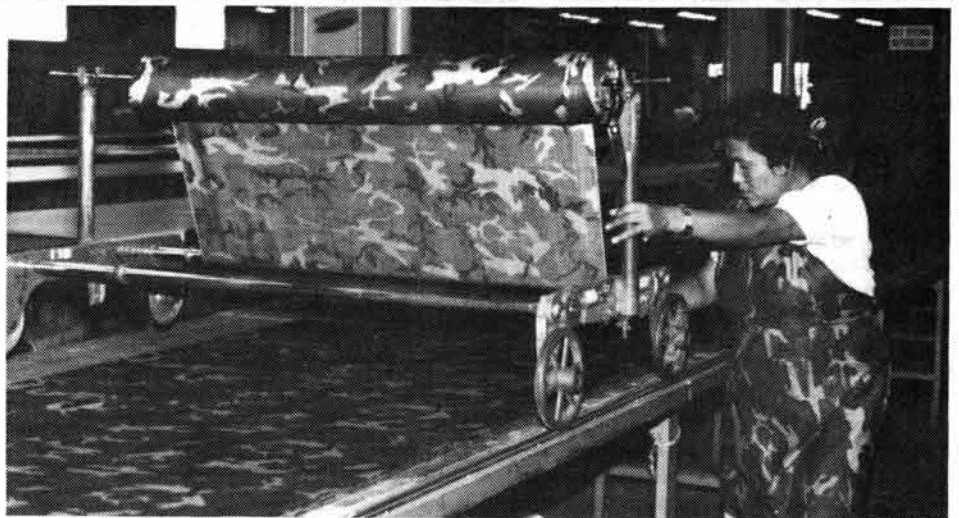
D. Continue attention to the relatives of those who are mobilized.

II. Supply of goods and price controls

In order to develop organized means to make up for the loss in real wages, we will form a national commission that will review:

A. The reduction of prices and the establishment of price controls on basic products, through a rigorous review of the costs of production and transport and a substantial decrease in the profits of companies that import and sell goods.

B. The correct application of the agreement between the CST and the Ministry of Domestic



Hobbrook Mahn/IP

Producing camouflage cloth for military at Enaves textile plant in Managua.

Commerce (MICOIN), with the goal of ensuring distribution through official channels: CATs [Workers' Supply Centers], commissaries in the countryside and in work centers, and the territorial network.³

3. Certain basic goods are distributed through official channels where quantities are rationed and prices are controlled. The geographically based part of the system is the territorial network, consisting of small stores in each neighborhood, selling the most basic foodstuffs (rice, beans, oil, etc.), toothpaste, and toilet paper.

Commissaries in the workplaces and in the countryside are intended to give priority to productive

To focus energies on eliminating the source of supply to the speculative market and to urge MICOIN and the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform (MIDINRA) to maintain strict control of distribution, elim-

workers, making basic products available at reasonable prices so workers are not forced to shop at the private markets, where goods are a great deal more expensive. In Managua the commissaries, which varied widely from one factory to another, have been superseded by the Workers' Supply Centers (CATs). These are larger stores with a wider variety of goods, including not only food, but clothing and tools as well.

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FIDEL CASTRO
SPEECHES 1984-85



WAR & CRISIS
IN THE
AMERICAS

inating the middlemen as much as possible.

C. Encouraging production for self-sufficiency in the countryside, and compelling state and private enterprises to support this activity.

III. Productivity and wages

A. To confront the current economic crisis and the effects of the war of aggression, the union movement, together with the state, will carry out the following tasks immediately:

1. Revise the work and wages system⁴ to correct errors and contradictions in it.

2. Develop an aggressive plan of action so that the state, in every industry and later in every enterprise, will establish a wage incentive system geared to encouraging the surpassing of individual and collective quotas of production. To this end, the administration and the workers must reach agreement through the mediation of the Ministry of Labor (MIT-RAB).

3. Plan to study and apply a simple incentive system through norms that include:

- Labor discipline,
- Amount and quality of production,
- Efficiency, austerity, and conservation of resources,
- Rationalization of resources,
- Maintenance and care of equipment and tools.

4. To do this, we appointed a National Wages Commission.

B. In order to increase production and labor productivity, it is necessary to ensure adequate working conditions, in the present context of economic survival. Toward this goal, we will:

1. Ask the state to manufacture simple safety equipment (gloves, masks, aprons, etc.).

2. Urge the creation of a single administration for occupational health and safety.

3. Develop together with the state a single, coherent, systematic plan for preventive safety education for the workers, with the participation of labor organizations and the full support of INSSBI [Nicaraguan Institute for Social Security and Welfare], INISER [Nicaraguan Insurance Institute] and SINAFORP [National Program for Vocational Training].

4. Ask the state to allocate funds for safety equipment for the working people.

5. Ask the international labor movement and nongovernmental organizations to donate safety equipment.

IV. Implementation

A. We need to strengthen the role of the workers in the area of implementation, not only in production and services but also in managing the enterprises, in order to make effective the resolutions that will enable us to confront the economic crisis, the war, and the organizational and economic weaknesses we have, making a specific plan that defines:

4. The National System for the Organization of Work and Wages was initiated last year. It established categories for each major occupation in Nicaragua and set a uniform, national wage or salary rate for each category.

1. Measures in the enterprises and government institutions to guarantee discussion of production plans in each work center, and control and evaluation of the fulfillment of established goals in economic plans.

2. Build in to the constitution⁵ the participation of working people in institutional and economic action and the formulation of specific laws.

3. Exercise effective vigilance over the correct use and application of bank credit in agricultural and industrial production.

B. We need to participate in drawing up a special central plan to guarantee a successful harvest of export crops. This means organizing and mobilizing task forces for the harvests, relying heavily on government employees. It

5. Nicaragua's National Assembly has begun drafting a national constitution. Each political party in the assembly has presented its proposals for the constitution. Mass organizations, such as the unions, will put forward their recommendations as well.

also means improving the system of distribution and supply to guarantee bringing in the harvest, adequately maintaining the installed capacity for the harvests, and assuring the essential medicines will be available.

C. Strengthen the innovators' movement to ensure achievement of economic plans by the enterprises.

D. Organize voluntary work around those tasks that are most important to the economic plans of the enterprises, because our commitment is to produce with efficiency and austerity, giving our best efforts to strengthen our economy of survival.

E. Endorse the position presented to the National Assembly by the FSLN on drafting the constitution of the Republic of Nicaragua and the active participation of working people in the different stages of consultation which the Constitution Commission is carrying out.

Win the war!

Produce with efficiency!

Defend the power of the working people!

10 AND 20 YEARS AGO



November 3, 1975

Bikini island was once part of a ring of twenty-six small islands in Micronesia, forming a circle with a twenty-four-mile-wide lagoon in the center. About 160 persons lived on Bikini's total area of two-thirds of a square mile.

Today several of the islands have disappeared and only about 75 persons live on the desolate remains of Bikini. They do so at great peril to their lives.

After forcibly evacuating the island in 1946, the Pentagon exploded twenty-three nuclear bombs on the atoll. The blasts sank thousands of tons of World War II warships anchored in the lagoon and destroyed several of the islands on the western ring of the atoll.

After twenty-nine years of forced exile, the people of Bikini are suing the United States government. The aim is to force Washington to resolve the issue of their resettlement, and if possible, safeguard the return to their home.

The suit demands recognition of their elementary human and democratic rights.

WORLD OUTLOOK

PERSPECTIVE MONDIALE

(Predecessor of *Intercontinental Press*)

October 29, 1965

Luis de la Puente, head of one of the guerrilla fronts in Peru, was killed October 23, according to a press release issued by the general staff of the Peruvian army. The communiqué

said that the guerrilla leader, together with seven others, attacked a small ranch in the department of Cuzco, killing three peasants.

All eight freedom fighters were then killed by government troops as "they sought to flee."

In view of the decree passed by the Fernando Belaúnde Terry government last August providing the death penalty for anyone caught with arms in his possession, it may well be that the eight guerrilla fighters were captured and then simply butchered by the government troops. "Shot while trying to flee" is the standard Latin-American formula used to cover up the cold-blooded execution of prisoners.

The government claimed that the death of Luis de la Puente signifies the end of guerrilla fighting in the eastern part of Peru. Similar claims have been made repeatedly by government officials since last spring when the guerrilla struggle again took on fresh life after dying down for several years.

The Paris daily *Le Monde* [October 26], for instance, while agreeing that the death of Luis de la Puente "dealt a heavy blow to the insurrection," held that this did not necessarily mean the end of "extremist subversive activities," as claimed by the government. "It is not known if one of his lieutenants is now able to take the leadership in the maquis in the department of Cuzco."

Le Monde also noted that guerrilla activities increased to such an extent over the summer months that the Peruvian government not only decreed the death sentence for carrying arms, but resorted to the use of napalm.

Small items have continually appeared in the press in the past month concerning the indiscriminate dumping of napalm in the areas where guerrilla fighting has been going on.

Washington's air piracy aimed at PLO

Part of international campaign to isolate Palestinians

By Steve Craine

The U.S. government, with the unanimous backing of the big-business press, has used the hijacking of the Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro* by four Palestinians to go on an international campaign against the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

In addition to verbal attacks, this campaign included a brazen act of air piracy — the interception of an Egyptian passenger jet by U.S. warplanes over the Mediterranean on October 11.

Washington's outpouring of hypocritical denunciations of terrorism is designed to isolate the Palestinian movement and divert criticism from Israel's October 1 bombing of PLO headquarters in Tunisia. In that raid, Israeli jets flew 1,500 miles and destroyed their target with deadly accurate rocket and bomb runs. More than 60 Palestinians and Tunisians were killed in the raid. It was only by chance that PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat was not present at the time of the attack.

The Reagan government immediately hailed the Israeli air strike, calling it a "legitimate response" to "terrorist attacks." Even in later, more carefully considered statements, the White House apologized for its ally's action, calling it "understandable as an expression of self-defense."

But Washington was relatively isolated in its unqualified support for Israeli aggression. In

the United Nations Security Council, Washington succeeded in watering down, but not killing, a resolution condemning the attack. Even some imperialist governments voiced their strongest criticisms of Israel in many years.

When four Palestinians hijacked the Italian ship off the Egyptian coast on October 7 and controlled it for 51 hours, U.S. politicians and news media jumped on the chance for a propaganda bonanza.

Newspapers, magazines, and television news programs chronicled every detail of the ordeal of the ship's passengers, especially of the 82 Americans and the one casualty of the episode, Leon Klinghoffer of New York City.

PLO repudiates ship hijacking

What was not widely reported, and was completely ignored by the U.S. government, was the unambiguous repudiation of the hijacking by the leadership of the PLO. Arafat denounced the action from the start as harmful to the Palestinian cause. "It is our policy that we are against any kind of terrorism because we suffer from Israeli-organized terrorism," he said.

Arafat played a central role in mediating an arrangement to end the hijacking. Since the hijackers claimed to be acting in the interests of the Palestinian people, the PLO — which is recognized by most of the world as the representative of the Palestinians — took the re-



Yassir Arafat, "We are against terrorism because we suffer from Israeli-organized terrorism."

sponsibility to investigate and judge their actions.

But such an arrangement was unacceptable to Washington.

Washington seeks show trial

U.S. acquiescence to a PLO trial would imply recognition of the Palestinian organization. Furthermore, the U.S. government was more interested in putting the PLO on trial than in dealing with four individual Palestinians. This became all the more obvious when the Egyptian plane was in Italian custody after U.S. fighters forced it to land at a NATO base in Sicily. Washington initially was no less content to have the Palestinians tried in Italian courts than by the PLO.

U.S. troops at the Sicilian airfield were ordered to commandeer the plane and all its passengers in an effort to whisk them back to the United States for a show trial. But Italian police thought they had jurisdiction over the captives. The *Washington Post* cited an "intelligence source" who described "a confrontation that nearly led to gunfire" between the U.S. and Italian forces.

The Italian government refused a direct request from U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz to turn the Palestinians over to the U.S. authorities, but agreed to charge the four with the murder of Klinghoffer. It also rejected U.S. demands for the extradition of Moham-

Time running out on 'IP' offer

One of our favorite letters recently comes from a subscriber in Sweden, where we have a number of regular readers.

He writes, "My subscription to *IP* will expire with No. 20 of this year. This payment is a little late, but I hope I won't miss any issue."

"I've read *Intercontinental Press* since 1977," he adds, "and I wouldn't miss it for anything in the world. I can't imagine life without it. You're doing a marvelous job."

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price. This offer is only good until November 15, so you'll have to act fast. The details about it are in the ad on page 677.

We recently received a letter from a reader asking us to discontinue his subscription. Normally, this is bad news. But in this case it wasn't. The reader is a prisoner in Indiana who is getting out soon and is preparing for his release. He writes, "I will get a subscription after my release." We'll be looking forward to reestablishing this relationship.

Another prisoner, writing from Pennsylvania, says, "My *Intercontinental Press* is the favorite left reading material on B-block. We keep them on file." This is one of the highest tributes we could receive. We thank the men of B-block and hope they continue to find our publication valuable.

med Abbas, head of the Palestine Liberation Front, a tiny faction within the PLO to which the hijackers are said to belong. Abbas was accompanying the accused hijackers on the trip from Egypt.

When the Italian government allowed Abbas to leave the country for Yugoslavia, Washington raised a howl of protest, although no evidence has been presented that Abbas was involved in the hijacking. The U.S. press redoubled its efforts to portray him as both the mastermind of the hijacking operation and as an important ally of Arafat.

Reagan expected that the victory of U.S. armed forces — the largest in the world — over a civilian jet would be a feather in his cap, much like his 1983 invasion of Grenada. "We did this all by our little selves," he gloated.

The U.S. news media went wild in praise of Reagan and his skyjacking. "We Bag the Bums" and "Getting Even" were typical headlines. *Newsweek* led its 16 pages of coverage, "This time it was different: the good guys finally won one. And all across America, people stood a little taller, savoring the unaccustomed sense of righteous triumph." The same magazine characterized the Palestinians as a "swaggering crew of terrorists suddenly turned into cornered airborne rats."

The *New York Times* wrote that the attack "unleashed a taste for retribution that has been building for years."

An immediate victim of this chauvinist frenzy was Alex Odeh, regional director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, who was assassinated in a bomb attack in Santa Ana, California, on October 11.

Odeh had appeared the previous evening on a local television program and defended the PLO. "I think the media mistakenly linked the incident [the *Achille Lauro* hijacking] with the PLO," he had said. "The media ought to give the PLO and Arafat recognition, inform the public about the PLO as a political organization, and Arafat in particular as the chairman of the PLO who is a man of peace." For this statement, Odeh's office door was booby-trapped. The bomb killed Odeh and injured seven other people.

No group claimed responsibility for the bombing, but the ultrarightist Jewish Defense League hailed the killing. The group's chairman, Irv Rubin, said, "No Jew or American should shed one tear for the destruction of a PLO front in Santa Ana or anywhere else in the world."

In fact very little printer's ink was spilled on Odeh's murder — just as the Washington-based crusaders against "terrorism" have nothing to say when *contra* mercenaries murder children in Nicaraguan daycare centers or when the apartheid regime in South Africa guns down Blacks in a funeral procession.

Arafat excluded from UN event

Washington and its allies pushed to take advantage of the new political atmosphere in the Middle East following the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro*. The British government used

the incident as an excuse to call off a scheduled meeting with a joint delegation from the PLO and the Jordanian government. Had the meeting occurred it would have represented a breakthrough in winning recognition for the PLO.

In the aftermath of the hijacking, the U.S. government was also able to blackmail the United Nations into withdrawing its invitation to Arafat to take part in the international organization's 40th anniversary celebrations. On the momentum of this successful move against Arafat, Washington and its supporters were also able to block the participation of Sam Nujoma, leader of the South West Africa People's Organisation, which is leading the liberation struggle in Namibia.

In the Arab world the reaction to Reagan's sky piracy was one of condemnation. Street protests broke out in Cairo, resulting in "the most violent clashes between students and police . . . since the turbulent final years of Anwar Sadat's rule," according to the *Washington Post*.

A student told the *Post*, "The American

people must know the truth about the Egyptian people. They have had enough of Mr. Reagan and American policy toward the Middle East and the people of Palestine."

A Saudi Arabian newspaper commented, "The United States, if it is really out to check terrorism, would do better to stop Israeli terrorism against the Arabs."

A statement by the Cuban Foreign Ministry condemning Tel Aviv's October 1 bombing in Tunisia pointed out, "Once again, the Israeli government enjoys the full and absolute complicity of the government of the United States of America, its strategic ally . . ."

"This support from the U.S. imperialists encourages the Israeli regime to display absolute contempt for world public opinion. Acts such as this and the complicity of the main imperialist power encourage illegality and total lack of respect for civilized conduct in international relations, terrorist actions, and the indiscriminate use of force."

Now Washington has not only applauded the state terrorism of its Israeli allies, but has joined them in action against the PLO. □

Forums in Montreal and Toronto launch 'Nouvelle Internationale'

By Michel Dugré

[The following article is reprinted from the October 14 issue of *Socialist Voice*, a socialist paper published fortnightly in Montreal.]

* * *

The official launching of *Nouvelle Internationale* and the second anniversary of *New International* were celebrated by meetings in Montreal and Toronto organized by the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL). The two journals are magazines of Marxist theory and politics.

The Montreal meeting on September 20 attracted 40 people. Thirty came to the Toronto meeting the following evening.

The speakers at the meetings were Steve Clark, a member of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the United States, and Michel Prairie, one of the co-editors of the two magazines and a member of the RWL Political Committee.

Clark described the two main factors that led the RWL and SWP to undertake publication of these two magazines — the turn to the industrial unions by the two parties at the end of the 1970s and the Grenadian and Nicaraguan revolutions that occurred in 1979.

The turn to the industrial unions, Clark explained, forced us to "deepen our understanding of the historic line of march of the working class and its allies" to power. And it was and is essential for organizations aiming at the overthrow of the imperialist system to draw out all the lessons from the revolutions in Grenada and Nicaragua, he added.

That's what *Nouvelle Internationale* and

New International are for.

"They are tools," said Clark, "for building revolutionary parties in our own countries and also for building an international party."

Michel Prairie took up this theme again from the standpoint of the RWL's experiences in English Canada and Quebec. "There has never been," Prairie said, "a revolutionary communist party in the Canadian state which developed as a pan-Canadian party, a multinational party, with a strong representation of workers from Quebec in its membership."

That stems from the very big difficulties the communist movement has had in understanding the link between the Quebec national liberation struggle and the struggle by the working class for the overthrow of the Canadian capitalist rulers, he said.

It's precisely these types of questions that are raised by *Nouvelle Internationale* and *New International*.

Both meetings were followed the next day by a class in which Steve Clark described the national democratic character of the unfolding revolution in South Africa. His presentation was followed by workshops which discussed the importance of democratic tasks in the South African revolution such as the struggle for land, for a republic, for the building of a nation and a working class.

Nouvelle Internationale and *New International* are two indispensable tools for workers and farmers struggling to take the power from Canada's capitalist class and who want to profit from the historic experiences of the world working class and its allies to further their struggle. □