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Reagan Seeks More Funds for Nicaraguan 'Contras'



U.S.-financed counterrevolutionaries have been carrying out terror raids against Sandinista revolution.

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Endangers Revolution***

***Lesotho
Apartheid-backed Coup
Topples Government***

Guatemalan Rulers Put On Civilian Face

Reagan seeks more funds for Nicaraguan 'contras'

By Doug Jenness

U.S. President Ronald Reagan announced January 21 that he will ask Congress to approve up to \$100 million in aid to the counter-revolutionaries (contras) waging war against the Nicaraguan government.

A White House official said that at least \$60 million would be used for arms and other direct military aid. The rest would be earmarked for food, medicine, clothing, boots, and other supplies, which have been characterized by government officials as "humanitarian" aid.

Last June Congress voted to give the contras \$27 million in this kind of "humanitarian" aid. Spending authority for that appropriation runs out on March 31.

Reagan's disclosure of the new aid proposal was made at a meeting of Republican senators and came as Congress was returning from a month-long recess. White House officials said the administration expected to send the proposed aid package to Congress by early February.

The proposed increase in funding for the contras is aimed at reinforcing their grinding war against Nicaragua's Sandinista government. The goal of this contra war is to wear down the Nicaraguan people. Washington hopes that divisions will be created and deepened among Nicaragua's working people and that confidence in the Sandinista government will be eroded. The Pentagon is looking for conditions that could lead to an internal revolt, opening the door to overturning that government.

Costly war

Pentagon strategists are now calling this type of war "low-intensity conflict." But for the Nicaraguan people this conflict is far from low intensity — it is a large-scale and very costly war.

Fifteen thousand Nicaraguans have been killed in the past five years. Proportionate to the population, this is more deaths than the United States suffered in World War II. Thousands more Nicaraguans have been wounded and permanently maimed. Others have been kidnapped, tortured, raped, or otherwise brutalized.

The total economic damage exceeds US\$1.3 billion, a staggering sum for a country of 3.5 million people that earns less than \$400 million per year in foreign exchange.

Administration officials and Reagan supporters on Capitol Hill are expressing optimism about winning congressional support for stepping up aid to the contras.

The January 22 *New York Times* reported that some White House officials "believed the mood in Congress had markedly shifted in re-

cent months in favor of increased aid to the Nicaraguan rebels. 'We believe there has been a change in attitude,' a White House official said."

One administration spokesperson asserted that actions of the Sandinistas have contributed to this changed attitude, turning "friends into enemies in Congress with increasing internal repression of the church and the press, with the increased Cuban combat role, with their support for terrorism."

Congressional debate coming

The initial reaction of several prominent congressional Democrats, however, indicates that there will be a debate in Congress over the aid proposal.

When Speaker of the House Thomas O'Neill was asked on January 22 whether the proposal would pass, he replied, "Unless there's a big change in the House, I'd have to say no."

Congressman Michael Barnes from Maryland wrote a letter to the president arguing that "this would be a particularly bad time for the United States to increase the level of conflict in Central America."

The Senate minority leader, Robert Byrd of West Virginia, said he would "just have to wait and see" the details of Reagan's proposal.

The resistance of many congressmen to increasing aid to the contras reflects differences in the U.S. ruling class over policy in Central America. There is concern among many that the war will be escalated to the point where Washington will be committing massive numbers of its own combat forces.

The prevailing view in U.S. ruling circles, at this time, is that the political price for such an escalation would be too high. They know it would meet fierce resistance from Nicaragua's workers and peasants and would rapidly provoke a massive international protest movement.

The outcome of the debate that is opening in Congress is not a settled matter. It will hinge on many things, including international developments, the course of the war, and the level of antiwar opposition in the United States and internationally.

Greasing the skids

One point should be noted, however. Many liberal journalists and legislators who are critical of Reagan's proposal to substantially strengthen the contras are increasingly outspoken in condemning the Sandinista government. Wartime measures curtailing certain democratic rights, imposed by the Nicaraguan government to deal with internal sabotage, are being

pointed to as evidence that the Sandinistas have become "totalitarian."

By sounding this theme, many liberals are echoing the lies of the Reagan administration. The result is to undermine opposition to financing the contra gangs. If U.S. lawmakers are attacking the Sandinistas as "totalitarian," it is more difficult for them to be persuaded to argue against aid to the contras, especially when it has a "humanitarian" sugarcoating.

But "to Nicaraguans who have been killed, raped, and mutilated by the contras, the appellation 'humanitarian' aid rings brutally hollow," wrote Carlos Tunnermann, Nicaragua's ambassador to the United States, in a letter to the editor published in the January 23 *New York Times*.

"Foreign aid designed to improve the poor military performance of the contras," Tunnermann emphasized, "does not, under any reasonable definition, constitute humanitarian assistance."

The liberals' complaints about the Sandinistas and their fake distinction between military and "humanitarian" aid only help to grease the skids for Reagan's drive to get more help for the contras.

Reagan spokesman Larry Speakes told reporters that the White House would also seek government funding for the Angolan counter-revolutionaries, especially the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

However, a few days later Reagan withdrew the proposal. According to the January 26 *New York Times*, Secretary of State George Shultz looked into "the possibility of covert military aid with the intelligence committees in Congress and had found considerable opposition."

The White House and leading Republicans are now urging Congress to adopt a resolution that will present a general expression of support to UNITA when Jonas Savimbi, the principal leader of the South African-backed group, comes to Washington at the end of January. Savimbi is scheduled to meet with Reagan during his visit.

In motivating the proposals for stepping up aid to the Nicaraguan contras, Reagan said that it would demonstrate to the Soviet government Washington's strength and determination in the coming year. He particularly linked this stance to the next summit between himself and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. The meeting is scheduled for later this year.

In a statement relayed to reporters by Speakes, Reagan said, "Make no mistake about it . . . the ability to succeed in that meeting will be directly affected by Gorbachev's perception of our global position and internal solidarity."

Talks peace, makes war

Reagan's message is clear. Neither agreements on arms reductions nor progress on détente between the United States and the Soviet Union will alter one bit Washington's resolve in continuing its dirty war against Nicaragua.

Unfortunately, Moscow's orientation plays into Reagan's hand. The Soviet leadership has

made the goal of an arms agreement and détente its principal international campaign. Opposition to U.S. aggression in Central America has been placed on the back burner. Throughout the world the Communist parties, labor organizations, and peace groups most directly influenced by Moscow are concentrating most of their energies on the campaign around disarmament and détente.

This, for example, is the approach of the Communist Party and many peace groups in the United States. In the January 17 issue of the CP's newspaper, the *Daily World*, Michael Myerson, executive director of the U.S. Peace Council, is quoted as saying: "The peace movement has its agenda cut out for it now. First priority must be to get the Reagan administration to meet the Soviets on the issue of testing. To stop testing would put a cap on the arms race. You can't create new weapons or be sure of old ones without testing."

Myerson said the U.S. Peace Council is calling on "all peace forces — not just disarmament groups, but labor, civic and youth organizations, etc. — to . . . get Reagan to conclude a test ban agreement with Gorbachev when he comes to the U.S. for the second summit this year."

Myerson's comments were in response to Gorbachev's January 15 proposal on halting nuclear arms tests. The Soviet leader announced that Moscow is extending for three months the moratorium on underground nuclear tests that it began last August. He repeated his offer to continue the ban longer if Washington agreed to join in. The Soviet Union, he said, would agree to "appropriate verification," including "on-site inspections wherever necessary."

Antiwar activists' first priority

Gorbachev's proposal will be widely supported by working people all over the world, and deservedly so. But that does not make it the *first* priority for those fighting for peace. To make it so is a *diversion* from what should be the central priority — building a massive international campaign against Washington's mercenary war in Nicaragua. No number of summit meetings or arms pacts will bring peace to Nicaragua. And if Reagan can appear to be a peacemaker through this summitry, he will, in fact, have strengthened his hand in waging war against Nicaragua.

Supporting a ban on nuclear tests, or any other arms reduction proposals, should not be done at the price of abandoning the fight against the war going on in Central America right now. Rather such agreements should be supported as part of the fight to get Washington to end its aggression against Nicaragua.

More than ever, an international campaign against Washington's contra war is needed. Waiting until there is a major new escalation of the war, such as direct U.S. air attacks or the involvement of U.S. combat troops, would be a serious blunder.

It is not inevitable that the U.S. rulers, even with their massive resources, will succeed in wearing down the Nicaraguan people and im-

posing a government obedient to Washington's dictates. The outcome of the war is not decided. A big international antiwar movement, solidly based on Nicaragua's right to self-determination, can make a difference in that outcome.

If the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and all the parties that look to it for direction were to make this campaign their first priority, it would qualitatively add a powerful force to the struggle against U.S. intervention in Central America. □

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Rulers adopt a democratic facade

New civilian president promises austerity, okays military repression

By Steve Craine

Many Guatemalans did not wait for the January 14 inauguration of the country's first civilian president in more than 15 years before they took to the streets to test the true extent of the "democratic opening" that Guatemala's military regime has been preparing for the past 18 months.

On January 10 about 1,000 relatives of victims of government repression marched through Guatemala City demanding to know the truth about the fate of their missing family members. It was the largest such action by the Mutual Support Group for Families of the Disappeared (GAM) since that group was founded nearly two years ago.

The demonstration was joined by a contingent of teachers, who threatened a nationwide strike if the new government refuses to accept their demands for higher wages.

The GAM marchers carried a large banner expressing their question to President-elect Marco Vinicio Cerezo: "More than once you told us, 'I can't do anything now, but when I take office there will be justice.' What pretext will you use now?"

As the procession passed police headquarters, the demonstrators shouted, "Murderers! Murderers!" An estimated 50,000 Guatemalans have been killed or "disappeared" since 1980 at the hands of the police and army or private right-wing death squads functioning with the complicity of the authorities.

Despite Cerezo's pledge to be independent of the military, in the weeks leading up to his inauguration he repeatedly stated that he would not order any investigation into the whereabouts of missing persons or the involvement of the army and police in political killings.

Cerezo also demanded that the teachers' union call off its threatened strike "in the national interest." Eduardo Meyer Maldonado, who was education minister-designate, tried to dissuade the teachers, commenting that "it doesn't seem right that there should be a strike just at the moment when we are all trying to do our part to install a democratic regime."

Expectations tempered with skepticism

After 31 years of virtually uninterrupted military dictatorship, Guatemalans' expectations for the new civilian government are tempered with a degree of skepticism.

The return to civilian rule has been a project of Gen. Oscar Mejía Víctores, who seized power in August 1983 and became the last in a long line of military dictators. In July 1984 a constituent assembly was elected, and in late 1985 presidential and congressional elections were held in two stages.

None of the eight candidates allowed to participate in the elections posed a challenge to the continued power of the Guatemalan ruling classes or to imperialist domination by the United States.

Of the major contenders in the election, Cerezo's Guatemalan Christian Democracy (DCG) was generally seen as the least tied to the military dictatorship. The party won a majority in the new congress, and its presidential candidate, Cerezo, won the December 8 runoff election by a 2-to-1 margin over his only remaining rival.

The 1.1 million votes he received, however, represented only about 30 percent of the total number of eligible voters in the country, reflecting a high rate of abstention and a smaller but significant number of voters who cast blank or defaced ballots.

Throughout the period of the elections, the government did not diminish its repression against the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG), which has spearheaded guerrilla resistance to the regime.

The URNG did not officially call for a boycott of the vote, but *Informador Guerrillero*, a magazine published by the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP), one of the URNG's constituent groups, hailed the high abstention rate in the first round as a "brave rebuke" to "military continuity hidden within a civilian government."

Guatemala's 31 years of military rule were ushered in by the U.S.-sponsored coup in 1954 against the government of Jacobo Arbenz, which had begun to implement a number of popular reforms. U.S. corporations, notably the United Fruit Co., felt their superprofits were threatened by Arbenz's reforms and encouraged the CIA to help establish a military dictatorship.

Since 1954 a succession of generals has ruled the country with an iron hand, keeping the population in poverty, ignorance, and fear. In recent years, however, the military officers and the landlords and capitalists they represented have begun to see a number of advantages in changing their method of rule.

'Improved' methods of control

In 1984 and 1985 military control over the rural population was systematized and written into law. Having dealt some serious blows to the insurgent forces, the generals now believe they can control the guerrilla movement without resorting to indiscriminate terror, which had reached a peak of 500 killings a month in 1981.

The centerpiece of the counterinsurgency strategy is a network of rural concentration

camp, called "model villages," throughout the countryside. The idea of the model villages is taken from the "strategic hamlets" imposed by the U.S. Army in South Vietnam in the 1960s. A large portion of Guatemala's impoverished peasants have been forced into prison-like conditions in these villages, where they are kept under almost constant surveillance.

A system of "civil defense patrols" has been set up with the same end in mind. More than 1 million Guatemalan men between the ages of 18 and 55 have been dragooned into these units, where they are subject to military discipline but for the most part are forbidden to carry weapons.

Military domination of all aspects of life in the countryside is completed with a scheme that puts control over all development expenditures in the rural areas under the jurisdiction of the National System of Interinstitutional Coordinators for Reconstruction and Development, which is run by the army.

The model villages, civil patrols, and coordinators were all institutionalized in amendments to the country's constitution adopted last year.

With this system locked into the constitution and the considerable successes registered against the guerrillas, the generals think they can afford to ease up on the reins a little.

While guerrilla actions in the countryside are now seen as less of a threat than during their peak in 1978-82, the Guatemalan rulers are increasingly concerned by rising discontent in the cities.

Much of this opposition focuses on the economic plight of the Guatemalan masses, both rural and urban. And the economic crisis of the country is another force impelling the generals to look for a democratic facade.

The Guatemalan economy has been essentially stagnant for several years. Between 1983 and 1984 production suffered a particularly sharp decline. Income per person decreased about 15 percent from 1980 to 1984 and stood at only US\$498 in the latter year. The country's foreign debt increased more than tenfold since 1976, and last year the quetzal was devalued to one-third of its longstanding position of parity relative to the U.S. dollar.

President Cerezo admitted in his inaugural address that two-thirds of Guatemalan children are malnourished.

The military regime has lacked the credibility needed to mobilize important sectors (including many capitalists) behind any consistent plan to deal with this economic crisis.

In April 1985 Mejía Víctores was pressured to withdraw a package of tax hikes and new

import duties less than a week after they were announced because of opposition from the business sector. In September mass demonstrations of students and workers in Guatemala City forced him to back down on increases in city bus fares.

The government has not attempted to propose a comprehensive tax plan since the debacle of last April. But immediately after winning the December election, Cerezo expressed confidence that as an elected government his administration would not have trouble winning support for new taxes.

Need to restore image

The military regime also lost a great deal of credibility in the international arena in recent years. The success of the GAM in publicizing cases of the thousands of victims of repression in the country and the revelations of military abuse of human rights in other countries, such as Argentina, have put the spotlight on the Guatemalan regime's barbarities.

As Cerezo himself put it before his inauguration, "We need Guatemala to restore its image abroad, and this kind of situation is detrimental to us."

Cleaning up Guatemala's human rights image would help smooth the way to increased aid from Washington. In 1984 the Reagan administration took the first step to circumvent a 1977 congressional ban on military aid to Guatemala. But in the first year of renewed military grants, the total amounted to only \$300,000.

To show its support for Guatemala's "democratic opening," the White House requested \$10.3 million for the Guatemalan military for fiscal year 1986. It hopes to send an additional \$77 million in economic aid.

Thus far, despite the increased expectations of many Guatemalans for real change, Cerezo's statements and actions have fit in well with the military's plans.

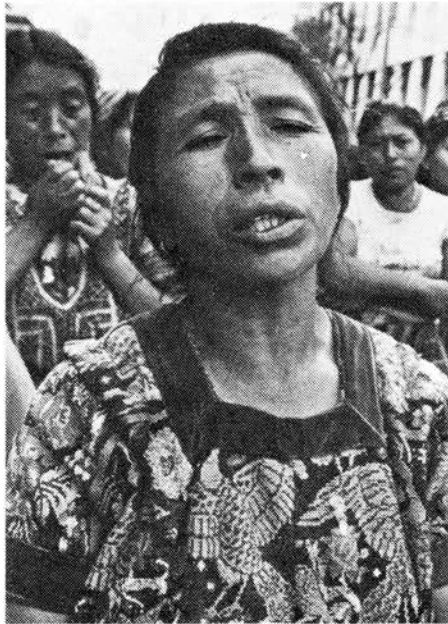
Austerity was the keynote of Cerezo's inaugural address on January 14. "There are no funds to begin new projects," he told the people. In the face of a "terrible crisis," he said, they must expect a period of "great austerity and great sacrifice."

He also indicated in a preinaugural interview that he had no intention of instituting a land reform that might bring some relief to the majority of Guatemalans, who are peasants without adequate land.

Cerezo further signaled his willingness to cooperate with the outgoing military regime by consulting with General Mejía Víctores on his appointment of a defense minister. Cerezo's choice, apparently approved by Mejía Víctores, was Gen. Jaime Hernández, commander of the Guard of Honor, an army unit stationed near the capital. Hernández had in the past held senior posts in El Petén and El Quiché provinces, the main areas of counterinsurgency activity.

No investigation of military

The major risk confronting Guatemala's former military rulers in permitting this trans-



Mothers of the disappeared demonstrate in Guatemala City.

fer of government is the possibility that they will be held accountable for their many crimes against the people as is now happening to Argentina's former rulers.

Since he won the presidential election, Cerezo has been questioned many times on his intentions in this regard. He has always answered very carefully that, as president, he has no authority to initiate legal proceedings against anyone.

Although the new president has repeatedly proclaimed his independence, it is generally assumed that nonprosecution of those responsible for the death squads is part of the deal he has struck with his predecessors. As an unnamed foreign diplomat commented to the *Christian Science Monitor*, "he cannot even touch the issue of past human rights abuses and survive. If the Army even suspects that the crimes are going to be investigated and its officers tried, it will topple him instantly."

Cerezo stresses that he will govern by the constitution and that he expects the military to abide by it also. This stand implies he will not seek to undermine the army's authority over the model villages, civil defense patrols, and interinstitutional coordinators, since these institutions were written into the constitution by Mejía Víctores. The new constitution also provides that officers cannot be tried in civilian courts.

Cerezo's foreign policy

On inauguration day the new government indicated its interest in improved relations with the other countries of Central America, including the government of Nicaragua. Nicaragua's president, Daniel Ortega, attended the swearing-in ceremony, as did the presidents of Panama, Colombia, and El Salvador and the president-elect of Honduras. Cerezo announced plans to host a summit meeting of Central American heads of state in the next few

months.

He has said he is interested in restarting the Contadora Group's negotiations for an end to armed conflicts in the region and has proposed the eventual formation of a Central American common market.

Although these positions do not put the new Guatemalan government squarely on Washington's side in its attempts to isolate and militarily overthrow the Sandinista government in Managua, Cerezo has stated his support for "pluralism" in Nicaragua — one of the code words under which Reagan is waging his counterrevolutionary war.

Cerezo openly supports the Social Christian Party (PSC) of Nicaragua, which is affiliated with his Guatemalan Christian Democracy. The PSC is one of the parties that attempted to disrupt the 1984 elections in Nicaragua by joining the CIA-supported boycott. It is now the most vociferous capitalist party outside the Nicaraguan National Assembly.

In late December Cerezo made brief visits to all the Central American countries. In Nicaragua he met with members of the PSC. "I can tell you with all my heart," he told party organizers, "that I respect and admire the struggle you are waging here in Nicaragua, which is an example for all of Latin America." The Guatemalan embassy in Managua hosted a reception for the president-elect during his visit. All the Nicaraguan guests were active opponents of the Sandinista government.

Another Christian Democratic party affiliated with the Guatemalan DCG is that of Salvadoran President José Napoleón Duarte. His success in providing a civilian veneer to the brutal dictatorship in El Salvador provides an image of the role the Cerezo administration in Guatemala is expected to play. Together the governments in El Salvador and Guatemala represent a trend that is being called the "christian democratization" of Central America, a process that Washington has encouraged.

Noticias de Guatemala, a news bulletin published by Guatemalan exiles in Mexico City, pointed out in a December editorial that "the Guatemalans who voted for the DCG did so as an act of protest against the Army; on the other hand, they unwittingly strengthened a political project alien to their democratic aspirations." The editorial continued, "The DCG will attempt to keep the hope of its supporters alive. However, it will soon clash with the inherent contradictions of the antipopular project and will be unable to justify or to stop repression."

An ominous indication of the likelihood of continued repression was the reappearance of death squads such as the Secret Anticommunist Army (ESA) and the Mano Blanco (White Hand).

On December 12 the body of 27-year-old teacher Beatriz Barrios Marroquín was found on a road in southern Guatemala. Her hands had been cut off, and with her body was a cardboard sign reading, "There are more to come." The ESA took credit for the murder. About the same time it also issued a threat to kill Nicaraguan President Ortega during his visit for the inauguration. □

Guatemalan peasants hit terror

Protest murders, displacement, crop destruction

[The following communiqué was issued by the Peasant Unity Committee (CUC) of Guatemala in December 1985.

[The CUC, organized in 1978, is part of the January 31 People's Front (FP-31), which takes its name from the Jan. 31, 1980, massacre of 27 people occupying the Spanish embassy in Guatemala City to call attention to massacres of peasants by the Guatemalan army in El Quiché province.

[The communiqué is taken from the December 1985 issue of *Noticias de Guatemala*, published in Mexico City. The translation from Spanish and the footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

We, the workers of the countryside, Indians and poor *ladinos* [those of Spanish or mixed ancestry], organized in the Peasant Unity Committee (CUC), state before national and international public opinion:

1. While the regime makes propaganda about the return to constitutionality, claiming that the soldiers are returning to their barracks and democratic civilian government has arrived, the army has stepped up repressive actions against the defenseless civilian population of villages north of Nebaj and Chajul in El Quiché department who are resisting being concentrated.¹

In September, using more than 2,000 kaibiles [special counterinsurgency troops] and members of paramilitary gangs, the army began a strong military offensive against the villages of Batz Choccolá, Trapichito, Batz Saj-sibán, Ixtupil, Tzi Xacbal, Batzumal, Kejchip, Vicampanabitz, and Vicalamá.

According to incomplete reports, in the course of the army actions 322 peasants were captured, 18 peasants were murdered, 778 homes were destroyed, and 7,132 cuerdas [760 acres] of corn were destroyed. Hundreds of cuerdas of fruits and vegetables were destroyed, 1,200 quetzals were stolen, and animals, corn, work tools, and kitchen utensils were consumed, stolen, burned, or destroyed.

2. The majority of those killed, wounded, and captured were old people, children, the sick, and women with many children.

3. These facts prove that the counterinsurgency program remains fully in force, that it is being and will continue to be pushed ahead by the army, with the result that more misery, pain, and death will be visited upon the peasant population solely for exercising its right to freely organize for its most elementary rights

and to prevent the destruction of its ethnic-cultural unity.

4. This population has shown great heroism and determination in the face of constant repression and persecution by the army. By using security measures and emergency plans, this population has avoided having a larger number of dead, injured, and captured.

All these events take place in the context of massive preelection propaganda, in which the very rich, the army, and the government invested great resources and efforts to try to strengthen their interests and to satisfy the interests and objectives of the United States administration, concretized in its overall plan to establish its misnamed Regional Democracy in Guatemala and Central America. The U.S. administration wants to implant this "democracy" through implementing its counterinsurgency policy, and has taken a further step in that direction by carrying out the "free" elections in our country.

It has already been shown that rejection and repudiation of the elections was the winner in these elections, with a high percentage of void or blank ballots (227,000) plus the total absence of votes from hundreds of thousands of displaced people inside the country and tens of thousands of refugees abroad.

The validity of the elections and of the new government is further contradicted when we add the climate in which the elections took place: large numbers of disappearances, murders, massacres, military control on the national level, and a large number of voters forced and coerced into showing up to cast ballots to vote for a new government nominated by the political parties that have traditionally brought only more hunger, exploitation, repression, and discrimination to our people.

The Christian Democrats have, directly or indirectly, played an active part in the various electoral processes that have taken place in Guatemala.

Will the new civilian government, most likely headed by [Marco] Vinicio Cerezo of the Christian Democrats,² really be able to send the military back to the barracks, which in our country means ending the massacres, the genocide, the scorched earth policy, and the various forms of military control and subjugation of the population?

Will it be able to solve the economic and social crisis and bring to trial all those directly responsible, with the army at the head of the list?

The counterinsurgency policy and its implementation in our country is not a problem of a particular government, much less is it an im-

pulsive question. Clearly it is one of the vital foundations that enable the system to survive and is of fundamental interest to the U.S. empire.

That is why the so-called democracies of the Yankee criminals and terrorists, of the rich and the Guatemalan army, will be no more than window dressing, which our people cannot forget or tolerate in their history.

The acts that we have exposed stand in contrast to the high degree of preparations for the electoral process and the supposed climate of the beginning of real democracy in our country. Regarding these acts:

a. *We hold responsible* the army and the military dictatorship for the repressive actions against our people that have left in their wake 18 murdered peasants, 322 others captured, as well as the damage, thefts, and other criminal deeds that are thus far only a part of the army's offenses.

b. *We demand* with great urgency the freeing of all those who were detained and that their physical and moral integrity be totally respected.

c. *We demand* that the new government insure that these terrorist practices cease and proceed to bring those responsible for all these criminal deeds against the civilian population to trial and punishment.

d. *We repeat* our demand that the new government dissolve the civilian patrols, free the population concentrated in the strategic villages and so-called Poles of Development³ so that they may freely determine their own forms of organization and return to their communities.

We demand the immediate withdrawal of the army from our villages and the complete cessation of the repression.

e. *We ask* all organizations that monitor respect for human rights to include this exposure in the report that will be presented to the next General Assembly of the United Nations on human rights violations.

Finally, we repeat our determination to continue struggling — even in the midst of the difficult conditions imposed by the army's repressive actions — for respect for the human rights of the Indian and poor *ladino* peasants of Guatemala. □

3. Hundreds of thousands of peasants have been forced to take part in so-called civil defense patrols, which search the countryside for guerrillas. "Poles of Development" and "model villages" are euphemisms used by the military to describe its system of control over the rural population.

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1. In an attempt to isolate guerrilla forces, successive Guatemalan regimes have rounded up peasant families and forced them to relocate in army-controlled "model villages."

2. This was apparently written between the first round of the elections, on Nov. 3, 1985, and the second round on December 8, won by Cerezo.

Legalization of abortion discussed

Wide range of views expressed by both opponents and supporters

By Cindy Jaquith

MANAGUA — The debate over whether to legalize abortion in Nicaragua has sparked a wide-ranging discussion here, touching on some of the most fundamental questions of women's liberation.

Nicaragua's current law makes it a crime to have or perform an abortion. The only exception is a "therapeutic" abortion, for which the woman must obtain the approval of a three-doctor ethics committee and the permission of her spouse or parent. Few women succeed in getting hospital approval for a legal abortion. Those with money go to private clinics where the operation is performed illegally. Most working-class women are driven to back-alley abortionists.

In November 1985, *Barricada*, the newspaper of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), initiated a public debate over this law. It ran a series of reports on the hundreds of women dying each year from illegal, botched abortions. *Barricada* then featured a series of interviews and columns, the majority of them supporting legal abortion. Several of the articles have stated that abortion is a fundamental right of women to control their own bodies.

The country's two other dailies, *El Nuevo Diario* and *La Prensa*, have responded with opinion columns of their own on the subject. There is a lively exchange of views taking place in workplaces, rural areas, and schools.

Many different opinions are being expressed. The Catholic church hierarchy, one of the principal voices of the counterrevolution here, has come out sharply against legalization of abortion. But among supporters of the revolution there are also conflicting views on abortion. Members of the Nicaraguan Women's Association (AMNLAE), other mass organizations, and the FSLN are debating the issue. They are discussing both whether abortion should be legal and what is the best way to conduct the discussion.

The debate has brought to the fore the important place of women's emancipation in the Nicaraguan revolution. When Nicaraguan workers and peasants overthrew the Anastasio Somoza tyranny here in 1979, they established their own government, led by the FSLN. Among the first steps made by the new government was adopting measures to guarantee women's equality under the law and begin to open up social, economic, and political opportunities to them. Somoza's antiabortion law was not changed, however.

As working women have come more to the fore in the revolution — taking on an increasingly bigger role in production and defense due



Michael Baumann/IP

Nicaraguan Women's Association demonstration. As women have become more active in politics, they have pressed more strongly for their rights, including the right to abortion.

to the U.S.-sponsored war here — they have become more outspoken about the obstacles still holding them back from full participation in society. Winning the right to control their own bodies has become a central question, especially in light of the high death rate from illegal abortions.

How is the abortion discussion unfolding? What are the arguments — pro and con — being raised?

Catholic church hierarchy

The Catholic archdiocese's family commission released a statement in early December, shortly after the initial *Barricada* articles appeared. Titled "Thou shalt not kill," the statement sought to turn women who have abortions — and are the victims of the current law — into criminals. It accused them of being murderers, arguing that the fetus is a human being.

"The Catholic church opposes attacks on life in any form," said the statement, "whether these are called abortion, suicide, homicide, or euthanasia.

"No one can accept the taking of a life by anyone. . . . God alone is the origin and sole master of life.

"The life of a child, from conception, is inviolable. The mother has no rights over it."

"The abortion plague," as the statement called it, begins with letting women use contraceptives. In addition to combating legal abortion, the archdiocese said it would also wage "a firm battle" against birth control, which is legal in Nicaragua.

The archdiocese's statement was printed on

the editorial page of *La Prensa*. This is the paper of the Nicaraguan capitalist class. It is often referred to as "the newspaper of the U.S. embassy" because it so nakedly promotes the political line of the U.S. government.

La Prensa has run a series of columns bolstering the "abortion is murder" theme. Some have been pseudoscientific pieces by doctors claiming that abortion is wrong because the fetus is a human being. Others simply state outright that women are — and should be — baby-making machines. "The primordial mission of the woman is the propagation of the species," wrote one columnist.

La Prensa also reported on an antiabortion forum held in December by the Social Christian Party (PSC). It was a panel of medical and legal "experts" trying to prove that abortion is murder.

The PSC is the most vocal capitalist party in Nicaragua that is outside the National Assembly. It lost its status as a registered party in 1984 when it joined the CIA-orchestrated boycott of the elections by far-right parties. Recently, however, the PSC's status as a registered, legal party has been restored, and it has been speaking out on a variety of political issues.

'El Nuevo Diario'

El Nuevo Diario has also run a few columns on the abortion debate. *El Nuevo Diario* was established here after the 1979 revolution by staff members of *La Prensa* who disagreed with that paper's counterrevolutionary line. A variety of political viewpoints appear in *El Nuevo Diario* on both domestic and interna-

tional questions.

One column in the paper that flatly opposed legalization of abortion drew an indignant response from several women readers. Written by Gaspar Calderón, it argued that, since abortion is legal in several imperialist countries, Sandinistas should not legalize it, because the revolution's policies must be "new" and "original." The idea that it is the right of women to control their own bodies comes from the capitalist world, Calderón said, along with other "extreme feminisms."

"If we establish in Nicaragua an abortion law like those in countries that are 'advanced and progressive' — and also bourgeois and oppressive — then there's no need for a Sandinista revolution," he wrote.

"We shouldn't let bourgeois countries dictate the stance of revolutionaries," he concluded. Instead of legalizing abortions, the revolution should provide adequate social, political, and economic resources "so that no Nicaraguan woman feels obligated to have an abortion."

Two days later, a letter to the editor appeared from a woman who pointed out that Calderón was ignorant of the facts about abortion in capitalist countries, particularly the United States. Although abortion is legal there, she wrote, right-wing groups and Ronald Reagan's administration are attacking it viciously. "Clinics where abortions are done have been burned, bombed, and totally destroyed," the letter said. "The Reagan administration cut off funding that allowed poor women to decide [whether to have an abortion] the way bourgeois women can." Other letters have also attacked the Calderón column.

A question of population?

The idea that social services for women and children should be expanded *instead* of legalizing abortion was also raised in a column run on the editorial page of *Barricada*. Staff writer Elsa Gómez called for putting massive resources into housing, infant care, education, and other services as an alternative to legal abortion. Her reasoning:

"The revolution needs more children to be born. They should grow up in an appropriate environment that helps them develop their abilities. By changing this situation of war so that we can work more, and in peace, we can invest more in child development. Then we could expect that the mother in control of her faculties will be unable to deny herself the right to have a child. Otherwise, who will Nicaragua rely upon for her future?"

The view that abortion is strictly an economic question — as opposed to a fundamental question of women's liberation — has been expressed in several columns. *El Nuevo Diario* columnist Francisco Hernández Segura, for example, wrote a piece arguing that "everything indicates that the 'popularity' of abortion has its roots in poverty, in the misery that the big majority of society suffers. . . . When the Nicaraguan people have destroyed their enemies financed by the Reagan administration and the material production of the country

can reach high levels, there will be fewer abortions."

Hernández Segura said, however, that he favors the legalization of abortion despite his opinion that "from whatever angle you look at it, abortion is an action contrary to human nature."

'War turned into pretext'

Among others speaking out, however, have been those arguing that abortion is a question of women's rights, first and foremost. A group of nurses interviewed by *Barricada*, for example, were sharply critical of arguments against legalization put forward by some supporters of the revolution.

Mirta Ulloa said she thought the abortion question "has not been dealt with well, because the Sandinista People's Revolution is still young.

"Often the argument raised is the [aggression] and that process is turned into a pretext. There are a lot of prejudices and machismo. Something's being considered a crime that is not a crime."

Nurse Carolina Silva connected the legaliza-

tion of abortion to strengthening women's ability to fully participate in society and especially in politics.

"Under current conditions," she told *Barricada*, "the woman has to take care of the children and can't be involved in politics. That's only for the men. They can go out to a meeting, an assembly; they're the vanguard.

"But we're the vanguard — we who are taking care of the kids and working so that they can always do everything and afterwards be called the vanguard."

Sagrario Carvajal, head nurse at a clinic, said, "In the course of the revolution, women have won the right to work, to be in combat, and in addition, we bring up the children. Why are we denied the right to decide about our own bodies? We're the ones who want to decide how many children we want to have. That's why the current law has to be totally changed."

Women from countryside

Although most of the public statements on abortion have come from Managua, *Barricada* interviewed several women from rural areas who are FSLN representatives in the National

Police chief favors women's rights

MANAGUA — "I am for abortion — not just as a woman, but also as a police officer," Commander Doris Tijerino declared here in December. She is Nicaragua's national police chief and a longtime leader of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

Tijerino made her remarks in an interview printed in the Dec. 9, 1985, *Barricada*, daily newspaper of the FSLN.

The Sandinista leader also commented on other policies and laws restricting women's ability to control their own bodies.

She said the Ministry of Education's school curriculum "ought to be revised because, as everyone knows, it does not include sex education." This results in a greater number of unplanned pregnancies among teenage women, she pointed out.

She suggested that sex education begin in the secondary schools, "or maybe even in the last years of primary school. Perhaps this will turn out to be more important than legalizing abortion because it will avoid the necessity of resorting to abortion as a solution."

Tijerino also said that the Ministry of Health should revise its birth control policies to make contraceptives cheaper and more readily available to women.

She criticized regulations governing women's access to voluntary sterilization, such as the requirement that the woman have her husband's permission. "It's absurd that a woman who's having her third Cesarean section has to bring in a permis-

sion slip from her husband [to get sterilized]. This is discriminatory and harmful to the woman as a human being," she argued.

Tijerino also took up the question of how Nicaragua's police deal with illegal abortions. "Some say, in an accusing tone, that the police are cracking down on abortion, while others ask why the police don't do anything," she noted.

There have been reports of police trying to arrest women for illegal abortions. Tijerino, however, told *Barricada* that the police are not enforcing the antiabortion law, because it is obsolete. When a woman suffers severe complications or death from an illegal abortion, she added, "we often cannot act, because of the lack of evidence and of people willing to press charges. The police do not intervene against those who carry out illegal abortions, except when a judge orders it."

At the same time, Tijerino denounced doctors who take advantage of the current law to charge outrageous fees for illegal abortions. "We have information that some doctors charge about 50,000 córdobas for an abortion," she said. "Three years ago they were getting 6,000. The illegality of abortion is allowing them to get rich off the tragedy of the woman, who sometimes ends up dead."

"If abortion were legal," she pointed out, "we could go after the back-alley abortionists. But since it's not legal, we are — in fact — institutionalizing this terrible practice."

—Cindy Jaquith

Assembly.

Denigna Mendiola, who has a long history in the peasant movement, said she thought the war, the country's fragile economic situation, and religious sentiments would have to be taken into account in deciding what to do about abortions.

"However," she continued, "with or without a law, women keep having abortions." Mendiola said she thought more abortions take place in the cities than in rural areas. Peasant women, she said, more often drink an herb mixture that is supposed to induce a miscarriage "because they don't know any other method."

"It seems to me that the situation and the laws should be changed," she told *Barricada*. "But first there has to be education."

Teresa Delgado Martínez, a leader of the Sandinista Defense Committee (CDS) in the market in Chinandega, said she saw nothing wrong with an abortion in the very first period of pregnancy, but "it's a crime if you have one at three months because then you have a little fetus."

She assailed the idea that abortion "is just something poor people do. I remember a scandal at the Social Club in Chinandega in the time of Somoza. They found a fetus in one of the bathrooms, and you know, only the 'good girls' went there."

Delgado said she expected the Catholic church hierarchy to attack the revolution if abortion is legalized. She added that some women will themselves be against legalization because of the "obscurantism" they have been brought up under. "Imagine," she said, "there are some parents who are so close-minded that they protest the fact that the schools teach anatomy."

Opinions divided in working class

Among working-class women in the cities, opinions are also divided.

A woman who works at the Texnica textile plant here said she considered abortion a crime and a sin against the church's teachings. She emphasized that she is not a supporter of Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, whose antidraft proclamation she particularly resents. But, she added, in her view abortion is the taking of a life unless a woman has been raped. She went so far as to say that women who have abortions should be in prison.

Pointing to the large number of youths being killed in the war, she also argued that, by having more children, Nicaraguan women can make a contribution to the revolution, of which she is a firm supporter.

As for birth control or sterilization, she thought that women had the right to use these methods after having two or three children. As a member of the Nicaraguan Women's Association, she is active in working to change the current law that requires women to have their husbands' permission before they are sterilized.

A second woman interviewed by this reporter took a different view. An AMNLAE activ-

Police: no arrests for abortions

MANAGUA — As part of the debate here on abortion, the Sandinista Police in the town of Nandaime released a statement denying charges that they persecute women having illegal abortions.

The statement came in response to an interview with María Lourdes Bolaños of the legal office of the Nicaraguan Women's Association (AMNLAE). Interviewed in *Barricada*, daily newspaper of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), Bolaños spoke out for decriminalizing abortion.

She also said, "There have been cases, like a recent one in Nandaime, where a police officer tried to arrest a woman because she had been accused [of having an abortion illegally]. There was a mass mobilization that prevented the arrest." *Barricada* then added, "What is curious is that there are still people persecuting women for this supposed crime, but not going after criminals who collect a juicy fee" for illegal abortions.

Nandaime Police Lt. Leonel Selva responded with a letter printed in a sub-

sequent issue of *Barricada*. He called Bolaños' stand on abortion "positive" and commended *Barricada* "for taking the initiative to generate a discussion on this important question."

However, Selva said, the report that the Nandaime police tried to arrest a woman because she had an abortion is "totally and absolutely false." He added, "It is also false that the masses mobilized to prevent such an action."

"We suggest — both to Dr. Bolaños and to *Barricada* — that they be more careful in making references like this without first being sure of the facts," Selva concluded, "so we in no way damage the image of the Sandinista Police, which is an organ of our revolution, or present it to the masses as opposed to their interests. The idea still exists that the women who are victims of this practice [abortion] should be hounded rather than going after those who are profiting from it — in other words, that the victim, not the criminal, should be prosecuted. We don't agree with that."

—Cindy Jaquith

ist at the Victoria de Julio sugar refinery outside Managua, she expressed deep concern about the number of young women, including some at the refinery, who are suffering the consequences of botched, illegal abortions. Legalization, she believes, would first of all stop the deaths.

"But," she continued, "a woman should have the right to an abortion for other reasons, too, including the simple fact that some women don't want a child right now, or have no husband, or can't afford it."

"The situation of women in the countryside is very hard," she continued. By her estimate, more than half the women at the plant, many of whom are from peasant families, have no husband or permanent companion. Most, however, are trying to raise children, which absorbs practically every minute of their time when they are not at work. With no child care available at the refinery, one of the big things that suffers is their participation in AMNLAE and other political organizations, she said.

AMNLAE

The national executive committee of AMNLAE, as of the first of the year, had not yet released a public statement on the abortion debate. A member of AMNLAE's legal office, María Lourdes Bolaños, gave an interview to *Barricada*, however.

"Finally, this issue that's so controversial is being taken up," she said. "It was out of fear that an error was made. The more general problems of the revolution were always pushed to the fore, and the problem of abortion was put on the back burner. We've always said that the laws of the past were class-biased, in favor

of the bourgeoisie. But now we're putting aside abstract generalities and taking up a concrete problem."

Bolaños said the current antiabortion law discriminates against women. "It says that a woman who has an abortion can be sentenced to one to four years in prison. But if a man beats his wife, and she has a miscarriage, he faces only six months to two years in prison. What further evidence do you need that this is a discriminatory law?"

Bolaños said, "Abortion cannot and should not be considered a crime. I'm for decriminalizing it. The law must be modified."

FSLN

The most prominent figure in the FSLN to speak out on the issue thus far has been Commander Doris Tijerino, chief of Nicaragua's police and a longtime Sandinista leader. "I am for abortion — not just as a woman, but also as a police officer," she said in an interview with *Barricada*. (See box on pg 64.)

"The current law," she said, "restricts the civil rights of the woman by denying her the right to freely determine maternity." But this law should not just be changed by decree, she emphasized. Discussion and education must take place first among the broad masses of women.

"There should be a campaign to get women to reject the prejudices and accept legalization," she continued. "AMNLAE ought to initiate a study of the law penalizing abortion" and put forward a proposal in the National Assembly for a new abortion law that "supports the right of the woman to decide her own life." □

Apartheid-backed coup topples regime

Following years of South African threats, destabilization

By Ernest Harsch

For its defiance of the apartheid regime in neighboring South Africa, the government of the tiny state of Lesotho was toppled January 20 in a rightist military coup.

In a radio broadcast early that morning, Lesotho's military hierarchy announced that Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan had been deposed. A new governing Military Council, headed by Gen. Justin Lekhanya, was set up. Troops began patrolling the streets of Maseru, the capital, and a 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. curfew was clamped on the country.

This coup was the culmination of several years of South African economic blackmail, destabilization, and direct military attacks. Since January 1 in particular, the apartheid regime in Pretoria had imposed a tight economic blockade on Lesotho, which is totally surrounded by South African territory. The shutting of the borders blocked the importation of food, medicines, and other necessities, causing considerable hardship for the country's 1.4 million people.

Just three days before the coup, General Lekhanya visited Pretoria with other military and police officers to discuss the South African regime's conditions for lifting the blockade. Jonathan's ouster was obviously one of these.

Another long-standing South African demand has been that Lesotho expel the thousands of South African political refugees who have found a haven in Lesotho, in particular members of the African National Congress (ANC), which is leading the freedom struggle in South Africa.

While denying — against all the evidence — that it had anything to do with the coup, Pretoria made no secret of its pleasure at the military takeover. Foreign Minister Roelof Botha charged that Jonathan had been “the biggest single destabilizing factor in Lesotho” and said that Pretoria “welcomes any lessening of tension in Lesotho. . . .”

Within hours of the coup, the South African blockade was eased and a trainload of goods was allowed across the border, the first since the beginning of the year. The following day Lesotho's new Military Council dispatched a delegation to South Africa to discuss relations between the two countries. According to Botha, the council had vowed to follow a policy of “good neighborliness.”

What that meant became clear on January 23, in the Military Council's first major policy statement. It announced that all ANC members in Lesotho would be expelled from the country “as quickly as possible” and flown to other African countries (though they would not be handed over to the South African authorities).

Of all the independent governments of southern Africa, Lesotho has long been one of the most vulnerable to South African interference and pressure.

But Lesotho's very existence as a separate state within the heart of South Africa is at the same time testimony to the tenacious resistance of its people to European colonial conquest and apartheid rule. During the last century, the Basotho people repeatedly fought off the attempts of the British colonial authorities and local European settler interests to subjugate them and take away all their land. Some of the most fertile Basotho lands were, however, lost and are today part of the Orange Free State, a South African province.

Basutoland, as the country was then called, eventually became a British colony in 1884, but no white settlers were allowed to acquire land within the territory. This was in marked contrast to the situation in surrounding South Africa, where Africans had the vast bulk of their land taken from them.

Basutoland remained a British colony until 1966, when it became the independent state of Lesotho.

Though nominally independent, Lesotho has suffered from the domination of its much more powerful neighbor. With limited resources of its own, its economy is integrally tied to that of South Africa. The bulk of its trade is with South Africa, and the remainder must pass through South African territory. Some 160,000 Basothos — two-fifths of Lesotho's entire male work force — are employed as migrant laborers in South Africa, mostly in the mines and on white-owned capitalist farms. Fully 70 percent of Lesotho's income derives from the remittances sent home by these workers and from the customs tariffs on trade through South Africa. Lesotho belongs to the South African-dominated customs union, and its currency is tied to the South African rand. Of the few industries that exist in Lesotho, many are owned by South African companies.

During Lesotho's first decade of independence, the policies of its government — headed since 1966 by Chief Leabua Jonathan — reflected this South African domination. In that period Jonathan was considered “Pretoria's man” and his governing Basotho National Party (BNP) received covert South African backing. The Jonathan government used the South African-trained Police Mobile Unit against other political parties in the country, including the Basotho Congress Party (BCP), which for a time had links to South African liberation organizations.

During the mid- to late 1970s, however, the policies of the Jonathan government and of the

BNP began to shift. This was partly under the impact of the advancing liberation struggle in southern Africa, such as the winning of independence by Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. It was also under the influence of the massive Black upsurge that began to shake South Africa itself with the township revolts of 1976.

Support for ANC

Jonathan and other members of his government spoke out against apartheid more forcefully than before. They refused to recognize the Transkei and other South African Bantustans as “independent” states, as Pretoria demanded. Thousands of South Africans who fled into Lesotho to escape Pretoria's brutal police repression were granted political asylum. Members and leaders of the ANC, in particular, were accorded a warm reception. This did not, however, include the provision of military training or base facilities, as Pretoria has charged.

Seeking to lessen Lesotho's dependence on South Africa, the government also established new political and diplomatic ties in the region and the rest of the world. Closer relations were forged with Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, and other southern African countries. In the early 1980s, diplomatic relations were established with the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea; Jonathan visited those three countries, as well as several Eastern European workers' states, in 1983. Just a few days before the recent coup, Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca had visited Lesotho for discussions with the government.

Destabilization

The South African authorities were alarmed by the Lesotho government's assistance to South African refugees and political activists and its expressions of political independence from Pretoria. At a time when the apartheid regime has been sponsoring counterrevolutionary terrorist groups in Angola and Mozambique and carrying out military interventions and economic sabotage throughout the region, it embarked on a campaign of destabilization against Lesotho as well.

This has included economic blackmail, direct South African military intervention, the sponsorship of terrorist bands, and support for local opposition political forces.

As a justification for these moves, the South African authorities accused Jonathan of “communist” leanings and of providing military bases to ANC “terrorists.”

Pretoria has taken full advantage of Lesotho's extreme economic dependence on South Africa. Periodically since the early

1980s, South African customs officials have staged "slowdowns" at Lesotho's borders, exercising stringent checks on all vehicles in and out of the country. This caused traffic to back up for miles and delays of up to several days, producing shortages within Lesotho of meat, fresh produce, and medicines.

Defensive arms Lesotho bought from Britain were embargoed upon their arrival in South African ports. Spare helicopter parts intended for drought relief operations were similarly embargoed.

Remittances to Lesotho from the common customs pool were deliberately delayed by the apartheid regime. Pretoria frequently threatened to withdraw from joint projects, such as the Highlands water and hydroelectric scheme, which is due to provide all of Lesotho's power. Threats were also periodically made to cut back the number of Basotho migrant workers allowed into South Africa.

This South African economic squeeze worsened an already severe situation for Lesotho's working people. According to a report on the Lesotho economy in the September-October 1984 issue of the New York bimonthly *Africa Report*, "Lesotho faces a crisis of unemployment and growing pockets of poverty. Six percent of its population now commands a third of its national income, while in mountainous and remote rural areas, land is becoming ever more sparse. Where there were fewer than 2,000 landless families in 1970 (13 percent of the population), there were 35,000 landless families (more than 20 percent) by 1980. The wages of migrant labor, which have provided such rural areas with a living they could not have earned from the land, will soon become more scarce. And the numbers of Basotho youth, unable to find employment either in South Africa or at home, will grow — and grow restless."

Massacres, terrorist attacks

Twice, on Dec. 9, 1982, and again on Dec. 20, 1985, South African troops staged military raids on homes of South African refugees in Lesotho's undefended capital.

During the December 1982 attack, some 100 South African troops were dropped by helicopter in Maseru in the middle of the night. They were assisted by giant floodlights positioned on the South African side of the Caledon River, facing Maseru. The troops fanned out and attacked 12 homes with machine-guns, grenades, and incendiary bombs. Thirty South African refugees (most of them members of the ANC) and 12 Lesotho citizens were slaughtered.

During the December 1985 raid, a smaller group of South African commandos slipped into Maseru. With silenced weapons, they attacked two homes, killing six South African refugees and three Lesotho citizens.

While these direct South African attacks have received the most international publicity, just as devastating to Lesotho has been the incessant campaign of South African-backed sabotage and terrorist attacks.

Pretoria's chief instrument for this has been



the so-called Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA), a mercenary force of rightist Basotho exiles that has been responsible for scores of attacks.

The LLA is the military wing of a faction of the Basotho Congress Party, led by Ntsu Mokhehle. Its role today testifies to the extent of the BCP's political degeneration.

The BCP was founded in 1952 under the political influence and inspiration of the South African ANC. Its general stance was anti-imperialist and anti-apartheid, and for that reason it suffered repression from the Jonathan government. During the 1960s, however, it broke from the ANC perspective and aligned itself with the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), an anticommunist split-off from the ANC that rejected the ANC's goal of building a democratic, nonracial state in which Blacks and whites would have equal rights.

Over time, the BCP moved increasingly to the right. In 1974, the BCP faction led by Mokhehle attempted the armed overthrow of the Jonathan government. After the defeat of this coup attempt, Mokhehle and his colleagues were granted refuge in South Africa. As the differences between the Jonathan government and Pretoria deepened, the South African authorities sought to use this grouping for their own ends, leading to the formation of the LLA in 1979.

Operating from South Africa's Orange Free State and the Transkei Bantustan, the LLA — often directly aided by South African police and troops — carried out numerous raids into Lesotho. These involved attacks on the police and troops, as well as on villages, shops, church missions, buses, and other civilian targets. Government buildings and economic installations were also sabotaged, and attempts were made to assassinate government ministers and other prominent political figures.

Some LLA attacks involved up to 100 or 200 armed men. During a February 1983 attack on a fuel depot in Maseru, a South African helicopter was spotted dropping bombs.

Ties with opposition parties

Besides sponsoring such direct terrorist attacks, Pretoria has forged links with a number of right-wing political parties within Lesotho.

These include another faction of the Basotho Congress Party, headed by Gerard Ramoreboli; the Marema Tlou Freedom Party,

a long-time bourgeois opposition force led by Makolo Khaketla; and the United Democratic Party, whose leader, Charles Mofeli, went so far as to try to justify the December 1982 South African raid into Maseru. These groups, together with the Catholic and Protestant church-sponsored newspapers (the largest circulation weeklies in the country), kept up an incessant barrage of propaganda against the government, much of it echoing the charges leveled by Pretoria itself.

In early 1984, another party, the Basotho Democratic Alliance, was founded by leaders of yet another BCP faction. It was actually set up at a meeting in Pretoria, with South African Foreign Minister Botha present. Its leader, Phoka Chaolane, later admitted publicly that it had been promised South African funding.

In the months leading up to elections scheduled for Sept. 17-18, 1985 — the first in 15 years — these opposition parties stepped up their propaganda efforts. They often attacked the government from the right, criticizing it for granting political asylum to refugees, "worsening" relations with South Africa, and establishing diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union and other workers' states.

These parties also demagogically blamed all the country's social and economic problems on Jonathan's BNP. Since the BNP had been the governing party for 20 years and reflected the interests of Lesotho's ruling class, such accusations found a certain hearing among the population.

In addition, the rightist parties accused the government of using authoritarian methods and engaging in electoral fraud. On this pretext, they all decided to boycott the elections, prompting the government to cancel them.

Some of these rightist politicians played a role in the South African economic blockade imposed on January 1. Ramoreboli, Mofeli, Khaketla, and several others traveled to Pretoria during the blockade to meet with Foreign Minister Botha. The Jonathan government termed them "collaborators" and had them arrested upon their return to Lesotho.

Pretoria likewise established contacts within the officer corps of the military and the leadership of the BNP itself. Evaristus Sekhonyana, a national chairperson of the BNP, emerged after the January 20 coup as part of the delegation sent by the Military Council to negotiate with Pretoria.

A warning to southern Africa

In waging this concerted campaign of destabilization, Pretoria pursued several concrete goals. It wanted the Lesotho government to expel the South African refugees and even hand some of them over to the South African authorities. It wanted a halt to Lesotho's support for the ANC. And it wanted Jonathan to sign a "nonaggression" pact, similar to the ones Pretoria had already foisted on the governments of Mozambique and Swaziland.

At first, the South African authorities hoped that their pressure would be sufficient to get the Jonathan government to cave in to their demands. But Jonathan refused, stating that his

government would not "bow to apartheid blackmail." Pretoria's real aim, Jonathan noted in a 1983 speech, was that it "wants Lesotho as another Bantustan and the inception of a government which is a mere appendage of Pretoria."

That is precisely the kind of government that the South African rulers hope to come out of the January 20 coup — an "appendage" of Pretoria that will follow apartheid dictates.

This overthrow of the Lesotho government is a major blow to the people of Lesotho and a violation of their sovereignty. It is also a blow

to the ANC, which is now being denied sanctuary in yet another African country (following earlier expulsions from Mozambique and Swaziland).

The coup is likewise a warning to all governments and peoples in southern Africa that dare to stand up to the apartheid regime. Although it certainly will not stop their struggle for freedom from the South African yoke, it will make that struggle more difficult.

Pretoria's aggression against Lesotho reaffirms once again that it is the apartheid regime that is the main source of violence and instabil-

ity in southern Africa.

That was a point that was stressed just several months ago, in October 1985, when Lesotho's constitutional monarch, King Moshoeshoe II, spoke before the United Nations General Assembly on behalf of the Lesotho government. Noting that attacks by the South African government against neighboring countries were a "common phenomenon," he appealed to the peoples of the world to "take the urgent, necessary, and appropriate measures to deter and disarm the oppressive regime." □

Burkina

Cease-fire halts war with Mali

But dangers to revolution remain

By Ernest Harsch

The cease-fire signed on December 29 between the governments of Burkina and Mali has brought a halt to the brief war between those two West African countries, although the threat of a renewed outbreak remains.

The war had begun on the morning of December 25 when Malian troops, backed by tanks, armored cars, and jet fighters, invaded Burkina from the north and west, a provocation directed against Burkina's democratic, anti-imperialist revolution.

Although the war lasted just five days, it took a serious toll, claiming an estimated 100 deaths and many wounded on both sides. Burkina itself suffered 48 deaths, most of them civilians.

For the people of Burkina, the single most costly attack came against the provincial capital of Ouahigouya, the target of two bombing raids by Malian jets. According to a French doctor working at the Ouahigouya hospital, the jets dropped fragmentation bombs on residential areas of the city, causing at least 13 deaths and several dozen wounded. After the second Malian attack on December 26, virtually all of Ouahigouya's 30,000 residents fled into the countryside for safety.

Other villages and towns suffered from Malian air and ground attacks as well. Orodara, a town of 30,000 in the western part of the country, was briefly evacuated in face of advancing Malian troops.

According to the cease-fire terms, both armies are supposed to withdraw to positions they held before the outbreak of the war. In particular, they are to withdraw from the Agacher region, a disputed 90-mile strip of territory in the north that Burkina now administers, but which the Malian government claims as Malian territory.

On orders from Burkina's president, Thomas Sankara, all Burkinabè troops have been pulled out of Agacher. But so far, Malian troops continue to occupy some parts of the re-

gion, including its largest village, Dionouga.

A January 7 Agence France-Presse dispatch from northern Burkina reported that thousands of refugees from the war zone are wandering the countryside in search of food and water. According to the report, residents of Diguel, one of the main villages in Agacher, "said Malian tanks and armored cars had been set up around the village and Malian troops had been seen digging trenches in the area."

The report continued, "The high commissioner of Burkina Faso's Soum Province, which encompasses the Agacher Strip, estimated that 30,000 people had been displaced by the war and the continued Malian presence. The official, Michel Meda, said Sunday [January 5] in the provincial capital, Djibo, that drought in the contested region had made life difficult for residents of Agacher's 40-odd villages even before the hostilities erupted. Mr. Meda added that as a result of the war and the destruction of grain stocks by Malian troops, it would be necessary to feed the refugees until the next harvest at the end of the year."

'Clash between reaction and revolution'

The pretext the Malian authorities used to

invade was the claim that Burkinabè troops had occupied "Malian" villages in Agacher.

The border dividing Mali and Burkina was originally drawn by the French colonialists, without regard to the interests of the peoples of the area. Today, many Agacher residents consider themselves Malians, a fact that the Burkinabè government does not dispute. Differences remain, however, over precisely where the border should lie. Since it first took power in August 1983, the Sankara government has repeatedly urged that the dispute be settled peacefully, through the World Court. But the Malian government of Gen. Moussa Traoré has resisted such a settlement.

Just a few weeks before the Malian invasion, Burkinabè census-takers were sent to villages in Agacher, on Burkina's side of the provisional border that the Malian government also recognized. But when the census personnel arrived, they were attacked by Malian police. Burkinabè troops were then sent to defend them, and were withdrawn when the census was completed. It was after their departure that the Malian military invaded.

Although the imperialist news media have sought to portray the war as a simple territorial dispute, the government in Burkina charged from the beginning that the Malian attack was an attempt to open the way toward the overthrow of the popular, democratic revolution that has been unfolding there since August 1983.

A December 25 statement of the National Secretariat General of the mass-based Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) declared, "It is no longer a question of a territorial claim, but of a direct and open clash between retrograde forces and progress, between reaction and revolution. This is why the neocolonial instrument represented by Moussa Traoré's regime has the support of its colonialist and neocolonialist masters."

One indication of the openly counterrevolutionary goal of the Malian invasion came dur-



ing the course of the war itself. Burkina's intelligence services detected the presence among the Malian forces of several prominent exiled Burkinabè counterrevolutionaries, including a former army captain who had directed several terrorist bombings in Burkina in May 1985.

French arms to Mali

According to a report in the January 13 Paris fortnightly *Afrique-Asie*, the Malian government had several months earlier begun building up its stocks of ammunition and military spare parts. It also received shipments of light arms from France, and some foreign military "advisers" were spotted among the Malian forces.

"We knew that Mali had received arms from France," President Sankara stated in an interview. "I even had the opportunity to express to [French] President Mitterrand our country's regret at seeing France giving military support to Mali, at a time when the relations between our two states were deteriorating. Reminding me of the existence of a military assistance agreement between France and Mali, President Mitterrand then asked me if I would also want a similar agreement. I told him that I would prefer to receive the same amount — in agricultural equipment!"

With only a small air force and virtually no tanks or armored cars, Burkina was militarily ill-prepared for the Malian invasion. Its only air strike into Mali — against a military base in Sikasso — was carried out with two small, propeller-driven planes.

Nevertheless, the Burkinabè armed forces enjoyed popular backing, a key ingredient in holding back the invading Malian troops. The mass CDRs provided important logistical support to the army, and CDR militia units themselves carried out military actions. Much of the transport in the war zones was donated by civilians.

Because of this mobilization, the Malian forces suffered some serious losses on Burkinabè soil, and in some areas were driven back across the border. They lost an undetermined number of tanks and armored cars.

Confronted by this unexpectedly stiff resistance, the Malian authorities were soon willing to sign a cease-fire.

Cease-fire terms

Two cease-fires were actually negotiated. The first was arranged through the mediation of the Libyan and Nigerian governments. It called for an immediate withdrawal of troops from the contested area and the establishment of a military observer team composed of representatives from Burkina, Mali, Nigeria, Libya, and the Organization of African Unity to supervise compliance with the cease-fire. President Sankara signed this cease-fire, but President Traoré did not. The Malian authorities, as well as the proimperialist regime in neighboring Ivory Coast, objected to any Libyan involvement in the observer team.

A second cease-fire was then worked out, under the auspices of the government of Benin and the member governments of the Nonag-



Pat Wright/IP

Women's military unit in Ouagadougou during Aug. 4, 1985, celebrations of revolution's anniversary. To defend revolution, army and militia are being strengthened.

gression and Defense Assistance Agreement (ANAD, composed of Burkina, Mali, Ivory Coast, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Togo). Under this cease-fire accord, the observer mission was to include two officers from each of the ANAD countries and Benin. Both Sankara and Traoré signed it.

Sankara made it clear, however, that his government would have preferred the first cease-fire accord, since it provided for an immediate withdrawal of troops. The second accord only calls for an eventual withdrawal after the observer team is in place and has determined that the cease-fire is being complied with. This provides a loophole to the Malian forces to try to consolidate their position in the areas they still occupy.

Nevertheless, both governments have declared their readiness to abide by the terms of the cease-fire and to try to ease the tensions between the two sides.

At a January 3 mass rally in Ouagadougou, Burkina's capital, President Sankara declared that "it is the hour for reconciliation." Participating in the rally were representatives of the Malian community resident in Burkina. Sankara called on the Burkinabè people to avoid "any hatred toward our Malian brothers."

A week later, at a ceremony in the Malian capital, Bamako, prisoners of war from both sides were exchanged. And on January 17 Sankara and Traoré met in neighboring Ivory Coast to begin discussions on the conflict.

The government of Burkina has also continued to reiterate its desire to have the Agacher dispute settled before the World Court. That body, on January 10, called for a complete withdrawal of all troops from Agacher within 20 days, and said that until the conflict is ultimately settled the region should be administered as it was before the outbreak of the war — that is, by Burkina.

Given the continued dangers facing Burkina, despite the signing of a cease-fire, the governing National Council of the Revolution has called on the population to observe "vigilance and a general mobilization to block the road to . . . all counterrevolutionaries and any other enemy seeking to destabilize our government."

Sankara has also indicated that steps will be taken to bolster the country's defense capabilities.

In an interview with *Afrique-Asie*, Sankara stressed the important role that the popular mobilizations had played during the war. "Our military success depended considerably on the support of the population. Our army was transported by trucks spontaneously given to it by civilians. Also, the popular support allowed us to overcome problems of administration, notably in the feeding of the troops."

But Sankara added that this was no longer enough. In the past, he said, the equipping of the army had been deliberately neglected, because in an impoverished country like Burkina "we thought it was criminal to spend money on arms."

"But in the future," Sankara said, "we will be obliged to devote part of our resources to equipment for our army." □

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Marcos, Aquino trade charges

Communist Party condemns elections as 'big political swindle'

By Ben Espiritu

MANILA — Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos has made "communism" the main election issue in this Southeast Asian country, where communists are summarily executed by government forces. He has charged that Filipino leftists are backing his wealthy opponent and are ready to take over the reins of government should the opposition win the February 7 presidential election.

Marcos accused opposition candidate Corazon Aquino of surrounding herself with "50 communist advisers," who, according to the president, include Aquino's capitalist brother-in-law, conservative Jesuit theologians, and an imprisoned communist leader. Aquino flatly denied the accusation, adding that she is not a communist, never was, and never will be. In fact, in her strongest warning yet against the communists, Aquino said the other day that should she win she would "not hesitate to fight them with every available resource of the republic should they refuse to lay down their arms."

As this developed, the underground Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) called for an active boycott of the forthcoming poll. It branded the presidential and vice-presidential elections as nothing but a "big political swindle" meant to make Filipinos believe that Marcos could be kicked out of power through the ballot. The election, said the party, only promotes "illusions which aim to delay the attainment of genuine national freedom and democracy."

Large rallies for Aquino

As the presidential candidate of the United Nationalist Democratic Organization (UNIDO), Aquino has been drawing mammoth crowds reaching as large as 200,000. She does not fail to stir a response whenever she speaks of the difficult times she endured when her popular husband, Benigno Aquino, Jr., was ordered incarcerated by Marcos and held in solitary confinement for more than seven years during martial law. He was later assassinated by government soldiers at the international airport here upon returning home from three years of exile in the United States in August 1983.

Aquino's running mate is former Senator Salvador Laurel, UNIDO president and a corporate lawyer belonging to a big landlord-capitalist family in a province south of Manila.

Spontaneous chants of "Cory! Cory! Cory!" (Aquino's nickname) and the flashing of index finger and thumb in the form of the "L" sign for *laban* (fight) greet the 52-year-old candidate wherever she goes, a clear indication of



Aquino and Laurel flash "L" sign for "laban" (fight). Aquino has drawn huge crowds on campaign tours.

her popularity among the country's 54 million people, 25 million of whom are registered voters. She is the first Filipino woman to run for the highest position of the land.

In sharp contrast, campaign rallies by the government political party, Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL, New Society Movement), have been far more subdued and smaller. What are passed off as massive crowds of 30,000 to 50,000 "enthusiastically" rooting for Marcos are actually people who have been herded and bribed with money, shirts, and snacks into joining KBL rallies. Despite heavy makeup, the 68-year-old Marcos appears visibly tired and sick, his eyes nearly closed and his cheeks puffy from a worsening kidney ailment.

This year marks the Filipino strongman's 21st year as the country's president, eight years of them as martial-law administrator.

In his campaign sorties in southern Tagalog provinces recently, Marcos lambasted Aquino for her supposed "red" links. He warned his audience, composed mostly of government employees, military personnel, and members of government-controlled village associations, that an Aquino administration with communists occupying responsible positions would pose a bloody future for Filipinos.

Citing the situation 21 years ago in Indonesia, the Philippines' neighboring country, Marcos declared that Indonesian President Sukarno "allowed Communists into his Cabinet and in 1965, the Communists staged a revolt, killing several generals and Cabinet members. From 700,000 to 1 million Indone-

sians, mostly civilians, died."* He added that only he and his running mate, member of Parliament Arturo Tolentino, 75, could prevent such a dangerous scenario.

The president likewise revived old charges that Aquino's husband, considered Marcos' most likely rival for the 1973 presidential election had not martial law been declared in September 1972, allegedly masterminded the killings of several individuals including a village leader, in his home province of Tarlac.

Marcos again accused the slain Aquino of organizing in 1969 the New People's Army (NPA), together with the now-imprisoned CPP leader Jose Maria Sison. He repeated old charges that Aquino's husband had funded the spectacular NPA raid at the country's premier military academy in 1970, which netted more than 50 high-powered firearms for the then-fledgling NPA, which has now grown to a force of 15,000.

In a recent interview with foreign journalists, Marcos warned that the country's armed forces will not allow an administration with leftist links to take over. He claimed that a government under Aquino that allegedly harbors communists will eventually be dominated by communists. He hinted of a possible military coup should Aquino win in the election. He reiterated his charge that she is backed by

*The massacre in Indonesia that Marcos referred to was in fact carried out by rightist generals, who, using the pretext that members of the Communist Party of Indonesia were in Sukarno's government, staged a coup and murdered or imprisoned hundreds of thousands of suspected Communists and anti-imperialist political activists. —IP

"50 communist advisers," singling out the 86-year-old Senator Lorenzo Tañada, the venerable "grand old man of the opposition" and chairperson of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan, or New Patriotic Alliance).

In a talk with the country's leading capitalists at a Manila business club, Aquino strongly rejected the charges leveled against her. "I will not appoint communists to my cabinet," she emphatically declared, to the utter relief of her businessmen-supporters.

"How can I be a communist and be with the same group that was supposed to have killed 'Ninoy' [her husband's nickname]?" she asked, referring to the highly-discredited military theory that the NPA guerrillas were behind the murder of the opposition leader on the airport tarmac.

Aquino also denied getting advice from Sison. Although Sison remains incarcerated in the same maximum prison where Benigno Aquino had been jailed, Aquino said she had never met him during her visits to her husband. In the same breath, she blamed Marcos for the rapid growth of the CPP-led guerrilla movement in the country. She noted that when Marcos was first elected president 21 years ago there were practically no NPA guerrillas around.

CPP: 'meaningless electoral contest'

As the two contending candidates hurl red-baiting charges and countercharges at each other, the banned Communist Party of the Philippines has warned the people of the sham nature of the presidential election, calling it a "noisy but meaningless electoral contest among local reactionaries."

In the December 1985 issue of its official organ, *Ang Bayan* (The Nation), the party's Central Committee presented the analysis that the coming election is a political initiative of the Marcos regime that complements the Reagan administration's current policy and objectives toward the country. It said that Washington is supporting the vote because the U.S. policymakers "want to consolidate the ranks of the local reactionary classes so that they are unified in suppressing the revolutionary movement." This is the main reason why Marcos is exerting all his efforts in focusing the campaign on the issue of communism.

The CPP said that had Marcos not moved the election forward to February, he would have been in a weaker position to run for the presidency in mid-1987 as a result of the rapidly-expanding guerrilla movement in the provinces and the growing protest movement in the cities. The party predicted that Marcos would have faced certain defeat had he waited until 1987. Hence, the need for a snap presidential election in February.

The primary aim of the emergency election, according to the CPP, is to buy a "new mandate" for the embattled Marcos regime to extend its rule another six years. The election aims to win back to parliamentary politics Filipinos who, out of alienation over the corrupt and repressive Marcos regime, have

joined much more militant struggles including *welgang bayan* (popular strikes) and armed revolution, the party added.

In calling for an active boycott, the CPP stated that it does not want to be a party to the massive fraudulent scheme being organized against the people.

Marcos' oft-repeated boast that "I do not intend to lose" is not without basis. His control over the government bureaucracy and the 250,000-strong armed forces remains firm. He controls the Commission on Elections and the Supreme Court, two important government bodies that determine the process and outcome of the election, having filled them with his loyalists. His political apparatus, the KBL, is intact and well-oiled, from the national down to the regional, provincial, and local levels. He has the national treasury as his campaign chest. He controls the country's television stations, 90 percent of the radio stations, and 85 percent of the newspapers.

Marcos can easily use the nation's constitution and Batasang Pambansa (National Assembly) for his own ends. In the remote possibility that Aquino and her running mate win, the president can legally block their assumption to office or prevent them from governing effectively. Worse, Marcos can reimpose martial law or declare a state of emergency if neces-

sary to stay in power, as he had indicated in a press interview.

Lastly, Marcos can still rely on support from U.S. President Reagan and from the U.S. Congress.

The CPP also said the forthcoming election is all the more meaningless because "no candidate of consequence is upholding the fundamental interests of the broad masses of people. If at all, there is the mere possibility that exploitation and oppression may not be as intense under a new regime."

Even as it considers the election insignificant and its outcome predictable, the Communist Party of the Philippines stated it cannot dismiss it lightly. It said the election presents "excellent opportunities" and "some major pitfalls and problems" to the antidictatorial mass movement and to the revolutionary movement.

The liberalization of restrictions and the Filipinos' enthusiasm for political discussions will open up among the people the widest dissemination, among other things, of the "need and correctness of the revolutionary struggle against the fascist dictatorship," the CPP said. On the other hand, the party warned of the "dangers of reformism," noting the "last-chance-for-democracy" appeal being peddled by the oppositionist politicians during the campaign rallies. □

STATEMENT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Solidarity with Tunisian workers

[The following declaration was issued on Dec. 20, 1985, by the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. Since it was issued, General Union of Tunisian Workers leader Habib Achour has been sentenced to a year at hard labor and imprisoned in Sfax.]

* * *

At the end of October, the Tunisian government launched a large-scale offensive against the workers' movement by attacking its predominant trade union organization, the Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens (UGTT — General Union of Tunisian Workers).

After several months of escalating repression, the government sent its police and the ruling party's militia to occupy the offices of the UGTT in most of the country, including the capital. Dozens of trade union cadres were arrested. The secretary general, Habib Achour, was put in "administrative detention."

Sections of the proletariat, especially in the southern part of the country, resisted the regime's offensive, unleashing a series of general strikes and organizing the defense of the trade union headquarters. They have unfortunately remained isolated, the response having been weak in the rest of the country. International solidarity, moreover, has been negligible.

This is why, after having launched its offensive, the government has been able to maneuver with the majority of the trade union bureaucrats in order to get them to accept its repressive intervention into the internal life of the union.

Although in "administrative detention," Habib Achour has been kept in the leadership of the union, but he has been replaced as secretary general. The autonomy of the UGTT has been flouted, and the regime will take advantage of this to push forward the projects that have been imposed on it by the International Monetary Fund and imperialism.

The situation, however, has not been stabilized. The workers retain a fighting potential that the trade union bureaucracy, moreover, has to take account of in its negotiations with the regime. More than ever, they need solidarity from the world workers' and democratic movements, especially from the trade unions.

The Fourth International calls on the workers' organizations to offer solidarity as soon as possible. It is necessary to call for the release of the jailed trade unionists, the evacuation of the repressive forces from the occupied union headquarters, and complete restoration of the independence and liberties of the trade union movement. □

Disastrous split damages revolution

Imperialists seek openings for intervention

By Ernest Harsch

Heavy fighting has rocked South Yemen since January 13, resulting from a deep split in the leadership of that Middle Eastern country.

This armed conflict has inflicted grievous harm to South Yemen's democratic, anti-imperialist revolution. It undermines many of the social, economic, and political gains working people have won there since they threw off British rule in 1967 (see following article).

This conflict also provides openings that the imperialists and their regional allies will seek to utilize to push back the anti-imperialist struggle throughout the Middle East.

The split in South Yemen has torn apart the government, officer corps, and governing Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP). From the extent of the fighting, it is clear that both sides were able to draw on significant forces. Both had the support of parts of the army, navy, air force, and militia.

The first demonstrative public sign of this split came on the afternoon of January 13, when a domestic radio broadcast from the capital, Aden, announced that an attempt to "assassinate" President Ali Nasser Mohammed had been defeated. The alleged coup plotters were branded as an "opportunist rightist grouping" acting in league with "imperialist and reactionary circles." The broadcast named those involved (all members of the YSP Political Bureau) as: Abdel Fattah Ismail, Ali Ahmed Nasser Antar, Ali Salem al-Beedh, and Ali Shayi Hadi. It claimed they had been executed.

Very quickly, however, large-scale fighting engulfed Aden and the regions around it, pitting foes and supporters of President Ali Nasser against each other. The capital was shaken by aerial bombardments, artillery fire, and tank battles.

An opposition radio station that began broadcasting north of Aden claimed that none of the alleged coup plotters had, in fact, been executed, but were leading the struggle against Ali Nasser. Ismail and Antar, in particular, were widely considered the main leaders of this effort, although Antar was later killed in the fighting.

By January 19, this opposition radio station had been moved to Aden itself, indicating the advances made by Ali Nasser's opponents. The station accused Ali Nasser of having attempted to impose a "dictatorship" and to link South Yemen "with the wheels of neocolonialism and reactionary influence."

By January 25, the fighting in Aden had subsided with the apparent defeat, at least in the capital, of Ali Nasser's supporters. Prime Minister Haider Abu Bakr al-Attas — who had been in the Soviet Union throughout most of

the conflict — was proclaimed the new "acting president." Several days earlier he had declared his support for Ismail.

But the takeover in Aden did not yet end the fighting in the country as a whole. A new radio station, supporting Ali Nasser, began broadcasting from his home area in the Abyan Mountains east of the capital. It urged continued resistance.

The death and destruction in Aden alone have been massive. As many as 10,000 people are believed to have been killed — in a country of only 2 million people. Physical damage is estimated to run into the hundreds of millions of dollars (South Yemen's gross domestic product is only around \$900 million). Scarcely a building in Aden has remained untouched. During the fighting, water and electricity was cut off to most of the city.

Revolution under pressure

The strains and fissures within the South Yemeni leadership have been evident for a number of years. From time to time they have broken out in armed clashes, although never on the scale of the current conflict. These divisions at the top have been exacerbated by the big pressures bearing down on South Yemen's revolutionary struggle.

In part, the difficulties facing the revolution arise from the very poverty and backwardness of the country, a legacy of 128 years of British colonial rule. Although the revolution has brought many gains to the working people, South Yemen remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Its per capita income is just \$470 a year, life expectancy averages around 46 years, and more than 60 percent of the population is still illiterate.

These objective difficulties have been greatly compounded by outside pressure, especially the threats, aggression, and blackmail of the major imperialist powers. Their efforts to subvert the revolution have been aided by the surrounding regimes in Saudi Arabia, North Yemen, and Oman, all of which maintain close military ties with Washington and London.

From the first days of the revolution, South Yemen has been the victim of foreign aggression. Brief wars were fought in 1972 and 1979 with the reactionary regime in North Yemen, which received major U.S. arms shipments and large-scale financing from Saudi Arabia.

Throughout most of the 1970s, South Yemen suffered from a virtual economic embargo imposed by the imperialist powers and most of the Arab regimes. Assistance from the Soviet Union, Cuba, and other workers' states only partially compensated for this.

As recently as 1983 and 1984, armed clashes broke out along the Saudi border. Exiled opponents of the revolution continue to receive assistance in neighboring countries. In the early 1980s, Washington obtained base facilities in Oman for its Rapid Deployment Force; one base, at Thamarit, is just 100 miles from South Yemen's border.

Divisions in leadership

Most of the current leadership in South Yemen came out of the armed struggle against British colonial rule. Ali Nasser, Ismail, Antar, and others were all key leaders of the National Liberation Front (NLF), the main anticolonial organization.

The NLF leadership termed the process in South Yemen a "national democratic revolution." It also increasingly adopted the terminology of Marxism. This was further codified in 1978 when the NLF united with two smaller groups to form the Yemeni Socialist Party. According to Ismail, the YSP's first general secretary, it was "a vanguard party of the working class" that was "guided by the theory of scientific socialism."

Membership in the YSP has been kept restricted and today there are only 26,000 members in the entire country. Just 13 percent are workers and 12 percent peasants.

Over the years, the government and party leadership have received assistance from a variety of workers' states, including the Soviet Union, China, North Korea, Cuba, and the Eastern European countries. Cuba has several hundred military instructors and technical personnel in South Yemen.

The YSP leaders, however, have looked primarily to Moscow and the Eastern European parties for political direction. Instructors from East Germany, for example, make up the greatest number of teachers in the YSP's party schools.

Throughout the 1970s, the government's economic policies emphasized continual expansion of the state sector, at times overstepping its ability to manage the nationalized enterprises. Planning officials later acknowledged that many errors were made.

Differences within the government and party leadership over economic, social, and political policies were frequent, but were rarely discussed publicly. They were usually settled through coercive means, with the losing side in a dispute routinely branded as "reactionary." Factional intrigue was common.

Before the current split, the most serious rift came in June 1978, when Aden was shaken by several days of street battles. Salem Robea

Ali, the president at the time, was accused of having attempted a coup; he was deposed and executed. Ismail was named the new president, supported at the time by Ali Nasser, who had been prime minister since 1971.

Fred Halliday, who has written extensively on South Yemen, noted some changes during a visit in 1979. He reported that "top party officials in Aden have received increased material privileges in the form of access to restricted consumer goods shops, and the army has become much more prominent in Yemeni life, with rank promotions for top commanders."

Ismail himself was then ousted in 1980. He went into exile in Moscow, while several of his key supporters were arrested. Ali Nasser became the new president and YSP general secretary, while retaining his previous position as prime minister.

Ali Nasser's government instituted some policy shifts. Restrictions were eased on small private businesses and on retail merchants, while individual peasants and peasant cooperatives were given increased assistance. Visitors to South Yemen noted stepped-up economic activity and a greater availability of consumer goods.

While reaffirming its close ties with Moscow, the government also embarked on a campaign to broaden its international relations and open up new sources of economic assistance. In 1981, a tripartite mutual defense agreement was signed with the governments of Ethiopia and Libya.

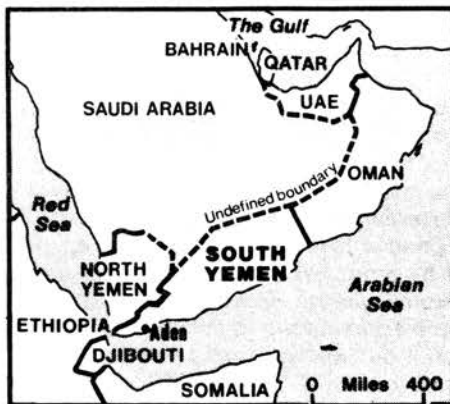
Diplomatic ties were also established for the first time with Oman, and political and economic contacts were increased with Saudi Arabia and North Yemen. This was accompanied by the government's decision to drop its direct backing to the anti-imperialist guerrilla forces in both North Yemen and Oman (which had already been largely defeated by then).

Some within the YSP opposed these shifts or came into conflict with Ali Nasser's supporters for other reasons. They coalesced into several factions. Some supported Ismail; others looked to Antar, who had been ousted as defense minister in 1982. By 1984 these factions had formed a bloc, and in May of that year several of its leaders were brought into an expanded Political Bureau.

Then in February 1985 Ismail himself returned from Moscow and secured a key organizational post within the YSP Central Committee. Ali Nasser relinquished his position as prime minister to al-Attas, while remaining as president and YSP general secretary.

In mid-1985, as preparations were under way for a party congress scheduled for October, the strains within the YSP mounted. Ali Nasser's supporters obtained 70 percent of the delegate nominations, prompting a sharp reaction from his opponents. Rival factions in the army and militia set up street barricades. Armed clashes were temporarily averted, however.

The YSP congress took place as scheduled. Ismail and his supporters were strong enough to reinforce their position within the party



leadership bodies.

What finally triggered the showdown is not yet publicly known. But there are some indications of the general political disputes that underlie the split.

Political differences

According to a report by Helen Lackner in the January 20 London *Guardian*, differences over agrarian policy were one factor:

Abdul Fattah [Ismail]'s supporters see cooperatives as an intermediary step on the road to total collectivisation of the land. In anticipation of this, every cooperative was provided with a large administration of full-time officials in the 1970s. By contrast, since 1980, under Ali Nasser, reforms have been introduced which increase the power of the peasants and fishermen, giving them far greater control over their produce, over marketing, distribution, investment and organisation.

In the case of agriculture, individual peasants have also been given titles to their land, thus ensuring that they are not subject to collectivisation against the peasants' will. This has been done at the expense of the top-heavy administration of the cooperatives, whose officials may be among the supporters of the rebellion.

Ismail himself hinted at the differences during his campaign to whip up opposition to Ali Nasser in 1985, preceding the YSP congress. Ismail accused Ali Nasser of having "abandoned the revolutionary movements of the Arabian Peninsula, especially in North Yemen and Oman, of encouraging private capitalism by facilitating the return to the country of South Yemeni émigrés, and of favoring economic relations with the West on the pretext of efficiency."

Ali Nasser's supporters denied that the government's policies involved either support for capitalist forces or collaboration with imperialism.

Some news commentaries, including in the Soviet press, have drawn attention to a further possible factor in the split: differing tribal allegiances.

Ali Nasser, a Dathina from the Abyan Mountains, tended to promote his fellow Dathinas in an effort to counter the supporters of Antar and Ismail. Antar's grouping, on the other hand, had a strong base in his native Dhali region, north of Aden; it was there that the opposition radio station was first set up.

The revolution has made progress toward developing a nation-state, advancing national consciousness, lessening the isolation of the countryside, and overcoming many of the tribal particularisms that previously marked Yemeni rural society. But this process is still far from complete.

Washington's 'interests'

From the beginning, the U.S. imperialists have been attentively watching the course of the conflict in South Yemen. The White House announced it was monitoring the situation "very closely." A State Department official told a reporter that while Washington had "no friends" on either side of the conflict, "we have interests in South Yemen."

Those "interests" involve seeing that the Yemeni revolution is driven back as far as possible. The U.S. and other imperialist powers are now preparing to take advantage of the rift that has opened up, with the aim of deepening it and spreading yet further demoralization among the Yemeni masses.

One aspect of this preparation is the anti-communist propaganda campaign being advanced by the big-business news media. It presents the warfare in South Yemen as an inevitable outcome of the revolution. And to justify U.S. intervention — whether in South Yemen or elsewhere in the region — this campaign also sounds the standard U.S. propaganda theme of "Soviet interference," claiming Soviet backing for Ismail's "hardline Marxist" faction against the "moderate" Ali Nasser.

While there has long been considerable Soviet political influence over the Yemeni leadership, and even involvement in its internal life, there is no evidence of a direct Soviet role in seeking to oust Ali Nasser. The first response of the Soviet press to the January 13 claim that Ismail and his colleagues had been executed for attempting a coup was to condemn them as "counterrevolutionary." During most of the fighting Moscow did not publicly favor either side, and only endorsed al-Attas as acting president when it appeared that Ali Nasser's forces had lost.

The real danger of military intervention in South Yemen comes from imperialism. In fact, in the month leading up to the outbreak of fighting, threatening U.S. military actions stepped up noticeably. The U.S. aircraft carrier *Saratoga* and other warships conducted maneuvers near South Yemen, and U.S. warplanes buzzed Yemeni civilian aircraft. Israeli officials openly discussed possible military action against South Yemen for giving refuge to hundreds of Palestinian fighters.

Now, on the pretext of rescuing foreign citizens, U.S., British, and French warships have concentrated in South Yemen's vicinity. A unit of the Special Air Service, a British intervention force, has been placed on alert in nearby Djibouti.

The current conflict in South Yemen has already weakened the revolution in face of such imperialist pressures and threats. The gains of the Yemeni masses are in jeopardy. □

Social gains of the Yemeni revolution

18 years of struggle against poverty, imperialist domination

By Mike Daley and Georges Sayad

On Nov. 30, 1967, 128 years of British rule over South Yemen came to an end. After four years of armed struggle, the British army had been defeated and an independent republic secured.

The process of the colonization and liberation of South Yemen was tied to the rise and decline of British colonialism.

The British colonialists occupied the port of Aden in 1839 for use as a coaling station on the route to India. They also began to develop and consolidate their hold over the whole of what is now called South Yemen.* By the 1950s this process was complete. Aden was ruled by a British governor, while the rural "protectorates" were ruled by various tribal leaders who had a series of treaties with the British.

The British rulers developed the port of Aden, while leaving the feudal social and eco-

This article, giving some of the background to the South Yemeni revolution, was written before the recent outbreak of fighting there.

nomie relations in the rural areas untouched. About two-thirds of all employment in South Yemen was tied to agriculture, yet it accounted for only 7 percent of the gross domestic product. The British maintained their rule in the countryside through a variety of sultans and sheiks. According to Fred Halliday,

... the strength of the sheikhs was confirmed by the series of direct treaties between these local rulers and the British. Sheikhs received not only recognition and a promise of support in times of crisis, but the money and guns to consolidate their position. Some of these tribal leaders were landowners; in nomadic times the land had been held collectively by the tribes, but with settlement, land was broken up into estates owned by tribal leaders and into small individual plots. In the state of Lahej the Sultan was the biggest landowner in the whole of South Yemen; 50,000 acres — one-sixth of cultivated land — was owned by the sultans, while another 100,000 acres were owned by tribal chiefs. In the more remote parts of the country tribal chiefs were economically undistinguished, and just as wretchedly poor as the rest of the tribe. In Dathina and in parts of the Yafai area no rulers were acknowledged, perhaps partly due to remnants there of the primitive communist Qarmati belief. [Fred Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans*. New York: Vantage Books, 1975, p. 178]

*A century before the British colonialists invaded, Aden and the rest of what is now South Yemen were part of a united Yemen. But in 1728 a local sultan revolted against the governing imam in the North and this region broke away. By the time the British arrived, the South was itself divided up into a number of separate sheikdoms and sultanates.

Aden, the major town in South Yemen, derived its relative prosperity from four sources — shipping, industry, the British military, and trade with the rest of South Yemen as well as North Yemen. All this was dominated by foreign (mainly British) capital, most of whose profits went straight back to Britain. The local Adeni bourgeoisie was very weak and tied to British rule; its role was limited to servicing ships, trade, and so forth.

Independence struggle

South Yemeni opposition to British rule dates from the first days of British occupation. During the 19th and early 20th centuries there was a series of tribal rebellions. In the 1950s a nationalist opposition began to emerge based on the merchants.

With the expansion of the British military base and the building of the oil refinery, tens of thousands of peasants came to Aden looking for work.

Starting in 1953, the Yemeni trade union movement took off rapidly. By 1956 there were 21 registered unions, with over 20,000 members (out of a population at that time of 800,000). The unions responded both to the immediate situation in Aden and to events in the Arab world as a whole. In 1956, after the Egyptian government of Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal and was attacked by British, French, and Israeli forces, more than 18,000 workers came out in a series of strikes combining local issues and support for Egypt.

The British colonialists responded with a mixture of reforms and repression, but failed to quash the workers' movement.

On Sept. 26, 1962, the people of North Yemen overthrew the governing imam and declared an independent republic, the Yemen Arab Republic. This had immediate and far-reaching effects. The People's Socialist Party (PSP), the political arm of the Aden Trades Union Congress, immediately organized a mass demonstration in support of Northern independence, and the nationalist movement called for North-South unity.

The British colonialists sought to overthrow the new republic in the North. Together with the reactionary regime in Saudi Arabia, they backed the North Yemeni royalists in their attempts to regain their rule. This brought a prolonged civil war that eventually led to the defeat of the radical nationalists in 1968 and the establishment of a government under heavy imperialist and Saudi influence.

In the meantime, however, South Yemeni nationalist militants who had traveled to the

North and participated in the civil war there had formed the National Liberation Front (NLF) in 1963. Its most important founding force was the South Yemeni branch of the Arab Nationalist Movement. This was a pan-Arab movement heavily influenced by the ideas of Nasser. Its South Yemeni branch was made up of workers and students in Aden, many of whom were from the countryside and had preserved their ties with it.

Similarly, many of the nine other groups that made up the NLF were based in the countryside. The fact that the NLF had a base both among workers and other sectors in Aden and among the peasantry in the rural areas set it off from previous nationalist formations. The NLF was also different in that it was committed to armed struggle.

On Oct. 14, 1963, the NLF began the armed phase of its struggle in the Radfan Mountains.

The war in South Yemen was to be Britain's Vietnam. Some 18,000 British troops were committed to the fight, which spread from the countryside into Aden. The British combined vicious repression with the promise of independence in the future, although they also made it clear that they meant the British military base to remain after independence.

As the struggle deepened, the NLF began to gain support from the ranks of the PSP. By the end of 1965, half of the 12 major unions, led by the oil workers, were supporting the NLF.

The Nasser regime in Egypt allied with the PSP leadership and traditional tribal leaders of the NLF and sought to place the liberation struggle under Egyptian control. Together they fomented a split in the NLF, leading to the creation of the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY).

By November 1966, all relations between the NLF and FLOSY were broken. From then on the NLF had to fight attacks from FLOSY as well as from the British forces and their Yemeni hirelings. Despite this added obstacle, victory was not far away.

The British rulers now hoped to grant formal independence after first crushing the mass anti-imperialist movement. In February 1966 they declared their intention to abandon the military base in Aden, and in April of the following year defense of the countryside against the NLF was put in the hands of a local mercenary force, the South Arabian Army (SAA). On June 20, 1967, London announced its plan for granting South Yemen independence while maintaining British domination.

But the British position rapidly collapsed. On the same date that these plans were revealed, the police and SAA forces in the Crater area of Aden rebelled and attacked the British

troops there. The SAA was honeycombed by NLF cells. Together they held Crater for 13 days. On November 7, the SAA openly declared its support for the NLF. The whole British plan lay in ruins. All the colonialists could do was to begin packing for home. On Nov. 30, 1967, the People's Republic of South Yemen was declared.

Poverty and oppression

Independent South Yemen was immediately confronted by many serious problems. British and U.S. imperialism realized that the anti-imperialist upsurge threatened their interests in the area. In this they were joined by Saudi Arabia, the sultan of Oman, and the right wing of the North Yemen republic, as well as a host of defeated South Yemenis, all of whom were determined to sabotage and crush the new republic.

On top of this there were grave social and economic problems in what was (and remains) one of the poorest countries of the Arab world. At the time of independence there were only 127 miles of paved roads in South Yemen, of which all but 14 were in Aden. Because of the lack of rain and rivers, 65 percent of the country is desert and wasteland. Warehouses, electricity, refrigeration, schools, and hospitals were also either nonexistent or practically nonexistent outside of Aden.

Control of the land remained in the hands of feudal sultans and sheiks, as well as of a new layer of better-off peasants, which had formed since independence. The mass of the peasantry was subject to a tremendous yoke of servitude.

Tribal identification continued to be widespread, and the political and ideological grip of the sultans and sheiks was still powerful — many people considered their rule to be sacred.

The immediate focal point of the Yemeni revolution was thus the question of land and agrarian reform. The task here was to remove the control of land from the grasp of the feudalists, while ensuring that the peasantry had both land and water with which to irrigate it. Without solving this question there could be no way forward for the workers and peasants of South Yemen.

Another key question facing the Yemeni people was that of striving to forge a modern nation. This has involved the struggle to overcome the division between North and South Yemen, which predates the British occupation of the South, as well as drawing together the various tribal groupings in the countryside.

On top of these domestic political and social hurdles, the new Yemeni state suffered from imperialist economic pressures and sabotage. The British government betrayed its commitment to give £60 million in aid and did nothing to compensate the 20,000 Yemenis thrown out of work by the closure of the military base. Moreover, the closure of the Suez Canal had cut port trade in Aden by 75 percent.

Radicalization

The first NLF government was led by Qahtan ash-Shaabi. He was part of the Nasirist wing of the NLF. While it had opposed



Teacher with student. Since revolution, education has been expanded for all.

the British, it was also opposed to making major changes in the social and economic fabric of the country. Ash-Shaabi and the NLF left wing clashed over two major questions. The first was on driving through with the agrarian reform, which meant taking on the feudal class structure in the countryside. The second was the dismantling of the colonial apparatus and the SAA. The two questions were intimately linked. At its Fourth Congress in March of 1968, the NLF majority supported the left wing.

The resolutions of this congress laid out the policies the left wing of the NLF believed were necessary to lead the country forward. The congress also defined the NLF as a "revolutionary organization which represents the interests of the workers, peasants, soldiers and revolutionary intellectuals. . ." (Quoted in Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans*, p. 246).

Within a fortnight of the congress, on March 19, 1968, the right wing, concentrated in the army and state apparatus, arrested a number of NLF left-wing cadres. Left-wing activists were subsequently removed from all key positions, many were arrested, and others fled Aden. The NLF left wing entrenched itself in the Hadramut region, while ash-Shaabi maintained control in the Aden area. On May 14 the left wing attempted an insurrection in the Aden area, but failed. The army held firm and occupied the NLF strongholds throughout most of the country.

Taking advantage of the split in the NLF, imperialism sought to overthrow the government. Encouraged by the governments of Saudi Arabia and North Yemen, a series of counterrevolutionary rebellions broke out. An invasion force from North Yemen consisting of FLOSY fighters attacked. The ash-Shaabi government, faced with imminent disaster, released the NLF cadres, and a joint defense of the country was successfully waged.

The NLF left wing then began to regroup. On June 22, 1969, in what is known as the

June 22 Corrective Move, ash-Shaabi was forced to resign and the right-wing regime was overthrown. The country was renamed the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY).

This development marked the beginning of a new revolutionary upsurge in South Yemen, in which the toiling masses mobilized on a broad scale to advance the national democratic revolution.

According to the PDRY's first constitution, "The strong alliance between the working class, the farmers, the intelligentsia, the petty bourgeoisie is the invincible political basis of the national democratic revolution in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. . . . Soldiers, women and students are considered part of this alliance in view of their attachment to the productive forces of the people" (Constitution of the PDRY, Article 7).

Peasant "intifadha"

One of the first acts of the new government was to initiate a deep-going agrarian reform. The NLF began to form village committees consisting of members of the peasant movements. These became organizing centers for the land reform.

According to Mohammad Haiten Ali, "The committees surveyed land to identify the big holders and rich peasants, following up with a census of landless peasants and farm laborers. The peasant mass helped willingly. The class struggle grew sharper, escalating at times to armed clashes" (*World Marxist Review*, February 1972).

Finally, Haiten continued, a new agrarian reform law was passed and "a decision was taken to proceed with the reform in accordance with the new law, adopted in November 1970 after its draft was approved by poor peasants and farm laborers. . . ."

The reform was carried out by the peasant committees. In reality it involved an *intifadha* (massive insurrection) in the countryside that began in October 1970. Peasants armed with scythes occupied the estates and used the peasant committees to administer the reform.

An NLF cadre described this process in his province:

"We persuaded the peasants that the exploiters would never change and they had to act. They took their hatchets and sickles and immediately arrested all the Sheikhs, sada and other feudalists — eighty-two in all. The population were stupefied. They thought that these people were untouchable and that whoever lifted a hand against them would die on the spot. When they saw that the lords remained in prison and that the town was not struck by any cataclysm, all tongues were loosened and all the other peasants joined those who had taken part in the risings and came into the peasant leagues. . . . It was important that the peasants themselves took the people to prison. [Quoted in Halliday, p. 260]

By the end of 1972, peasant uprisings had carried through this agrarian reform to a great extent. The feudal estates were dismantled, and land was given to the farm laborers and peasants. Land ownership was limited to 20 acres of irrigated or 40 acres of unirrigated

land.

All water became national property to be administered by the state. Having a just distribution of water was essential, as South Yemen is without a single year-round river in the entire country. Tractors and other agricultural implements also became national property to be rented out for use by individuals or cooperatives.

At the 1978 founding congress of the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP, uniting the NLF with two smaller groups), Abdel Fattah Ismail, a key party leader, explained the accomplishments of the revolution that had taken place on the land:

The positions of the feudals and semi-feudals have been eliminated thanks to the initiatives and actions of peasants led by our Political Organisation. The political and economic influence of this class has been ended for good.

Developing agriculture

Having initiated an agrarian reform, the new republic faced the immense task of developing agriculture. Tools were needed, as well as credit, a market, and a way to get the goods to market in a salable condition. All this infrastructure, including a modern road system, had to be built up from scratch.

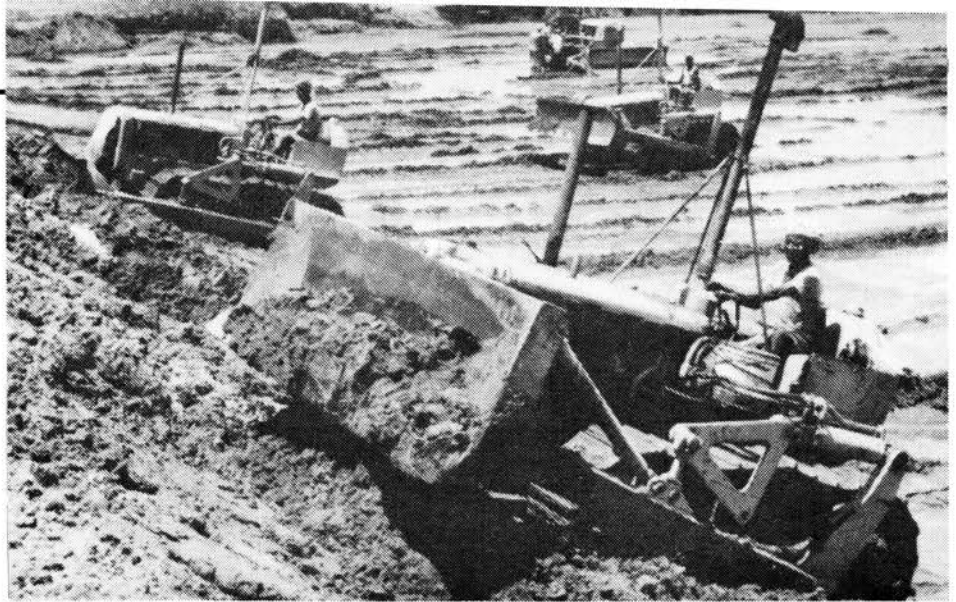
Today, "there are good roads around Aden and motorable tracks throughout the western area. A new road has been built . . . between Aden and Mukalla. A 92 km road from Naqubah to Nisab is being built. . . . The Chinese are also constructing a road from Shihr to Sayhut. The Yemen Company for Land Transport . . . provides regular road transport between Aden and Taiz. Some 32,800 vehicles were in use in the country in 1980, of which 16,500 were passenger cars" (*The Middle East and North Africa, 1983-84*. London: Europa, p. 713).

Despite the problems of arid land and the lack of equipment and infrastructure, agricultural production had to be increased to meet the needs of the people and to provide valuable sources of foreign exchange. With the scant resources at hand, the government encouraged the building of peasant cooperatives. To aid their formation, the government set up equipment rental offices and provided power and water.

Hand in hand with the cooperatives, a state sector was set up in the larger cotton-producing farms and on unused lands. By 1978, 8 percent of the cultivated land was in the state sector, and 80 percent of all agricultural products were produced by cooperatives, uniting about 38,000 peasant families.

A campaign of diversifying agricultural production was also launched. With the help of Cuba, large-scale chicken production was introduced. New crops have also been planted, such as bananas and tobacco, which are destined for export.

South Yemen has also faced considerable problems in the development of its agriculture. The early years of the cooperative movement were carried out with some haste, and some arbitrary decisions were imposed upon the



Major efforts have been made to develop agriculture, assist peasant cooperatives.

peasantry.

The low productivity of the land was compounded by a two-year drought that ended in 1977. This caused a substantial drop in production, particularly in the export-earning cotton sector. Then, following the drought, South Yemen was hit by severe floods in 1982. These damaged thousands of hectares (1 hectare = 2.47 acres) of valuable farmland, killed 50,000 head of cattle, and destroyed 25,000 homes, as well as damaging newly built roads and bridges.

With the 1982 floods, the government carried out a modification of its policies. All the tools were turned over to the peasant cooperatives for management and care. The cooperatives were now allowed to sell 40 percent of their crops on the open market, in order to boost production. The remainder is still purchased by two state companies to ensure basic distribution to the population and ensure that exportable production is available. In order to continue encouraging cooperatives, an immediate loan of 80,000 dinars (about US \$230,000) is made to a new cooperative upon creation.

One aspect of the PDRY's development in food production has met with considerable success. This is the fishing industry. The PDRY is surrounded by very rich fishing waters, yet fish was practically unknown as a source of food for most of the country. In 1970-72 fishermen were also mobilized into *intifadhat*, seizing boats and fishing implements just as the peasants seized the land. They too have joined cooperatives.

The fishing industry has been much easier to develop than agriculture, especially with the technical and material aid provided by Cuba and other workers' states. Between 1978 and 1983 the total catch rose from 48,000 to 85,000 tons. With the development of roads, electricity, and refrigeration, it became possible for the first time to provide the peasantry with this valuable form of protein, as well as to develop a new product for export.

Another important question facing the PDRY has been the settling of tens of

thousands of nomads. The nomadic Bedouin played an important role in the herding of livestock. Government policy has been one of patiently explaining the benefits of a settled life and providing as much aid as possible to newly settled communities. In this way it has proved possible for the Bedouin to enjoy many of the fruits of the social gains won by the revolution.

Planning for industry

At the time of independence, the industrial sector was limited to the Aden refinery and some small-scale industry in Aden. In November 1969, just five months after the ouster of ash-Shaabi, the first steps were taken to break direct imperialist control over the economy with the passage of the Law for the Economic Organization of the Public Sector and National Planning.

According to the World Bank, "This nationalized the country's eight banks (of which seven were foreign). . . . Twelve insurance companies (foreign) were nationalized and amalgamated . . . all others were placed under liquidation. Five major trading companies (all foreign) were nationalized. . . . All Aden Port service companies were nationalized. . . . Finally all five petroleum distribution companies (foreign) . . . were nationalized" (*PDRY: A Review of Economic and Social Development*, p.3).

Following this, in 1977, the British Petroleum refinery in Aden became state property. Then in April 1978, the local subsidiary of the British communications company, Cable and Wireless, was nationalized.

These nationalizations placed the public sector firmly at the forefront of industrial development. According to an official at the Ministry of Planning, "Recently [1980] the contribution of the public sector to industrial output has been 60 per cent, the private sector 24.7 per cent, the joint sector 13.8 and the co-operative sector 1.5 per cent."

The PDRY attempted to begin utilizing this state sector in order to take a conscious approach toward economic matters. Since 1971,

there have been three major attempts to plan the economy and economic growth: a three-year development plan (1971-74), the first five-year plan (1974-78), and the second five-year plan (1979-83), although this was revised in 1980 as a 1981-85 plan.

Ali Nasser Muhammad, the general secretary of the YSP until recently, explained the success of the first five-year plan: "In the first five-year plan the aggregate social product increased by 51 per cent, the national income by 43 per cent and per capita income by 25 per cent. Output grew by 167 per cent in industry, 32 per cent in agriculture and 137 per cent in fishing. Construction increased by 320 per cent, transport by 230 per cent and trade by 110 per cent" (*World Marxist Review*, March 1981).

This success has been largely achieved by a growth in labor productivity.

The last 18 years have marked advances for the PDRY in the sphere of industry, as well as industry's diversification and development outside of Aden. Today there is a textile mill in Mukalla, and cotton gins, flour mills, and other food-processing plants in other areas. There are factories producing agricultural implements, plastic and aluminum goods, and paint. There are plans for a cement plant in Abayan. All of this represents real progress for the workers and peasants of South Yemen.

This growth of industry has also led to a numerical growth of the working class (see table).

One major economic factor, and the major source of foreign exchange, has been remittances from Yemeni workers living abroad. In recent years there has also been a growth of economic aid from other Arab countries. This followed a systematic attempt by the PDRY to increase such aid from 1975 onward.

The imperialist countries continue to rebuff most of the PDRY's requests for aid. This has meant that since independence South Yemen has turned to the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, and the other workers' states in order to obtain essential aid.

Today the Soviet Union is a major source of economic aid to South Yemen. In 1979 the PDRY signed a 20-year friendship treaty with the Soviet Union and also became an observer in the Council for Mutual Economic Assist-

ance (CMEA), the economic organization of the Soviet Union, Cuba, Vietnam, Mongolia, and the Eastern European workers' states.

Advances in education, women's rights

Despite the scarcity of resources and the still-low productivity of society, the 2 million people of South Yemen have made significant gains in raising their general social and economic conditions.

The most dramatic gains are in the sphere of education. At independence, barely 18 percent of the population was literate. By 1980, 40 percent of the adult population was literate, and a new law was passed with the aim of conducting a five-year campaign against illiteracy. One of its main features was the development of an adult education program. In addition, literacy courses were to be provided for all illiterate employees during working hours and at the workplace.

In 1967, about 64,000 students were in schools, but by 1979 school enrollment had risen to more than 250,000, and educational facilities had been extended throughout the countryside. Even the nomadic Bedouin have access to schools, with special boarding schools for their children.

Institutions of higher education have also been established since independence. The British had left South Yemen without any universities. By 1977 the University of Aden was established, with over 1,700 students.

Particular efforts have been made in providing women equal educational opportunities and drawing them into the work force. The Family Law of 1974 prohibited the long-established practices of polygamy, child weddings, dowry, and unilateral divorce. The law took steps to guarantee women's rights in and out of wedlock.

Women could no longer be bought and sold or denied all rights. They now had clear political rights established by the constitution, as well as the right to education, work, and social benefits such as equal wages and a minimum 50-day paid maternity leave.

By 1979 women made up 31 percent of the school enrollment, up from almost zero in colonial days. By the end of the 1970s, women were also being integrated into the work force, accounting for 14 percent of the industrial workers. However, the lack of child-care facilities poses new challenges to this process.

The passage of the Family Law and other advances were preceded by mobilizations of women, as well as large-scale discussions throughout the country on proposed changes. In the course of these, the General Union of Yemeni Women (GUYW) was built, which numbered 14,000 by 1980. These mobilizations and discussions have raised the general understanding of the necessity of advancing the conditions of women.

Leaders of the GUYW explained that the advances made would have been impossible without the victory of the revolution. "We are against the slogans raised in some Arab countries against the veil or demanding women's suffrage on their own. These are secondary.

Women's emancipation requires the existence of a progressive revolutionary regime, and as such a regime exists here, we will be able to achieve more in fewer years than women's movements in the rest of the Arab world" (Aida Yafai, a member of the Central Committee of the NLF, quoted in "State Policy and the Position of Women in South Yemen" by Maxine Molyneux, *Peuples Méditerranéens*, No. 12, p. 43).

Improving living standards

Article 41 of the constitution declares, "Medical care is the right of each citizen, the Government guarantees this right . . . through the expansion of free health services." This expansion has taken place, with many areas having health care for the first time in history. By 1977 the number of doctors and nurses had tripled to 222 and 1,362 respectively.

Housing, another basic need, was also removed as a tool of exploitation in 1972 through a sweeping nationalization of all housing units, except those inhabited by their owners. Rents were drastically reduced. However, housing shortages still remain.

In 1974 the government instituted price controls over basic foods. Transportation costs were also absorbed, thus providing the basic foodstocks to the entire country at uniform prices. This, combined with housing, electricity, piped water, roads, and new food sources such as fish and poultry, has led to a rise in the standard of living for the rural population.

In the 1984 and 1985 budgets, over 30 percent of the state's expenses were allocated to the development of education, health, and housing, with another 18 percent to transportation and communications.

An aspect of the political mobilization of the toilers has been the construction of mass organizations. Besides the GUYW, other mass organizations have been built. These are the Democratic Yemen Union of Peasants, General Confederation of Yemeni Workers, Yemeni Democratic Youth League, cooperatives of producers, committees for popular defense, and people's militias (which have a reported membership of 100,000). These mass organizations are led by the Yemeni Socialist Party.

The stated goal of the YSP, as adopted at its founding congress, "is directed to completing the national-democratic revolution and achieving the long term aims, namely, creating the material, technical, economic, social and spiritual requisites for going to the next stage, that of building socialism."

Imperialism fears example

Fighters for national liberation throughout the Arab world, and in particular in the Arabian Peninsula, have looked to the example of the PDRY. The victory of the liberation war and the subsequent advances of the masses inspired fighters throughout the peninsula. The revolution in the South is a constant threat to the reactionary ruling class in the North.

The reactionary sultanate of neighboring Oman was shaken by civil war during the

Employment by sector

(in thousands)

1969 1973 1976 1981*

Agriculture and Fishing	138	152	181	204.6
Industry	8	20	27	47.8
Construction	3	15	28	33.8
Transport	4	14	24	28.9
Commerce	26	25	30	41.7
Services	85	97	109	95.8
TOTAL	264	323	399	452.6

*1981 figures are estimates

Sources: World Bank and *Middle East and North Africa 1983-84*.

1960s and 1970s. The fighters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman were given refuge and support by the PDRY. It was only through the massive armed intervention of British forces and those of the shah of Iran that the sultan's regime was saved for imperialism.

The PDRY's policy has been one of constant support to the Palestinian cause. In the 1973 war, despite the distance from the war front, the PDRY took action against Israel by closing the Bab al-Mandab straits (the entrance to the Red Sea) to Israeli shipping.

The PDRY has been at the forefront of opposition in the ranks of the Arab League to the Camp David agreement, or any other imperialist-spawned treaty with Israel. Most recently, the YSP has played a role in trying to avert a split in the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The PDRY has also put forward anti-imperialist positions in the United Nations and the Nonaligned Movement. In 1977-78 — while Cuba was providing tens of thousands of internationalist volunteers to Ethiopia to help

defend the revolution in that country from an imperialist-inspired invasion from Somalia — the PDRY also sent a military force to aid the Ethiopians.

The imperialist powers have not permitted the development of the PDRY to proceed without constant attacks and threats. In 1972 major armed confrontations took place on the borders with Oman, Saudi Arabia, and North Yemen. The attackers were beaten back.

Again in the course of the war between Ethiopia and Somalia, counterrevolutionaries operating out of Saudi Arabia launched a new attack on the PDRY. In 1979 an invasion force was massed in North Yemen, along the border. Heavy fighting broke out, and the North Yemeni forces were defeated. The U.S. government rushed a naval carrier force to the Gulf of Aden.

Such imperialist threats and pressures aim at derailing or destroying the example of the democratic revolution in South Yemen, an example for the toiling masses struggling for national liberation and social progress throughout this key region of the world. □

Cuba

Disaster of the century

Hurricane's toll: \$1 billion in damage, 2 dead

By Will Reissner

Although 1985's devastating earthquake in Mexico and volcanic eruption in Colombia received considerable coverage in the U.S. big-business news media, the same newspapers and radio and television stations passed over in virtual silence another serious natural disaster — the hurricane that swept Cuba in November 1985.

This politically motivated blackout was especially striking since the path of the hurricane, as it traveled through the Caribbean toward the United States, was meticulously followed by the mass media, while its impact on Cuba was scarcely mentioned.

Hurricane Kate roared through Cuba on Nov. 19, 1985, with winds of up to 200 kilometers per hour. It was the worst natural disaster to hit the country this century, leaving a trail of physical destruction 500 kilometers long across the island.

In all, some 80,000 homes were damaged, and 5,000 of them were completely destroyed. Thousands of industrial plants and agricultural facilities were heavily damaged. Many had their roofs blown off.

On the northern coast whole towns were swept away by the surging sea.

In huge areas of the countryside, where the sugar harvest was about to begin, vast stands of sugar cane were toppled.

More than 10,000 hectares (1 hectare = 2.47 acres) of plantain trees were ruined by the storm.

In the citrus fields, much of the crop was

knocked off the trees.

Some 70 percent of the country was left without electrical power, and downed telephone lines knocked out communications.

Initial estimates placed the physical damage at more than US\$1 billion.

Yet only two people lost their lives in this disaster, both in the capital city, Havana. The minimal death toll testifies to the ability of the Cuban population to mobilize in the face of an emergency.

The overwhelming majority of Cubans are members of one or another mass organization — the Committees for Defense of the Revolution, the Cuban Women's Federation, the trade unions, youth groups, the Territorial Troop Militias.

As a result of this high degree of organization, more than 715,000 people were evacuated from dangerous locations before the hurricane came ashore. It was this mobilization that kept the death toll down to two.

In addition, economic losses were kept down by moving more than 200,000 head of cattle, 7,000 pigs, 57,000 sheep, 5,000 horses, and more than 100,000 fowl out of the path of danger.

No sooner had the winds begun to die down than the rebuilding effort began. The Cuban state provided rebuilding materials at half price to everyone whose home was damaged. Loans were immediately made available to those who did not have the ready cash to begin repairs.

Cuban President Fidel Castro reported to a session of the National Assembly of People's

Power, the country's legislative body, that "once more the principle of socialist solidarity, of revolutionary solidarity, was put into practice, wherein no one was left without resources and those who needed a loan got one so that they were able to buy the materials" with which to rebuild.

Even under the best of circumstances, however, the extent of physical damage was so great that rapid, total reconstruction would have been impossible relying solely on Cuba's domestic resources. As Castro noted, the amount of fibrocement slabs required for repairing walls and roofs would equal the total planned production for 1986. In addition, 10,000 tons of zinc roofing were needed, but in all of Cuba only 1,000 tons were in stock.

The Soviet government, however, was quick to offer emergency aid for repair of the hurricane damage. On Nov. 28, 1985, Moscow announced that the Soviet Union would send to Cuba, free of charge, 30,000 tons of rice, 20,000 tons of flour, 10,000 tons of zinc roof sheeting, 5,000 tons of sheet aluminum, 2 million asbestos-cement tiles, and 1,000 tons of long-fiber asbestos.

Cuban authorities report that the zinc, aluminum, and tiles donated by the Soviet Union will be enough to replace all the roofs destroyed by the storm. The rice and flour shipments will help to make up for the loss of plantains, root vegetables, and other crops destroyed by Hurricane Kate.

The hurricane's damage has come on top of a two-year drought that has left reservoirs at only 62 percent of capacity. The storm did not alleviate the water shortage because the high winds were accompanied by little rain.

Because of the drought, some agricultural production targets, particularly for rice, beans, meat, and milk, were not met in 1985.

In addition, falling international sugar and oil prices have limited Cuba's hard currency export earnings. Sugar prices have dropped to less than US\$.03 per pound.

Nevertheless, Cuba's economy grew 4.8 percent in 1985. Average annual growth in 1981-85 was 7 percent, more than projected in the five-year plan.

Most of the hurricane's impact will be felt in the 1986 results, when the economy is projected to grow by only 3 to 3.5 percent. □

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Castro talks to unionists, peasants

Discusses Latin America's aboriginal roots, united fight against debt

[In 1985 Cuba hosted a series of conferences on the foreign debt crisis in Latin America, which drew thousands of representatives from a wide range of organizations in the region.

[At the closing session of the conference of Latin American and Caribbean trade unions and peasant organizations held in mid-July, Cuban President Fidel Castro held a discussion with the delegates.

[Following are two excerpts from this dialogue. The first is Castro's response to the delegates' debate over the date for a continent-wide action in October 1985 against the foreign debt.

[The majority of delegates voted to hold the action on October 23, and many protests were held on that date. Some participants, however, proposed that the actions be held on October 12, the anniversary of Christopher Columbus' first landing in the Americas in 1492. Castro supported the October 23 proposal and in his discussion with the delegates explained why.

[The second excerpt contains Castro's explanation that the fight to cancel the foreign debt in Latin America is a national liberation struggle that will require a broad, united effort. He warned against sectarianism that would undermine the potential for building this united fight.

[To illustrate his point, he cited the experience of the July 26 Movement in forging a united force to overthrow Cuban tyrant Fulgencio Batista in 1959. He also described how this antisectionarian approach laid the basis for the regroupment of revolutionary forces that established the Cuban Communist Party in 1965.

[The excerpts from Castro's July 18 discussion with the trade union and peasant representatives are taken from the pamphlet *To Pay Tribute to the Empire or to Pay Tribute to the Homeland*. The pamphlet, published by Editora Política in Havana, includes the full English-language text of Castro's dialogue. The footnotes and bracketed inserts in these excerpts are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

'I am an Indian'

All of you are responsible for opening a third front today. I was meditating about this this afternoon. We already have one big — very big — front [against the foreign debt], which is the one we've discussed here. Then there's a second front, which was opened concerning the Seoul Olympic Games;¹ another

front. I don't know if a pamphlet on this was distributed to you or not. Anyway, that's two fronts. And the third front was opened today, concerning October 12.

I had a series of ideas and opinions about that; I could say that I've been muttering about this for some time now. I haven't said anything publicly, but I've been ruminating on this problem for some time, you might say, chewing it over, and I simply can't swallow this idea (*Laughter*) of defending October 12.

I have my opinions about this, because I feel like an Indian. I am an Indian; I belong to this new mass of Indians who inhabit our region. I feel aboriginal, as all of you who live proudly in these lands do, feeling a part of them, no matter where our ancestors came from: some from one place and others from another. They say that those who were here before Columbus arrived came from Siberia or China or I-don't-know-where and crossed over the Bering Strait. They weren't from here, either, but I think they came peacefully. They had their wars among themselves, but they were wars between more or less even sides, until we were discovered.

I say "we were discovered" because I feel like an Indian; I am an Indian; I feel that I am a part of the new Indians. There are those who have pretensions of being much more powerful Conquistadores now, with a lot of technology and more sophisticated and destructive weapons than the Conquistadores who conquered our lands and subjugated our peoples had then.

I think, as I said this morning, that the choice of that date would have been unfortunate or unlucky; it clashes with all the values that we most cherish.

The Indians here on this island were the most peaceful inhabitants of this region. The Aztecs, the Incas, the Araucanians, and others were more warlike and better organized, but the Indians of Cuba were the most peaceful people who have ever lived in the world. Naturally, they didn't have any planes, locomotives, radios, television sets, tractors, buses, harquebuses,² crossbows, swords, or even sailboats. I've always thought how lucky the Conquistadores were because, by mistake, they landed here. Don't forget: Columbus was trying to get to the Indies; nobody knew that a whole continent was in the way, right across their path — and it was lucky for him and for Cortes, Pizarro, and all the other Conquistadores that it was.

I've read some books about the Orient, or

what was called the Indies at that time, with a great deal of interest. They include the complete history of Marco Polo, in detail — 800 pages. The Orient had armies of well-trained warriors, with hundreds of thousands of fearsome cavalymen. If the Conquistadores had, by chance, arrived in China at that time, they wouldn't have lasted more than 15 minutes — 15 minutes at most.

They were able to conquer this hemisphere because they brought a few dozen horses, and the Indians believed that each horse and rider was a single being, one animal that had a strange shape. Then, when they killed the horse and the man kept coming, it was demoralizing. Moreover, the Conquistadores had a few little cannon, which were demoralizing, too. But, in China, they'd invented gunpowder, and they had armies of hundreds of thousands of cavalymen.

When I was in school and studied history, I was taught about the Spaniards' "prowess," and I've read books about the conquests. I've come to the conclusion that it was their mistake that saved them. I would have liked to have seen Diego Velázquez, who conquered Cuba by killing the Indians here, landing in China, or Pizarro and Hernando Cortes, those "glorious" warriors — we were taught that they were glorious warriors. I know what they did. They came here with swords; they had the cross bless the conquest — I have a lot more respect for the cross than for the sword — and they wiped out the population. There was practically nobody left here in Cuba. There were 6 million Indians in Mexico, but, within a few years, there were just 2 million left.

They didn't wipe all of them out with their swords, their diseases, and their atrocious methods of slavery simply because they couldn't. They conquered enormous areas, raped, did everything you can imagine, grabbed all the wealth, and enslaved our peoples.

I think that this part of history should be criticized and that those in the cradle of the Conquistadores, who are almost proud of their ancestors' feats, should make the criticism and self-criticism of the conquest, of colonialism, and of the Conquistadores. The day they engage in self-criticism, we will be able to thank them for some cultural things they left us. But I think that there can be no defense of the discovery and conquest without criticism and self-criticism for the unjust, atrocious, and brutal things that happened.

This is what I think. I'm thoroughly convinced about all this, but I didn't want to start making a fuss about it in the middle of the struggle against the debt.

Tomorrow, the cables are going to say more

1. The Cuban government initiated an international campaign in November 1984 urging the International Olympic Committee to divide the 1988 Olympic events between North and South Korea. Cur-

rently, the Olympic games are scheduled to be held only in Seoul, South Korea's capital.

2. A matchlock gun invented in the 15th century.

about the problem of the conquest than about the conference, but I'm not afraid. We have three fronts, and we'll keep on struggling on three fronts, that's all. (*Applause*)

Fighting sectarianism

We are faced with a challenge that is greater than ever before. Fortunately, I believe we have more awareness, more potentially favorable factors, and such clear differences with them [the imperialists], such appropriate and unique characteristics for unity, that we can wage this struggle. I'm convinced that we can wage this struggle, but it must be united and all-encompassing.

If it is a matter of a struggle for national liberation that requires the broadest participation of all possible sectors, our promoting the struggle for social revolution at the same time would contradict the correct strategy and tactics of the present social and political circumstances of our countries.

And I say it literally: this struggle must be as broad as possible; if not, we will not win the battle. We would be either underestimating imperialism and its forces or overestimating our own forces, and I don't underestimate or overestimate them, but see them for what they're worth. We can create a very broad front, without excluding any social strata, any social sector, it wouldn't exclude anyone! Those who wish to exclude themselves, let them do so, let them exclude themselves, but we shouldn't exclude them. (*Applause*)

This is a tremendously transcendental and historic moment: the time for definitions has come, and I think we should give all men and women of this hemisphere, whatever their social strata — and I believe it could potentially be an overwhelming majority, if we are able to get the message to them, if we know how to use this correctness — the option of being with their homeland or against their homeland. They should make a choice, at this time of definitions, each one should say whether the tribute should be rendered to the empire or to the homeland, and I'm speaking of the homeland in the broadest sense.

We shouldn't exclude anyone, we should give that possibility to each one and let each one take a stand. And some will. We know that there are minority sectors that are the ones most directly linked to imperialism, the financial sectors of imperialism, we know they exist, and they will be on the side of imperialism. But they will be a minority, they should be a minority. And if a greater number place themselves on the side of imperialism than should be, then we start losing the battle. That can happen if we are not comprehensive; it can happen if we are sectarian.

We also have a lot of experience in the battle against sectarianism, the experience of our own revolution. When the revolution triumphed, our movement [July 26 Movement] had the support of the vast majority of the people; it won that support with the war, with the fact that it pointed out a path, that it saw a revolutionary possibility.



Havana, Jan. 1, 1959: "Batista Flees." Castro explains how July 26 Movement drew the broadest possible forces into the struggle against dictatorship.

In times when there was nothing similar to the present Latin American crisis, in times when there seemed to be no solution to the existing oppression, a small group of us started preparing ourselves, organizing ourselves to struggle, based on a set of principles and premises that were later proven by life and history. We even had to move away from some historic criteria, for instance, that the revolution could only take place when there were great crises. Ours took place when there was no great crisis, and it was undertaken by a group of men who had to defeat a tyrannical government, backed by a well-equipped army, and do it without a single professional soldier, a single penny, or a single rifle.

If some thought we were mad, I believe they were right in thinking so; objectively they were right, subjectively they were not. Nevertheless, we began that struggle, we waged it, and were successful. All of that gave us the almost total support of the people. I said that our organization was like the bed of a small river where, at the moment of victory, an Amazon of people rushed in.

We never had hegemonistic tendencies — and there were other smaller, less strong organizations. We never dreamed of saying: this is our victory, it is only ours and they can't have a single bit of it. On the contrary, we started to call on them to join us. We called not only on communists to join us, those who had been fighting with us in the mountains, but on the students' organization which had even had some differences with us. We didn't call on those organizations only. We want you to know that we called on everyone — except the Batista people. We offered everyone the possibility of joining the revolution, and we didn't boast of the huge support our own organization enjoyed.

The surveys said that the revolution had 96 percent support. If I say that our movement included 90 percent of the population, I don't exaggerate. But we didn't look at the number

of people that were joining us, but a principle, and we said: the principle is unity. But if you don't appreciate the principle of unity, you start rejecting people who want to participate; if you want to be hegemonistic, you end up splitting your own organization.

So we were not analyzing the quantitative value of the principle of unity, but its qualitative value. If the others had 3 percent, well, let that 3 percent come to us and we would highly appreciate it; the others 2 percent, and we would also appreciate it highly.

There were organizations here, old political parties that at least were opposed to Batista, and at a given moment we accepted them as elements against the dictatorship, we gave them all an opportunity; there were some with 100 people, 200 people. I can tell you that the revolution became so strong that the other parties had no more than 100 or 200 people that followed them militantly.

We embraced everyone; those that were excluded from the revolution were so because they wanted to exclude themselves, or because they thought it couldn't survive, or because they thought we were all mad, or because they thought that the Yankees would crush us and that it was only a matter of 15 days, and that the economic blockade, and sugar quota, the threats were going to put an end to us. And we are here.

The principle of unity was always a fundamental element of our policy — antisectarianism, because we had to fight sectarianisms. In the first place, our own: those who were in the mountains, guerrillas with a lot of prestige, tended to be sectarian with respect to those who were in the plains, because they were doing other tasks, another type of struggle which, by the way, was not less dangerous; against the sectarianism of our organization with respect to others.

Other sectarian attitudes were generated afterwards. The Popular Socialist Party itself, that is, the party of the communists, generated

some sectarianism that, to tell the truth, had been developing before, it was not a sectarian attitude that emerged then, but problems that had already come up during the underground struggle.

What happened was the following: our organization had people who had been members for five years; the oldest — very few — six years. Actually, from the March 10 [1952] coup d'état [of Fulgencio Batista] to the victory of the revolution, less than seven years had elapsed. There was a first little group or cell of three or four of us who started the work, and others joined later. Of these, I think no more than five or 10 had been members of the movement for more than six years when the revolution triumphed. That is how we started organizing the movement during the years of struggle. But when the revolution triumphed, the vast majority of the people had been members for two years, one year, or one month — that entire sea of heterogeneous people joined our struggle.

The Program of Moncada³ was a very advanced and quite radical program, but there seemed to be people who thought it was simply another lie in this country, one more program. They didn't take our first revolutionary program seriously, and we were revolutionaries educated with clear, very clear ideas; we were Marxist-Leninists since before March 10, when Batista's coup d'état took place — I want you to know that, I've said it before, we were Marxist-Leninists before. (Applause)

A socialist program couldn't have been put forth yet, it would have been unrealistic. We advanced a program of political liberation and extensive social justice, which is what had to be put forth at that time in order to be realistic. We told no lies, no stories; we thought that was what had to be done in the entire initial stage of the revolution, and we did it.

When the program started to be implemented, the confiscation of the properties of all embezzlers and the harsh measures against the transnationals; when we implemented the urban reform; when we implemented the agrarian reform and various interests started to be affected; when many people discovered that this was not going to be a government of the rich but rather the government of the people and that for the first time in the over four centuries of this country's recognized existence there emerged a government that identified itself with the people, then the people became more militant together with the government.

But some sectors that believed in other things, or thought they could handle that government or that the Yankees would tame us

rapidly, started to withdraw from the revolution. At that time, we had to organize our defense, the administration of the state, diplomatic representation, and many other things, some quite sensitive and complex. Our fighters were in the army, where they should remain, but there were some activities that required politically proven personnel. Who had a 25-, a 30-year membership? The Popular Socialist Party.

Our movement contributed most of the leaders of the state, almost all the leaders of the army, the State Security, and other bodies. We contributed most of the cadre, but on many occasions, when we needed someone for specific functions, in those times of confusion, of vast imperialist campaigns, we would call on a communist, because they were militants with a much longer history and were better prepared politically, having been members of the party for 20, 25, or 30 years. That, which was correct, which was a necessity, also brought about sectarian attitudes on the part of the Popular Socialist Party, which was still an independent party before all of us joined into a single organization.

We went through all those experiences, but we knew how to get through them. And when there were sectarian attitudes among our ranks, we fought them; when there were sectarian attitudes in the ranks of any of the allied organizations we fought them as well, with correct methods, and immediately prevented the sectarian attitude of old members of the communist party from generating anticommunist sectarianism or anticommunist sentiment.

Thus, in matters related to the struggle against hegemonism, against sectarianism, and in the intransigent defense of the principle of unity, we have long experience. I believe that was a decisive factor in our reaching the point we have reached now, in the revolution having the strength it has today, and in having

been able to withstand all of the imperialist attacks and be better prepared than ever to resist any adventure that is attempted against us.

Actually, if we are able to play a role in this struggle together with the rest of the Latin American peoples, it is because we have a firm nation, a united people, a tremendous strength, a good economic and social situation; that is what allows us to make a contribution in this struggle of the fraternal Latin American countries. This is not mere chance, it is the result of a strategy, a tactic, a set of principles that we have applied consistently.

And I believe that the results we have obtained, the achievements of the revolution in every field, have been due to our consistent implementation of all those principles, including the principle of collective leadership that we have always applied — since I started in the revolutionary struggle, I began organizing a cell, and when the revolution triumphed, we organized a leadership nucleus, made up of all forces — that of collective responsibility, which doesn't mean that every one of us doesn't have responsibilities and that every one of us doesn't have a field of action in which we make decisions; and that of the struggle against the cult of the personality, against making gods of men — I say it honestly, against caciquism [bossism] — against all those evils, which has been waged here intransigently in order to create a solid revolution, based on principles, to create a truly revolutionary awareness among the people.

Because our people's unity is not based on worshiping an individual or on the servile cult of an individual, it is based on a firm and profound political awareness. And the relations of our revolution's leadership with the people are based on consciousness, are based on principles, on a loyalty proven for more than 26 years; they are based, among other things, on the fact that the people have never been told a lie. (Prolonged applause) □

Belgian cops raid POS offices

Four persons charged with organizing a 14-month bombing campaign in Belgium were arrested by police December 16.

The four are accused of being members of a clandestine organization called the Fighting Communist Cells (CCC), which has been credited with 20 bombings since October 1984.

In the weeks before their arrest, Justice Minister Jean Gol assigned six companies of paratroopers to patrol Belgium's streets.

Following the arrest, Belgian police staged a predawn raid on the Brussels offices of the Socialist Workers Party (POS), Belgian section of the Fourth International.

The Dec. 20, 1985, issue of *La Gauche*, a fortnightly published by the POS, reported that plainclothes and uniformed police broke down the doors of the offices at 5 a.m., turned everything upside down, and carried off a typewri-

ter. The offices house the POS's Brussels regional headquarters and bookstore.

An editorial noted that "the POS has nothing to do with terrorism. There is nothing 'criminal' about it.

"We are a party that fights out in the open. . . . We want to win the majority of the working class through a battle of ideas. We present our views regularly to the working people through our newspapers, leaflets, pamphlets, and public meetings."

La Gauche added, "From the moment that the CCC planted its first bomb, 14 months ago, we expected that Gol and his gang would strike at our party. Because we know from the experience in other countries . . . that terrorism, whose origins and practice in this case are extremely dubious, is *always* used as a pretext for attacking the anticapitalist left wing of the workers' movement." □

3. On July 26, 1953, Fidel Castro and 170 supporters attempted to capture the Moncada army barracks in Santiago de Cuba. They were unsuccessful, and Castro and others were jailed. During his trial, Castro gave a long speech in defense of the action, which was subsequently reconstructed by him in prison and published clandestinely. Entitled "History Will Absolve Me," the speech became the principal programmatic document of the July 26 Movement.

East Asian 'economic miracles' fading

Problems catch up with Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan

By Will Reissner

For two decades, overall economic growth rates in Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan have been among the highest in the world.

These four East Asian states — often described as "newly industrialized countries" or (NICs) in the big-business press — have long been touted as "models" of capitalist development for the rest of the semicolonial world.¹

But they are beginning to run into the same kinds of problems that have plunged Latin America, Africa, and other Asian countries into economic crisis.

Among these factors are growing protectionism in the imperialist countries, which closes markets to the products of the semicolonial world; a slowdown in economic activity in the United States and Japan, which further limits possibilities for exporting to those markets; and high interest rates in the United States, which drive up the cost of foreign borrowing.

Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan have followed similar strategies of economic development that resulted in two decades of rapid growth.

In all four cases authoritarian regimes (British colonialism in the case of Hong Kong) have kept a lid on working-class organization in order to maintain low wages for the labor-intensive assembly and manufacture of products for export. In each case foreign markets, not the growth of the domestic market, spurred expansion.

Dependence on U.S. market

For all four, the main foreign market has been the United States. In 1984 fully 50 percent of Taiwan's exports went to the United States, as did 45 percent of Hong Kong's, 35 percent of South Korea's, and 20 percent of Singapore's.

As Sir John Bremridge, Hong Kong's colonial financial secretary, commented, "You tell me how much the American economy is going to grow, and I'll tell you what will happen to us."

This export-fueled economic development has left all four countries extremely vulnerable

1. By any standard, Hong Kong and Singapore could hardly serve as models for other semicolonial countries. They are little more than city-states that have, for various reasons, been politically separated from the surrounding, much less developed countryside.

Using the same method of analysis, São Paulo abstracted from the rest of Brazil or Mexico City viewed without the rest of Mexico are at least as much "success stories" as Hong Kong taken without China or Singapore considered without Malaysia.

to downturns in the world economy. In fact the slowdown of growth in the U.S. economy, along with signs of a recession in Japan in 1986, has already stopped the growth of their exports.

This fundamental problem is combined, in each of the four countries, with other problems specific to their own economic development.

Singapore hit hardest

The economic downturn has hit hardest thus far in Singapore, a city-state of 2.5 million people located at the end of the Malayan Peninsula.

A former British colony, Singapore was part of the Federation of Malaysia until 1965, when it became a separate state. It has been ruled since 1959 by Lee Kuan Yew, the present prime minister. The population is overwhelmingly ethnic Chinese.

The second half of 1985 was marked by a sharp downturn in Singapore's economy. Economic activity in the last quarter of 1985 was 5.5 percent lower than in the same period in 1984. Forecasts for 1986 project a drop in the gross domestic product of more than 5 percent.

Singapore lost 90,000 jobs in 1985, and the sudden plunge of electronics sales to the U.S. market is expected to lead to another wave of layoffs in major factories in the coming year.

The shipbuilding industry is cutting its capacity by 30 percent due to the lack of new orders.

The city-state was also shaken by a collapse in the real estate market and the closing of the Singapore stock market for three days in December following the failure of a major elec-

tronics company.

As correspondent Paul Sillitoe noted in the Dec. 12, 1985, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, the shutdown of the Singapore stock exchange "had no precedent in any major stockmarket in the world."

The stock market closing and the drop in the gross domestic product, wrote Sillitoe, "have seriously damaged Singapore's image, vigorously promoted by the government, as an international financial centre."

The end of Singapore's long boom is linked to developments in the world economy as a whole.

The biggest factor has been the flat level of world economic growth since 1980. The economic slowdown has limited markets in the United States, Japan, and the West European countries and has sparked the rise of protectionism, making it more difficult to boost Singapore's exports.

In addition, Singapore serves as an industrial and financial center for neighboring states such as Malaysia and Indonesia. Both have been hit hard by falling international prices for their raw materials exports, especially tin, rubber, palm oil, timber, and oil.

Declining demand for oil has also hit Singapore's refineries hard.

Moreover, the long boom in the city's economy, combined with the small size of the population, has enabled workers in Singapore to win larger wage increases than in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea, with which Singapore competes for export markets.

Average Hourly Wages and Benefits

	1980	1984
Singapore	US\$1.47	US\$2.37
Taiwan	1.27	1.90
Hong Kong	1.40	1.44
South Korea	1.08	1.32

From 1979 to 1981, the government of Lee Kuan Yew, recognizing that labor costs in Singapore were rising, carried out a policy of discouraging labor-intensive and encouraging capital- and skill-intensive industries.

The policy succeeded in driving out a number of low-wage, labor intensive industries, but it had less success in attracting replacements.

Singapore's inability to successfully shift from low-wage assembly industries is not unique. The governments of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and South Korea all face similar problems.

Prime Minister Lee has now shifted gears and is calling for at least two years of zero growth in wages, and even wage cuts if necessary.

This policy, however, could lead to unrest

Exports in perspective

Much is made of the export prowess of South Korea and Taiwan. But it is useful to keep their performance in perspective.

While their export levels are far higher than the norm for other semicolonial countries, in comparison to even the smaller imperialist powers they remain bit players in trading.

South Korea, for example, has more people than the combined populations of Canada, Belgium, and Switzerland. But those three had combined exports of \$167 billion in 1984, compared with \$29.2 billion for South Korea.

Similarly, the Netherlands, with only 14.4 million people, exports \$65.7 billion, while Taiwan, with 19.1 million people, exports \$31 billion.

in the city-state's labor force. A three-day work stoppage in early January at a small engineering factory marked Singapore's first recorded strike since 1977.

An upturn in Singapore's capitalist economy requires an upturn in the economies of the United States and Japan, as well as a rise in the commodity prices received by its Southeast Asian neighbors.

At this point no relief is in sight on either score.

Hong Kong's doldrums

Hong Kong, a city of 5.5 million people (less than 50,000 of whom can vote in legislative elections), has been a British colony for 143 years. Like Singapore, Hong Kong suffers economic doldrums.

In the first ten months of 1985, Hong Kong-produced exports fell by 7 percent from the same period in 1984.

Hong Kong is still the world's largest exporter of clothing, fur garments, and toys. But markets for these products in the United States (which takes half of the colony's exports), Western Europe, and Japan have been stagnant or declining.

The only bright spot on the economic horizon is Hong Kong's growing trade with China, to which it is scheduled to be returned by the British authorities in 1997. In 1984 and 1985 China had the world's highest economic growth rate.



Garment worker in South Korea.

A few giants dominate South Korea

In the 1960s and 1970s, Gen. Park Chung Hee fostered the growth of huge family-owned conglomerates as the vehicles for industrializing South Korea.

These conglomerates, called *chaebol* in Korean, have received huge low-interest government loans and protection from competition.

Some 50 *chaebol* now dominate the economy. Combined net sales of the top 30 alone amounted to three-quarters of South Korea's total output of goods and services in 1983. The 10 largest have combined assets of US\$37.9 billion.

The predominance of this handful of

giants has crowded out small and medium companies. *Chaebol* get most of the available credit (the 30 largest owe an amount equal to 48 percent of the country's total bank credits). Successful smaller companies are gobbled up.

Despite their size and government support, the *chaebol* are in poor financial shape. They are, Shim Jae Hoon notes in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, struggling "under the load of an astronomically high amount of unpaid — and perhaps unpayable — debts." Shim adds that "*chaebol* are said to be among the worst financially structured corporate bodies in the world."

In the first nine months of 1985, trade with China jumped 33 percent, to US\$11.3 billion, fully one-quarter of the colony's trade. Although more than half of this was made up of reexports, there was also a 50 percent jump in Hong Kong-produced exports to China.

Had it not been for the growth in exports to the Chinese market, Hong Kong's 5 percent drop in manufacturing employment in 1985 would have been much larger. Moreover, much of 1985's 10 percent rise in wholesale, retail, and service employment involved jobs servicing the China trade.

As with Singapore, Hong Kong has found it difficult to shift its manufacturing base from low-wage, labor-intensive industry to more technologically sophisticated fields.

Because of the falling level of exports to the United States, "Hong Kong is reemphasizing its historic role as the gateway to China, but this time on a much larger scale," noted John Burns in the Dec. 29, 1985, *New York Times*.

In 1984, the Chinese and British governments signed an agreement under which Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong will be restored in 1997. The government of the People's Republic of China pledged to allow capitalism to remain in effect in Hong Kong for 50 years beyond that date.

Since the accord was signed, the Chinese government has made a number of moves to reassure Hong Kong's capitalists. Peking has poured substantial investments into the British colony, including a commitment to build a 70-story Bank of China building. It has also bailed out two major Hong Kong companies facing bankruptcy and has boosted trade to make up for the decline in Hong Kong's exports to the rest of the world.

Dominated by conglomerates

With 42 million people, South Korea is by far the largest of the four East Asian capitalist "success stories." But despite its size, South Korea is as dependent as the others on exports to fuel its economic growth and is therefore as vulnerable to a downturn in the world economy.

Since the early 1960s, the economic development strategy followed by South Korea's military rulers has been straightforward.

The military rulers determine the priorities for development and assign privately owned conglomerates to develop those areas.

The conglomerates, called *chaebol* (see box), have been given massive government loans and protection from foreign competition through the erection of high tariff walls.

Huge foreign loans are taken out to purchase Japanese capital equipment and processed raw materials for the new industries, which then sell their products abroad, especially in the United States, which takes 35 percent of South Korea's exports.

Successive military regimes insured that the products of the *chaebol* would remain competitive on foreign markets by preventing workers from organizing to improve their wages.

Fueled by its exports and with its domestic market protected by high tariff walls, South Korea's economy averaged 8 percent annual growth over 20 years.

The importance of exports in South Korea's economy is shown by the fact that foreign sales account for fully one-third of the gross national product. (In Japan, often cited as the world's premier exporter, foreign sales account for less than one-fifth of the GNP.)

But in the process of building its industrial base, South Korea has also become the semicolonial world's fourth-biggest debtor, with a foreign debt that has mushroomed to \$47 billion.

Payments on South Korea's foreign debt now amount to more than \$6.7 billion per year. In order to keep paying, South Korea must continue to increase its foreign currency earnings through higher exports and attract new loans to cover the old ones as they come due.

But in 1985 exports showed a slight drop from the previous year's level, and prospects for 1986 look grimmer.

As the year began, the U.S. government was exerting strong pressure on Seoul to reduce the big imbalance between South Korea's

exports to the United States and its imports from there. In 1984, the U.S. trade balance was \$3.6 billion in South Korea's favor. (Worldwide, however, South Korea imported more than it exported.)

Washington has charged South Korean manufacturers with dumping, that is, selling products in the United States at lower prices than in South Korea. It has protested what it calls excessive tariff protection of the South Korean market, barriers to U.S. entry into fields like insurance in South Korea, and widespread South Korean pirating of U.S. drugs, chemicals, books, and movies.

In 1984, the South Korean government had to accept "voluntary" limits on steel exports to the U.S. market, and Washington has ruled that South Korean color television manufacturers are guilty of illegal dumping.

Some quotas will probably be placed on South Korean textile sales in the United States. Textiles make up nearly one-quarter of South Korean exports.

Added to these problems are the decline in the electronics market in the United States and the general crisis in the shipbuilding industry worldwide.

South Korea invested heavily in building a modern shipbuilding industry in the 1970s, just before the market for new ships collapsed. New orders fell by 47 percent in the first half of 1985, and 7,000 workers in the shipyards were laid off.

In addition, the large volume of construction business that South Korean companies were able to get in the Middle East has dried up as falling oil prices limit development funds in that region. Tens of thousands of South Korean workers are returning home as these projects wind down.

"We have to face the cold fact that we can't expect the rapid growth rate that we have enjoyed in the past," laments Ahn Seung-chul, president of the government-financed Korea Development Institute.

Regime sits on volcano

But the end of high growth rates poses vast problems for South Korea's military regime, which is sitting on top of a social volcano.

It is estimated that 7 percent annual growth is the minimum needed to generate new jobs for each year's school leavers. But in 1985 the growth rate fell to less than 4 percent. In addition, stagnant exports are causing big industrial companies to lay off thousands of workers.

The official unemployment rate is only 3.5 percent. But that counts as employed anyone who worked at least *one hour* in the week. Officials of the Ministry of Labor estimate that 25 percent of the labor force is underemployed, working 18 hours or less per week and looking for more work.

Added to the growing problem of unemployment is widespread bitterness at the glaring social inequality in South Korean society.

As Susan Chira noted in the Oct. 6, 1985, *New York Times*, "the most passionate concern for ordinary Koreans" is "the widespread be-

lief that the benefits of Korea's success are being denied them." Resentment of income inequality, she added, "runs very deep."

According to Shim Jae Hoon, writing in the Dec. 12, 1985, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, "pressure for change from radical students and opposition groups, their ranks now reinforced by labour's demand for a more equitable distribution of wealth, has become too strong to ignore."

The regime's response, however, has been the iron fist. In early 1985, for example, a strike at the Daewoo Apparel Company led to the arrest of strike leaders, the firing of hundreds of workers, and hospitalization of female strikers who had been beaten with steel pipes.

An example of the explosiveness of South Korean society was provided in 1979, when present military ruler Gen. Chun Doo Hwan killed his predecessor Gen. Park Chung Hee. During the turmoil that followed, a mass insurrection took place in the southern city of Kwangju.

In the course of suppressing the May 1980 Kwangju uprising, South Korean troops killed an estimated 2,000 people in 10 days. The demand for justice for the victims remains a central focus of opposition to the present regime.

Low investment level in Taiwan

Taiwan's economy grew by 11 percent in 1984, a growth rate second only to China's in the world. But in the fourth quarter of that year an economic downturn began, which continued in 1985.

The downturn was partially due to lower de-



U.S. electronics plant in Taiwan.

mand for Taiwan's products in the United States, which takes about half of the island's total exports. Major exports are textiles, garments, electronics and electrical machinery, footwear, and toys and games.

But more fundamental problems are also operating in this island of 19 million people. As Carl Goldstein noted in the Dec. 19, 1985, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, "for the past five years, it has been an official priority to promote the move away from the cheap labour-dependent industries that brought Taiwan rapid economic development in the 1960s and 1970s, but which in the 1980s are facing ever-steeper competition from China, Asean nations² and other developing countries.

"Progress has been slow, however," Goldstein added.

Such a transformation would require big capital investments. In fact, however, in 1985 domestic capital investment dropped 5.7 percent from the previous year. This marked the fourth successive year of stagnant or dropping capital investment by Taiwan-based companies.

Foreign investment, mainly from the United States and Japan, however, was up 39 percent in 1985, to more than \$500 million.

The declining domestic investment and growing foreign investment point to a relationship masked by the gross figures in Taiwan's economic picture.

On the face of things, Taiwan's prospects should be rosy. In 1985 the island had a trade surplus of \$11 billion, with exports valued at \$31 billion and imports at \$20 billion.

By the end of 1985, Taiwan's foreign currency reserves had grown to \$21 billion, while the public sector foreign debt stood at only \$5.5 billion.

But as Carl Goldstein noted, "The existence of the [foreign currency] reserves points up the failure to utilize a massive amount of capital productively. In light of stagnant or declining

Taiwan's ruling dynasty

When the Communist Party-led forces won in China's civil war in 1949, former ruler Chiang Kai-shek and his followers fled to the island of Taiwan. There they set themselves up as the "real" Republic of China.

Since then, Chiang's followers have ruled over the native Taiwanese, using martial law and emergency powers to suppress all opposition. In 1984, the long arm of Taiwan's government reached into the United States, where Chinese-American journalist Henry Liu was murdered on orders of Taiwan's chief of military intelligence.

After Chiang Kai-shek's death, his son became president in 1978 and still rules.

The majority of members of Taiwan's legislature are aging Chiang Kai-shek supporters who won their seats in 1948 on the mainland. They are not subject to reelection since their constituencies have been part of the People's Republic of China since 1949.

Only one-quarter of the seats are filled by locally elected Taiwanese, and all but six of the 79 legislators belong to the ruling Kuomintang party.

2. Association of Southeast Asian Nations, composed of Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei.

domestic investment during the past few years, the waste is even more obvious."

In fact, 80 percent of the Taiwanese government's foreign currency reserves are held in dollars, and most are invested not in Taiwan, but in U.S. Treasury bonds.

What the overall figures hide is the difference in the fortunes of Taiwanese and foreign companies operating in Taiwan.

For the Taiwanese companies, times are hard. The local stock market has opened a special category for nonperforming companies, which now includes 20 percent of all the stock listed on the exchange.

Bankruptcies are rife as Taiwanese capitalists lose their cheap-labor advantage to other competitors, cutting profit margins on traditional exports.

For example, the progovernment *Free China Journal* stated in its January 13 issue that "the toy industry has helped bring prosperity to Taiwan for decades." Now, however, "in the area of labor cost, producers in South Korea, Thailand, mainland China, and Hongkong have the advantage over manufacturers here." The result was a 20 percent drop in Taiwan's toy exports in 1985.

U.S. capitalists reaping gains

The major beneficiaries of Taiwan's export boom are not Taiwanese capitalists, but U.S. capitalists.

As Steve Lohr pointed out in the Sept. 23, 1985, *New York Times*, Taiwan "did not accumulate its roughly \$11 billion trade surplus with the United States last year by selling its brand name products in America.

"Instead, most of the deficit with Taiwan is attributable to American companies producing goods there less expensively than at home and then shipping them across the Pacific."

The profits, therefore, end up not in Taiwanese hands, but in the coffers of the U.S.-based and -owned companies.

In the final analysis, the successes that local and foreign capitalists have scored in these four economic "models" have come at the expense of poorly paid workers putting in long hours under sweatshop conditions. State repression has hindered organized action to achieve better wages and working conditions.

In South Korea, for example, pollution has reached dangerous levels. The housing shortage is an acute nationwide crisis, with an average of 2.5 households per housing unit in the cities. One-third of the work force earns less than 100,000 won per month (US\$112).

Writing from Seoul, Shim Jae Hoon warned: "Especially troubling is the genuine hatred with which people making a fortune are viewed here; whether they be businessmen or professionals, the fact that they are well-off is often automatically associated with greed, dishonesty and corruption" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, July 18, 1985).

As the working class grows in size, experience, and sophistication in these countries, the toilers are gaining a stronger position from which to fight for the right to enjoy the fruits of their labor. □

Korea

Proposal to end war games

North says military maneuvers hurt dialogue

By Will Reissner

In a bid to ease tensions in the divided Korean Peninsula, the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) urged the South Korean regime and the U.S. government to join it in a complete suspension of all military maneuvers. The suspension would continue as long as a dialogue between the North and South Korean governments is taking place.

In a January 11 statement, the DPRK's Foreign Ministry announced that North Korea will "stop all military exercises during the period of the north-south dialogue."

The statement added that "we are always ready to respond to any negotiation, if the U.S. and south Korean side deem it necessary, on our proposal."

Suspension of military exercises, the DPRK statement added, "will result in bringing about a positive change in the relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America and in providing a good chance of dispelling mutual distrust and building confidence."

Each year Washington and the South Korean military regime organize gigantic "Team Spirit" military maneuvers in South Korea. These exercises involve practice invasions of the north by hundreds of thousands of troops.

In past years North Korea has responded by placing its own forces on a heightened level of military alert.

On January 18, one week after the North Korean proposal to suspend all maneuvers, U.S. and South Korean authorities announced that "Team Spirit '86" maneuvers will commence in South Korea on February 10.

Nearly 40,000 U.S. troops, armed with 1,000 nuclear weapons, are permanently stationed in South Korea.

North Korean officials responded to the announcement by stating that they will not take part in any further negotiations until "a favourable atmosphere is created" after the "Team Spirit '86" exercises are over.

For years the North Korean government has been proposing steps to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula and resume contacts between Koreans on both sides of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) that has separated the country since the end of the Korean War in 1953.

In October 1983, the DPRK 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 replace the 1953 armistice agreement.

Washington, however, turned a cold shoulder to the North Korean proposal. But the North Korean government continued to make



overtures to improve relations with the regime in Seoul.

The first major breakthrough took place in September 1984, when the South Korean government accepted a North Korean offer of aid to relieve southern flood victims. Hundreds of North Korean trucks and 12 North Korean freighters delivered vast quantities of food, relief supplies, and building materials.

Soon after, the two sides agreed to establish a telephone hot line between Red Cross offices in their respective capitals, Pyongyang and Seoul. This marked the first direct telephone connection across the DMZ since an earlier hot line was disconnected in 1976.

One week after the establishment of the hot line, the North Korean government proposed talks on economic cooperation and trade between the two parts of Korea. The South Korean military regime grudgingly agreed to such talks, under pressure from the South Korean population, for whom Korean reunification remains a cherished goal.

Since that time regular meetings have been held between Red Cross organizations, economic officials, parliamentary representatives, and Olympic Committee officials of the two governments.

In September 1985 these meetings culminated in the first visits across the border since 1953. Thirty people from Pyongyang and 35 from Seoul crossed the armistice line to meet with separated family members.

An estimated 10 million Koreans were separated from their families when they found themselves on opposite sides of the military demarcation line at the end of the Korean War.

The recent North Korean proposal to end military maneuvers was aimed at continuing this process of easing tensions and encouraging contacts across the DMZ. □

For a South Asia free of nuclear arms

Statement of Indian section of Fourth International

[The following is a statement issued by the Inquilabi Communist Sangathan, the Indian section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

There can be no doubt that Pakistan is very close to developing a nuclear weapons-making capacity. In view of the negative repercussions it might have, the country is unlikely to announce it through any kind of Pokhran-type explosion [the detonation of an Indian nuclear device in May 1974]. Indeed the government in Islamabad is likely to pursue a policy of keeping the last wires unconnected so that technically she cannot be accused of being a nuclear weapons power.

India had, of course, demonstrated her nuclear weapons-making capacity at Pokhran in 1974. Since all nuclear regimes (whether in authoritarian societies like the USSR, China or in bourgeois democratic societies like U.S., Great Britain, France) are fundamentally undemocratic, the Indian public has no way of knowing whether, or how many, "bombs in the basement" India has. The country certainly has enough weapons-grade fuel to construct a number of bombs, possibly with the "last wires unconnected" also.

For some years now, a systematic hysteria has been generated [in India] about the "Pak bomb." Its purpose is to gather public support for the Indian government's policy on the bomb. This policy is not one of nuclear disarmament or to see to it that Pakistan also disarms, but to keep the option open for India to produce the bomb openly and establish a proper nuclear weapons programme (which is much more than just having the capacity, or even keeping a few "bombs in the basement" whenever it decides to do so).

This is why [Indian Prime Minister] Rajiv Gandhi has, on the one hand, rejected proposals from Pakistan for mutual inspection of nuclear facilities or for establishing a nuclear weapons free zone (NWFZ) in South Asia, and on the other, keeps warning of the danger that a "Pak bomb" will cause to the subcontinent and the need for "reevaluating" India's nuclear policy if this happens. At the same time, he and others in the government repeat that India has no intentions of going in for nuclear weapons and only wants to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. What this whole approach amounts to is a policy of *nuclear ambiguity*, of deliberately creating uncertainty as a way of maintaining some leverage vis-à-vis Pakistan, as well as the other nuclear weapons powers.

In fact, Pakistan is also pursuing a policy of nuclear ambiguity to maintain its own leverage vis-à-vis other powers. However it is more

serious and willing than India to close the nuclear option for both countries by having a NWFZ in South Asia.

This is not because General Zia [ul-Haq] of Pakistan is more peace-loving than Rajiv Gandhi. It is that he and other experts realize full well that if there is a nuclear arms race in South Asia, the burden of "matching the enemy" will be much greater on Pakistan than on India in every respect (economic, political, social) because of the great imbalance in power, resources, size, population, etc. That is why Zia would be prepared to have "non-nuclear parity" between Pakistan and India through establishment of a NWFZ. That is why, although India says the Pakistani proposal for NWFZ is just propaganda, they will never dare to call Pakistan's bluff in this matter.

The Indian government, in fact, argues that just because Pakistan and the U.S., as well as other nuclear powers, want such a zone for their own reasons, "we" should not be "manipulated" into accepting this. This is a typical example of the kind of thinking which is responsible for promoting proliferation (both horizontal and vertical) of nuclear weapons. This kind of thinking fails to recognise the unique nature of nuclear weapons, which are capable of mass destruction, and tries to treat them like conventional weapons — as legitimate instruments of foreign policy to secure so-called "national interests" as defined by the bourgeois ruling class. But the nuclear weapons can never be used to defend territory. The threat of nuclear weapons, far from leading to stability through deterrence, only leads to even more insecurity and a spiralling arms race. If there is to be genuine disarmament of nuclear weapons, then they must not be used as instruments of foreign policy.

The question of nuclear security must as far as possible be separated from other issues of national security. Nuclear security can be defined as the legitimate right of people of, say, South Asia to be progressively free of the use, the threat of the use, and even the possibility of

the use embodied in the very existence of nuclear weapons. The only alternative to such an approach will be a proliferation in the name of national security, which only leads to greater insecurity at ever higher levels of danger. This is precisely the experience of the superpower arms race which has reached "insane" levels of overkill capacity on both sides and still shows no signs of even stopping temporarily.

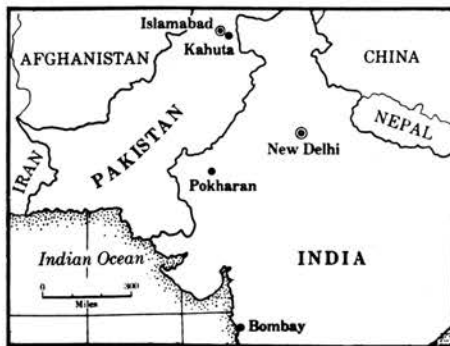
Regardless of the motives of the U.S., USSR, or Pakistan in wanting a NWFZ, the *objective* value of having a NWFZ in South Asia is profound. Keeping the nuclear option open for both countries through a policy of nuclear ambiguity means that the option can well be exercised or realised if pressures to do so build up beyond a point.

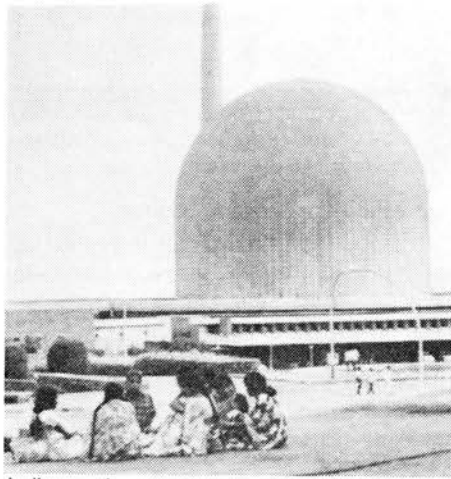
Having a NWFZ in South Asia does not mean the India-Pakistan conflict will disappear or that there will not be clashes. But it does mean that both sides agree that neither side will ever use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against each other's population, even if war breaks out between the countries. This will be an immense gain and advance for sanity. It is up to India to respond positively to the Pakistani proposal for mutual inspection and a NWFZ, whatever the latter's motives, and to try and establish such a zone.

The arguments by the Indian pro-bomb lobby and by Rajiv Gandhi against such a zone are dishonest, hypocritical, and weak. In fact, if Pakistan's bomb is the real problem then this zone is the best way to eliminate the danger. That is why most Indian objections to such a zone have nothing to do at all with Pakistan! To take some of these objections:

- Rajiv Gandhi has publicly declared that having a NWFZ in South Asia is meaningless because it will not prevent clandestine betrayal, that it cannot guarantee against violation. In which case why bother to have any treaty of any kind? No political pact can guarantee non-violation. Why bother to call for a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, which the Indian government does? Nothing can prevent U.S. or Soviet submarines from violating such a zone of peace if they want to. But does anyone doubt that if the zone of peace proposal was accepted by all concerned, including the U.S. and USSR, that it would be a great political advance?

The NWFZ is above all a *political* proposal of great merit. Like all such proposals it will work best when those governments who are party to it *want* to make it work and share an interest in maintaining it. The weight of mass opinion in the subcontinent must be brought to bear on the governments of India and Pakistan (the other South Asian governments except Bhutan are all in favour of such a zone) to accept the establishment of a South Asian





Indian nuclear reactor.

NWFZ.

• The other major argument used by India's pro-bomb lobby is that if India gives up its nuclear option it has no defence or deterrence against nuclear blackmail by U.S., China, or other nuclear powers. This is an insidious argument because: (a) it deceptively implies that keeping the option open could enable India to have such a deterrence; (b) it ignores the historical character of conflicts and tensions and argues on an essentially abstract, absolutist, and *hypothetical* level. For example, China has never threatened India (nor Vietnam) nor any other country with nuclear weapons. Neither the USSR nor the U.S. has ever threatened with success any other non-nuclear nation. We continue to live in a world where the correlation of class forces on a world scale does not make it possible for any national bourgeoisie or state to get away with fulfilling such threats against the masses of another country.

Nor does keeping the option open help India to deter, even in a theoretical sense, another nuclear weapons power. It is not enough to have the option or even a few weapons. To have any hope of deterring other nuclear weapons, it is necessary to have what is known as a "credible deterrent equation," that is, a sufficiently developed nuclear weapons programme of warheads, missiles, and other delivery systems which can promise massive retaliation even after an enemy first strike. India is so backward (as the UK and France are with respect to the USSR) in this respect that it can never have an effective nuclear deterrent against the superpowers who are going further and further ahead.

With respect to establishing a credible nuclear deterrent against China, it is 15-20 years behind. If it embarks on a programme to "match" China (1) it can do nothing to prevent nuclear blackmail by China during the long years of Indian preparation; (2) it will spark off a nuclear arms race in the subcontinent, since Pakistan will go ahead with its own nuclear weapons programme; (3) it will make China and the U.S. more hostile about Indian intentions. Even the Soviets will be more suspicious, not to mention greatly disturbing India's smaller neighbours, which will have every reason to worry about India's "hegemonistic" ambitions; (4) it will in all probability still fail

to "match" China because the latter will simply maintain, if not extend, its lead by making further advances in its own nuclear weapons programme.

All this only goes to show the fallacy of thinking that going in for nuclear weapons will enhance Indian security. It will not. But it does fit in with the ambitions of the Indian bourgeoisie and its state to increase its prestige, authority, and control over the South Asian region. Even here it will create more problems and instability than the "stability" (read domination) that the Indian state wants. What is more, going in for a nuclear weapons programme will have dangerous domestic repercussions.

• Although having a few bombs is not expensive, having a proper nuclear weapons programme is, and updating it constantly or embarking on the escalator of a regional nuclear arms race will mean an enormous diversion of resources from other sectors and needs

such as proper housing, health care, food, education for the Indian masses.

• Establishing a "nuclear regime" in India means further militarising of civil society, greater erosion of democratic rights in order to "protect" military secrets or "security," prescription in various forms of protest against such nuclear weapons production and deployment, etc. Such a nuclear regime will also mean greater concentration of power in the executive and even less control by the masses over what is literally for them a life and death issue.

• Finally, such a nuclear weapons programme could quite possibly aggravate a delicate situation by weakening communal harmony between Muslims and other communities in India.

The Inquilabi Communist Sangathan unequivocally calls for the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (NWFZ) in South Asia. □

10 AND 20 YEARS AGO

Intercontinental Press

February 2, 1976

On January 12 the last Spanish soldier left Sahara, effectively ending ninety-two years of Spanish colonial rule over the country's 70,000 inhabitants. The remaining Spanish administrators are scheduled to depart February 28.

In November 1975, Madrid signed a pact with the governments of Morocco and Mauritania, partitioning Sahara between the two powers.

Now Moroccan and Mauritanian troops have forcibly moved into Sahara, and King Hassan II of Morocco has asked Washington for new military equipment and increased training.

Behind the saber rattling lies the question of control over Saharan phosphate deposits—the largest in the world. Part of the deal between Morocco, Mauritania, and Spain guarantees that all three powers will share in the profits. Morocco has already opened negotiations with several American-owned multinationals, including the Rockefeller interests, for development of the deposits.

The only ones not consulted in all this are the inhabitants of Sahara. Caught in the middle of the power play, more than 40,000 of them have fled the cities as Moroccan and Mauritanian troops advanced.

WORLD OUTLOOK

PERSPECTIVE MONDIALE

(Predecessor of Intercontinental Press)

February 4, 1966

In seeking a motive for the kidnapping (and most likely murder) of Mehdi Ben Barka in

Paris October 29, the bourgeois press has persistently advanced the hypothesis that the revolutionary leader was preparing to make his peace with Morocco's tyrant King Hassan II and that ultraright political forces, such as those represented by Interior Minister Mohammed Oufkir, sought to block this. The press is completely silent about a different possible motive.

Ben Barka was president of the International Preparatory Committee for the Tricontinental Conference recently held in Havana. With Boumedienne's seizure of power in Algeria through a coup d'etat last June, the imprisonment of Ben Bella and the resulting shift of the government to the right, Ben Barka's position as a leading North African revolutionist assumed new importance. He would undoubtedly have played a big role at the Tricontinental Conference. To remove Ben Barka from the scene thus signified a blow against the Havana meeting, a blow which a number of reactionary forces, including the CIA, would most certainly favor.

Ben Barka visited Cuba during the preparations for the conference. While there he spoke strongly for an overall strategy among revolutionists on a tricontinental scale.

"We must achieve greater coordination in the struggle of all the peoples, as the problems in Vietnam, the Congo and the Dominican Republic stem from the same source: U.S. imperialism," he said.

He visualized "the two great currents of world revolution" attending the conference—the one "born in 1917 with the great October Revolution, and that which represents the anti-imperialist and national liberation movements."

Ben Barka added: "It is historic that this conference will take place in Cuba, because the Cuban Revolution is the realization of these two currents."

Washington steps up pressure Qaddafi government targeted for destabilization

By Steve Craine

After getting little support from its imperialist allies for punitive sanctions against Libya, Washington has opened a new front in its campaign to destabilize the government of Muammar el-Qaddafi.

On January 23 the U.S. flotilla sent to the central Mediterranean earlier in the month was instructed to send its warplanes on a series of maneuvers provocatively close to Libyan territory.

The one-week schedule of maneuvers called for U.S. jets to test the Libyan government's response by pressing further and further south into the Gulf of Sidra, which is claimed by Libya as part of its territorial waters.

In a similar incursion into Libyan airspace in August 1981, U.S. fighters shot down two Libyan planes.

The U.S. Navy now has on location in the Mediterranean 28 ships, including two aircraft carriers with more than 96 fighters and bombers and a score of reconnaissance planes. The ships have also been given Pentagon authorization to enter the Gulf of Sidra.

The Libyan government responded to these war moves with a "total alert" of its naval and air forces. Colonel Qaddafi denounced the maneuvers as "an aggressive provocation" by the Reagan administration and an example of "state-organized terrorism against a small, stable, and peaceful country." JANA, the Libyan news agency, called the U.S. actions "a return to gunboat diplomacy."

Washington asserts that its purpose in challenging Libya's territorial claims in this way is to demonstrate "U.S. resolve to continue to operate in international waters and airspace."

The U.S. and most other imperialist governments refuse to recognize Libya's claim that the entire Gulf of Sidra south of parallel 32.5 is within its territorial waters. But Libya has vital facilities to protect in the gulf. Several oil installations — including oil drilling rigs and pipeline terminals — lie outside the 12-mile limit Washington says it accepts.

'Antiterrorist' campaign

These aggressive actions against Libya, including the economic sanctions and encroachments on its territory, are part of Reagan's hypocritical "antiterrorist" campaign.

With its propaganda machine churning out unsubstantiated assertions of Libyan government involvement in the December 27 terrorist attacks in the Rome and Vienna airports, Washington felt it possible to further tighten the screws on the Qaddafi government.

On January 7 Reagan announced a total U.S. economic embargo on Libya, including a ban on trade, commercial contracts, and other



transactions between the two countries. He set a deadline of February 1 for all U.S. citizens living or working in Libya to leave the country or face stiff fines and jail terms. On January 8 all Libyan government assets in the United States were frozen.

These economic measures and the new military threats are all designed to make life difficult for the Libyan people and to undermine support for the government.

The eventual goal is to remove Qaddafi. His government, which came out of the revolution against the proimperialist regime of King Idris in 1969, has represented a challenge to Washington ever since. Qaddafi has been an outspoken supporter of a number of liberation movements and governments that are in conflict with imperialism. This is the real reason he is accused of "terrorism" by Reagan.

Washington's first moves against Libya following the killings in Rome and Vienna were less successful than expected. Few of its allies joined in the sanctions proposed by Reagan. Scores of governments, from the member-states of the Islamic Conference Organization and Arab League to the workers' states, declared their solidarity with Libya. The Soviet Union deployed several ships in the Mediterranean to be able to warn Libya of hostile U.S. or Israeli military activity.

Even as Reagan was announcing his plans for blackmail against Libya, however, he was also pursuing other means to the same end. He told a news conference January 7, "I promise you further steps will be taken" if the economic squeeze does not accomplish its goals.

On January 27 Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead repeated this threat. Returning from a 10-day trip to Western Europe to try to rally support for sanctions against Libya, Whitehead told a Washington news conference

that his government "reserved the right" to use military force against Libya if Qaddafi "doesn't change the pattern of his actions."

More money for covert operations

The same day Reagan announced the embargo, he also ordered increased money and personnel to be devoted to CIA covert operations against Qaddafi. His administration also initiated further discussions with the Egyptian government to secure its cooperation in future military moves in the region.

These steps match CIA plans revealed last November for a variety of approaches to removing Qaddafi. A 1984 "vulnerability assessment" by the CIA pointed out, "No course of action short of stimulating Qaddafi's fall will bring any significant and enduring change in Libyan policies."

The Reagan administration is reviving tactics Washington has used in the past to promote the overthrow of Qaddafi. These include assassination attempts, prodding discontented elements in the Libyan army to revolt, and assisting the Egyptian and other neighboring regimes to provoke incidents with Libya.

According to the *Washington Post*, however, "sources" familiar with the CIA's plans for undermining Qaddafi noted "the absence of a large, well-organized and committed group of opposition forces either inside or outside the country" as a serious weakness in the plan. One source spoke of the need for some "Qaddafi contras," according to the *Post*.

Discussion over use of force

The actions against Libya have been accompanied by a much-publicized "debate" within the Reagan administration. But this involves just tactical differences over when and how to use the Pentagon's massive firepower against those it accuses of "terrorism."

This discussion only underscores the almost universal acceptance of Washington's claim that it has the right to try, condemn, and execute anyone it can stick the "terrorist" label on.

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, in debating "hard-liner" George Shultz, the secretary of state, admitted that their differences are "just a matter of emphasis."

"I don't think there's any doubt that if we find a very good, appropriate target for response to terrorist actions that anybody would have any hesitancy about dealing with it," Weinberger said.

Adding to the discussion of how and when to hit Washington's opponents was the release of a speech given several months ago by CIA Director William Casey. "We need not insist on absolute evidence that the targets were used solely to support terrorism," he said. "Nor should we need to prove beyond all reasonable doubt that a particular element or individual in that [target] state is responsible for specific terrorist acts."

This public discussion of military reprisals, along with the already serious measures taken against Libya, are intended as a warning to the Libyan people, as well as to anyone else who opposes imperialist policies around the world.