

# INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

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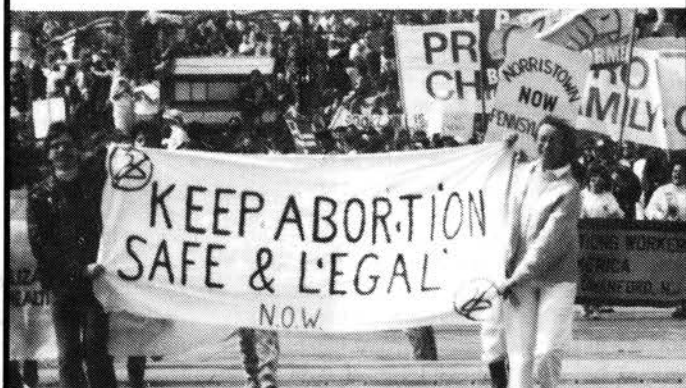
## *Eyewitness Report From Philippines* **Masses Push for Rights and Purge of Marcos Officials**



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Reagan Presses for  
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*Borge on Church-  
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Demonstration in Washington, D.C., March 9.

Ernest Harsch/IP

# Reagan's contra aid blitz

By Ernest Harsch

Opening his drive for massive new U.S. funding to the Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries, President Reagan warned that a defeat for increased aid would lead to a "strategic disaster." This could result in a Central American "sea of red, eventually lapping at our own borders," he said.

Employing some of the most strident terms the White House has yet used about Nicaragua, Reagan formally presented his aid request to Congress February 25. He is asking for approval of a \$100 million package for the counterrevolutionaries (known as *contras*), who have been seeking to overthrow the Nicaraguan government. Some \$70 million of this is to be direct military aid and the remaining \$30 million is to comprise "nonlethal" supplies.

Last year, the Republicans and Democrats in Congress approved \$27 million in such "non-lethal" aid, an allocation that expires March 31.

The Nicaraguan embassy in Washington stated, "The actions of the administration are additional proof of its commitment to a military solution in Central America, because more aid to the *contras* will inevitably lock the U.S. into creeping escalation, which will culminate with the intervention of U.S. combat troops in Nicaragua."

The close link between U.S. support for the *contras* and the possibility of direct U.S. military intervention was underlined by another, much less publicized, development.

On March 3, U.S. Army units arrived in Honduras to build a new military airfield, the sixth constructed by U.S. forces in the last three years. It is being built just 20 miles from the Nicaraguan border, in an area of frequent *contra* activity. This is part of a new series of U.S. military maneuvers in Honduras that will involve up to 4,400 U.S. troops.

According to a *New York Times* dispatch from Honduras, "United States officials say the exercises are designed to intimidate the Nicaraguan Government as well as to prepare for possible future military action against the Sandinista Army."

## Red-baiting

In justifying its request for congressional approval of U.S. military aid to the *contras*, the Reagan administration has pulled out all the stops. It has mounted an extensive and determined campaign in Congress and in the news media to portray this aid as crucial to the "security" of the United States.

Virtually every day, Reagan, Secretary of State George Shultz, or some other official has made a public speech in support of the *contra* aid. On March 3, Reagan met at the White House with Adolfo Calero, Arturo Cruz, and Alfonso Robelo, the three top leaders of the United Nicaraguan Opposition, the main front

for the *contra* forces based in Honduras. Administration officials and supporters have written newspaper columns blasting the Sandinistas and extolling the *contras*.

Every lie, slander, and hysterical accusation that Washington has previously used against Nicaragua is being employed, in concentrated form.

Anticommunism and anti-Sovietism are at the top of the slander heap. On the same day Reagan met with the *contra* leaders, he and Shultz delivered similar speeches warning of dire consequences if the *contras* are defeated. Reagan proclaimed that a congressional defeat of the aid request "could well deliver Nicaragua permanently to the Communist bloc." Shultz argued that if the Sandinistas are able to consolidate their position, Washington will face a "Soviet and Cuban base on the mainland of Latin America."

White House communications director Patrick Buchanan, in a column in the March 5 *Washington Post* that Reagan later publicly endorsed, stated that Nicaragua could host Soviet "bombers patrolling off San Diego and Seattle."

Buchanan accused Nicaragua of being a totalitarian state. "The censored press," he wrote, "the bogus 'People's Church,' the obliteration of Indian culture, the mob assaults on priests, the schools given over to class hatred, the smashed unions, the secret police, the neighborhood 'block committees' of informants, the harassment, exile and murder of dissidents — all the unmistakable hallmarks of the modern fascism that travels under the passport of Marxist socialism are now apparent."

Employing classical red-baiting tactics, Buchanan charged that the congressional vote on the *contra* aid will reveal whether congressmen stand "with Ronald Reagan and the resistance — or Daniel Ortega and the communists."

Many other charges have been leveled as well. Speaking before representatives of Jewish organizations, Reagan accused the Sandinistas of practicing anti-Semitism. This was accompanied by accusations that Nicaragua fosters "terrorism," based on its support for the Palestine Liberation Organization and its contacts with the Libyan and Iranian governments. Reagan said that "if the Sandinistas are allowed to consolidate their hold on Nicaragua, we'll have a permanent staging ground for terrorism, a home away from home for Qaddafi, Arafat, and the Ayatollah, just three hours by air from the United States border."

## Hypocrisy on Philippines

Administration officials have also made false parallels between the situations in the Philippines and Nicaragua, seeking to equate the Sandinista government with the Philippine

dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos that was overthrown in a popular upsurge in late February. Shultz claimed that repression is "far, far worse" in Nicaragua than in the Philippines under Marcos. Senator Richard Lugar, a Reagan ally and member of the U.S. observer team during Marcos' rigged elections, called on the Sandinistas to hold "free" elections "like the Philippines." Reagan maintained that "we stood for democracy in the Philippines; we have to stand for democracy in Nicaragua."

This turns reality inside out. Washington propped up the brutal Marcos regime for two decades, abandoning him only at the last moment, when the Filipino masses rose up to oust the hated tyranny.

While the Sandinistas are portrayed in the most lurid terms, the *contras* are being palmed off as angelic "freedom fighters." This is despite all the evidence — including reports in the major U.S. news media — that these counterrevolutionaries follow a policy of systematic murder, rape, kidnapping, theft, and terror against the Nicaraguan population.

Such reports, according to the White House, are simply the result of a sophisticated Sandinista "disinformation campaign" aimed at besmirching the *contras'* image.

And in case these justifications for *contra* aid prove unconvincing, another one was thrown in for good measure. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, when asked whether a collapse of the *contra* forces could lead to direct U.S. intervention, responded, "Ultimately, that would indeed be the case." His implication was that more aid to the *contras* would head off such an outcome.

This "antiwar" guise is part of the White House's claim that its backing to the *contras* is not intended to overthrow the Sandinistas, just to pressure them to the negotiating table. In fact, it is the Nicaraguan government that has repeatedly urged negotiations, and Washington that has spurned them.

## Ruling class divisions

The Reagan administration's propaganda drive has a tone of desperation. That is because of the gains the Nicaraguan workers and peasants have made in deepening their revolution and the serious blows they have inflicted on the *contras*. Despite the extensive U.S. aid the *contras* have already gotten, they have failed to capture and hold a single town or piece of territory in Nicaragua. They lack any popular base, and are nothing more than a mercenary force directed by the Pentagon and CIA.

The White House fears that without an increase in U.S. aid, this mercenary outfit may collapse. And that would make other, direct U.S. military moves against Nicaragua more difficult and risky.

Another factor in the vehemence of the propaganda drive is the considerable resistance that further U.S. aid to the *contras* faces, both within the United States and throughout Latin America.

This has heightened differences among the U.S. rulers on this question. They agree on the need to overturn the Nicaraguan revolution,



but are divided over how best to do that, particularly in light of the contras' setbacks.

These tactical divisions are reflected in the considerable criticism within Congress and among liberal columnists of Reagan's particular package of contra aid.

So far, four out of five congressional committees have voted against recommending approval of the aid request. Speaker Thomas O'Neill, who heads the Democratic Party majority in the House of Representatives, said that if Congress granted the aid it "would be a disaster and a shame for this country." Rejecting the administration's contention that aid to the contras would avoid the use of U.S. troops, O'Neill stated, "Give \$100 million and our boys would be in there."

Some Republicans have also criticized the aid request, and Democrats and Republicans alike have reacted sharply to Reagan's red-baiting tactics.

A common thread among congressional criticisms of more aid to the contras is that it will not work, that it is an ineffective means of opposing the Sandinistas. While questioning the wisdom of Reagan's proposal, all attack the Sandinista government in one form or another. None of these congressmen have questioned Washington's "right" to intervene in Nicaragua. They differ only on the form of that intervention.

Most voted for "humanitarian" aid last year, and several proposals are now being floated to do so again. "Congress is not going to turn its back on the contras," Representative William Broomfield, a Republican, affirmed. "But obviously their chances are better of getting humanitarian aid." Representative Dave McCurdy, a Democrat, supported "lethal assistance as a last resort," but urged Washington to first conduct more negotiations.

Making a gesture in this direction, Reagan on March 7 appointed Philip Habib as a new special envoy to Central America to hold talks with the region's governments, including Nicaragua's.

One concern of the ruling-class critics of Reagan's proposal is the political damage it will inflict on U.S. imperialism's broader interests in the region, particularly at a time when Washington finds itself isolated on this question.

On February 10, Shultz met in Venezuela with eight Latin American foreign ministers, four from the governments in the Contadora group and four from those in the Contadora support group (Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela and Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Uruguay). They urged Washington to halt its aid to the contras.

In February Nicaragua and neighboring Costa Rica agreed to renew diplomatic ties. Costa Rican President-elect Oscar Arias Sánchez says he opposes military aid to the contras.

#### 'Stop the contra money flow'

As the pros and cons of Reagan's aid bid are being publicly debated, opponents of Washington's mercenary war are beginning to move

into action in both the United States and Canada.

On February 21 some 600 protesters marched on the Capitol in Washington, chanting, "We say 'no' — stop the contra money flow." The action was endorsed by a coalition of more than 30 organizations.

On March 4 nearly 200 religious figures formed a human cross in front of the Capitol to symbolize their opposition to Reagan's contra aid request. "The Government's distortion campaign is to prepare the American people for further U.S. military action in Nicaragua," the religious figures declared. Organizers said similar ceremonies were taking place in 75 other cities.

Some prominent trade union figures have

also publicly opposed Reagan's contra aid proposal.

Central American and southern African solidarity groups are planning a demonstration in New York City March 21 to protest U.S. aid to the Nicaraguan contras, as well as to the South African-backed mercenaries fighting against Angola. An antiwar march and rally is being organized for San Francisco for April 19 by a coalition of unionists, anti-apartheid fighters, peace activists, and others. In Canada, a coalition of 90 organizations has called a national day of protest for June 14 to oppose U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean, apartheid in South Africa, and the Canadian government's support to apartheid and U.S. intervention. □

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# How mass uprising toppled tyranny

*People press for democratic rights, purge of all Marcos officials*

By Deb Shnookal  
and Russell Johnson

MANILA — "I stood as a human barricade February 22–25, 1986" adorns the front of a T-shirt being sold by Manila street vendors. On the back is emblazoned, "Victory for People's Power."

These slogans refer to the massive popular mobilizations that brought down the hated Marcos dictatorship and installed Corazon Aquino as head of a new government. The "people power" revolutionary uprising was the culmination of the mass anti-Marcos movement that emerged in the streets following the Aug. 21, 1983, assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino at Manila airport.

The latest round of mobilizations began in response to Marcos' decision late last year to call presidential elections for February 7. Facing increasing isolation and pressure in the Philippines and abroad, the dictator hoped to strengthen his position to continue repressive rule over the Filipino people.

But the Filipino people saw it differently. They saw the election as an opportunity to deal a blow to the dictator. They mobilized in their millions in support of the candidacy of Corazon Aquino. "Cory" Aquino has become the popular symbol of the antidictatorial struggle since her husband was assassinated. In the days following the election, the mobilizations continued around the need to protect the ballot boxes from Marcos' goons.

Faced with this massive groundswell of support for Aquino, Marcos had to resort to the most blatant stealing of the February 7 election. But this only deepened the popular determination to have done with him. This came to a head when Aquino, at a February 16 "victory rally" in Manila of more than a million supporters, took up the call from the mass organizations backing her for a campaign of civil disobedience and a boycott of the businesses of the Marcos cronies to protest the election fraud and bring down Marcos. The Catholic bishops' conference also took up this call.

As pressure mounted, Aquino rejected all overtures toward a compromise under which she would share power with Marcos. Tensions began to emerge within the military hierarchy. Finally, on February 22, two top military officers — Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Deputy Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Fidel Ramos — fled to the Camp Crame headquarters of the Philippine Constabulary with a few hundred soldiers, after being warned of a plot by Marcos supporters in the military to murder them. Plans were also apparently under way to round up many figures in the anti-Marcos opposition, including Aquino, who at that time



went into hiding.

At this point, Enrile and Ramos denounced Marcos' electoral fraud and declared that they recognized the presidency of Aquino. Then the Catholic radio station, Radio Veritas, called on the people of Manila to mobilize and form a human barricade around Camp Crame to prevent military units loyal to Marcos from attacking the camp. Thousands upon thousands from both middle-class suburbs and working-class barrios immediately responded to this call, facing down the tanks Marcos sent to crush the rebels.

As the days passed and more and more soldiers came over to the rebellion, tension outside the camp began to ease. By February 25 as many as 2 million people surrounded Camp Crame. The atmosphere was festive.

Other crowds were gathered outside a radio station seized by the Enrile-Ramos forces and at the Mindiola Bridge outside the Malacanang Palace, where Marcos was holed up. Finally, on the evening of February 25, Marcos fled the palace in a U.S. helicopter. The people's uprising had been victorious.

Malacanang, so long the palatial bunker of a hated dictator, has now opened its iron lace gates to the public, and ordinary Filipinos can wander through the palace gardens, photograph each other in front of Marcos' former presidential library, and purchase any amount of "people power" paraphernalia available

from hundreds of street vendors.

President Aquino's statement that she will not live in the palace has received a popular welcome.

The government that has emerged from this upheaval of "people power" is a coalition between conservative forces associated with the landowning oligarchy and figures connected to the mass anti-Marcos "parliament of the streets." The former group includes many who previously supported the dictatorship — the Enrile-Ramos wing of the military, traditional politicians such as those in Vice-president Salvador Laurel's UNIDO party, and forces linked to the Catholic church hierarchy.

The second element in the coalition includes a number of prominent human-rights lawyers, such as Joker Arroyo and Jose Diokno, who defended communists and other victims of the Marcos repression.

It will continue to contend for influence over the course of the government behind the mass personal authority of Aquino.

## Struggle for democratic rights

The first important test of the new relationship of forces arising from the overthrow of Marcos had centered on the restoration of democratic rights.

During her presidential campaign Aquino had promised the full restoration of democratic rights, including the release of all Marcos' political detainees. Enrile, Ramos, and other conservative elements in the new government strongly opposed this, above all the release of the central leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its guerrilla organization, the New People's Army (NPA). The CPP and NPA leaders were being held by the military and were initially excluded from the proposed general amnesty.

Aquino addressed this question at a huge open air Mass and rally held in Luneta Park in Manila, March 2, to celebrate the overthrow of Marcos.

Speaking to a crowd estimated at between 2 and 3 million, Aquino announced the restoration of the writ of habeas corpus, including on the island of Mindanao, where the Muslim population has been waging an armed struggle for autonomy alongside the NPA rebel movement. She reiterated her pledge to release all the political prisoners as part of her call for "national reconciliation."

Over the next few days, most of the detained leaders of the CPP, NPA, and the allied National Democratic Front were freed, and all are expected to be released soon.

Aquino also urged the crowd to continue the "people power" that had brought down the dic-



tatorship, claiming that resistance to her government from Marcos supporters continues in some areas. She has come into conflict with the national parliament, which is controlled by Marcos' New Society Movement (KBL), and with Marcos-appointed judges and local politicians.

Subsequently, on March 10, Luis Villasuete, head of the Presidential Commission on Government Reorganization, announced that the Aquino government, as part of a six-month transition to constitutional rule, will formally declare itself a revolutionary government not beholden to the laws of the Marcos period. Marcos' parliament and constitution would be "defunct."

In their place, a constitutional commission would be appointed from various sectors and political groups to draft a new constitution, Villasuete said. The commission, he said, would also have to address the questions of land reform and local autonomy. Villasuete argued that the process of electing a constitutional convention to carry out these tasks would only delay the transitional period to an elected government.

Among the political detainees released was founding chairman of the CPP Jose Maria Sison, held for more than eight years in a military stockade.

Shortly before he was freed, Sison told reporters that he welcomed the Aquino government. However, he said, there were key questions that the government had to address before there could be any national reconciliation: above all, the issue of land reform and the removal of the two huge U.S. military bases in the Philippines.

"The moment Mrs. Aquino proposes to solve the land problem, then that is the time for Mrs. Aquino and the NPA to talk," Sison said. "There would have to be a dialogue before a cease-fire."

Sison added that Aquino "had inherited the whole military instrument that was used by Marcos to exploit the people. There are still problems to solve."

During her election campaign, Aquino had said that Marcos' "land reform," launched in 1972, was not enough. She called for providing technology and marketing assistance to those farmers who already had land.

She also pledged to extend the land reform beyond rice and corn lands to the sugar and coconut lands that had been exempt from the 1972 reform. But Marcos' land reform was a fake. It greatly accelerated the concentration of the land in the hands of fewer owners, including U.S. monopolies, displacing tens of thousands of peasants. Moreover, the indebtedness of exploited peasants has reached staggering levels under this law.

Aquino has also announced her support for scrapping the sugar and coconut monopolies run by Marcos cronies.

Leaders of the main section of the Moro National Liberation Front — the Muslim group fighting government soldiers on Mindanao — have been reported as supporting Aquino and willing to return from exile to discuss a cease-

fire with the government provided real moves are made toward autonomy.

As further steps to what the Aquino government calls its "dismantling" of the Marcos dictatorship, a number of Marcos' aging generals have been ordered to retire. Brig. Gen. Salvador Mison, another of the "reformists" within the armed forces, has been appointed acting chief of staff.

Almost all the Marcos-appointed justices of the Supreme Court and many lower courts, as well as officials of the Commission on Order and Civil Service, submitted courtesy resignations to President Aquino by March 7.

#### New period in class struggle

With the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship, a new period has opened in the Philippine class struggle. The masses of Filipino people are beginning to exercise the democratic rights they have conquered through their struggle, as the conflicts continue within the new government and the old oligarchy. As the principal leaders of the left return to public political life after years of incarceration, an important political discussion is developing within the progressive movements over how to assess the Aquino government and the process that thrust the new president into power. A central ques-

tion is how to utilize the new situation to push forward the struggle of the workers and peasants in face of an overwhelming economic crisis.

The depth of the mobilizations during and after the elections, which eventually swept Marcos from power, and the speed with which they developed, caught all the left-wing organizations by surprise.

What was the "people power revolution"? Was it a genuine popular revolution? Or was it in essence a military coup scripted in Washington?

Should revolutionaries take up Aquino's call to maintain "people power" to strive to advance the organization of the workers and peasants? Should they seek representation in the government? Or would this subordinate the working people to a bourgeois government?

Should revolutionaries fight to widen the democratic opening and win legalization of the left parties? Or is the democratic opening necessarily short-lived and the task of the revolutionaries to remain in the underground and in the hills to prepare for the return of conditions like those under Marcos?

Should there be "critical collaboration" with or "principled opposition" to the Aquino gov-

## Marcos' prisoners celebrate release

MANILA — Red and yellow confetti, flashing cameras, and journalists' tape recorders greeted some of the most famous political prisoners of the Marcos regime as they arrived at a reception to celebrate their freedom. The Bayan-sponsored reception was held on the evening of March 7 at the house of longtime human-rights campaigner Armando Malay. Spirits were high as guests welcomed the recently released prisoners, and ex-detainees warmly greeted one another.

Among those present were Jose Maria Sison and Bernabe Buscayno, the CPP and NPA leaders; Horacio ("Boy") Morales and Fr. Ed de la Torre of the National Democratic Front; and many other CPP leaders such as Alan Jazmines, Noel Etabag, Jerry Bulatar, and Isagani Serrano.

Only a few days before, it had seemed that the military was planning to block President Aquino's stated intention to release all political prisoners. But Sison, Buscayno, and others were dramatically released on March 5.

Isagani Serrano had been imprisoned twice — first from 1973 to 1976, and then from 1982 to March 5, 1986. He was one of the political prisoners in Camp Crame, where the military rebels, Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Lt. Gen. Fidel Ramos, were holed up against Marcos from February 22 to February 25. He explained to *IP* what it was like in Camp

Crame through those four days.

The main fear, he said, was that of retribution against the rebels by the Marcos loyalist armed forces, who might attempt to bomb the camp. But the political prisoners were not afraid of Enrile and Ramos, he explained. "At that particular moment we had kindred feelings with the leaders of the rebellion. We hoped for their victory. Their downfall would also have been our death. All our lives had somehow come together," Serrano said.

He described what it was like in the prison in the days after Marcos fled. "It was like a catharsis. We were relieved and jubilant and very happy for the new government that had assumed power. And we were thankful to the people, who were a key factor. Without the people we were a goner," he said.

What did he see as the prospects for the new spirit of national reconciliation that was evidenced by the mass popular rallying to defend Camp Crame against Marcos?

"I think the people up there in the hills will react to certain favorable developments, the most important being the release of all political prisoners, especially with Joema [Sison] and Bernabe Buscayno being released," he said. "These releases are a major act of goodwill on the part of the president, along the lines of reconciliation."

— Deb Shnookal

ernment?

Questions like these are being hotly debated in the universities and union offices, among the former political prisoners, and in the countryside.

This discussion has been stimulated by the virtual abstention of the CPP and the mass organizations it influences from the mass anticidatorial movement that arose around the Aquino candidacy through their decision to boycott the election. This effectively put the CPP outside the events that unfolded, preventing it from assuming a leadership role in the

massive outpouring of February 22–25.

In fact, many individuals and groups within the CPP-led mass organizations broke away to participate in the popular movements around the electoral challenge to Marcos' rule. These break-aways included some chapters of Bayan and even the NPA in some areas like southern Luzon.

Some much smaller revolutionary organizations participated in the mass campaign around Aquino, although they were not strong enough to help shape the unfolding events to the extent

the CPP might have.

Among the Filipino masses there is a strong sense of relief that they were able to rid the country of Marcos with so little bloodshed. They have acquired a new national pride and consciousness of their power through their role in ousting the dictator.

This is summed up in the popular slogan "Mabuhay ang Pilipino" (Long live the Filipino). They are in a stronger position today to wage new struggles to defend and extend the rights they conquered through "people power."

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## Cuba

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# Reporter's notebook on CP congress

*Delegates discuss internationalism, advancement of women and Blacks*

**By Mary-Alice Waters**

[The Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party took place in Havana February 4–7. The delegates discussed and adopted a Main Report, presented by party First Secretary Fidel Castro. That report reviewed the progress of the last five years, outlined the shortcomings and problems that must be dealt with, and projected the main lines of development for the next five-year period.

[The Congress also adopted resolutions dealing with economic and social guidelines for the coming period, international policy, and the administrative organization of the country and made some minor changes in the party statutes.

[In addition, the congress elected a new Central Committee and adopted a sweeping report on the criteria and guidelines for the composition of the party's leadership bodies.

[The Congress also adopted a draft program of the party, which will now be discussed throughout the country — in the trade unions, women's organizations, student groups, the farmers' association, the armed forces, and the neighborhood committees. At the end of 1986 a special session of the Third Congress will be convened to discuss and incorporate changes coming out of the mass discussion process now under way. When the program is finally adopted it will replace the shorter Programmatic Platform adopted at the party's first congress in 1975.

[The following sketches are from the notebook of our reporter who attended the congress in Havana. Previous coverage of the congress appeared in our March 10 issue.]

\* \* \*

On the morning of the second day of the Cuban Communist Party Congress, a U.S. SR-71 spy plane provocatively circled the island, being careful not to violate Cuban airspace. Raúl Castro, minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, reported this event to

the delegates, humorously noting that the sonic booms heard over the city of Havana earlier that morning were obviously the Reagan government's salute to the Third Congress of Cuban communists.

In a more serious vein, however, Raúl noted that such acts frighten no one in Cuba.

Moreover, he commented to prolonged applause, by the time the Cuban communists of the future are celebrating their 203rd congress in the year 2985 — and probably well before that — instead of a North American spy plane, "what will come from the north will be a plane carrying an official government and party delegation to represent the socialist — that is, communist — government of the United States."

\* \* \*

The Cuban government staunchly defends the rights of all nations to be treated with equal respect and dignity — whether their people number a hundred thousand or a hundred million.

This political principle was clearly demonstrated by the simultaneous translation services offered guests at the Cuban party congress. Signs at the front of the convention hall announced that the entire proceedings were available in Lao, Khmer, Korean, Japanese, and Hungarian, as well as Arabic, Portuguese, German, Russian, French, English, and Spanish.

\* \* \*

How can we make better use of our own labor power and the material resources available to us to hasten the industrial development of our country? Delegates at the congress centered a great deal of their attention on this question.

More than 29 percent of the delegates were currently production workers. Many other delegates had direct responsibilities related to management, planning, scientific and techni-

cal training, and provincial government. The economic and social guidelines for the next five-year period had been discussed by more than 3 million people prior to the congress, and more than 1,600 proposals and changes coming from these meetings had been incorporated in the draft resolution before the congress.

The main challenge, numerous delegates stressed, is one of revolutionary leadership.

Technical aid and favorable long-term trade agreements between Cuba and the other countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Vietnam, and Mongolia) have enabled Cuba to plan for and construct a number of modern industrial complexes. Production of sugar, textiles, food, steel, nickel, petroleum, agricultural equipment, electrical power, pharmaceuticals, and many other basic products has increased dramatically.

But a modern industrial plant employing thousands of workers does not run on technical know-how alone. First and foremost, it takes men and women who are able to lead their fellow workers.

Several delegates from Santiago de Cuba, for example, spoke of the challenge they face in reaching full production capacity at the giant new Celia Sánchez textile complex located in that eastern province. The complex, they noted, already employs some 7,300 workers in three production shifts, but two problems remain: increasing the size of the work force and retaining the skilled workers who have been trained to operate the technologically advanced equipment.

One difficulty they pointed to has been inadequate housing for the trained personnel moving into the area. The housing shortage has prompted many to leave and look for jobs elsewhere.

Fidel Castro interrupted the discussion on this question to explain the context — for the benefit of guests from capitalist countries who, he was afraid, might not fully understand. "In





One of the most popular spots in Havana is this revolutionary "billboard" that stands facing the offices of U.S. Interests Section (formerly the U.S. Embassy) in Havana. "Mr. Imperialists, we have absolutely no fear of you!"

capitalist countries," he remarked, "workers have to fight to *keep* their jobs. But here these workers have numerous possibilities and options. It is the factory that has to fight to keep them from leaving."

Despite some difficulties of this kind, however, the weak spot has not been technical preparation and training, insisted one delegate, the general secretary of the party nucleus at the plant.

The work force includes many young workers who have studied abroad and are well trained, he noted. But, he added, "it is not enough to have mastered the technology. You must also know how to lead people." You must know how to lead the men and women who will make the productive process work. And that, he emphasized, you don't learn in a trade school in any country.

In response to questions posed to the delegates by Fidel Castro and Raúl Castro, it was established that among the 7,300 employees at the Celia Sánchez textile plant, there are currently some 470 members of the Communist Party, 1,300 members of the Union of Young Communists (UJC), and 1,500 trained and armed members of the rapid action forces of the Territorial Troop Militias. Forty-seven percent of the militia troops are women.

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Ensuring the working-class composition of the Cuban Communist Party has always been a central concern of the leadership. The Main Report adopted at the First Congress in 1975 noted the challenge facing the party in this regard. Precisely because the party "is formed by workers with the highest prestige among the masses, with great authority and most outstanding achievements in labor, they are always the first to be chosen to hold any administrative leadership post."

It is positive, that report noted, that a high percentage of those who assume leadership responsibilities at farms, factories, and work-

places, and as officials in the mass organizations, the party, and municipal and provincial government departments, are of working-class origin. Unless the party takes measures to guarantee its continued growth and constant renewal in all work centers, however, it will cease being a party of workers.

That class perspective has guided the growth of the Cuban Communist Party from the beginning. Today, 37.3 percent of the party members are production workers, another 5.9 percent are service workers, and 16.5 percent are teachers, professionals, and technicians.

A similar class perspective guides the construction of the Union of Young Communists and the recruitment of youth leaders to the party.

The Main Report adopted by the Third Congress noted that "young people working in production, teaching, or services make up 59 percent of the membership" of the UJC. Another 20 percent are students.

Women make up 41 percent of the UJC membership. The report, however, pointed out that women are not fully represented on the leadership level. Despite progress in the last five years, women currently make up only 19.5 percent of the leadership cadres.

In line with a policy of accelerating the promotion of young people to party membership and leadership responsibilities, the Main Report observed that hundreds of UJC cadre have taken on responsible positions in the party, the state, and other spheres in the last five-year period.

The report called attention to another important guideline for party membership, however. "It is highly appropriate for UJC cadre to spend some time in production or services before being promoted to responsible positions in the Party. No textbook, no academy can take the place of the experience one gains in the work and struggle of the rank and file."

I asked Julio Canera Gutiérrez, the first secretary of the UJC in the province of Ciego de

Avila, if this guideline is carried out in practice.

Yes, he assured me, it is the norm. But just as important, he went on, is the composition of the UJC. There is no quota system for young workers, for women, for Blacks and mulattos, or any other group. But, he said, it is not by chance that a majority of our members are workers.

"This is not a concession to workers," Julio added. "It is simply a recognition of the fact that the conditions of one's life determine consciousness." Only the working class can lead a socialist revolution, he went on. "We are a working-class party and a working-class youth organization."

\* \* \*

One of the most important developments registered by the Third Congress was the decision to implement a "broad renewal" of the leadership bodies. Forty percent of those elected to the Central Committee were new, and a policy of affirmative action for leaders who are young, female, Black, or mestizo was discussed and adopted.

As Fidel explained it in his report on the election of the new Central Committee, "It was a matter of renewal or death."

For the first time, a party congress discussed and adopted a policy of promoting Blacks and mestizos.

"Hypocritical societies that practice racial discrimination are afraid to talk about this," Fidel told the delegates and guests in a speech that was carried live on radio and TV throughout Cuba. "Revolutionary societies are not."

"If you do not feel embarrassed to say white or blond, why do you feel embarrassed to say Black or mulatto or mestizo? Why? Especially in this country, when we are children of mixed blood. This is our greatest source of pride, because it is not a bad mixture, it is an excellent mixture."

Castro discussed the history of slavery and racism in Cuba and the legacy inherited from

decades of imperialist exploitation. One of the first acts of the victorious revolution in 1959 was to outlaw discrimination on the basis of race. And the antiracist laws were not just on paper. They were enforced by the new revolutionary power. But, as Fidel noted in his report, "it is not enough to establish laws on equality and expect total equality." The correction of historic injustice cannot be left to spontaneity, he insisted; it has to be consciously promoted.

The promotion of an affirmative action policy in relation to Blacks and mestizos represents another important step forward by the Cuban Communist Party — a continuation of the process begun at the Second Congress in 1980 when, Castro noted, "we gave the Central Committee a strong dose of feminism, a strong dose of workers." (Not only workers "in their condition as leaders," Fidel said, but "workers in their condition as factory workers.")

Now, he told delegates, we have "to continue along those lines and insist on three issues, three promotions" — women, Blacks and mestizos, and youth.

In recent years in Cuba it has been highly unusual to hear revolutionists argue that affirmative action for Blacks and mestizos is necessary to eliminate the legacy of discrimination. The emphasis has been on the very real progress of the revolution in eradicating racism — often to the point of denying that any legacy of racism exists in Cuba.

Even statistics that would show the real advances have not been available. Until recently, Fidel noted, no one knew what percentage of the party or its leadership was Black and mestizo. "No one cared to ask," he commented, because the attitude was that "this question was erased in our constitution."

In capitalist Cuba, questions about one's race were asked for purposes of discrimination, Fidel continued. So after the revolution people stopped asking. But now the situation has changed. It is necessary now to keep track, he insisted, "because we have to see how this policy of proportion advances and how each of the sectors is represented."

According to Fidel's report, 34 percent of the Cuban population is Black or mestizo. Of the new Central Committee, 28.4 percent are Black or mestizo, which is close to the proportion in the party membership as a whole.

Esteban Lazo, a Black who is first secretary of the party in the province of Matanzas, was one of the newly elected members of the Political Bureau.

Following the close of the congress, discussion of this question more than any other dominated the public commentary. There were many Cubans who felt like the young Black woman taxi driver who told *Granma*, "This congress made me happy three times over: to be a revolutionary, to be a woman, and to be a Black."

\* \* \*

A big discussion in the Cuban Communist Party in the period leading up to the Third Con-

gress concerned the need to accelerate the pace of recruitment of women, the need to promote women leaders on a preferential basis, and the need to step up the educational efforts of the party in combating sexist attitudes toward women.

The heightened consciousness on this question was evident in numerous ways at this congress.

Women today comprise 21.5 percent of the party membership, up from less than 15 percent a decade ago and 18.8 percent in 1980.

But women were 26 percent of the delegates to the Third Congress. Even more striking was the fact that 41 percent of the delegates who took the floor in the open sessions of the congress were women.

Of the Central Committee elected by the Third Congress, 18.2 percent are women.

That figure represents conscious leadership advances over the last two decades. In 1965, at the founding of the Cuban Communist Party, only 5 percent of those elected to the Central Committee were women. At the First Congress in 1975, 8.9 percent were women. In 1980 the Second Congress elected a Central Committee of whom 12.4 percent were women.

Fundamental to the advancing social status of Cuban women is their steadily rising educational level and growing integration into the productive labor force.

At the time of the Cuban revolution, well over 25 percent of Cuban women were illiterate, with the percentage sharply higher in rural areas. Today, the campaign for all adults to complete a ninth-grade education is being successfully waged.

In 1959 fewer than 10 percent of Cuban women worked outside of their own homes or plots of land. Of those who were employed, 70 percent worked as domestic servants!

Today 37.3 percent of the work force is female. More than 55 percent of technicians and college graduates are women. No one is employed as a domestic servant.

In explaining the inadequate percentage of women in the Cuban Communist Party and its leadership, Fidel referred to this historical legacy inherited from centuries of colonial domination and imperialist exploitation and the fact that only with the victorious socialist revolution in Cuba were women able to begin to enter the labor force in significant numbers.

But it takes time and conscious leadership action for such historic changes in women's economic and social status to be translated into comparable changes in women's leadership role. And this is doubly difficult in an underdeveloped country with sharply limited resources to devote to creating the kinds of social services that are necessary to alter women's double burden of domestic labor — the foundation of women's oppression.

Sex discrimination has been and remains more prevalent than ethnic or racial discrimination, Fidel told the delegates. It is obvious, he noted, that there has been more progress on overcoming race discrimination than prejudice against women. The statistics on women in the party and in municipal and provincial bodies of

People's Power offer irrefutable proof.

The promotion of women who are leaders is not something that can be left to chance, Castro insisted in his report to the congress on the election of the new Central Committee. It will not happen spontaneously.

That is why the congress adopted a policy of boldly renewing the party leadership bodies, with an emphasis on promoting young leaders, women, and Blacks. "We must change what history has created," Fidel told the delegates. And that is what they set out to do.

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The negative impact of sexist attitudes toward women — including on industrial productivity and efficiency — received pointed attention at the congress. *Machismo*, delegates pointed out, often prevents the most qualified worker from being hired — if that worker happens to be a woman.

It is commonly acknowledged that many administrators will try not to employ women in skilled jobs in Cuba, arguing that there is a greater turnover among women workers because of family pressures, that absenteeism is higher among women because they take time off to care for sick children, and that women have the right to paid maternity leaves of several months.

Political Bureau member Jorge Risquet gave delegates one example of the kind of machismo he said had to be combated. He recalled that when a large, new cement factory began operation a short time ago in Cienfuegos, one of the furnace operators was a young woman who had been trained for her job in the German Democratic Republic.

Risquet commented that he recently learned the woman was no longer working at the cement plant. She had married, and her husband objected to her continuing to work there.

"Our political work," Risquet concluded, "must include the struggle against machismo."

Risquet's intervention prompted Fidel to add another example. Recently, he commented, he had been talking with a young woman doctor working in the family medical program. He asked her if she was being awakened often in the middle of the night by calls from patients.

The doctor told him that her real problem was something else. Her husband got very angry because the phone calls awakened *him*. She indicated she was trying to educate her patients not to call unless it was absolutely essential.

And, Fidel told her, she should educate her husband as well.

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In 1985 another important step was taken in organizing the full participation of the masses of Cuban people to defend their country against any military attack.

For the first time, Fidel's Main Report stated, 14- and 15-year-old students "began to receive their pre-military training and have been organized into small reserve units.

"To date, 150,000 young people have joined these reserve units voluntarily and with paren-



tal consent.”

\* \* \*

The Main Report adopted by the Third Congress contained some sharp criticism of the functioning of the daily press in Cuba.

While praising *Granma* and the other national and provincial daily newspapers for their efforts to provide a growing number of readers with information in a “sober and precise” manner, the report also noted that there are “frequent signs of a mistaken notion of what criticism of economic and administrative activities should be.”

In practice, the report said, there is a tendency to point out problems in an isolated way and treat “criticism as though it were a separate genre in journalism.” In fact, criticism is simply a method of work, necessary to “interpret reality as a whole, to promote collective action aimed at transforming it and to overcome deficiencies,” the report said.

“In a workers’ state like ours,” it noted, “criticism of the deficiencies, or mistakes in economic or administrative activities is not made to destroy anybody or damage the people’s trust in the Revolution, but rather to confront the cadre on the basis of their own sense of honor, to educate the people, and point the way to corrective action.”

The report underscored, however, that the weaknesses of the Cuban press are not simply due to inadequate training or inexperience. The bureaucratic practices of officials and administrators who are afraid of a press that is competently doing its job are also a very real factor.

“Many officials and administrators do not expedite the work of the journalists or maintain contact with them,” the report stated. “They deny access to unclassified information, become self-appointed censors, try to justify everything, or simply pretend they’re not involved.”

The Cuban journalists covering the congress proceedings were glad to hear the critical remarks contained in the report. They thought the report would help to stimulate discussion within the Journalists’ Union of Cuba — which will hold a national congress later this year — and would encourage the press to be more systematic in going after necessary information and presenting real problems.

A number of journalists also commented that the criticisms contained in the report did not go far enough.

\* \* \*

What motivates people to work efficiently and well in a society where production is regulated by planning to meet the social needs of all, where everyone is guaranteed a job, where rent is only 10 percent of income, where health care and education are free?

Capitalists “efficiently” organize the work force to meet capitalist needs. They intensify labor and increase the rate of exploitation. The only limit is the consciousness, organization, and struggle of the workers themselves.

Revolutionary workers who are increasingly playing a role in planning and controlling an

economy that produces for need not private profit have a completely different set of criteria for organizing production “efficiently.”

In his Main Report, Fidel Castro remarked that even if the Cubans have much to learn in the realm of technical efficiency, “becoming the sorcerer’s apprentice, i.e., apprentice capitalists, is not the solution.”

As the congress discussion unfolded, Fidel gave a concrete example.

To much laughter, he recounted the kinds of mutual misunderstandings that had accompanied a recent experiment in joint management of an enterprise in Cuba partially funded by Spanish capital.

“There are a lot of things we don’t know about running industries efficiently,” Fidel said. “But one thing we do know something about is how to manage industry in the midst of a *revolution* that must *defend* itself.”

That is a political question, Fidel went on, “and it is only with *our* political principles that you can organize a factory in Cuba today.”

He explained that the first thing the Spanish managers objected to was being told they had to work together with the trade union leadership — that no work schedules or other decisions on organizing the work could be implemented without union agreement.

“They didn’t like that,” Fidel said. That’s not the way they are used to organizing a plant in Spain. “But they liked it even less when they learned that the party was organized in the plant, and the Union of Young Communists, too.” They learned that those organizations also had a say in what could be done.

“They learned, for example, that there was a militia unit in the plant,” Fidel went on, that the workers were armed, and that time for militia training had to be organized into the work schedule.

In Cuba, that is part of “efficiently” organizing production.

When it came time for the sugar harvest, Fidel continued, “the Spanish managers learned we would need 30 volunteers to cut cane as part of a national mobilization.” Naturally, 30 of the hardest workers in the plant volunteered and the rest of the workers agreed to make up for their absence.

“They didn’t like the microbrigades, either,” Castro added. He was referring to the system by which a great deal of the housing in Cuba is built. A factory organizes a construction brigade. While the brigade members build apartments, their jobs are covered by other workers in the plant. The new housing is then assigned to the workers at that plant on the basis of greatest need.

Finally, Fidel related, along came Hurricane Kate last November, one of the most destructive storms ever to hit Cuba. With sugar cane stalks battered to the ground by the wind and rain, an extraordinary mobilization of labor power had to be organized to go out and cut the cane by hand. Many more workers volunteered, and a great deal of the harvest was saved.

But that’s not the way capitalists organize labor power to produce profits for themselves.

The experience, Fidel said, convinced him that it was difficult to operate a factory on the basis of joint management with capitalists. “Our workers have different conceptions of why and for whom they produce, and our workers think the capitalists’ concepts are even more alien than the capitalists think ours are.”

Only we can manage production in Cuba, he concluded. But our political principles alone do not mean we operate efficiently. To improve that we must master the technology. To improve that we have to learn.

\* \* \*

“Hey, compañera. Over here.”

It is 1:30 a.m. Out on the patio of the reception hall the dance music is swinging and hundreds of delegates and guests are unwinding after four long days of congress proceedings.

I join the three compañeros, who are laughing and joking. They know I’m a *nor-teamericana*, a guest from the United States. They want to know what I think about their party, their revolution, their country.

The three are workers from the province of Holguín. One is a trade union official in a cement plant. Another works on a state farm in the sugar industry. The third works in a brewery.

The brewery worker is missing part of his right arm. “I left that part of my body in Africa,” he jokes. “It was a contribution from the Cuban people to the Angolan people.”

He is one of the 100,000 Cubans who have completed internationalist missions in the last five years and returned to Cuba to take up their lives and work there anew.

I try to ask them questions about Cuba, but they want to talk about the United States. It’s three-to-one and they win. What do North American workers think about the Cuban revolution? Will workers in the United States make a revolution like Cuba’s?

When I confidently tell them that workers and farmers in my country will make a revolution, they promptly agree. I am surprised at their confidence, because many Cubans, who have been living with the imperialist monster at their throats for so long, think of the socialist revolution in the United States only as a historical certainty. It is not something they consider likely to occur in their lifetimes.

But my friends from Holguín have a different view. They assure me that working people in the United States need a socialist revolution now. They do not believe U.S. workers will allow themselves to be exploited forever. The U.S. government, which wages war against Nicaragua, arms the South African-backed forces in Angola, and threatens to destroy Cuba, does not represent the interests of working people in the United States. So it will not last forever.

The party begins to wind down and we head for the door. But the three compañeros from Holguín want the last word.

“We have a message for working people in the United States,” they tell me. “We want you to know what the Angolan people know. You have friends here in Cuba.” □

# Junta tries to reestablish 'security'

*Working people take steps to organize fight for democracy*

## By Will Reissner

Haiti's ruling junta, which was hand-picked by former dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier hours before he fled that Caribbean country on February 7, is trying to consolidate its control in the face of continuing mass protests.

As these pressures mount, the junta has been forced on a number of occasions to go further than it had wanted.

For example, the junta's first act after taking power had been to organize Duvalier's escape from Haiti, and subsequently government leaders had stated that the new regime had no plans to ask for Duvalier's extradition from France.

But growing protests led the new government to announce with great fanfare on February 27 that it was demanding Duvalier's return from France.

Days after this announcement, however, the French government stated that no such request had ever been received. At that point Justice Minister Gérard Gourgue acknowledged that no extradition request has actually been filed.

In nearly three decades of rule over the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, the Duvalier family accumulated a personal fortune of hundreds of millions of dollars, most of it invested outside Haiti.

## Exiles kept out

While the junta drags its feet on recovering this stolen wealth and bringing Duvalier back to face justice, it is also preventing anti-Duvalier political exiles from returning to their country.

When Duvalier was in power, all Haitians outside the country for 90 days were required to obtain a reentry visa before being allowed to return. The new government has retained this requirement, which allows it to screen out what it calls "undesirables" (see article on page 171).

"We don't want a lot of troublemakers coming back and causing problems," explained Maj. George Valcin.

One special target of the people's outrage has been the new regime's practice of protecting well-known Duvalier-era torturers and organizing their escape from the country.

This issue came to a head after army troops and police organized the escape of Col. Albert Pierre to Brazil on February 23. Pierre, who headed Duvalier's secret police from 1974 to January 1986, had taken refuge in the Brazilian embassy after Duvalier left Haiti. From there he was escorted by military guards to the airport and left Haiti on a chartered jet.

Protesters had rushed to the airport in hopes of stopping Pierre's departure but were un-

successful.

Two days later, however, Haitians were able to prevent the junta-organized escape of another key Duvalier secret police official, Luc Desyr.

Crowds were alerted to the military's attempt to spirit Desyr out of the country when an airport employee telephoned a radio station to report that Desyr's name was on an Air France passenger list.

Thousands of people rushed to the airport and prevented Desyr from leaving. Troops escorting Desyr saved him by firing tear gas into the crowd and hustling him away in an army jeep.

Although prevented from bringing Luc Desyr to immediate justice at the airport, crowds took their revenge on his palatial home. Men, women, and children stripped the house down to its bare walls. Windows were broken, doors were pried loose, bathroom fixtures and furnishings were removed, and statues around the house's swimming pool were smashed.

Crowds inflicted similar damage on the homes of well-known torturers Rosali Max Adolphe and Elois Maître.

On February 27 nearly 1,000 people sacked the house of André Simon, a longtime Duvalier stalwart who had boasted of killing hundreds of people in 1969-70 after peasants broke into the house of a local Duvalier thug and distributed its contents.

Col. Albert Pierre's escape to Brazil provoked the junta's first real political crisis.

Following Pierre's escape, Justice Minister Gourgue, the only member of the six-man junta who had not been a close Duvalier associate, threatened to resign.

Gourgue complained that he had not been told of the junta's decision to let Pierre leave. "He heard about it on the radio, just like everybody else," one Gourgue aide stated.

To show his anger over the decision, which he described as "shocking and offensive," Gourgue boycotted the junta's February 25 ceremony marking the reinstatement of Haiti's historic flag in place of the flag introduced by the Duvalier dynasty.

It was crowds gathering for the flag-day ceremonies that rushed to the airport to prevent Luc Desyr from being spirited out of the country.

As demonstrations and reprisals spread in the wake of the junta's unsuccessful attempt to get Desyr out of Haiti, the government imposed a 7:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. curfew on February 26, only hours after it had lifted a month-long 11:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. curfew.

But the government was also forced to bow

to the protests and announce that former officials accused of human rights violations will no longer be allowed to leave the country.

## Strikes spread

Workers in a number of state-run and private companies have taken direct action to remove Duvalierists from positions of authority.

In the city of Les Cayes, for example, employees of state-owned Haiti Electricity walked off their jobs demanding the removal of the manager of the Les Cayes office.

A similar action by Haiti Electricity workers in the capital, Port-au-Prince, led to the removal of director Alix Cameau.

Workers at the National Bank of Credit in Port-au-Prince went on strike February 26 and 27 to press for the ouster of corrupt officials linked to Duvalier. The National Council of Government (CNG), the official name of the ruling junta, agreed to their demands February 27.

Earlier, workers at the Haitian-American Sugar Company's Port-au-Prince mill walked out to demand changes in management.

In the days immediately following Duvalier's flight on February 7, students throughout Haiti continued their school boycotts to press for the removal of prominent Duvalierists from government posts. Most of those school boycotts have ended, but many student protests of other types continue.

At the medical school and teachers' college in Port-au-Prince, students staged walkouts demanding the extradition from Brazil of Colonel Pierre. They also demanded that the teachers' college be provided with new facilities adequate to the needs of a country whose population is illiterate in its vast majority.

Under strong pressure, the Ministry of National Education yielded to this demand and agreed to relocate the teachers' college into the building that had been demanded by the students.

That building was the ultramodern headquarters of the Volunteers for National Security (VSN), Duvalier's personal corps of goons and thugs. VSN members are more commonly known as Tontons Macoutes, which means "bogeymen" in Haiti's French Creole language.

In some parts of the country, representative organizations have developed to begin administering local areas. This development has gone furthest in northern Haiti, around Cap-Haitien, the country's second-largest city.

There, on February 21, representatives from all the towns and municipalities in the area gathered to form a Committee of Renewal of the North.



At its founding meeting, held in the Cap-Haïtien City Council building, participants voiced the complaints of their respective municipalities and laid the basis for establishing structures to allow residents of Cap-Haïtien to play a direct role in administering the city.

One of the first orders of business was the establishment of structures to organize the February 25 flag-day celebrations in Cap-Haïtien. The committee voted to carry out a mass cleanup of the city in honor of the ceremony.

This cleanup was largely organized by youth, who had played a major role in the protests that brought down the Duvalier regime.

The committee also voted to demand that the VSN headquarters in Cap-Haïtien be converted into the Regional Directorate of Education.

Strong applause greeted speakers calling for a thoroughgoing purge of Duvalierists from positions of power. This purge, known among Haitians as "Operation Uproot," must extend beyond individuals to institutions, they stated.

### Managing the transition

In its attempts to stabilize the political situation, the junta, which is under strong pressure to specify a date for elections for a new government, announced on February 25 its plans for a transition.

But just as the junta itself was hand-picked by Duvalier, the new commission that will draw up the rules for the transition will be hand-picked by the junta.

Junta member Col. William Regala, the minister of the interior and national defense, stated that the junta will name a 19-member consultative council and that that council in turn will designate the members of a Constituent Assembly to write a new constitution for Haiti.

A front-page article in the March 5-11 issue of *Haiti Progrès*, an exile newspaper published in New York, noted that such a consultative council would be an "assembly of notables" with no representation from the country's workers and peasants.

A constituent assembly, the article argued, should be elected by universal, direct suffrage so that its composition reflects the different classes in the country, their weight and specific forms.

Junta member Gourgue contended that elections cannot be held for at least 12 to 18 months. "That will be the minimum time we need. There has to be a council that chooses a constituent assembly. We have to write a constitution, organize political parties, write an electoral law," he stated.

Although he is one of the two civilians on the junta, Gourgue opposes elimination of military control of the government. He argued, "We need the armed forces because they are the only people who can guarantee security."

Gourgue is worried that "now everyone believes we had a revolution. Everyone wants change immediately."

But the junta's first priority, he stated, is to

reestablish security. "We have to reorient people, stop the pillaging, the revenge."

Prior to accepting Duvalier's offer to serve on the junta, Gourgue had been the chairman of the Haitian League of Human Rights. While not a particularly outspoken opponent of the Duvalier regime, Gourgue, as the only member of the junta who was not closely connected with the ousted despot, is the only figure providing the regime with credibility among the Haitian masses.

## Return of Haitian exiles

### Junta is screening out 'undesirables'

By E. St. Albin

[The following article is reprinted from the February 26-March 4 issue of *Haiti Progrès*, published in New York. The translation from French is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

There is a lot of talk about the return of the exiles, but the number who have thus far been able to go back can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Of the first ones to return, Jean-Claude Bajeux, is a special case since he is the only one thus far to have been able to do so without the famous "reentry visa."

We have also seen the arrival of Karl Lévêque, Viter Juste, Félix Morisseau-Leroy, and Duly Brutus of the IFOPADA [Union of Haitian Patriotic and Democratic Forces] — who was there for only a brief stay.

And recently it was Father Antoine Adrien's turn to land at Port-au-Prince's airport, renamed Maïs Gâté Airport. However, Father Adrien's return did not go without a hitch because, although he had been duly granted his visa, he was arbitrarily detained for more than two hours, and apparently was only able to leave the airport because an imposing delegation from the church was there to meet him. In the end, they could not go so far as to expel him from the country.

In any case, the junta views the return of the exiles as a serious problem. In a Feb. 20, 1986, broadcast, Radio Métropole stated: "The problem of the exiles still remains untouched. Now, the basic criteria for obtaining a reentry visa are being studied case by case. It is known that the CNG [National Council of Government] fears a massive return of certain 'undesirables.' It remains to be seen who falls into that category."

Moreover, the February 24 *New York Times* states: "As for the several hundred political exiles who were deported or were refused reentry during the Duvalier period, one official told reporters that the Government does not want the return of 'small-time politicians.'"

"Fearing disturbances, the Government has refused to lift a ban on the return of political exiles. It can screen Haitians who want to return by applying a rule that anyone who has

Even before Duvalier fled, Gourgue had developed close ties with U.S. diplomats in Port-au-Prince. Since he joined the junta, Marlise Simons reports in the March 5 *New York Times*, "contacts between him and the American Embassy have intensified."

The U.S. State Department announced on February 26 that Washington will release \$26.6 million in economic and military aid to Haiti that was blocked in the last days of Duvalier's rule. □

been abroad for more than 90 days requires a re-entry visa. So far only three political exiles, abroad for close to 20 years, are known to have returned."

So, not only has the National Council of Government perpetuated the Duvalierist arbitrariness of the reentry visa, which is a totally abnormal and unacceptable practice, but in addition it seems to have opted for selective issuance of these visas.

In this regard, we can get an idea of the criteria used to identify the "undesirables" by looking at the communiqué issued by the CNG on Feb. 20, 1986, which contains the typically Duvalierist claim of "agitators in the pay of international communism [who] set out to provoke untimely demonstrations."

If we have already reached the point where this is being used to provide advance justification for any new repression against the people, it can be imagined that the government will not hesitate to portray all those political exiles it wants to keep out of the country as being connected with "international communism."

In other words, the left elements, the progressives, the revolutionaries will continue to be classified, after 28 years, as "dangerous subversives." Thus far, in the various consulates abroad, the situation remains confused and visas are handed out with caution.

According to the [Paris daily] *Le Monde*, upon his return from a five-day trip to Haiti, "in the course of a press conference, on Thursday, February 20, in Paris," Duly Brutus of the Union of Haitian Patriotic and Democratic Forces (IFOPADA) "brought up the difficult perspectives for the return of a million Haitian exiles to their country."

"Mr. Duly Brutus put the number of those who would be inclined to return within a very brief period at 10,000. . . . Mr. Brutus indicated that the return of the Haitians would have to be staggered in order to avoid a catastrophic effect on the country's economic and political situation. 'There will have to be a preparation for return,' indicated IFOPADA spokesman Mr. Serge Gilles" (Feb. 22, 1986).

This way of analyzing the question mixes together several different things, because the point is first of all the unconditional right of

political exiles to return, that is, those whose political activities inside the country had led to banishment or to flight, or whose activities outside prevented them from ever returning to Haiti.

In this regard, there aren't 1 million political exiles. That is the total of all the Haitians living abroad. Their living on foreign soil is undeniably linked in one or another way to the dictatorship. But there are a number of professionals, merchants, workers of various categories, in other words emigrants who are not subject to a prohibition against entering Haiti.

It is also obvious that 1 million Haitians would not crowd the airports at the same time to return to their country.

We already know that even with new political conditions, a quite considerable segment of the community will continue to live outside Haiti. Others can also project returning over a longer term because they are not all going to abandon their businesses, their studies, their professions at a moment's notice.

So by presenting the return of the exiles as the return of a million people, these IFOPADA representatives tend to indirectly support the junta's discriminatory position by justifying the continued maintenance of the Duvalierist status quo, i.e., the reentry visa.

At present, this is the crucial point that we must absolutely focus upon. The moment one starts to present the specter of a million people who are going to descend upon Haiti, the question is presented in an entirely false light.

All evidence indicates that the IFOPADA in France wants to adopt a "moderate," conciliatory attitude toward the CNG; "Mr. Brutus," *Le Monde* reports, "hoped that negotiations could be opened on this subject with the Haitian authorities." Thus they are already moving from demands to compromise, undoubtedly with the unacknowledged hope of being included in the "good seed" that will be accepted back.

However, while political parties like the IFOPADA will only whisper when they describe themselves as "left" and would rather appear simply to be "democrats," a much less embarrassing term, they find that men like Leslie Manigat, general secretary of the RDNP (Assembly of Progressive National Democrats), are labeling them part of the most dangerous "far left."

The right, wanting at all costs to keep politics exclusively for its own benefit, does not hesitate to use the most worrisome epithets against those it intends to eliminate.

Thus, on the eve of Duvalier's fall, *El Diario de Caracas* (Feb. 2, 1986) reported some statements to the press by Leslie Manigat, from which we will quote one excerpt.

After having indicated that the RDNP had concluded a "pact for joint action" with the MOP (Worker Peasant Movement), Mr. Manigat states:

"As concerns the parties of the Marxist left,

such as the pro-Soviet United Party of Haitian Communists (PUCH) or like the two ex-Maoist organizations that now call themselves socialists and democrats, like Serge Gilles' IFOPADA or Arnold Antonin's OR-May 18, we, men of dialogue within a movement of united opening, do not on principle spurn seeking a tactical agreement in the common struggle against Duvalier. But we do so with prudence, vigilance, caution, and the guarantees necessary to avoid finding that the struggle that is waged by everyone is then stolen exclusively by the communists after the common victory, as in the, to say the least, problematic precedents of Grenada and Nicaragua, Haiti being Cuba's closest neighbor."

So, ironically, while Messrs. Brutus and Serge Gilles take "diplomatic" positions in order to temper the burning questions in the hope of being accepted on the new political chessboard, they will be strongly surprised to hear themselves so disloyally tagged as "communists" by Mr. Manigat.

In passing, it is worth noting how Manigat uses Cuba and Nicaragua as bogeymen,

preaching a "democracy à la Venezuela," not to say à la America, meaning the kind that Washington intends to impose on our country.

So in this fierce contest that is now being waged with an aggressive right and with a merciless competition unfolding within that right, and with a so-called "left" that tries its utmost to blunt the sharp edge in order to avoid the discrimination of a rather formal label, we can see why the return of the exiles might be perceived by many not as a principled question for the entire opposition outside the country in general but rather as a case of "everyone for themselves."

However, as in the Duvalier epoch, once you accept the principle of discrimination against others, you should not be surprised to be discriminated against in turn, because "communism" can serve all sorts of ends. It is in these kinds of historic circumstances that the true positions are revealed, but nothing can be done without rejecting any principle other than the return of all the Haitian political exiles to their country without any ideological discrimination. □

## Solidarity with the Haitian people!

[The following statement was adopted March 2, 1986, by the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International.

[The statement welcomes the victory of the people of Haiti last month over the hated Duvalier dictatorship. For nearly three decades, that tyrannical regime had served the interests of U.S. imperialism and of a tiny handful of wealthy Haitian families. The social and economic legacy of this imperialist oppression and brutal dictatorship has left Haiti the country with the lowest living standards, worst medical care, most malnutrition, and lowest literacy in the Americas.

[Imperialist domination has also burdened Haiti with a large foreign debt, a social malady inflicted by world capitalism on countries throughout the Caribbean and Latin America, Africa, and Asia. While the vast majority of Haitians go without food, medical care, and other of the most elementary social needs, a growing portion of the wealth produced by their labor is siphoned into the vaults of imperialist banks.

[The Haitian people are today determined to use the democratic rights that they have been fighting for for so long and at such a heavy price in order to organize and struggle to improve their living standards and social conditions. Working people around the world, above all in the imperialist countries, can add our voices to the just demands of the Haitian people by calling for an immediate cancellation of Haiti's foreign debt and the sending of massive food and medical aid to the Haitian people, with no strings attached.]

\* \* \*  
The Fourth International hails the courageous people of Haiti, who, through their mobilizations over the last months of 1985 and the first months of 1986, brought down the hated dictatorship of Jean-Claude Duvalier and its gang of murderers, the Tontons Macoutes. The toppling of this U.S.-backed dictatorship — the second-oldest in the Americas — opens for the first time in many decades the opportunity to organize open political and trade union activity by the oppressed and exploited working people of Haiti.

The new military-civilian junta in Haiti, largely handpicked by Duvalier from among his cronies just hours before his flight, is now trying to deprive the Haitian people of this hard-won opening for democratic political organization and activity.

We stand beside the Haitian workers and peasants in their demands that the torturers and murderers of the Duvalier tyranny be brought to justice and punished; that all political exiles be allowed to return to Haiti immediately; and that an end be put to all police and army attacks on popular demonstrations and meetings.

The massive U.S. military presence in the Caribbean looms as a danger to the gains that the Haitian people have conquered and are now fighting to consolidate and extend.

We demand:

No U.S. military intervention in Haiti!  
No imperialist military pressure on Haiti!  
Imperialist forces out of Haiti!



# Minnesota meatpackers' strike holds firm

*Fighting determination of union members inspires widespread solidarity*

By Steve Craine

A strike by meatpackers in Austin, Minnesota, is shaping up as one of the most important labor struggles in the United States in recent years. Its significance lies not in the number of workers involved, nor in the economic weight of the industry, but in the fight-to-win policies of the union that is leading the battle.

The 1,500 members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local P-9 are fully mobilized and determined to defeat the union-busting attacks of Geo. A. Hormel & Company, a major producer of canned meat, bacon, and sausage.

To counter the assistance the company has received from the state in the form of antiunion court rulings and a month-long intervention of National Guard troops to herd scabs into the plant, the local is relying on the strength of its own ranks. And from this position it is reaching out for support from workers and farmers throughout the country. The unionists believe they can win this fight and are refusing to subordinate their goal of victory to any other considerations.

In addition to seeking support statements and financial assistance from unions in scores of cities, Local P-9 members have organized to stop production at Hormel plants in other states and have won support from hard-pressed working farmers in the Midwest who sell their hogs to Hormel. Their own children also gave them a hand by walking out of school February 21 in support of the strike.

## Example for fight against takebacks

At issue in the strike, which began Aug. 17, 1985, is how to stop company plans to exact crippling takebacks from the union. Workers in the meatpacking industry have been especially hard hit in the past several years by the drive of employers in all U.S. industries to weaken the unions and squeeze more profits out of the work force.

In 1981 the UFCW signed a master contract with several of the country's largest packing-houses, including Hormel. Faced with company threats of layoffs and plant closings, the union officialdom accepted a two-and-a-half year wage freeze in exchange for company promises not to eliminate more jobs.

Several companies took advantage of this opening to push through further attacks on the meatpackers in 1983. That year two major firms — Wilson Foods and Rath — filed for bankruptcy in order to get out from under their UFCW contracts. Wilson Foods used bankruptcy proceedings to force through a 40 percent pay cut. Hormel followed suit in 1984 by unilaterally slashing hourly wages to \$8.25

from \$10.69, the rate frozen in the 1981 contract.

The employers' ability to freeze and even reduce wages shows how far union power has eroded in the industry.

It also illustrates the gains made by the ruling-class in its offensive against U.S. workers. Workers in virtually every sector of the economy have sacrificed hard-won union rights over the past few years in exchange for promises of job protection. In most cases the unions' top officials have refused to stand up to the bosses' demands. In many unions, the officialdom has led the way in promoting concessions as a strategy.

This is why millions of U.S. workers can identify with the struggle now being led in the meatpacking industry by the membership of UFCW Local P-9. Most U.S. workers have been, or fear being, confronted with the same onerous demands from their bosses that Hormel workers face today.

And, as in the cases of other sections of the working class, the Hormel workers are being asked to give up a lot more than wages.

## Issues in the strike

In fact, both the union and the company have stated they are ready to accept a wage settlement of \$10 per hour. This is still \$.69 less than the rate in force when the freeze went into effect more than four years ago.

A special issue of the local's paper, the *Unionist*, published just after the strike began, explained that Hormel management was out to destroy the most fundamental union rights. The union paper explained that the company's proposed contract would divide the work force by "paying new workers less than current workers for the same work" through a two-tier wage system and expanded use of temporary and part-time workers.

The *Unionist* also exposed company plans to destroy the seniority system and allow bosses to arbitrarily assign jobs and overtime.

The local is determined to resist Hormel's demand for a free hand to discipline and fire workers for "strikes, slowdowns, refusals to work, sympathy strikes, picketing, boycotting, [or] handbilling." This provision, the *Unionist* pointed out, "aside from violating a member's constitutional rights, would allow the company to fire a person for participating in political activities that have nothing to do with Hormel."

Company negotiators demanded cuts in the workers' medical insurance coverage and the complete elimination of maternity leave.

In addition, Hormel wants to end the right of injured workers to reclaim their regular jobs if

they are unable to return to work within 60 days. The *Unionist* called this demand "punitive treatment of injured workers," and noted that one-third of the workers at the Austin plant had suffered some injury on the job in 1984. Major injuries increased by 119 percent from 1981 to 1984, the *Unionist* reported.

The high rate of injuries in Austin is aggravated by the excessive production quotas demanded of the workers there — some 20 percent higher than at any other Hormel plant.

It was to defend themselves from these harsh demands that the members of Local P-9 went out on strike last August. Daily mass pickets kept the Austin plant, Hormel's largest and most modern, shut down tight for five months. During this time the company refused to negotiate. The strikers voted three times to reject the company's last prestrike proposal.

To show their willingness to negotiate, the workers have stated that they would accept a contract similar to those in place at Hormel's other plants, even though this would mean compromising on the union's original pay demand. Hormel management has ignored this offer, clearly signaling the importance it places on the "noneconomic" aspects of its union-busting package.

Hormel only attempted to reopen the plant after it had won a court injunction on December 24 limiting union pickets to three at each gate and forcing all other strike supporters to stay off city streets in a wide area around the plant.

Even with this injunction in force, union members were able to mobilize in sufficient numbers to keep scabs out until January 21 when the state National Guard was deployed to escort strikebreakers to and from the plant.

Democratic Party Governor Rudy Perpich kept 800 guardsmen on duty for 33 days, at a cost of \$1.4 million, while Hormel tried to bring its scab work force up to full strength. Despite rounding up a work force of about 900, production remains only a small portion of its usual levels, according to Local P-9 spokespeople. The National Guard troops were withdrawn from Austin on February 21.

As long as the Guard, referred to by the strikers as "Hormel's private security force," was herding strikebreakers in and out of the plant, the union shifted its tactics away from picketing at the Austin plant gate. Instead, for several weeks, the union activists turned their attention to "roving pickets" — teams of P-9 members and supporters who traveled to other Hormel plants to spread word of their strike and win support.

On February 25 the local won an important legal battle when a judge ruled that the ban on

demonstrations in city streets was unconstitutional. That part of the injunction was to be lifted on March 7.

With the National Guard gone and the most restrictive court orders lifted, the membership of the striking union is discussing whether to renew mass picketing to keep scabs out. As with other decisions throughout the course of the strike, the entire membership is involved in discussing the next steps.

#### **Union democracy in action**

Throughout the strike, P-9 members have met on a regular basis, often as frequently as every day, to plan their strike strategy. Even while the plant was shut down tight, many local members were working hard on building alliances beyond Austin itself, organizing further support for their struggle.

Hormel workers and P-9 officers took part in protest actions by family farmers in Minnesota who are fighting the banks and giant food processing monopolies for the right to make a decent living off the land. Militant farmers' organizations like Groundswell and the North American Farm Alliance returned the solidarity by participating in protest rallies when the National Guard intervened in the Hormel strike.

Striking workers also are helping to win support through a consumer boycott of Hormel products and a "corporate campaign" designed to scandalize Hormel's financial backers.

A key element of reaching out for broader support has been the "roving pickets" formed by the striking local. They have traveled to Iowa, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Texas, Georgia, and Washington state.

At some Hormel plants the roving pickets set up lines and asked the local workers not to cross. In others they merely tried to talk to their union brothers and sisters about the issues of their strike. In Georgia where antiunion "right to work" laws prohibit the closed shop (exclusive union contracts), the strikers from Austin convinced a number of nonmembers to join the union.

#### **Iowa workers locked out**

The biggest success for Local P-9's roving pickets has been at Ottumwa, Iowa, where Hormel has its second-largest plant. There the big majority of the workers refused to cross the P-9 picket line set up on January 27. Hormel retaliated by attempting to fire more than 500 Ottumwa workers who honored P-9's line. This was in clear violation of Hormel's contract with the workers there.

As in Austin, the workers in Ottumwa made their own plans and decisions for the struggle on a day-to-day basis. After more than three weeks of picketing to keep the plant closed, P-9 leaders directing the picket in Ottumwa presented a proposal for a shift in tactics to a meeting of 800 workers and their supporters on February 20. At this community solidarity meeting a plan was discussed to withdraw the P-9 picket line and organize the fired Ottumwa workers to demand their jobs back.

The next day the fired workers led a demonstration to the plant to reclaim their jobs. The

company responded by chaining the gate shut. Lynn Huston, vice-president of the striking Austin local, who had been leading the P-9 pickets in Ottumwa, told the press, "This is a lockout. Locking the employees out is a direct violation of the contract."

#### **'Scab City, Minnesota'?**

Big discussions among strikers and their supporters in Austin also accompanied the decision by high school students there to boycott classes in support of the strike. The night before the school walkout, a debate broke out in the nightly union support meeting. Although no one suggested stopping the students from carrying out their planned protest, several strikers expressed doubts about the action. One union member objected to "using the kids as a shield." Others stood up for the students' right to be "part of the history of the labor movement."

The February 21 walkout proved to be very successful, with some 350 students, including a few from the elementary grades, participating.

A high school organizer who had participated in some of the roving pickets in Iowa told reporters the students wanted to show that Austin is not "Hormel, Minnesota, or Scab City, Minnesota." The demonstration was sparked by the suspension of two Austin High School students for wearing strike-support buttons in the school. Students sporting "I love Hormel" buttons had not been disciplined.

The full participation of the rank and file in deciding on and carrying out the union's tactics has been a critical strength of this strike. As a young P-9 member, Dan Allen, explained to the *Young Socialist*, the newspaper of the Young Socialist Alliance, "When everyone gets a chance to say their piece, whether it be in agreement with the executive board or not, I feel that this is a very positive way for the union to become stronger."

Another strength of the strike is the activity of retired union members and women relatives and friends of the strikers. Since October 1984, when the company unilaterally slashed wages by 23 percent, the women have been organized in the United Support Committee.

Before the strike began, the group held informational picket lines in front of the plant to protest the wage cut. "There were things the union members weren't allowed to do," said Jan Butts, the group's president, "things that were legal for the support group to do."

During the strike the women and the retirees have organized essential support activities such as distributing donated food and helping hard-pressed families with financial problems. A union commissary feeds 800 strikers and their families.

"Hormel is trying to pull people apart," a woman striker told the *Militant*, but the support groups help the strikers and their families to "hang tough."

#### **Two views of union**

But the militancy and democracy of the Austin local has not gone over well with the top

officials of the United Food and Commercial Workers union. The struggle in Austin and the way it is being fought represent a challenge to the idea promoted by the officialdom of the UFCW and all other U.S. unions that the unions should be run by the officials for the ranks as opposed to being run and led by the entire membership.

For several months, UFCW International President William Wynn has publicly bad-mouthed the strike at Hormel, calling it "suicidal" and "destructive."

At a mid-February meeting of the AFL-CIO Executive Council, the top officials of the national union federation refused to take any action in support of the striking meatpackers. UFCW President Wynn made public a seven-page statement attacking the strike. He charged that the strikers' decision to fight for a decent contract demonstrated not the members' determination to win, but their manipulation by the local's leadership.

Members of Local P-9 are quick to explain that Wynn has his facts backward. The strength of the Hormel strike, they explain, is the involvement of the members in determining the course of their own struggle.

Wynn showed his contempt for the rank and file even more when he threatened that if the strike did not end soon, "I'll settle it."

Local P-9 President Jim Guyette, who is himself a striking Hormel worker, traveled to Bal Harbour, Florida, to present the strikers' case to the AFL-CIO Executive Council and seek its backing.

At a press conference called to answer the attacks by Wynn and other AFL-CIO officials, Guyette spoke for many union members around the country when he said, "A lot of workers would like to sit before the AFL-CIO leaders and say, 'Do you realize what the steelworkers are going through, the auto workers, the secretaries, the hotel workers?'"

Responding to the charge by the UFCW's meatpacking division director that the Hormel strike is a "colossal failure," Guyette stated, "We feel confident that we can win the situation with the support of the labor movement who is not down here in Bal Harbour out on the golf courses or in the jewelry shops."

Strike solidarity in that labor movement is growing and spreading. Support rallies have been held or are scheduled for many cities across the country, and contributions to the local's "Adopt a P-9 Family" program are pouring in. A longshoremen's local in California pledged \$13,000 a month for three months to help needy families in Austin. Contributions have come from more than 850 unions and individuals. At a rally of 500 in Detroit, Michigan, unionists from 15 unions contributed \$1,700, and their locals made pledges ranging from \$100 to \$2,000.

Guyette and other striking Hormel workers have addressed many of these solidarity meetings, helping spread the experience of Local P-9 as broadly as possible. As a promotional leaflet for a March 14 rally in New York City put it, "Meet the labor heroes of 1986!" □



# Possible boycott of Seoul Olympics

*Talks continue on North Korea's co-hosting proposal*

## By Will Reissner

Some progress has been reported in talks aimed at averting a major boycott of the 1988 Summer Olympic Games, now scheduled to take place in Seoul, South Korea.

Representatives of the Olympic committees of North and South Korea met for two days in Lausanne, Switzerland, in early January to discuss North Korea's proposal that the games be co-hosted and that events take place on both sides of the demilitarized zone that has divided the Korean Peninsula since 1953.

The Olympic Committee of the Democratic People's Republic of [North] Korea has also proposed that a joint team from the two Korean states participate in the sporting competitions under one flag.

The vice-chairman of North Korea's Olympic Committee, Chin Chung Guk, told reporters in Switzerland that "some progress has been made" in the talks with his South Korean counterpart on January 8 and 9. The meetings were chaired by Juan Antonio Samaranch, president of the International Olympic Committee.

But the North Korean sports official cautioned that "we have not reached a final agreement." Initial talks between the two Korean Olympic committees were held in October 1985. Another meeting is scheduled for June.

Unless an agreement on sharing Olympic events is reached, the 1988 games are likely to be the fourth consecutive Summer Olympics marked by a large-scale boycott.

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

In 1980, U.S. President Carter's administration organized a boycott of the Moscow games, and in 1984 the Soviet government led a boycott of the Los Angeles games.

Many figures in the Olympic movement doubt that the competitions could survive another significant boycott.

North Korea has strenuously objected to the International Olympic Committee's 1981 decision to hold the 1988 games in South Korea. This move, North Korean officials argue, helps to perpetuate the division of the Korean Peninsula that has existed since the end of the Korean War in 1953.

For the South Korean military regime, however, hosting the 1988 Olympics is a key element of its drive to win international recognition for the permanent existence of "two Koreas."

The government in Seoul hopes that teams from many countries that do not now have diplomatic relations with South Korea will participate in the 1988 Olympics, and that their participation, as well as the international attention focused on Seoul during the Olympics, will

pave the way for eventual diplomatic recognition.

Seoul's campaign for a permanent division of Korea also includes the call for simultaneous membership of North and South Korea in the United Nations, where both governments

## Castro: Cuba ready to boycott Olympics

In the Main Report to the Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party, Fidel Castro warned that Cuba is ready to boycott the 1988 Olympics in Seoul.

Unless the games are co-hosted by North Korea and South Korea, the Cuban leader stated on February 4, "Cuba's participation in the games is unthinkable." Castro's statement was greeted by prolonged applause from the delegates.

"There can be no doubt that the selection of Seoul to host the forthcoming Olympic Games," Castro stated, "was the fruit of U.S. influence, pressure, and machinations to disregard the other part of the country altogether and ignore the fact that that nation is cruelly and artificially divided, that a bloody war was waged there not long ago in which hundreds of thousands of citizens of several countries lost their lives, that South Korea is a U.S. military base harboring one of the most horrifying and repressive puppet states in the world."

He added that "Cuba supports the talks between the North and the South aimed at sharing the venue of the Olympic Games as the only way to seek an honorable solution to the existing situation."

"For Cuba," Castro told the party congress, "the glory of being loyal to its principles is worth more than the gold of all the Olympic medals, more than all the gold in the world."

Castro added a blistering attack on the way the Olympic movement is organized. "The Olympic movement," he said, "has made a shameful and disgusting move toward professional sports, succumbing to the promise of millions in business prospects that have nothing to do with the spirit of sports."

In February 1985 the International Olympic Committee (IOC) voted to allow professional athletes to take part in ice hockey, soccer, and tennis competitions.

Castro charged that "the Olympic movement — born at the height of colonialism — was and is a movement led by the rich

countries and the old colonial centers, a movement that has little use for Third World countries, and no interest in their possibilities for developing sports or hosting the Games."

Europe, with 38 National Olympic Committees, has 41 representatives on the IOC. Asia and Africa, which between them have 78 national committees, have only 31 members on the IOC.

"In the midst of the poverty afflicting billions of human beings, it is outrageous," said Castro, "to see the richest cities in Europe vying for the venue of the 1992 Olympic Games. The capitals of the poor countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America cannot even dream of it."

In his speech, Castro called on "the countries of the socialist community — which have most of the best athletes in the world — and the most prestigious and dedicated countries of the Third World" to join forces to turn the Olympics around.

Castro's comments at the Communist Party congress follow earlier scathing attacks on the elitist way the Olympics are run. In March 1985 Castro stated, "We don't need counts, marquesses, and millionaires to tell us what to do in the field of sports." He suggested that the Olympics be taken over by the United Nations.

At that time he also bitterly noted that the \$200 million in profits from the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics were being used exclusively to build sports facilities in California.

"The granting of \$200 million to the richest state in the richest country of the world shows the weaknesses and anachronistic ideas of the Olympic Committee," Castro said.

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

now have observer missions.

The North Korean government, in contrast, opposes any move that solidifies the present division of Korea and its people, and remains committed to the goal of Korea's reunification.

Since 1980 North Korean officials have proposed the establishment of a federal structure joining the two Korean states. Under this proposal, the capitalist system would remain in force in South Korea, while North Korea would retain its noncapitalist social system.

The North Korean government in Pyongyang argues that awarding the Olympic games to one part of the divided Korean nation strengthens the divisions, while a joint hosting agreement and a joint team would be a step toward Korea's reunification.

The Pyongyang government had originally proposed that the games be moved from South Korea to Yugoslavia, a leading member of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries.

Later it endorsed the co-hosting proposal, which was first raised by Cuban President Fidel Castro. In a Nov. 29, 1984, letter to IOC chairman Samaranch, Castro wrote: "We consider Seoul not to have been the best choice of venue for the 24th Games. The Korean nation has been artificially and arbitrarily divided into two. . . .

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

Warning that the Olympics cannot "withstand many more" crises, the Cuban leader suggested that the 1988 games "be shared by the two parts of Korea." He added that this proposal "is my strictly personal opinion" and had not been raised with either of the Korean governments.

Castro's proposal was formally endorsed by the North Korean government in July 1985, when North Korea's vice-premier, Chong Jun Gi, called for co-hosting of the games under the name "Korea Olympiad" or "Pyongyang-Seoul, Korea, Olympiad." Chong also called for half the events to take place in each capital and for a joint Korean team to participate in the events.

The North Korean official pointed out that "socialist countries and many nonaligned and Third World countries strongly opposed the hosting of the Olympic Games in Seoul." He warned that if the games take place as originally scheduled, these countries "will have no alternative but to neglect the Olympiad."

The North Korean co-hosting proposal has been endorsed by a number of world leaders. The growing pressures on the International Olympic Committee led to its sponsoring talks in Switzerland between the two Korean Olympic committees.

According to an Associated Press report, the January 8-9 meeting led to agreement "in principle" that one team cycling event will begin in Seoul and end in Pyongyang, and another will begin in Pyongyang and end in Seoul.

While this move accepts the co-hosting con-

cept in principle and is a step toward resolving the problem, it remains far short of the North Korean proposal for full co-hosting.

At the First General Assembly of the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa, which met in Ethiopia in December, the head of the Ethiopian Olympic Committee expressed support for the North Korean co-hosting proposal and warned that if the International Olympic Committee does not reconsider its decision to award the games exclusively to Seoul, a "fourth crisis" would be created in the Olympic movement.

In a December 16 message from Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega to North Korean President Kim Il Sung, Ortega affirmed the Nicaraguan government's support for the co-hosting proposal.

## South Korea

# Regime unleashes repression

## Students, politicians hit by crackdown

By Will Reissner

Since the beginning of the year, Gen. Chun Doo Hwan's regime in South Korea has been lashing out at its opponents.

Targets have included student protesters, opposition political figures, and organizers of a petition campaign for direct presidential elections in 1988.

In January a South Korean court sentenced two student leaders to death on charges of organizing campus demonstrations and spying for North Korea. The two were among 15 protest organizers arrested in late 1985. Two other students received life sentences, while the remaining 11 were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 2 to 15 years.

The two students who received the death sentences were charged with having begun their contacts with North Korean agents while studying in the United States.

The Chun regime has also moved against opposition members of the National Assembly. On January 15 seven members of the New Korea Democratic Party's parliamentary fraction were indicted on charges of assault and battery and obstructing officials in the performance of their duties.

If found guilty, the opposition legislators could be sentenced to prison, stripped of their seats in the National Assembly, and barred from running in future elections.

The charges stemmed from a fracas in the National Assembly in early December, when the ruling party rammed through the 1986 budget bill in just two minutes, without any debate.

Ten more New Korea Democratic Party (NKDP) members are under investigation from that same incident and could be indicted on the same charges.

Lee Min Woo, president of the NKDP,

Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Kapitsa said on January 8 that his government opposes Seoul as the location of the 1988 games, but added that Soviet athletes would take part in the competitions if the games were jointly staged by North and South Korea.

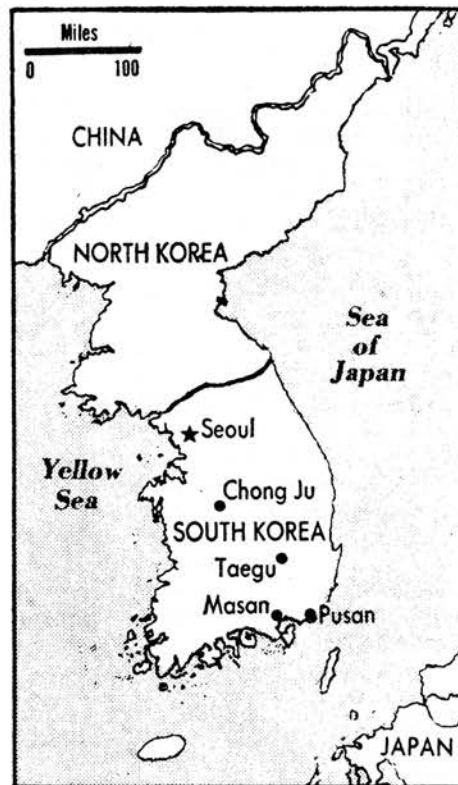
The call for co-hosting the 1988 games was also endorsed by a meeting of representatives of the sports organizations of the noncapitalist countries, who gathered in Hanoi, Vietnam, in November.

West German Olympic Committee Chairman Willi Daume acknowledged at a January 27 press conference that "the 1988 Olympic Games may miscarry due to political factors," and warned that the future of the Olympics looks gloomy. □

charged that the Chun government is trying to provoke the party into street demonstrations that could serve as a further pretext to the crackdown.

The South Korean government has also repressed opposition figures who began circulating a petition on February 12 calling for direct elections for the presidency in 1988.

Under the constitution promulgated by Chun





Doo Hwan after he took power in 1980, presidential elections take place in an electoral college, without campaigning by individual candidates.

The organizers of the petitioning drive had set a goal of collecting 10 million signatures.

In a New Year's speech, General Chun had demanded that the opposition drop the idea of direct presidential elections until after the 1988 Seoul Olympics. A new president is to be chosen earlier that year through the electoral college.

Police moved to seal the offices of the New Korea Democratic Party and the Council for the Promotion of Democracy on February 13 in an attempt to crush the petition campaign.

In the days that followed, dozens of opposition figures were arrested. According to a report in the February 18 *New York Times*, throughout South Korea more than 200 people were being held for questioning about circulation of the petition.

A number of prominent opposition leaders were placed under house arrest in connection with the petitioning. Police also raided 129 college campuses around the country on February 15, searching for materials related to the petition campaign. Police report that 449 students were arrested in the first 40 days of 1986.

On February 16 several hundred police surrounded the house of Kim Dae Jung, a leading opposition figure, who had been placed under house arrest on February 14. Kim's telephone was cut off, and police prevented visitors from approaching the house.

Kim Dae Jung has been placed under house arrest nine times, for periods of up to one month, since his return from exile in the United States last year. He is prohibited by the Chun regime from taking part in any political activity.

South Korean Justice Minister Kim Sung Ky warned on February 15 that the petition drive "is nothing but concealed violence and is an act against the parliamentary democratic system." Authorities in Seoul have warned that those circulating the petition will be severely punished.

The justice minister added that since Kim Dae Jung is still under a suspended 20-year jail sentence, he could be returned to prison for his activity in support of direct elections.

Four other prominent leaders of the petition campaign were released from house arrest on February 15, one day after the U.S. State Department expressed concern about the repressive moves.

A State Department spokesman had described the crackdown on petition circulators as "inconsistent with basic democratic principles."

The Chun regime, however, was not deterred. On February 20, more than 1,000 police surrounded the NKDP's offices to prevent a meeting called to discuss the petition campaign. The regime also placed 275 party members, including 80 members of the National Assembly, under house arrest.

Officials also prohibited all student demonstrations supporting the petition drive. □

## North Korean troops on alert

*Move provoked by U.S.—South Korea war games*

In response to the February 10 start of U.S.—South Korean "Team Spirit '86" military maneuvers, North Korea's military forces have been ordered to assume "a full combat posture," according to a report by the Supreme Command of the Korean People's Army.

The annual "Team Spirit" exercises in South Korea are the largest war games carried out anywhere in the world by U.S. and allied forces. The maneuvers include practice invasions of North Korea by air, land, and sea.

In addition to involving many of the 40,000 U.S. troops permanently stationed in South Korea, the "Team Spirit '86" exercise is mobilizing U.S. troops stationed elsewhere in the Pacific, in Hawaii, and in the mainland United States. More than 200,000 U.S. and South Korean military personnel will take part in the 10-week exercise.

This year's maneuvers feature live-fire simulated beach landings and river crossings, mock tank battles, artillery barrages, and naval operations.

The maneuvers also involve nuclear missile forces and nuclear-armed B-52 bombers. U.S. troops stationed in South Korea have some 1,000 nuclear weapons in their regular arsenal.

On January 11 the North Korean government had called on the South Korean regime and the U.S. government to join it in a com-

plete suspension of all military maneuvers on the Korean Peninsula.

A statement by the Foreign Ministry of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea announced that North Korea would "stop all military exercises during the period of the north-south dialogue" that had been taking place for nearly a year and a half between the two Korean states.

Urging a reciprocal move by Seoul and Washington, the North Korean statement noted that suspension of military exercises would bring about "a positive change in the relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America" and could dispel mistrust and build mutual confidence.

Since September 1984, talks between the North and South Korean governments have been taking place on a variety of issues. But in response to the start of the "Team Spirit '86" maneuvers, North Korea suspended its participation in North-South meetings.

Such talks could not be held while one side was "levelling arms at the other side's chest," stated Li In Ho, chargé d'affaires of the North Korean observer mission to the United Nations.

Li added that when "Team Spirit '86" is over "and favorable conditions [are] created for dialogue, we will resume talks." □

## South African workers back U.S. unionists

Black workers at a U.S.-owned plant in South Africa walked off their jobs and demonstrated on February 28 in solidarity with several hundred unionists in the United States threatened by a plant closing.

The 300 strikers, employed at a Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing (3M) plant in Elandsfontein, near Johannesburg, are members of the Commercial, Catering, and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA). Their union is a key affiliate of the new Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), a half-million-member union federation launched in late 1985.

They organized their action in support of the 350 workers at 3M's plant in Freehold, New Jersey, who face the loss of their jobs from the company's plans to close the plant.

As the South African unionists marched around the 3M compound in Elandsfontein, dancing, chanting slogans, and singing union and freedom songs, many of them wore T-shirts emblazoned with the slogans, "Don't abandon Freehold, my hometown" and "No retreat, no surrender." The slogans are taken from songs by popular U.S. singer Bruce Springsteen, who is from Freehold and who

supports the campaign to keep the New Jersey plant open.

The T-shirts also bore the emblem of Local 8-760 of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union, which represents the workers at the Freehold plant. The union had sent the T-shirts to the 3M workers in South Africa last December, seeking their solidarity.

"They're just workers, the same as us," CCAWUSA member Bafana Dhlamine, said of the Freehold workers. "We've suffered the same things."

Sidney Skosana told a reporter that this demonstration was an example of mutual solidarity, since the 3M workers in Freehold had "supported us before."

Yet another worker, noting that many people in the United States had contributed money for African famine victims in a campaign known as "U.S.A. for Africa," said, "Our slogan this time is Africa for the U.S.A."

The South African unionists also directed some of their anger against the apartheid regime, tearing down a South African flag outside the company offices. Company officials said they would dock the workers' wages for their half-day stoppage. □

# Peasants implement new land reform

Organize for First National Peasant Congress in April

By Harvey McArthur

EL CRUCERO — The windswept estate called "Las Nubes," perched on top of a mountain in this coffee-growing region south of Managua, used to belong to the wife of Anastasio Somoza, Nicaragua's U.S.-backed dictator until July 1979.

She used Las Nubes as a weekend country home. In the basement you can still see the iron bars Somoza installed to make a jail cell for prisoners.

Today, Las Nubes is a workers' training center. The jail cell serves as a pool room, but the bars remain as a grim reminder of the repression suffered under the Somoza regime.

On January 22 and 23, some 400 full-time staff members of the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG) held a national assembly here. They met to prepare proposals for the First National Peasant Congress, which will be held in Managua April 25-26.

"This is a historic day," UNAG President Daniel Núñez told the staff members. "For the first time, we are gathered here to evaluate our work and the problems we face so that we, and our leaders, will know the difficulties faced by the peasantry throughout our country.

"I think that organizing this first peasant congress is vital to make UNAG better known and so that there will be no doubt about the strength of the revolutionary Nicaraguan peasants," he said.

## 1986 Agrarian Reform Law

The UNAG assembly occurred two weeks after the Nicaraguan workers' and peasants' government decreed a new Agrarian Reform Law.\* The new law removes essentially all limits on the size of private landholdings that can be expropriated by the government. Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega explained that the measure was necessary to meet the Sandinista National Liberation Front's (FSLN) historic commitment to give land to all landless peasants.

Government officials estimate that 20 to 30 percent of Nicaraguan peasants have no land or insufficient land to make a living on. Many still work as sharecroppers or tenant farmers. While some peasants lost their farms through the U.S.-backed mercenary war, thousands of others simply have never benefited from the land reform program started in 1981.

During 1985 thousands of peasants organized marches and rallies to publicize their

\*The full text of Nicaragua's revised Agrarian Reform Law, which went into effect on January 11, was published in the March 10 issue of *Intercontinental Press*.



Bill Greter/IP

Peasants receive land titles and guns in San Marcos, Jan. 11, 1986. Banner reads: "Let no peasant be left without land."

plight and to demand that the government take land from rich landlords and distribute it to landless peasants.

Implementing the new law will be a major step forward, deepening the revolution in the countryside. UNAG in particular will have new opportunities to win poor peasants to its ranks, strengthening their political weight within the organization.

At the meeting here, the delegates reaffirmed a proposal from the UNAG national board to recruit 20,000 new members by the time of the peasant congress in April.

UNAG now has 124,000 affiliated members. Together they produce about 65 percent of the coffee, 68 percent of the meat, 60 percent of the cotton, 83 percent of the maize, 98 percent of the beans, and 100 percent of the vegetables grown in Nicaragua. UNAG members include peasants working their own land, whether in cooperatives or as individuals; farmers who own medium-sized plots and hire labor; and some large, capitalist landowners.

## Preparing for National Peasant Congress

The opening session of the assembly here heard a report from Núñez on behalf of the UNAG national board. The staff workers then met in workshops to discuss the report and documents with more detailed proposals for UNAG's work in the coming period. These ideas were later presented to local meetings of peasants throughout the country during February. After this more general discussion, the proposals will be finalized for presentation to the peasant congress in April.

A set of rules was presented at the start of the assembly. A tight schedule was set for meals and the workshops and plenary sessions.

Everyone had to be in their sleeping quarters by 9:30 p.m.; no drinking was allowed during the two-day meeting.

Since there were 60 or more participants in each workshop, each was limited to two contributions of three minutes each to ensure everyone a chance to take part.

Most of the meeting was closed to the press, but I was able to attend the opening and closing sessions, which Núñez and Commander of the Revolution Víctor Tirado addressed.

## Defending the poor peasants

Núñez's comments on the new Agrarian Reform Law focused on who should be affected by the new expropriations.

"We have defined a principle of our organization," said Núñez. "We are going to rise up, let us say, in insurrection against the big landowners with idle lands and those who are proimperialist. Why? So that the new land reform law will begin where [the old one] left off. It must expropriate the big landlords whose farms are idle."

A major theme in Núñez's speeches was the need for UNAG to be more aggressive in taking up the problems of the peasants and in defending their interests — especially those of the poorest peasants.

"UNAG must be the eyes, the heart, and the unflagging force in the interests of the poorest peasants," he told the assembly. "An UNAG cadre who gets comfortable, who sits back when a peasant comes to him seeking a solution to a problem and does not solve the problem, cannot remain in UNAG."

Núñez also discussed the composition of UNAG. Nicaragua still has a large number of



wealthy private growers and ranchers. They own 11 percent of all farm land. Most are organized in associations affiliated with the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP), an organization of bankers, bosses, and landowners opposed to the revolution. COSEP has close ties to the counterrevolutionary (*contra*) terrorists.

UNAG has followed a policy of trying to recruit those wealthy landlords who agree to maintain production, which is needed for the economic development of the country. As long as they maintain production and do not actively aid the counterrevolution, they are encouraged to join UNAG. They are known as "patriotic producers."

This policy of collaborating with "patriotic producers" aims at stimulating production of foods and export crops and weakening the base of the COSEP associations. UNAG made an important advance last year when the cotton growers in the Chinandega region, previously affiliated to COSEP, decided to join UNAG.

Núñez told me that about one-third of these large landowners are now members of UNAG. They are a minority of UNAG members.

In his opening remarks to the assembly, on January 22, Núñez stated that he was tired of critics who claim UNAG represents the interests of the rich landlords.

"We want to make clear once and for all that our principal strength is in the cooperatives and among the small producers," he said. "Who here is a big producer, or the son of some big producer? The great majority here left their small plot, farm, or lands to become professional cadres of this organization."

#### Proposals for the peasant congress

Núñez also described a new UNAG project to establish its own rural supply company. He explained that most trade in the countryside is still in the hands of small and medium traders and importers and that it is difficult and expensive for the peasants to obtain the supplies they need.

UNAG has received financial support from the governments of the Netherlands and other European countries to start this supply network. This will help guarantee peasants the materials they need to produce and live, according to Núñez. He also reported that the supply company will help win peasant support for UNAG, as it will demonstrate that UNAG can meet their needs.

One of the purposes of the big demonstration of peasants planned for April is to emphasize the importance of this project.

Núñez proposed that UNAG should adopt a position against incentive payments in dollars. Now many farmers who produce export crops receive part of their payment from the Nicaraguan government in dollars. This supplies a few dollars to each of many farmers, and the big landlords get the most. Núñez argued that all payments should be made in córdobas, the Nicaraguan currency, and that the government should keep all dollars earned from exports to use them for road improvements, imports of heavy farm machinery, and other projects that

will benefit the entire country.

This fits in with UNAG's plans to take more responsibility for the interests of all the peasants. "We will not just give the peasant a plot of land," said Núñez. "We must also teach him to read and write so he can understand the tasks facing us."

He urged UNAG cadres to use their expertise and commitment to serve "as the eyes and ears of the revolution" in the countryside and to watch the functioning of the state-owned agricultural enterprises to make sure their administrators are honest and efficient.

#### FSLN on UNAG's responsibilities

The final speaker at the assembly was Commander Víctor Tirado, speaking for the FSLN National Directorate.

Tirado set the discussion in the context of the U.S.-backed war against Nicaragua. Nine hundred UNAG members have been murdered by the *contra* mercenaries, and 250,000 peasants have been driven off their land by the war.

"You must be on top of events occurring throughout the world," Tirado told the delegates, "especially in a country where there are two buildings, one called the White House and the other the Pentagon. [This] is the country that is attacking us, that wants to eliminate this revolution. You have to analyze this document [prepared for the congress] in light of the aggression, in light of the intervention."

Tirado spoke at length about the role of UNAG in the revolution: "[Núñez] stated that UNAG is an anti-imperialist, democratic, revolutionary, and Sandinista organization. I

think that is correct.

"You discussed the alliance of the workers and peasants," he added. "This is a very important concept. On the one hand, within the peasant sector, there is a law called the Agrarian Reform Law. The workers must give complete support to this law. This demonstrates an alliance between the worker and peasant.

"What support does the peasant bring to this alliance?" asked Tirado. "One is supporting the national system of wages [the government-set wage rates for city and rural workers]. There the peasants give backing to the workers' movement."

Tirado urged UNAG to promote "revolutionary transformations in education, health, transportation, roads, etc. Here, UNAG is not only defending the peasants. It is defending the workers as well," he explained.

"Then, there are other aspects" of the alliance, he said. "Such as confronting speculators and seeing to it that supplies reach their proper destination, that the workers' movement create products that can reach the peasants at a fair price and vice-versa, and that the peasant movement produce basic foods and get them to the workers' movement at a fair price.

"We could add another aspect of the alliance," said Tirado, "the fundamental aspect of this revolution, which consists in maintaining the sovereignty and dignity [of Nicaragua], consolidating our independence, and fighting against the aggression. The great alliance between the workers and peasants is also manifested here." □

## 'IP' readers in 24 Canadian cities

From Toronto in Ontario, Canada, a reader who recently renewed his subscription to *Intercontinental Press* for another year wrote: "I look forward to having continuing reports on the unfolding world socialist revolution; to learn from, and apply the lessons from, struggles of the past and present."

A subscriber from Vancouver, British Columbia, on the Canadian west coast, in a note regarding a difficulty with the post office, thanked us "for your marvelous paper!!!"

These two subscribers are among 145 *IP* readers in 24 Canadian cities. Most subscribe; others buy their copies at newsstands or bookstores operated by supporters of the biweekly newspapers *Socialist Voice* and *Lutte Ouvrière*. These two publications reflect the views of the Revolutionary Workers League, the Canadian section of the Fourth International.

Since *World Outlook*, *IP*'s predecessor, started publishing in 1963, we've had a regular core of readers in Canada. And we've been grateful for their letters of encouragement and appreciation, especially

their subscription renewals. We urge our Canadian supporters to continue keeping in touch and to let us know about any good experiences in promoting *IP* and expanding its circulation.

We have tried to keep all of our readers around the world up to date on the latest political developments in Canada. And while there is room for improvement, we think we've done fairly well.

Last year, for example, we carried 19 articles on a wide range of activities and events in Canada, including the abortion rights struggle, the language fight in Quebec, labor strikes, the December elections in Quebec, and Central American and Caribbean solidarity actions.

This is just another example that shows the value of *IP*'s coverage. We urge readers to help us continue through financial contributions. The income that we receive from our subscriptions and bookstore sales does not cover the cost of putting out *IP*.

So please send whatever you can afford to: *Intercontinental Press*, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

# An antiwar protest that's off the mark

*Two letters on Nicaragua undermine opposition to contra war*

By Doug Jenness

We are reprinting in this issue two letters on Nicaragua that appeared in the February 13 issue of *The New York Review of Books*, a biweekly literary tabloid published in New York.

The first letter was circulated by the Campaign for Peace and Democracy/East and West. It was signed by 84 professors, writers, actors, politicians, union officials, clergy, and peace activists — most of them from the United States and Eastern Europe. Politically, the signers include liberals, pacifists, and socialists. The letter appeared earlier as a paid advertisement in the Dec. 1, 1985, *New York Times* under the heading, "Independent voices, East and West, speak out against Reagan's Nicaragua policy."

The second letter, sent to Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega on Dec. 1, 1985, was signed by 10 civil rights activists from Czechoslovakia. Eight of them also signed the letter that appeared in the *Times* and *The New York Review of Books*. These Czechoslovak dissidents are active in Charter 77, a group that began in 1977 around the submission of a petition demanding that the Czech government guarantee democratic rights. Some of the organizers were jailed as a result of their work around the petition, as well as for other human rights efforts.

Charter 77 encompasses individuals holding a wide spectrum of political views, from Catholics to those, like Petr Uhl, who consider themselves revolutionary socialists. Uhl has served two prison terms for a total of nine years since the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968.

According to a biographical sketch of Uhl written by his friend Jaroslav Suk, the civil rights activist became interested in Marxism in the 1960s in France where "he became a revolutionary Marxist and came close to the Fourth International."<sup>1</sup>

## Undercuts effective protest

The signers of the two letters in *The New York Review of Books* criticize the Reagan administration's intervention in Nicaragua. That these figures are speaking out publicly against U.S. policy in Nicaragua is positive. Additional voices demanding a halt to Washington's mercenary war help the forces who are working to organize mass protest actions to defend Nicaragua's democratic right to self-determination.

Despite their criticism of Reagan administration policy, however, the general thrust of

both letters actually undermines an effective fight against Washington's intervention in Central America.

The first letter, for example, likens U.S. government policy toward Nicaragua to that of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and Eastern Europe.

Why is the Soviet Union dragged into what is purported to be a protest against Reagan's Nicaragua policy? Moscow is not menacing Nicaragua; it isn't financing bands of counter-revolutionary terrorists there.

By introducing Soviet policy in other parts of the world into the statement, fire is deflected from the real target: the U.S. government. It is *Washington's* war in Central America that is at issue.

## Lets Reagan off the hook

Moreover, there is another problem with injecting Soviet policy in Afghanistan into a declaration whose stated aim is to advance the fight against U.S. war policies in Nicaragua. The Reagan administration itself has linked the issue of Soviet troops in Afghanistan to its campaign for open military aid to the Nicaraguan contras. The Nicaraguan mercenaries, Reagan claims, have a common bond with the counterrevolutionaries who are attempting to overthrow the government of Afghanistan. These reactionary bands from both countries are hailed by U.S. government officials as "freedom fighters."

But the 84 "independent voices" don't say a word about the *contras* waging war against the Afghan government or the millions of dollars of aid Washington is pumping to them. Their silence on this question, while they loudly attack Soviet policy in Afghanistan, lets the U.S. government off the hook. It helps Washington claim moral legitimacy for its reactionary Afghan policy.

The signers have fallen into the trap of attempting to prove their credibility to government officials and "public opinion" by showing that they are "even-handed," that they criticize both Washington and Moscow. By making an anti-Soviet disclaimer, they hope to have a bigger political impact, especially in an atmosphere where some Reagan administration officials are insinuating that opponents of aiding the Nicaraguan contras are "soft" on communism.

The real effect of such appeals, however, is to reinforce the anticommunist justifications used by Washington to demand more financing for reactionary forces in both Afghanistan and Nicaragua.

As a political protest, the statement is so shot full of holes that it collapses at the first touch. Truly uncompromising opponents of

Washington's Nicaragua policies don't bend at the knee when confronted with Washington's anti-Soviet demagoguery. Rather, they tell the unvarnished truth about Washington's contra war and unconditionally demand that the Nicaraguan people be allowed to determine their own affairs in peace.

## Appeal to Ortega

The political flaws in the letter to Ortega from the 10 Charter 77 activists are even more damaging than those in the statement of the 84. The letter's main aim was to protest alleged abuses of democratic rights in Nicaragua. The cause of human emancipation in that country, the signers wrote, "is being seriously jeopardized from within."

Two examples are cited — the "regrettable" censorship of Radio Católica and the Oct. 15, 1985, declaration of emergency curtailing certain democratic liberties.

Regarding Radio Católica, the letter cites a Czech-language broadcast from the CIA-run Voice of America. This is scarcely the most objective and fair-minded source to rely on for information about Nicaragua or any place else. The Czechoslovaks make no reference to any attempts to solicit the viewpoint of the Nicaraguan government on this incident. Apparently none were made.

Since the Czechoslovak activists sent their letter, Radio Católica has been closed down. So instead of just looking at the single incident cited in their letters, let's take up more broadly the government's relations with the radio station.

Radio Católica was an important voice of the Catholic church hierarchy in Nicaragua. It was run by Father Bismark Carballo, an aide to Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo. Obando, the contras brag, has more than anyone else in Nicaragua become their "spiritual guide" and a symbol of "resistance."

The top officialdom of the Catholic church in Nicaragua is the main organizing center for counterrevolution inside the country, and Radio Católica has for a long time played a key role in this activity.

In the face of counterrevolutionary military assaults on the Nicaraguan people, Radio Católica repeatedly violated the law by broadcasting appeals for draft evasion. At the same time, it refused to air certain broadcasts by the government, as all radio stations in Nicaragua are required to do.

Radio remains the principal means that government officials have for communicating to the bulk of the population. Informing the Nicaraguan people of government decisions as speedily as possible has added importance under current war conditions.

1. "Petr Uhl: a special target of the bureaucracy," *Intercontinental Press*, Nov. 16, 1981.



When Carballo, as a deliberate provocation, refused to broadcast President Ortega's end-of-the-year speech, the station was closed down January 2. These are the facts on the alleged abuse of Radio Católica's freedom of speech.

Moreover, the government's action was not a move toward suppressing freedom of religious expression as the big-business press (and most assuredly Voice of America) has charged.

No restrictions whatsoever have been placed on the rights of Nicaraguans to practice their religion. Nor have any clergy been arrested or tossed in jail. Moreover, radio and television time has been allowed for church officials to make statements and conduct religious services.

These facts on the government's relations with Radio Católica could easily have been verified by the Czechoslovak rights fighters before they launched into their criticism of the Sandinista leaders.<sup>2</sup>

### Nicaragua's declaration of emergency

The 10 signers of the letter to Ortega also complain that the state of emergency, which empowers the government to restrict certain democratic rights if necessary for defense, "negates all the Revolution's ideals." It could lead, they say, to the gradual setting up of a "bureaucratic dictatorship, a new system of repression and manipulation with empty slogans and full jails."

Let's stop here and catch our breath, before our critics from Czechoslovakia really get carried away! Let's look at some facts.

One fact is that Nicaragua has been living under some form of emergency decrees for most of the time since 1982. Emergency measures were partially suspended in 1984 during the presidential election campaign and reactivated again in October 1985. The most recent declaration gives the government broader powers than before in taking steps to limit the right to habeas corpus, the right to assembly, the right to strike, and so forth.

Sandinista officials have explained that the government in Managua took these steps because of the needs of the defense effort against the U.S.-backed contras. The scope of this contra war is immense. In proportion to its population, there have been more war-related deaths in Nicaragua in the past five years than the United States suffered during World War II. A staggering 50 percent of the country's national budget is allocated to the military defense effort.

Whether or not the emergency declaration is justified can be determined only by its necessity for defending the revolution in the context of this costly war imposed by Washington. That is the sole basis on which to judge whether or not the political price involved in curtailing certain liberties — and a price is always paid for such measures — has been justified.

2. The interview with Sandinista leader Tomás Borge that appears on page 184 of this issue outlines the Nicaraguan government's policy on church-state relations and on Radio Católica.



Cindy Jaquith/IP

Sandinistas are making big advances on Atlantic Coast in political discussion around autonomy plan.

In a wartime situation, administrative measures like those taken by the Sandinistas are sometimes necessary when a revolutionary government must be able to act decisively, yet still faces the task of fully winning and consolidating support for its policies in sections of the working class, peasantry, and other sectors of the population.

In practice, however, the emergency decrees have given the government far greater powers than it has actually used. The daily lives of the overwhelming majority of people in Nicaragua have scarcely been affected by these measures so far.

### Advances on Atlantic Coast

It is striking that the Czechoslovak human rights activists omit any reference to the big advances being made on the Atlantic Coast to win support from the indigenous peoples through political persuasion. In this region, government officials acknowledge, damaging errors were initially made in trying to draw the Miskitos and other Atlantic Coast peoples into the revolution.

A tendency to rely on an administrative approach alienated many residents of the region and opened the door to the contras getting a hearing and some support there, despite the progress in education, health, and other areas since the 1979 overthrow of the capitalist government.

With the announcement of its autonomy plan last year, the government shifted its orientation and launched a political discussion in which it is making big gains. The Sandinistas, of course, are able to do this only because of the significant military blows they have dealt to the contras and their military capacity to keep them out of the Atlantic Coast region.<sup>3</sup>

3. See "The hard lessons of the Atlantic Coast; Interview with FSLN leader Tomás Borge," *Intercontinental Press*, Feb. 24, 1986.

In sounding the alarm about nascent totalitarianism in Nicaragua, the Charter 77 activists also take a swipe at revolutionary Cuba, where, they allege, this evil is already well established.

Referring to repression with "empty slogans and full jails," they assert there are many in Latin America "who point to the 'positive' side of just such a development in Cuba."

They fail to name those who think it's a good thing that Cuba has "empty slogans and full jails." They can't produce any names for the simple reason that Cuba doesn't have a repressive system with jails full of political prisoners.

The burden is on the Czechoslovak activists to produce evidence that Cuba has filled its jails with people who have expressed dissident political views. And it must be something more trustworthy than a report from Voice of America.

Cuban President Fidel Castro has repeatedly explained to U.S. and West European reporters that the only "political" prisoners in Cuban jails are less than 200 confined for attempted sabotage, assassination, bombings, and similar criminal actions. No one is being held in Cuban jails for expressing their ideas or practicing their religion.

The sharp public criticisms made by the 10 Czechoslovak human rights fighters against the revolutionary governments of Nicaragua and Cuba are especially shameful considering that some among them consider themselves revolutionary socialists.

### Democracy and internationalism

The Czechoslovak human rights fighters note that the conditions in Nicaragua are quite different from those in Czechoslovakia. Living standards are immeasurably lower in Nicaragua, and these difficulties are compounded by Washington's economic embargo and the con-

tra war. The letter from the Czechoslovaks states that the Czech government "ensures its citizens a general level of prosperity and a fair consumption of material and cultural commodities" that are superior to conditions in the semicolonial world. Despite this recognition, however, they don't urge the Czech government to substantially beef up its material aid to Nicaragua.

Aid from Czechoslovakia and other East European workers' states has been helpful to Nicaragua, but a big increase could do even more to ease the pressure on working people and strengthen their ability to make further social and economic advances.

Instead of their sermon to Ortega, these Czechoslovak political activists would do better to call on the government in Prague to step up its aid to the Nicaraguan workers and peasants. This would be a very effective political action to help increase internationalist understanding and solidarity among workers in their own country — a task that the Czech government, despite its pretensions to proletarian internationalism, defaults on.

Such appeals are fully interconnected with the struggle for democratic rights in Czechoslovakia itself. A central objective of working people in fighting to establish their democratic rule in Czechoslovakia will be not only to use the power of their state to help improve their own conditions, but to support the struggles of working people internationally. This should have been ABC for those signers of the letter to Ortega who consider themselves proletarian internationalists.

#### The pressure mounts

Last year Charter 77 activists responded to an appeal by 154 writers, academics, and politicians from 10 West European countries. After the appeal appeared in the May 8, 1985, Paris daily *Le Monde*, 10 Czechoslovak activists, along with others, added their names.

In contrast to the statement that appeared in the *New York Times* and the *New York Review of Books*, the earlier, European appeal was exclusively devoted to condemning Washington's intervention in Nicaragua. It pointed to the social and democratic rights Nicaraguans enjoy today compared with the repression under Anastasio Somoza's hated tyranny. And it noted the fairness of Nicaragua's November 1984 elections.

After the Czechoslovak signatories reported in the Charter 77 publication *Informace o Charte 77* that they had signed the appeal, they received a letter from the New York-based Council of Free Czechoslovakia sharply condemning this action. A September 15 letter from this anticommunist and proimperialist organization seductively explained, "We have followed Charter 77's activities since its inception closely and with admiration. . . . By making your documents public in our *Czechoslovak Newsletter* and by including their contents into our notes to governments and political circles in the free world, we have evidenced our positive attitude toward your program."

The reactionary advocates of a "free Czechoslovakia" — that is, a Czechoslovakia whose capitalists are once again "free" to grow wealthy off the labor of workers and farmers — then went on to say why they thought it was wrong to oppose aid for the Nicaraguan contras.

"We wish to remind you," they wrote, "that in Nicaragua a process is under way similar to that which took place in Czechoslovakia on the eve of the communist putsch. In Nicaragua, too, the Ortega people speak about a specific Nicaraguan revolution, about social justice, religious freedom, a free opposition, and so on. We all know too well what happened to the specific Czechoslovak road to socialism. The same process led to the installation of the communist dictatorship in Cuba. The Sandinistas are willing to make any concessions on their way to total power except one: under no circumstances would they give up their 'leadership role.'"

## DOCUMENTS

# Two open letters on Nicaragua

[The following two letters appeared together under the heading "Protests on Nicaragua" in the February 13 issue of the *New York Review of Books*. Joanne Landy and Steven Becker were identified as codirectors of the Campaign for Peace and Democracy/East and West. The bracketed insertion is by the *New York Review of Books*.]

### 'Third way' proposed against interventions

To the Editors:

We think your readers will be interested in the following statement opposing the Reagan administration's policy in Nicaragua. Circulated by the Campaign for Peace and Democracy/East and West, it has been signed by leading peace, labor, social justice, religious, and cultural figures from the United States, Western Europe, and the Third World. For the first time they are joined in their opposition to U.S. interventionism by a large number of activists and writers from the Eastern bloc, many of whom have been persecuted in their own countries for work in independent peace and human rights movements.

Joanne Landy, Steven Becker

As opponents of the Cold War East and West, we protest the Reagan Administration's escalating war on Nicaragua. The nature of the Nicaraguan regime is not the issue. We defend the democratic right of every nation to self-determination in complete freedom from superpower control, whether that domination is justified by the Brezhnev doctrine in Eastern Europe and Afghanistan, or by Reagan's claims of U.S. special interests in Central

The letter added, "please tell your friends who signed the appeal that they should carefully ponder over their act and ask themselves whether their attitude does not lend support to the Soviet penetration of the world. This is what matters in Nicaragua."

How much this letter influenced the thinking of the Charter 77 members is not known, but there is no question that Washington's anti-communist propaganda barrage against Nicaragua has brought intense pressure to bear on many liberals and radicals. Under the fierce blast of this slander campaign, many liberal journalists and politicians have wilted. While many of them remain critical of aid to the contras, they echo the Reagan administration's attacks on the Nicaraguan government, and thereby run counter to the fight against Washington's war policies.

It is this chorus that the Charter 77 activists have unfortunately added their voices to. Hopefully they will reconsider their stand. □

America and the Caribbean. The application of force against weaker nations blocks democratic social and political change, tightens the superpowers' grip on their respective blocs and spheres of influence, and fuels the arms race with catastrophic consequences for all of us.

To escape from the current global impasse we must find a Third Way in which democratic activists and movements from around the world make common cause to build an alternative to both blocs. We are raising our voices in unison against this ominous heightening of the Cold War, and demand an immediate end to the United States' growing intervention in Nicaragua. We challenge the U.S. to set an example of noninterventionism, and we ask the Soviet Union to do the same in Eastern Europe and Afghanistan.

#### United States

Edward Asner, Steven M. Becker, Angie Berryman, Rabbi Balfour Brickner, Frank Brodhead, David R. Brower, Noam Chomsky, Dr. Charlie Clements, Gail Daneker, Richard Deats, Rep. Ronald V. Dellums, Tom DeLuca, Adrian DeWind, Daniel Ellsberg, Richard Falk, W.H. & Carol Ferry, Allen Ginsberg, Todd Gitlin, Victor Gotbaum, Stephen Jay Gould, Lee Grant, A. Winton Jackson, Charlie King, Charles Komanoff, Jeri Laber, Joanne Landy, Penny Lernoux, Grace Paley, Paul Robeson, Jr., Bernard Sanders, George Soros, Rose Styron, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., James Weinstein.

#### Czechoslovakia

Jiri Dienstbier, journalist, served prison term for civil rights activities; Jiri Hajek, former foreign minister; Eva Kanturkova, writer; Lubos Kohout, former professor, now works as laborer; Vaclav Maly, Catholic priest

*Intercontinental Press*



banned by State from exercising pastoral duties; Milos Rejchrt, Protestant clergyman; Jaroslav Sabata, former university lecturer, formerly on Communist Party Central Committee, imprisoned eight years for civil rights work; Anna Sabatova, activist, served two and a half years in prison; Zdena Tomin, exiled novelist; Petr Uhl, teacher, now a stoker, nine years in prison.

#### East Germany

Barbel Bohley, Women for Peace; Werner Fischer, independent peace activist; Ralf Hirsch, independent peace activist; Roland Jahn, independent peace activist, forcibly expelled in 1982; Gerd Poppe, independent peace activist; Ulrike Poppe, Women for Peace; Lutz Rathenow, author and playwright, imprisoned for publishing a book abroad; Rudiger Rosenthal, independent peace activist.

#### Hungary

Gabor Demszky, founder "AB" samizdat publishers; Istvan Eorsi, writer, poet, and playwright; Gyorgy Konrad, novelist and essayist; Gyorgy Petri, poet; Laszlo Rajk, samizdat publisher, son of L. Rajk, former Communist minister executed in show trial.

#### Poland

Jacek Czaputowicz, Polish independent peace movement "Wolnosc i Pokoj" ("Freedom and Peace"); Jan Jozef Lipski, Solidarnosc activist, member of KOR (Workers Defense Committee), imprisoned under martial law.

#### USSR

Sergei & Natasha Batovrin, founding members independent Soviet peace movement, now in New York City; Marya & Vladimir Fleishgaker, founding members independent Soviet peace movement, now in New York City; Lev Kopelev, writer, living in West Germany.

#### Yugoslavia

Kosta Cavoski, professor, Belgrade; Dobrica Cosik, Chair, Belgrade Committee for Defense of Freedom of Thought and Public Expression; Mahailo Markovic, professor, member Belgrade Committee for Defense of Freedom of Thought and Public Expression, editor *Praxis International*; Milan Nikolic, sociologist, tried for paper written at Brandeis University.

#### Other countries

Isabel Allende, Chilean author; Father Ernesto Balducci, Testimonianze, Italy; Wim Bartels, International Secretary, Dutch Interchurch Peace Council (IKV); Simone de Beauvoir; Ariel Dorfman, Chilean author; Mient-Jan Faber, General Secretary, Dutch Interchurch Peace Council; Carlos Fuentes, Mexican author; Dan Gallin, General Secretary, International Union of Food and Allied Workers, Geneva; Günter Grass, German writer; Mary Kaldor, *END Journal*; Petra Kelly, Green Party, West Germany; Rajni Kothari, Director, Peace and Global Transformation Program, India; Sylvie Mantrant, CODENE (Comité pour le Desarmement Nucleaire en Europe), France; E.P. and Dorothy

Thompson, European Nuclear Disarmament (END).

*Organizations listed for identification purposes only.*

## Czechoslovak activists criticize Sandinistas

Open Letter to the President of the Republic of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega

Dear Sir:

According to a Voice of America broadcast on November 1, 1985 (the Czech language 6:00 a.m. transmission), the Nicaraguan government ordered a two-day suspension of broadcasting by the independent radio station Radio Católica so as to punish the station for having transmitted a recent sermon by the Bishop of Managua which included two sentences which Voice of America claimed were the cause of the Government's ban. The first sentence states that freedom is a great gift from God to mankind, while the second maintains that it is wrong and against the will of God to take away one's neighbor's freedom.

We are signatories of the Appeal by European intellectuals "Nicaragua has the right to peace" (see *Le Monde* of May 8, 1985), the text of which has been sent, along with a list of Czechoslovak citizens who appended their signatures to it last May, to the Nicaraguan Embassy in Prague. Some of us are also signatories of a declaration signed jointly by people in the USA and Eastern Europe [which was published in the *New York Times* on December 1, 1985, and appears above]. Both of these texts call for noninterference in the affairs of Nicaragua and specifically for a halt to the sending of material assistance to the anti-Sandinista armed resistance. In varying degrees the texts express support for the courageous people of your country; they also refer to national independence and the right of nations to decide their fate in all independence. With the knowledge we have of the situation in Latin America, including Nicaragua, we can well appreciate that the question of human rights can and must assume a different aspect in a country suffering from material poverty which is furthermore the victim of an economic embargo and military incursions, in contrast to a country like Czechoslovakia, for instance, whose superficially well-functioning economy ensures its citizens a general level of prosperity and a fair consumption of material and cultural commodities — at least, from the point of view of people in the Third World.

The fact that activists from different citizens' campaigns here insist so strongly on the implementation of political, civil, and cultural rights, and that they fight for a more democratically run society as well as their society's greater independence from the State and the State's greater independence from the Soviet Union, etc., might viewed in this way seem strangely eccentric. We could of course understand such a misconception of our demands, but there is no way we can reconcile ourselves

to it, since the fight for human dignity and freedom, the fight for social justice, and the fight for equal rights of peoples and nations are one and the same struggle: the emancipatory battles in Eastern Europe and Latin America are part and parcel alike of that struggle. And it is out of our feelings of solidarity with the oppressed that, on the occasion of this regrettable action against Radio Católica, we wish to express our grave concern over developments in Nicaragua in the field of human rights and regarding the future of democracy in your country.

The recent declaration of a state of emergency, as a result of which numerous personal liberties and rights, including the right to strike, have been abolished or curtailed, cannot be justified in our view solely in terms of the military incursion by anti-Sandinista units operating from Honduras and Costa Rica. The counterrevolutionary onslaught will either be defeated by the free supporters of the Revolution or the Revolution will perish. In such a case it does not seem to matter too much if its defeat will be caused by outside intervention or an internal development which negates all the Revolution's ideals and which, with the so-called aim of "saving the Revolution," gradually sets up a bureaucratic dictatorship, a new system of repression and manipulation with empty slogans and full jails. There are many who are able to find something positive even in such a development. In Latin America, for instance, there are those who point to the "positive" side of just such a development in Cuba.

However, we live on a different part of the planet, and our purpose here is to convey to you the historical experience of Europe and particularly of its Eastern half, whose lamentable situation (and not only in the field of human rights and political democracy, but in economic terms, too!) is especially glaring in comparison with Western Europe. It is paradoxical that in countries that have carried out national democratic and social revolutions in the name of the rights of working people, of the proletariat, and of the free development of every member of society these rights are fewer (that is if they exist at all) than in countries where those revolutions have not occurred. These are the questions which strike us when we contemplate the future of the Sandinista Revolution. We protested against American support for the military attacks on your Revolution because we consider that U.S. policy on Nicaragua is detrimental to the cause of human emancipation. But now that we feel that this cause is being seriously jeopardized from within, it is to you that we address our sincere concern.

Jiri Dienstbier, Zuzana Dienstbierova,  
Ladislav Hejdanek, Eva Kanturkova,  
Lubos Kohout, Vaclav Maly,  
Milos Rejchrt, Jaroslav Sabata,  
Anna Sabatova, Jr., Petr Uhl

Sent via the Nicaraguan Embassy in Prague on December 1, 1985.

NB. This is an open letter by the above signatories and not a Charter 77 document.

# Church-state relations in Nicaragua

*Tomás Borge explains facts behind shutting down of Radio Católica*

[The following interview appeared in the January 16 issue of *Barricada Internacional*, the international weekly published by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in Managua. This translation is based on the text published in the English-language edition. Footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

Catholics make up some 50 percent of the Nicaraguan population while another 40 percent belong to one of the 46 Protestant denominations established here. Does religious persecution exist in this Christian country?

Yes, is the answer given by the interior minister, Commander Tomás Borge. There is fierce religious persecution by the Catholic church hierarchy against the progressive clergy, he states.

In a long interview granted by Borge to journalist Gregorio Selsler, the Sandinista National Directorate member explained that there is no conflict between the church and the revolutionary state in Nicaragua. However, there are certain individuals in the Catholic hierarchy who supported a pro-Somoza political approach during the years of the Somoza-family dictatorship and who today continue to subscribe to the same political position.

Nicaraguan priests enjoy complete freedom of thought; "what we principally demand is that [the church hierarchy] abide by the laws, because there cannot be two governing powers in the country," states Borge.

The complete interview was published in the Mexican daily *El Día* during the first week of January. In it Borge analyzes the figure of Cardinal Miguel Obando, relations with the other Catholic bishops, and the shutdown of Radio Católica that took place in that period, as well as other aspects of national policy.

Below we reprint that part of the interview referring to the Catholic church.

*Question. Cardinal Obando's uninterrupted marathon of trips, homilies, speeches, and Masses since his return from Rome and his suggestive stop in Miami following his investiture as cardinal is noteworthy.*

*Do you recall any other Nicaraguan member of the church hierarchy to have been such an enthusiastic traveler?*

*Answer.* Since his brief stay in Miami, Obando has embarked on an openly political campaign in every corner of the country. Obando never would have been cardinal, and it wouldn't have occurred to anyone to name him cardinal, had it not been for the revolutionary triumph. It was not the pope who named him, but rather the triumph of the Sandinista People's Revolution.



TOMÁS BORGE

He is cardinal for obvious political reasons: to strengthen a foreign political strategy. He returned to carry it out with plenipotentiary powers and guarantees, going from town to town, church to church, seeking applause, support, and followers. He is not doing this for the benefit of the gospel or religion, but for a political plan that fully coincides with Reagan's.

Anybody with an ounce of intelligence knows that, and the one who knows it best is Obando himself. He has surrounded himself with a number of priests who are in communion with him, but who do not confess their sins.

*Q. Is the Catholic clergy mostly made up of Nicaraguans?*

A. No, and this is another interesting phenomenon. The majority of the clergy are foreigners; I am not able to give the exact figures regarding a total of approximately 200 clergymen. There are Spaniards, Italians, North Americans. . . .

In the Protestant sects and denominations, most of the clergy is Nicaraguan, including the Moravian pastors, who in the past were nearly all Europeans — mostly Germans.

There is the case of Bishop Pablo Vega of Chontales, vice-president of the Bishops' Conference. In his diocese all the priests, except for himself, are foreigners. In other dioceses, the proportion of foreign priests is smaller. If I

am not mistaken, I think there are about 65 foreign Catholic priests.

Recently Bishop Vega has shown in his speeches and in his attitude a perceptible difference with respect to Cardinal Obando. He has said that "we can and we should hold conversations, maintaining a climate of mutual respect and mutual cooperation." I believe I recall him admitting that there is a strong resistance of "the economically powerful classes" in Latin America to any change, and frequently he refers to the Medellín<sup>1</sup> proposals. . . . This is not the cardinal's attitude.

Bishop Vega has a more realistic and open attitude, with greater frankness and clarity of positions. This does not mean to say that we agree on everything, but at least there is dialogue and good will on his part with respect to his points of view that differ from ours.

*Q. Will those priests whose residence visas were canceled be allowed to return?<sup>2</sup>*

A. They are being replaced by Nicaraguan seminarians who are being ordained, and now there are more than 10 of these young priests. I would like to clarify once again that those 10 were not expelled from the country. We simply took away their residence status as we would for any other foreigner who violates the law. Any government has that authority. They are not going to be allowed to return, nor are we going to permit any other foreign priests to enter Nicaragua.

*Q. The FDN (Nicaraguan Democratic Force) — through its "15 de Septiembre" radio station, which operates from Honduras with CIA financing and the Suazo Cordova regime's authorization — capitalizes on all of Obando's speeches and appearances with unflinching, mathematical precision.*

*The cardinal's image is manipulated and he is made out to be a symbol of the "resistance" as Reagan and the CIA use the term. FDN leader [Adolfo] Calero calls him the "spiritual guide of the Nicaraguan people and the FDN."*

*Is the cardinal aware of and in agreement with this manipulation?*

A. It is not a question of manipulation, since they use half-truths, lies, and slanders.

1. A 1968 Latin American bishops' meeting in Medellín, Colombia, addressed the repressive political and economic conditions in Latin America and predicted "uprisings of despair unless this suffering is alleviated."

2. On July 9, 1984, residency permits were revoked for 10 priests from Spain, Italy, Costa Rica, Canada, and Panama.



But, yes, it's true that he is a symbol. Obando is the contra's spiritual guide, and he was aware of this even before his trip to Rome and Miami. The agent Calero is only giving voice to the objective reality.

*Q. What happened to the "abstention" and "neutrality" in political matters so strongly called for by John Paul II?*

A. Mere chance is not what has permitted an institution such as the church with its long, complicated history of 2,000 years to remain unscathed despite its Borgia popes and so many others who belie its supposedly transcendental and metaphysical character.

There used to be the Borgias and now there are the Obandos. And you had that bishop in Granada, Canuto Reyes, who blessed the weapons of the soldiers and marines fighting against Sandino. And these men were killing Nicaraguan patriots who were perhaps more sincerely Catholic than Reyes.

I don't recall which saint made the statement that "the road to hell is paved with bishops, archbishops, and cardinals." I am not trying to predict where Obando might end up — I am not a soothsayer — but I do think that in the history of the church there were many bishops and cardinals who thought and acted as he does.

*Q. I have here in hand a very different reference from Cardinal Obando. On March 25, 1980, immediately after the murder of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero in San Salvador, a Mass was celebrated here in Managua in which prelates from all Latin America participated.*

*On that occasion, Obando actually said: "Monsignor Romero knew that it is a sin to remain silent in the face of injustice or to wash one's hands as did Pilate." And he went on to say: "The sinners are the assassins, the oppressors, and those who do not speak out as Monsignor Romero did." What do these words suggest to you?*

A. I'm not familiar with them because I was out of Nicaragua at the time and did not attend that Mass. Therefore I did not have the privilege of agreeing with that particular wisdom of Obando, which I would like him to apply to the situation in Nicaragua at the present time.

Because here, when we speak of murderers, oppressors, and injustice, there are certain persons whom the cardinal chooses to pass over, and this is not consistent with his statements in 1980.

*Q. There are historical examples of this as well in the country. Father Agustín Vigil was a friend and kind of "spiritual guide" for the U.S. invaders of 1855. . . .*

A. And in Somoza's time a number of priests served as chaplains in the National Guard. Some of them are still here today.

I have spoken to them, and they remain as faithful to Somoza as they are to the FDN and



CARDINAL MIGUEL OBANDO Y BRAVO

the counterrevolutionaries now.

I did not find any who are with the revolution. I seem to recall that Archbishop Lezcano personally crowned one of the tyrant's daughters as "Miss Nicaragua" and another archbishop consecrated Somoza as "prince of the church."

*Q. That was Lezcano too?*

A. I don't know who the bishop was then. I think it was my uncle, Monsignor Borge, a bishop and a Somocista as well. Bishop Borge took part in naming Somoza as "prince of the church."

Even Obando himself — and this is a little-known fact — flirted with Somoza. And Somoza flirted with him to the point that, when Obando was named bishop, Somoza gave him a gift of a Mercedes Benz. The fact was revealed a few days later by Carlos Mejía Godoy.<sup>3</sup> Obando became furious and telephoned Carlos to insult him and challenge him to a fight. But because of the public scandal he was obligated to return the gift to Somoza 10 days later.

He always maintained good relations with Somoza. It was only at the very end when he saw which way the wind was blowing and that the defeat was coming that he broke with Somoza. But at the same time he never accepted the Sandinista Front.

*Q. Yet he boasts of his role as mediator in the December 1974 taking of José María Castillo's house, and he claims that he saved lives*

3. A well-known poet and songwriter.

*of the Sandinistas.<sup>4</sup>*

A. He was a mediator and a mediator does not take sides. A mediator is supposed to be a neutral person. At the time when the incident commanded worldwide attention, he agreed to mediate because it gave him a lot of prestige, and he is a man with a calling for the limelight.

*Q. Commander Borge, we would like to know your opinion on Father Bismark Carballo's statements to the effect that the non-compliance with a government order that resulted in an official sanction against [Radio Católica] was due to "involuntary human error." According to his declarations to the AP news agency, this sanction was a "punitive response" to the church, because of the pope's recent letter to the bishops.*

A. I believe that there was downright bad faith in both cases. The pope's letter did not contain any instructions or reasons that would have obligated Carballo to refuse to participate in the national radio hookup to broadcast the presidential end-of-year message. The pope's letter did not say that he should disregard a government order.

Nor do we believe that it is correct to call it "human error," because in addition to this radio station's lengthy history of repeated violations of the radio broadcasting law, in this case it was given ample advance notice to plug into the radio hookup.

As in all the other cases, we are completely certain that this was a deliberate action. Perhaps they did not think that we would react in the manner we did this time, because our practice has been to demonstrate a great deal of flexibility and tolerance.

*Q. Do you think that this was a deliberate provocation?*

A. Yes, and a premeditated challenge. This was not the first case, although we hope that it will be the last, because that would represent a concrete step toward improving our relations with the church hierarchy.

What we principally demand is that it abide by the laws, because there cannot be two governing powers in the country. There is only one government here — the revolutionary, constitutional one — and as such, the government's decisions must be complied with, regardless of the fact that they may be appealed.

Radio Católica has adopted a defiant stance and has repeatedly failed to abide by the decisions of the Media Office. This is not human error, nor is it involuntary. This would be taking us for fools, and we do not underestimate them; we know how clever they are. . . .

*Q. Not long ago, charges were made that a*

4. On Dec. 27, 1974, FSLN commandos occupied Somoza-associate Castillo's home during a Christmas party, seizing many well-connected hostages. In exchange for their release, the Somoza regime freed all political prisoners, paid a \$1 million ransom, and allowed publication of a political manifesto in the press.

certain government action violated the freedom of the press.

A. Yes, indeed. And again Carballo played a leading role in that incident after he announced that he would publish a magazine by the name of *Iglesia*. He was informed that he would have to fill out the appropriate legal application forms for its publication.

But Carballo refused to do so, arguing that to apply for the permit would be tantamount to accepting that the government decide whether or not the magazine should be published.

This is a spurious argument. It was understood that we were going to approve its publication within the framework of the nation's laws, and he took it for granted that this would be our response. So this was yet another case of a challenge added to a provocation.

Was it also "human error" that Carballo refused to hand in his application in order to oblige us to deny him a publishing permit?<sup>5</sup> This is a priest who allows himself many "human errors." On many occasions he has broadcast programs that we had prohibited. He went ahead and broadcast them with the intention that we impose sanctions on him so that he could be regarded by world opinion as a victim of "religious persecution."

We never sanctioned him — not only to avoid playing his game, but also in the hope that it really was a case of human error. But Carballo has accumulated an impressive series of "human errors" during his lifetime. However, this case of fundamental disrespect for the legal norms went beyond all tolerable limits.

*Q. Can the accusations of alleged religious persecution in the country be considered as just one more facet of the United States' campaign against Nicaragua?*

A. It is true that intense religious persecution does exist in our country, but it is carried out by the church hierarchy against the progressive priests. Several days ago it was disclosed that Father Uriel Molina had been asked by the church to leave Nicaragua. Molina is Nicaraguan. He has lived in Nicaragua his whole life, all his family is here, and he has always exercised his priesthood in this country, where the majority of priests are foreigners. And he is one of the few native priests whom they are asking to go somewhere else.

This is a blatant case of religious persecution, and it is not coming from the Nicaraguan government.

Apart from having canceled the residency visas of 10 foreign priests who violated the law, we have never imprisoned any clergy nor prevented them from saying Mass — there are over 2,000 Masses celebrated weekly in Nicaragua — nor have we hindered the practice of religion in any way.

Priests are assassinated in El Salvador, as well as in Honduras and Chile, and no one says a word.

5. Most copies of the first issue of *Iglesia* were confiscated on Oct. 12, 1985.



Bill Greffer/IP

Bismark Carballo: Claims "human errors."

But here, where priests who break the law are not even arrested, we are portrayed to the world as religious persecutors. And since we do not do this and since we put up as much as possible with these violations and do not imprison or assassinate priests, this itself is suspect. Our respect for religion and religious persons must surely be aimed at "keeping up appearances," and "dressing in sheep's clothing," so that the world will not say that we persecute religion and kill priests. Consequently, even this respect of ours is depicted as a political tactic.

*Q. What are the concrete forms that religious persecution takes?*

A. There is a political controversy between Cardinal Miguel Obando and the revolution. It is not a religious contradiction or dispute. We have never questioned this prelate's theology, nor have we prevented him from saying Mass or preaching a homily. However, throughout the world they have distorted an incident to say that we forbade him to say Mass on television.

Here, television is a government organ of information, and the government has the right to broadcast what it considers within its authority. But this is not to say that if I decided to broadcast all my political speeches on television, that they have to do so.

In fact, many statements Obando makes on his political tours through the country are aired on television.

In the particular case of his Mass, we proposed that all the country's bishops should have the same access to television, but he did not want to share the right with the other bishops, assuming a discriminatory attitude. We proposed that other high-ranking priests and even some simple priests have the same opportunity, but he didn't want that. This is how the accusation that we forbade him to televise his Mass came about.

*Q. Would it be correct to say that the government has decided to assume the international cost resulting from the manipulation of these incidents, which are obviously provoked*

*in order to add propaganda ammunition to the Reagan administration's psychological war against Nicaragua?*

A. We must choose between the principle of exercising the authority that must govern all orderly countries and the political cost of a government measure. All over the world, radio stations and newspapers are closed down or suspended, and nothing happens. Even in the democratic paradise of Costa Rica, when an airplane happened to fire a rocket at a local radio station, this was reason enough to shut down the station.<sup>6</sup> And no one in the world seemed alarmed.

On the other hand, any measure that we take becomes the basis for a campaign to discredit our revolution. No one becomes alarmed when our radio space is illegally penetrated by radio stations from Honduras and Costa Rica and by the Voice of America transmitter over which aggression is launched from outside the country.

Thus, we would have to choose among these campaigns, which will continue even though we do not shut down Radio Católica or do anything to defend ourselves from these provocations and challenges. There will continue to be campaigns about supposed religious persecution in Nicaragua, because they are part of the plans for domestic and external aggression drawn up by the United States. □

6. Costa Rican authorities closed Radio Noticias del Continente in 1981. The shortwave station provided news of struggles against military dictatorships in Latin America and information on the revolutionary struggle in El Salvador. The station had been attacked by what was thought to be a Salvadoran military plane.

## World Congress resolutions available from Pathfinder

A special issue of *International Viewpoint* containing documents of the January–February 1985 World Congress of the Fourth International is now available through Pathfinder Press in New York.

The 110-page magazine includes the English-language texts of the five major resolutions adopted by the congress last year. These resolutions are: "The world political situation and the tasks of the Fourth International," "The present stage of building the Fourth International," "Revolution and counterrevolution in Poland," "Dictatorship of the proletariat and socialist democracy," and "The Central American revolution."

*International Viewpoint* is a fortnightly magazine published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. The special World Congress issue can be ordered from IV at 2 Rue Richard Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France.

In North America the document is available from Pathfinder Press, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014 for US\$8.00 plus \$.75 for postage and handling.



# Michael Banda's '27 reasons'

*WRP leader calls for reexamination of entire history of Fourth International*

[The following two articles appeared in the February 7 and February 15 issues respectively of *Workers Press*, published in London.

[The article by Michael Banda was headlined: "Twenty-seven reasons why the International Committee should be buried forthwith and the Fourth International built." Bill Hunter's article, appearing a week later, was titled, "Mike Banda and the bad men theory of history."

[*Workers Press* is put out by the wing of the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) in Britain that broke with Gerry Healy, the longtime cult figure of the WRP, in October 1985. Before the split the WRP was one of the largest organizations in Britain claiming adherence to Trotskyism.

[The split was precipitated by Healy's expulsion from the party on October 19 and resulted in two organizations both calling themselves the WRP. Healy, Alex Mitchell, Sheila Torrance, and Corin and Vanessa Redgrave are central leaders of one group, which is publishing a newspaper called *News Line*.

[The majority of the WRP leadership, including Michael Banda, Cliff Slaughter, Bill Hunter, and Dave Good, are now producing *Workers Press*.

[For an account of this split, see "Shattering of a British sect: the politics behind the Workers Revolutionary Party's degeneration," by Doug Jenness, in the Dec. 2, 1985, issue of *Intercontinental Press*.

[Leaders of the WRP (*Workers Press*) took a giant step in their break with Healyite policy in February by publicly repudiating the agent-baiting campaign of the WRP and its U.S. followers in the Workers League against the Fourth International and the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. The WRP and Workers League had charged that leaders of the Fourth International and the SWP are U.S. and Soviet police agents.

[Articles and documents relating to this repudiation appeared in the February 7 issue of *Workers Press*. Most of them were reprinted in the March 10 issue of *IP*, along with an article, "Giant blow to agent-baiting campaign: 'Workers Press' repudiates Healy's big lie," by Doug Jenness.

[The leadership of the Workers League had originally aligned itself with the wing of the WRP that broke with Healy. But the denunciation of the agent-baiting campaign provoked WL National Secretary David North to break this alignment and engineer a split by a minority in the *Workers Press* group, which is now organized around the *Young Socialist* newspaper.

[At the same time, the WRP (*Workers Press*) has launched a public discussion on the

political and organizational degeneration of the WRP and the entire history of the Fourth International and its place in the international workers' movement today. The articles reprinted below are two contributions to that discussion by leaders of the group supporting *Workers Press*.

[An editorial note in the February 7 issue stated that Banda's article had been submitted three weeks earlier and "has not yet been discussed on the Central Committee of the Party. It is part of the public discussion that we are holding on the history of our movement."

[The appearance of Hunter's article indicates that the public discussion will also include the presentation of diverse views existing among leaders of the WRP (*Workers Press*) themselves.

[Banda joined the British Trotskyist movement in the early 1950s and was a central leader of the WRP and its predecessor the Socialist Labour League. In 1976 he succeeded Healy as general secretary of the WRP.

[Hunter was a leading member of the Revolutionary Communist Party, the British section of the Fourth International in the 1940s. The RCP dissolved in 1949 when it entered the Labour Party and its supporters came to be known as the "Club." This remained its informal name until 1959, when the Socialist Labour League was launched.

[Hunter and Banda, along with Healy, broke with the Fourth International in 1963. The International had split 10 years earlier, with one wing calling itself the International Secretariat, and the other the International Committee. The majority of the British section, led by Healy, supported the IC, as did the majority of the SWP in the United States. (The SWP, due to reactionary legislation, however, is barred from affiliation to the Fourth International.)

[When reunification of the International took place in 1963, a minority of the International Committee, headed by Healy and French leader Pierre Lambert, refused to take part. The Healyite minority in a few countries maintained rump organizations retaining the name International Committee.

[The footnotes to the following articles are by *IP*.]

\* \* \*

1. The bureaucratic, unprincipled, and disgraceful action of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) in suspending the Workers Revolutionary Party for Healy's past collaboration with bourgeois national movements and the cover-up of the execution of the Iraqi communists is not an accident.

It compels all honest revolutionaries, and in

particular all those who fought the liquidationism and counterrevolutionary policies of Healy & Co and exposed and expelled him from the WRP, to reexamine the entire history of the ICFI as well as the history of the FI since Trotsky's death.

2. The history of the Fourth International (FI) has proved to be far more complex, tortuous, contradictory, and protracted than the history of the previous internationals, leaving little or no room for complacent analogies and facile comparisons and defying even the prognosis of Leon Trotsky about the rapid growth of the FI following upon the Second World War.

Contrary to Trotsky, what we have seen is an uninterrupted series of crises, splits, betrayals, treachery, stagnation, and confusion — a process characterised by a total lack of strategy and perspective, a manifest failure in theory and practice to grasp the nature of the epoch and concretise and enrich Trotskyism as contemporary Marxism.

3. What we have seen — and the action of the IC is only another and pertinent example — is an empirical and subjective idealist groping by self-styled groups of so-called Trotskyists for a means of short-circuiting the historical process, of looking for surrogates for the working class *a la* Pablo, of searching after the elusive spectre of the "natural Marxist" *a la* Cannon, or replacing the theory of dialectical materialism with the reactionary subjective-idealist methodology and epistemology of Healy.

With it went the substitution of a self-perpetuating bureaucratic clique for the democratic-centralist party and replacing Trotsky's conception of the FI by coteries of petty-bourgeois dilettantes, charlatans, and fantasists masquerading as a "world party."

It is certainly no accident — in fact it proceeds logically and practically from this very conception of the IC in 1953 — that not a single section of the IC — and this includes the Workers League of the United States — at any time in the last 32 years has been able to elaborate a viable perspective for the working class. Why?

4. To ask the question is to answer it. It must be stated emphatically, nay, categorically, that the FI was proclaimed but never built. Not even in Trotsky's time was there a cadre capable of sustaining his monumental work. Not surprisingly he spent the last few years conflicting with almost every group in the FI — the Chinese, the Indochinese, the French, and above all the Socialist Workers Party — in particular with J.P. Cannon in the famous discussion on the capitulation of the SWP to Left-Rooseveltianism and their refusal

to consider the U.S. Communist Party as a legitimate part of the working class.

This capitulation — let us recollect — was preceded by Cannon's previous disgusting accommodation to Norman Thomas and the U.S. Socialist Party in 1934–1935. In Britain the most active group — the Workers International League — refused for four years to affiliate to the FI, while the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India collapsed ignominiously in the post-war period and disappeared without a trace after entry into the Socialist Party of India.

5. The murder of Trotsky and the war, far from solving the unfinished problems and accelerating the development of the FI, in fact had the opposite effect. It accelerated the disorientation of cadres — a process which was undoubtedly assisted by the repression of the Nazis and the criminal activities of the Stalinists and Social Democrats in the occupation.

### Betrayal

However in the U.S. there were no such extenuating factors, and here the greatest betrayal of Trotskyism took place, in the Minneapolis Trial. The strategy and tactics of revolutionary defeatism were shamelessly abandoned by Cannon, Hansen, and Novack in favour of a semi-defencist policy, and this act of criminal betrayal was endorsed by the International Executive Committee (IEC) and International Secretariat (IS) and challenged only by G. Munis.

Cannon's political cowardice and capitulation to the backward sections of the U.S. working class became the pattern for the WIL—Revolutionary Communist Party in Britain, and his book *Socialism on Trial*<sup>1</sup> became the gospel for world Trotskyists and the basis for further revisions of Trotskyism after the war.

6. The enormous influence of the SWP in the FI proved fatal in more ways than one. It encouraged during the war the adoption of centrist policies by many sections paralleling that of the SWP and with it — an adaptation to centrist parties and groups in Europe. Healy, a close adherent and admirer of Cannon, actually left the WIL and proposed unity with Fenner (now Lord) Brockway. In Europe the sections abstained from participating in the Resistance and played little or no part in the struggle to project a revolutionary defeatist line.

7. The disorientation of the war was followed by even greater confusion with its termination. It is an understatement that the entire FI — bereft of Trotsky's dialectical ability and vision — was completely confused by the post-war situation because the leading Trotskyists, such as Cannon, had made a fetishistic dogma out of Trotskyism and were now buttressed by



MICHAEL BANDA

the impressionists like Pablo and eclectics like Mandel. Trotsky had sown dragon's teeth and reaped fleas.

In this scenario it must be admitted that the British section played little or no role — merely echoing Cannon's pragmatism in the case of Healy or swinging wildly between Trotskyism and state capitalism (the case of Haston, Grant, and Cliff). Dialectics had long ceased to inspire the FI. Vulgar empiricism had taken its place. The ideological reaction produced by the 1930s persisted after the war even though there was a mass upsurge of the working class. We had revolutionary situations without revolutionary leadership.

8. The most cogent proof of this was the total failure of the FI to appreciate:

(a) The military-bureaucratic changes in E. Europe until 1950 and the defeat of fascism by the Red Army.

(b) The world-historical significance of the Chinese, Yugoslav, and Indochinese revolutions. (The Chinese and Indochinese sections projected a strategy which ran counter to the armed struggle — corroborating Trotsky's earlier warnings on not ignoring the national struggle against imperialism.)

9. The most significant revision in the immediate post-war period was Cannon's 1946 American Theses which was a continuation of his national-defencist orientation covered up in seemingly revolutionary terms. It apotheosised American exceptionalism and under the guise of projecting a unique American road to socialism wrote off the European socialist revolution and with it the collective theoretical collaboration in continuing Trotsky's work and concretising his historical prognosis.

Cannon's struggle against Morrow, Goldman, etc. in this context was an alibi and convenient diversion which did nothing to stop the descent into pragmatism of the worst kind. Cannon and the SWP abandoned even the pretence of building the Fourth International by 1950.

10. The failure of the IS and IEC to address themselves to the major events of this post-war

period was complemented by the most shameless toadying to bourgeois democracy in Western Europe, e.g. Mandel's support for the 1946 referendum in France and, in Britain, the IEC's support for total entry into the LP and the transformation of the Healy group into an adjunct of the Bevanite left without any independent journal to crystallise opposition to the LP. This same process went on in India with disastrous results for the Indian and Sri Lankan sections.

### Gloomy

11. This was compounded at the Second World Congress by a thesis which was as gloomy as it was wrong. On the central issue of Israel the FI did not oppose the creation of the Zionist enclave and call for its overthrow but — bowing to Mandel's Zionist proclivities — called disarmingly for the restriction of immigration, a demand readily supported by Stalinists and Labour Lefts!

The Second Congress of 1948 was noted for its myopic insistence that imperialism was still stable and Stalinism unshaken. Not surprisingly and without any opposition from the SWP which was hosting the Johnson-Forest tendency, State capitalism, again on Mandel's insistence, was declared to be compatible with Trotskyism. This was an outrageous repudiation of Trotsky's crucial struggle against Burnham-Shachtman.

Two years later the FI paid a lamentable price when the state-capitalists broke internationally from the FI over the Korean war — in the same way as they did in the pre-war period over the Polish question and the Russo-Finnish war. The FI however did not even have the gift of hindsight. The entire Trotskyist heritage was being dumped three years before the arch-revisionist Pablo appeared on the scene.

12. The disruption and betrayal of the struggle to build the FI, to train cadres through a dialectical-materialist abstraction of the concrete historical practice of the world working class continued. After the Second Congress there was a systematic campaign waged by the SWP in collaboration with Healy to create a cult of Pablo and Mandel as the political executors of Trotsky — if not the greatest living political geniuses and strategists.

In a discussion with myself and the late P.K. Roy of the Indian section, the late Farrell Dobbs candidly admitted that the SWP consciously built up Pablo as the living embodiment of Trotskyism because they feared the death of Trotsky had left a void which had to be filled up! This was the essence of the theoretical bankruptcy of the SWP — and the whole FI leadership — and the most cogent proof of the pragmatism which had doomed the SWP. Trotsky himself had warned the SWP in *In Defence of Marxism*<sup>2</sup> that there would be no more Marx or Lenin but only great practitioners of Marxism.

The search for a great leader and the necessity to invent one if he didn't exist was the clearest warning of the political disasters

1. *Socialism on Trial*, including the transcript of Cannon's testimony in the Minneapolis trial, Grandizo Munis' criticism of the SWP's defense policy, and Cannon's reply to Munis, is available from Pathfinder Press, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014; 47 The Cut, London SE1 8LL, England; or P.O. Box 37, Leichhardt, Sydney, NSW 2040, Australia.

2. Available from Pathfinder Press.



which lay ahead and the fact that FI leadership in its entirety had abandoned the collective theoretical and practical struggle to lead the world revolution. The creation of a cult figure in Pablo was itself the corollary to the dogmatism of Trotskyism by the SWP. The leaders of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party complained about and criticised this trend but did nothing to fight it. The split and the subsequent rapprochement between Pablo, Mandel, and Cannon was hardly surprising — neither Cannon nor Healy ever broke from the conceptual framework of Pablo and his methodology.

13. The impressionistic eclecticism apparent at the Second Congress reached abnormal proportions with the relative post-war stabilisation of capitalism epitomised in the IMF, Bretton Woods, the Marshall Plan, NATO — and in the U.S. the inception of McCarthyism, the Cold War, and Kennan's theory of "Containment." The disorientation of the SWP was accelerated when sceptics in the party began to question the infallibility of Cannon, his vaunted "American Theses," and the failure of his prognosis to materialise.

Cannon, who failed to see the dialectical relation of revolutionary perspectives to the development of the European and colonial socialist revolution, now swung in the opposite direction and proclaimed McCarthyism as "American fascism" — a diagnosis which revealed that he knew little about Fascism and even less about class relations in the U.S. After that no one ever again heard about the 1946 Theses or for that matter about Trotsky's insistence that the SWP fight for the creation of a Labour Party based on the trade unions.

This demand of Trotsky's was the first casualty of Cannon's provincialism. It could not be reconciled with the prognosis that the socialist revolution was imminent in the U.S. and the SWP was destined to become the "small mass party" leading the revolution.

14. This improbable scenario of U.S. fascism coincided with the Korean War and led logically and directly to the strengthening of Pablo's strategy in the FI; first to the theory of centuries of degenerated workers' states and then, more ominously, with the advent of the cold war and the 9th Plenum of the IEC in 1949 to a major shift in emphasis on the inevitability of World War III and the transformation of such a war into a war-revolution. The corollary to this was consequent conversion of the FI into a "ginger group" within the Stalinist movement and the need for support for the "revolution in all its forms," i.e., political support of the zigzags of Soviet foreign policy.

#### Revisionist

With the exception of Bleibtreau, Doric Souza (LSSP), and the late Sam Gordon, who later capitulated to Cannon and Pablo, there was no opposition to this utterly revisionist line which was nothing more than a rehash of Kautsky's theory of ultra-imperialism in Pabloite attire. Central to this thesis was the premise that U.S. imperialism was so strong and stable that it could unite the whole of Western

Europe and, without resort to fascism and under the auspices of a Congressional Democracy with independent trade unions and an organised and militant working class, could embark on a thermonuclear world war against the USSR, China, and Eastern Europe!

This was Pablo's "new reality," and it was accepted without cavil or criticism by the vast majority of the FI leadership at the Third World Congress in 1951. There is little doubt in my mind that if Trotsky had been present at this improbable gathering of empirics and pragmatists he would have publicly dissociated from them with the declaration "if this is Trotskyism I am no Trotskyist."

15. The SWP even proclaimed this Congress as a "landmark" in the history of world Trotskyism and continued to support and defend the bankrupt perspective right up to and after the split of 1953 and the "Open Letter": a fact which testified to the opportunist and unprincipled nature of the 1953 split.

*What the Third Congress did in fact was to legitimise the national-state orientation of the FI and give credence to the policy of every section adapting politically to its native labour bureaucracy. Or as Lawrence succinctly put it: "If the pressure of the masses can force Thorez and Togliatti to take the power why not Nye Bevan?" Precisely!*

*I would therefore submit that the split of 1953 was inherent in the perspectives and policy adopted in 1951.* It intensified the division between those who in Britain and the USA (e.g. Cannon and Healy) were orienting rapidly towards the labour and reformist bureaucracies and the state and those in Western Europe who were adapting to the pressure of the dominant Stalinist bureaucracies as in Italy and France.

The opposition of the French leaders, Lambert and Just, of the PCI revealed the somewhat invidious position of a group which was based largely on the ultraconservative Force Ouvrière unions which had been restored in the post-war period by the AFL-CIO. Their political allies were in the French SP not the CP, and they could not adjust to Pablo's policies of entrism *sui generis*. Their opposition was based on expediency not principle.

Pablo's policies of adaptation and his theory of "revolution by pressure" also gave a licence to the reunified LSSP to begin its unprincipled political manoeuvres with Mrs. Bandaranaike (MEP) in the fifties and the ultimate consummation of this process with the coalition with Mrs. Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party in 1964 and the betrayal of the 21 demands movement. If pressure could move the bureaucracies in the West why not the liberal native bourgeoisie in the East? It was the rehabilitation by stages of the reactionary discredited thesis of Stalinism and Menshevism. That was all the Third Congress achieved.

16. As far as any viable political leadership was concerned it was clear that by 1951 the FI was completely emasculated. What happened after that was the logical product of the unprincipled agreement concluded at the Congress. Pablo, by necessity, was forced to scheme and

intrigue against those leaderships tied organically to the pro-Western bureaucracies such as Cannon, Healy, and Lambert. Conversely Cannon and Healy were forced to protect their own base of operations — naturally while still claiming adherence to the same fraudulent 1951 decisions — from the pro-Stalinist orientation of Pablo.

Healy was virtually liquidated into the Labour Party in Britain, proclaiming complete political confidence in Bevan and talking unctuously about reforming the state while Cannon was adapting to left Democrats in the U.S. and keeping a shameless and inscrutable silence on the Rosenberg executions. Cannon's articles on Stalinism reveal an appalling political indifference to the persecution of the U.S. Communist Party and confirm the charge that he never considered the CP a legitimate part of the working class.

This cowardly abstention encouraged the development of the Cochran-Clarke tendency which supported Pablo in the SWP. It wasn't accidental either that in the early stages of the Korean War the *Militant* carried a third camp position and that Cannon's intervention in this episode was more in the nature of a pacifist-moral outrage against the war than a revolutionary-defeatist opposition — not unlike North's opposition to the Grenada invasion.

17. *Parenthetically, it must be remembered that the real test of the FI came after 1951 in the 1952 Bolivian Revolution and that in this struggle, Cannon, Pablo, and Healy protected and defended the Menshevik Lora's line of political support for Lechín and confidence in the bourgeois-democratic MNR government of Paz Estensoro.*

The theory of Permanent Revolution and the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat were unceremoniously junked in favour of a two-stage theory of revolution which enabled the dictator Barrientos to come to power and suppress the Bolivian workers and legalise the POR. Significantly an internal document in the SWP by the Verne-Ryan tendency raising the question of the FI's endorsement of Lora's line was not replied to by Cannon, or even discussed!

18. The Open Letter and the formation of the IC is being touted around by D. North and his bureaucratic clique as a historic gain of Trotskyism which must be unconditionally defended. This merely testifies to the theoretical poverty, intellectual arrogance, and political immaturity of this sorry little gang of liars. The Open Letter was an opportunist response by Healy and Cannon conducted in the most arbitrary and hasty manner to give themselves an alibi for their own incredible political skulduggery.

There was neither logic nor honesty nor truth in this equivocal and undignified manoeuvre. *They fought Pabloism with Pabloism. They first of all deliberately created a Frankenstein Monster in the form of Pablo and then, through the Open Letter, tried desperately to absolve themselves of all responsibility and deliberately prevented any real discussion on and examination of the political, social, and*

*historical roots of Pabloism.* As they say in the courts, don't prove too much, you might incriminate yourselves!

One moment Pablo was being glorified as the infallible leader; the next moment he was being denounced as the "impudent bureaucrat," "irremovable secretary," and even as a "Stalinist agent working for the GPU" (shades of "Security and the FI").

This epistle from the philistines of "orthodox Trotskyism" was an arrogant ultimatum to the FI sections to fall in line with a group of opportunists *who bore the greatest responsibility for the crisis of leadership.* No wonder Cannon believed sanguinely that the Open Letter would bring down Pablo and his 30 sections like the biblical walls of Jericho. On the contrary, the Open Letter did nothing to alter the line of forces, clarified nothing, and obscured the *real* methodological issues at stake.

I challenge North and his flunkys in the IC to produce a single document, resolution, or memorandum which sought to explain theoretically the causes and origins of the split. *He will find none.* That is the greatest indictment of the IC and that is why I, for one, will treat his invocation of IC authority with the contempt, pity, and anger it deserves. The IC was a grandiose illusion, a contemptible manoeuvre, and a disgusting charade which in the end, and unsurprisingly, was forced to sustain its credibility with the despicable and disgraceful parody of the Dewey Commission called "Security and the Fourth International."

I for one am grateful to the IC for having suspended the WRP. I consider it an esteemed honour to have broken all political and organisational ties with an organisation which had become synonymous with bureaucratic thuggery, organised slander, political chicanery, and moral depravity of the most sordid kind. I would have preferred the IC to have the political guts to do what any principled leadership would do by expelling us. But then what can we expect from such dilettantes and Healyite epigones?

#### Adaptation

19. Now to return to this sorry and lugubrious tale. The formation of the IC solved nothing and did nothing to stop the adaptation to the native labour bureaucracies and the petty-bourgeois milieus. The acid test for the IC — in this sense — was not Cuba but Algeria. And by any standards the practical and theoretical justification for the practice was a damning and crushing indictment of IC leadership. From the start the IC — following the perfidious initiative of the PCI leaders Lambert, Block, and Just — adapted to the reformist-constitutionalist trend led by Messali Hadj and the MNA and opportunistically *opposed* the armed struggle organised and led by the CRUA (Revolutionary Committee for Unity of Action) which later became the FLN.

With a callousness to the suffering and sacrifice of the Algerian people, worthy only of reformist humbugs and Jesuit missionaries, Lambert and Healy — with the connivance of

Cannon — refused to support the FLN on the grounds that Ben Bella, Boudiaf, Krim bel Kacim, and Ait Ahmed were agents of Nasser and were of bourgeois origin. To justify this, the thoroughly idealist fallacy of a "people-class" — borrowed from Leon's book on the Jewish question<sup>3</sup> — was put forward.

Not so ironically this theory was a complete repudiation of Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution and Lenin's writings on the national and colonial question. According to this truly amazing contribution to political science there was no bourgeoisie in Algeria, only proletarians and semi-proletarians. The MNA was defined as a proletarian body and therefore there was no need for a separate Trotskyist organisation. The task was to win Messali to Trotskyism, denounce the FLN as an anti-working class terrorist body, and the Algerian revolution would be ours. QED.

Not only that. It was furthermore discovered by these wiseacres that Algeria was the beginning of the French revolution, so logically, Messali was destined to be the coleader of the French socialist revolution, together, presumably, with Lambert and Just. This disgraceful political pantomime today seems almost a joke but then it had serious and tragic implications for the Algerian and French proletariat. As a result the IC failed to construct a section in Algeria and discredited itself in the eyes of Arab workers.

What it meant in practice was that all the resources of the IC were devoted to white-washing the counterrevolutionary leadership of Messali — who was no socialist but a Pan-Islamite (the name Hadj signified he was a Hadji — a pilgrim to Mecca) — and to opposing the armed struggle in Algeria in favour of elections and UN interventions and, more seriously, separating the Algerian revolution from the historic aspirations of the Arab people to unite the Maghreb (the Arab West) with the rest of the Arab world.

In a distorted, but nevertheless legitimate way, Nasser symbolised this striving for unity and this was strikingly confirmed during the 1956 Suez War and the formation of the abortive United Arab Republic in 1955. Yes, Nasser gave generous help to the FLN (one reason why the French collaborated in the invasion of Suez in 1956) and the Voice of Cairo conducted a systematic pan-Arab, bourgeois nationalist, anti-imperialist propaganda. Cairo inspired many of the movements in Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Yemen, Aden, Libya, Sudan, Morocco, and Tunisia.

The OCI-IC theory on the other hand was nothing more than a scarcely veiled concession to the French imperialist policy of deracinating Algeria and considering Algeria as a "geographical expression" and an extension of metropolitan France. Hence the idea of the identity of the French and Algerian revolutions and the continued support for the arch scoundrels Messali and Moulay Merbah (who amassed for-

3. *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*, by Abram Leon, with an introduction by Ernest Germain, available from Pathfinder Press.

tunes by systematic terror and gansterism against Algerians in France) even after they signed a separate truce with Soustelle and de Gaulle.

Paradoxically, the archrevisionist Pablo, like the proverbial clock, was formally speaking on the right side of the barricades. He at least supported the FLN, albeit uncritically.

The author of this article, let it be recalled, was asked to write a defence of the MNA in 1957. On refusing to do so he was instructed by Healy and the editorial board of Labour Review, by a vote of 20-1, to do so. I will confess it was one of the most shameful episodes in my political career. To this day neither the PCI (OCI), SLL-WRP, or the IC have reexamined the shameless and tragic experience. To me, at least, it became inescapably clear that the OCI was a reformist and proimperialist organisation. I told Healy that many times, but he refused to believe it and opined that the OCI would change. And so it did! To become a completely chauvinist and discredited group occupying a position on the extreme right of the French labour movement.

20. The Algerian experience proved conclusively that the IC was not a homogeneous body and was incapable of giving leadership on questions affecting the struggle against the state — which is the most decisive test for any international. The sell-out on Algeria led predictably to the coming to power of De Gaulle. The coup of May 13, 1958, only accelerated the decomposition of the OCI and the IC.

A new "theory" or rather rationalisation was worked out to justify the treacherous inactivity of the OCI and its capitulation to the Bonapartist dictatorship. This was the Lambertist thesis that 1958 was a decisive defeat for the French workers, that the Fifth Republic was Bonapartism *sui generis* and that nothing could be done except prepare for illegality! None of these ideas were ever discussed by the IC. It was too embarrassing to Healy who was now tardily discovering that his one-time patron Cannon was blackballing him by corresponding with Tilak of the LSSP on the vexed question of unity with the IS of Pablo.

#### Business

True to form Cannon, having established his own freedom to manoeuvre with the labour bureaucracy and having disposed of the Cochranite nuisance, was now prepared to do business with Pablo on the basis of a common stand on the Hungarian Revolution and a watering down of the programme of political revolution in the USSR. To each his own. Healy at the same time was forced, to protect his own centrist political base, to withdraw from the Labour Party in the same confused way as he entered it in 1947 — and form the SLL.

Far from having a revolutionary orientation the SLL became a new adaptation to the wretched syndicalism of Brian Behan, Pennington, et al. Healy made a virtue out of necessity by turning to the ex-CPers coming out of the 1956-57 crisis of Stalinism, but he had no perspectives either for the IC or the SLL. A careful study of the 1957 to 1960 liter-





Fifteen of the 18 leaders of Teamsters Union Local 544 and the U.S. Socialist Workers Party who were jailed for opposition to World War II. Banda says SWP defense policy was "greatest betrayal of Trotskyism." Hunter calls this assertion "absolute rubbish."

ature (*Newsletter* and *Labour Review*) will bring out the unmistakable syndicalist trend of the SLL which was pragmatically combined with articles from Cdes. Slaughter, Kemp, and others on Marxism.

21. Healy's enormous energy and pugnacity kept the show on the road but where it was going no one — least of all Healy — knew. In the meantime the development of the world post-war boom — which completely contradicted the 1946–1948 thesis of an economic crash based on Mandel's underconsumptionist fallacies — completed the disorientation and nationalist degeneration of the IC. The SWP together with the Canadian, Chinese (no members yet, laughably, represented on the IC), and Latin Americans went over completely to Pablo leaving only Britain and France in the cold.

To add to the confusion, the French now came forward with the revisionist theory that the revisionism of Pablo had successfully destroyed the FI (Pablo never destroyed the FI because the FI had not been built. The FI of Pablo, Cannon, and Healy was a surrogate in-

ternational, a historical accident, and the misbegotten product of an unprincipled alliance shot through with opportunism and political double-talk) and it was necessary to rebuild it, that the IC should have no disciplinary powers and must only be a guiding body.

With instinctive opportunism Healy conceded to the scepticism, and the IC was re-named ICRFI (International Committee for the Reconstruction of the FI) and at the Third Congress in 1966 a new and outrageous opportunist manoeuvre was embarked on by inviting such disparate anti-Trotskyist Shachtmanite groups as the Robertson Spartacus tendency and the overtly state-capitalist Lutte Ouvriere group. Predictably none of them stayed till the end of the Congress.

22. Another fallacy which must be exposed is the legend that the discussion on Cuba proved the "orthodox" credentials of the IC. If this were so then indeed one would not have the crisis of today. Indubitably some important contributions on the method of pragmatism, the theory of knowledge and dialectics, as well as the question of base and superstructure, etc.

were made in the controversy with the SWP. But this did not alter the framework of the discussion which was entirely suspect.

Healy made no contribution at all to this struggle. The theoretical work was done entirely by Cdes. Slaughter, Banda, and Kemp.

More to the point is the manifest failure of the IC to make any effective intervention in the LSSP which since 1958 was drifting progressively to the right and towards accommodating with the SLFP. From 1960 to 1964 the IC *said nothing* in the hope that the centrists in the LSSP might come over to the IC. In this situation Pablo split from Mandel and augmented his credibility with the anticoincidence faction by opposing the N.M. Perera-Colvin da Silva group before the IC did so.

The IC intervention was made *only on the very eve* of the split conference in Colombo when Healy tried to gate-crash the conference and gain a cheap advantage at the expense of Pierre Frank and the United Secretariat. No real analysis was made of the tendencies involved in the opposition, and the IC ended with a pragmatic and episodic alliance with the

most dubious element in the opposition, the traitor P.B. Tampoe. The IC had no perspective for Sri Lanka except to denounce N.M. Perera ex post facto. It was left to Cde. Tony Banda to try and pick up the pieces and construct a section. Healy, apart from writing a second-rate analysis of the event, showed no interest again.

### Pretext

23. For reasons best known to himself Healy used the precedent of Sri Lanka as a pretext to pull all the SLL youth comrades out of the Labour Party Young Socialists and thereby handed over the Labour youth to the revisionists of the Militant tendency. This proved — if proof were necessary — that Healy and the IC never understood Social Democracy and the development and history of the British working class. He was incapable of making a serious theoretical analysis of anything and merely substituted his intuitions suitably dressed up in Marxist phrases.

Stemming from a totally false analysis of the post-war boom which came dangerously close to the “break-down” theory of early German social-democracy, Healy and the IC saw national and world developments as an apocalyptic and Messianic process. The entire orientation of the 1960s and 1970s was dominated by this bizarre, anti-Marxist thesis succinctly summed up in a *Newsletter* headline of 1968: “Crisis, Panic, Crash” (or as the Germans said: “Krisen, Kriegen, Katastrophen”).

Not deduction but reduction of every trend to a simple common denominator of the apocalypse. Hence every Labour government was seen as the last government of its kind, every monetary crisis as the final crisis, and every bank failure as the threshold to Armageddon. We used to laugh at Behan’s lobotomised economics and his theory of the “catastrophic crash” in the early 1960s, but Healy’s fantasies showed how little the IC had travelled since then. Every serious attempt to analyse world economy was frowned upon and the intellectuals were forced to toe the Healyite line: apocalypse now! Cde. Kemp, for one, was virtually driven out of leadership and almost out of the party for dissenting from this viewpoint.

24. Despite every attempt to accommodate to the French, the pressures of French imperialism were stronger and in the end prevailed. The IC did nothing to fight the rightward drift of the French except to make occasional polite criticisms which encouraged French arrogance. Next to Algeria the greatest debacle of the IC was the grotesque diplomatic silence, reticence, and criminal inactivity in relation to the May–June general strike of 1968 — and the conduct of the OCI.

The fact is that the OCI betrayed the general strike and impugned every tradition and principle of Trotskyism by its obdurate refusal to implement transitional demands and advance the struggle for power. At no stage did the OCI call for the overthrow of the 5th Republic or the formation of a Communist Party–Socialist Party government or even advocate the forma-

tion of committees of action and factory committees. The policy of the OCI was syndicalist through and through and informed all along by the defeatist, pessimistic assumptions of 1958.

The IC’s intervention was to send comrade Kemp to France to write an analysis of the Stalinist betrayal *but say nothing about the omissions of the OCI*. Every attempt to raise the question at IC and CC meetings was pushed aside. Instead Healy sang rhapsodies about the OCI and raised a £1,000 fund when De Gaulle banned the left parties. The SLL and IC did not criticise the French once because they obviously agreed with them. But politics, as Trotsky once remarked, knows no gratitude, and the French finally rejected Marxism as the theory of knowledge of the revolutionary party and — to add to their contempt — endorsed Lora’s treacherous role in the 1971 Bolivian uprising.

### Split

The split with the French did not take place on the central question of the struggle for power in France because that was too embarrassing for Healy. It is true to say that Healy and the IC did not break from the French but the reverse — the French OCI broke from Healy and the IC. Incredibly, the only polemical document written against the OCI — “In Defence of Trotskyism” — concerned the philosophy, but nothing was done to educate the IC cadre through an analysis of the political strategy and tactics of the OCI in the most instructive struggle in the history of the IC.

25. The sequence of stupidities, evasions, and missed opportunities unfortunately does not end here. Like the Bourbons of old, Healy and the IC learned nothing and forgot nothing. When the OCI began to grow in the late 1960s and became the biggest section of the IC and when it seemed that Lambert would dominate the IC, Healy decided on a new policy: Having funded the daily paper without any real political foundation he decided to outsmart the French with a forced march and transform the SLL into the WRP.

He was encouraged in this asinine project by starry-eyed illusions in what he thought was the most powerful industrial base of Trotskyism — the Cowley branch of the SLL in British Leyland. This group of backward syndicalists was glorified by Healy and built into something it never was.

To add to the confusion a completely bogus Charter of Basic Rights based on a badly digested reading of Cromwell’s life was elaborated and every possible concession was made to the trade unionist illusions of workers in Leyland, Vauxhall, Pilkingtons, and the docks. (As usual it was camouflaged with seemingly erudite quotations from Volume 38.) It was what Lenin called “giving the economic struggle a political character.” This was the real purpose of the ATUA and the real motive in forming the WRP.

As further expedients in this absurdly idealist repertoire, Healy intuitively projected the national march of 1972 and the most vulgar adaptation to a new milieu of idealists in the

entertainment industry. Healy believed that by marches, pageants, pop concerts, and various other politically exotic devices supplemented by lectures in a mutilated dialectics he could replace historical experience and the long, arduous political struggle of the party and persuade thousands of workers to abandon Social Democracy and become Trotskyists. To give this added credence the spectre of a nonexistent Bonapartist threat and an exaggerated emphasis on state conspiracies was invented. What happened subsequently was a biting satire on Healy’s prognosis:

Firstly, the entire Cowley branch together with a number of other WRP members defected, formed the WSL at the first prospect of a Labour government, and completely revised the Transitional Programme.

Secondly, the millions of workers continued to give their allegiance to the Labour Party and turned their back on the WRP.

Thirdly, the electoral intervention of the WRP in 1974–1975 proved to be a disaster and a costly one at that.

Fourthly, the daily paper was in big financial difficulties and solvency seemed as far away as ever.

The defection of Thornett — who was bureaucratically expelled with physical violence used against Richardson — and the problems of the paper only exacerbated Healy’s empiricism and subjective idealism. If the revolutionary party didn’t exist it had to be invented and membership figures had to be doctored. If the paper couldn’t pay its way in London then shift it to Runcorn and employ party members. If the party collapsed at the polls, no matter. We didn’t contest to get votes but to make members! There was a rationalisation for every problem.

If the working class could not finance the deficit of the party and press new sources of revenue had to be found: in the petty-bourgeois carpetbaggers like the Redgraves, in the IC, and the bourgeois-national movements. *The very perspective endorsed by the IC of transforming the SLL into the WRP and the daily paper — which the infant prodigy North likes to refer to as the greatest conquest of the IC — in fact garrotted the IC.*

The question facing the WRP and IC is not that the WRP leaders — Healy, Mitchell, and Redgrave — took large sums of money from the Arab countries but that this money was taken largely to finance the brainchild of Healy and the IC! This was the inexorable logic of a serious political mistake, a strategical error, for which the WRP and the IC were responsible. It was hardly surprising that as the revenue from Arab countries dried up, Healy became more rapacious towards the IC and the WRP. The sexual abuses and gangsterism of Healy were an inescapable concomitant of this disorientation and degeneration.

### Cause

North and his minions understand nothing about the degeneration of the WRP when they try to ascribe the cause to the abandonment of the theory of Permanent Revolution. The fact



is, as I have shown with innumerable references and concrete evidence, that the SLL-WRP and IC never subscribed to it in the first place. In practice they repudiated it.

This was, incidentally, the case in Indochina, too, where for years the IC advocated the policy of "Long Live the Vietnamese Revolution — Down with NLF!" I personally intervened both in the Workers League with Wohlforth and in a bitter struggle both with Healy and Lambert to change the line to "Victory to the NLF!"

26. The crisis in the WRP naturally coincided with crises in Greece and the U.S. In Greece the crisis was a factitious one. The Greek section was a bogus one which was, metaphorically speaking, smuggled into the IC after a split with the Mastroiannis group which attended the Third Congress of the IC. Sklavos and his entire group deserted the Greek working class and went into voluntary exile in Britain when the Junta came to power and did nothing to oppose the junta. Here again the main question for Healy was legality and he never criticised the Greeks for their petty-bourgeois cowardice.

Also there was no investigation by the IC into the charges of capitulation to the police and betrayal made against leading members of the Greek section. From 1971 an unprincipled relation was maintained with the Greeks in order to use them against the OCI. The present defection of Sklavos is not too surprising. He was a star product of the IC's school of legal Marxism. The desertion of the Greeks is but a stage in the irreversible process of the complete break-up of the whole IC. Good riddance!

The crisis with Wohlforth was artificially exacerbated by Healy with his paranoid ravings about security and his total failure to deal with the Workers League's problems of perspective and policy. The issue of Nancy Fields was exaggerated and distorted beyond all proportion. In my opinion Wohlforth's weaknesses were maliciously exploited by Healy to drive him out. As a point of information it is necessary to correct the impression that it was Dave North's leadership that fought Wohlforth. This is a tax on my credibility. The entire "struggle" was conducted by leaders of the WRP with tactical help from the WL. The case of Nancy Fields must be reexamined in the same way as Thornett, Blick, and other victims of Healy's malice and bureaucratic sadism.

The cause of the decline is more profound and a bit more complex — it was the failure or inability of the IC as a whole to grasp the contradictory nature of class struggle and the tasks of leadership in the post-world-war situation.

The IC failed to grasp in theory and practice the laws of historical-revolutionary change, and this constituted a failure, even refusal of those leaders to master the conceptual weapons of our epoch — dialectical materialism. ("The party which does not keep step with the historical tasks of its own class becomes, or runs the risk of becoming, the indirect tool of other classes" Trotsky, Lessons of October.) *That is*

*why the FI has still to be built.* Only in that way can we understand the repudiation of Permanent Revolution.

I want to make clear that I am not indulging in any form of ritualistic breast-beating nor am I seeking to avoid my own responsibility for the growth of Healyism and the bankruptcy of the IC. My only regret is that I didn't write this 10 years ago. This statement is a critical reexamination of the whole of the IC including myself which I feel is unpostponably urgent in view of the distortion, misrepresentation, and half-truth put out by the IC clique which is hell-bent on resuscitating a stinking corpse.

#### Position

For my part, I recognise that the WRP today is in the same position that the Bolsheviks were in 1915–1917 and that in order to build the FI it is necessary — as an indispensable precondition — to bury the IC. To let it fester for another single day would be tantamount to the worst betrayal of Trotsky and Trotskyism.

In conclusion I would like to commend to all those comrades who demonstrated in action their fidelity to the cause of Trotskyism and their repugnance of Healy's and North's method the advice of Trotsky:

"Lassalle used to say that a revolutionary needs the 'physical power of thought.' Lenin liked to repeat these words, although, in general, he did not like Lassalle much. The physical power of thought consists in analysing the situation and perspectives to the very end, and having come to the necessary practical conclusions, defending them with conviction, courage, intransigence, not fearing someone else's fears, not bowing before the prejudices of the masses, but basing oneself on the objective course of development." (*Writings of Leon Trotsky 1933–1934*, page 190, Pathfinder

Press, New York.)<sup>4</sup>

27. No examination of the IC would be complete or honestly objective if it didn't include the most sinister and reactionary manifestation of Healyism in the IC — Security and the Fourth International. No one who honours Trotsky's impeccable and scrupulous regard for absolutely verifiable facts and irrefutable evidence will have anything more to do with this monstrous frame-up based entirely on circumstantial evidence and political innuendo. The IC proved nothing which we didn't already know about Sylvia Callen or Zborowski. The letters on Hansen prove nothing either.

It is entirely possible, nay probable, that Trotsky did advise Hansen to "play ball" with the GPU agent as part of a plan to elicit information and that he also advised him to contact the FBI. Even if he didn't it doesn't prove that Hansen was guilty. North, I fear, is hoist on his own petard and faces the charge of being an accomplice with Healy and the execrable Mitchell in the murder of Trotsky's finest tradition.

Two further questions arise:

When North contends that the struggle against revisionism was abandoned he is only half right. History records that the anti-revisionist struggle was *transformed* for over a decade into a manic witch-hunt, a desperate forensic diversion to be precise, *to satisfy Healy's paranoid schizophrenia* as well as his anti-theory empiricism. In this respect Hansen's charge against Healy was right. Never in the history of intelligence work of state bodies has any agent devoted *the whole of his life* —

4. One of the 14-volume Pathfinder Press series *Writings of Leon Trotsky 1929–40*.

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as Hansen did — to building a reformist party. That is *not* the style of the GPU or FBI. Hansen lived and died a revisionist. A GPU agent — never!

There is an even more damning question I would like to address to Healy's political bloodhounds, North and Mitchell. Why is it that not a single radical intellectual, not one conscientious professor, trade union leader, or dissident Stalinist responded to the call for an

inquiry into the murder of Trotsky by Mercader and presumably, Hansen and Novack? To ask the question is to answer it.

No one except the paranoid North and his cronies in the IC will believe this damnable fantasy which paradoxically ended with a similar charge against North adduced by none other than Healy! It is incredible that North should now point to Budenz's testimony that Hansen was a GPU agent. Applying North's own rot-

ten yardstick how are we not to presume that Budenz was doing this as part of his own filthy deal with FBI and State Department?

As for North's amazing revelation that the entire leadership of the present SWP was recruited from the same Midwestern college, I can only retort: So what? Where is the concrete evidence of their work for the FBI? Put up or shut up North! □

# The 'bad men theory of history'

## Longtime WRP leader replies to Banda's view of Fourth International

By Bill Hunter

The document — "Twenty Seven Reasons Why The IC Should Be Buried Forthwith" (published in *Workers Press* on Friday, 7 February, 1986) — is, among other faults, one-sided.

This survey of the history of the Fourth International is highly subjective. History is written here in terms of the nature of the men and women who came into the leadership of the Trotskyist movement.

Throughout the document runs a parade of despicable characters. There are "disgusting" accommodators, capitulators to left-Rooseveltianism, the "greatest" betrayers of Trotskyism "shamelessly" abandoning revolutionary defeatism, abstainers from struggle, and people who committed the crime of being confused. In the period are practitioners of revisionism, and such people led the movement ever since Trotsky died. They are people who, even when they struggle for correct things, carry out the struggle as an "alibi" or a "diversion" (Cannon against Morrow and Goldman). Or — like Lambert and Just — their organisation is "perfidious" and, while they were the first to break with Pablo, it was on the "invidious" position of being based "largely in the ultraconservative Force Ouvrière unions."

The later split with Pablo, in 1953, becomes one between leaders resting on the Stalinist bureaucracies in Italy and France as against those "orienting rapidly towards the labour and reformist bureaucracies and the state."

This is no way to conduct discussion. In verbal polemic a certain emotional invective exaggeration is understandable, although not to be recommended. However, it is impermissible in a written discussion, on a central question before our Party. Particularly is it wrong in the present stage of the Party. We have broken out of a stifling regime. We have to take up discussion with full consciousness of the need to avoid anything like the way questions were dealt with in the past.

### Issues

The Party members are facing many fundamental issues for the first time and are now seeking to tackle the questions of: What is the International; what happened to it; what stages did it pass through? These are to be met with

serious analysis and not the invective which so recently reigned in discussion in the Party. There is the horrible example of Mitchell — the man who made the adjective the enemy of the noun. Every move a "foul" move; denunciation a substitute for politics.

We should take the advice of Engels to Lafargue, criticising an article which Lafargue had written on the "Possibilists" — right-wingers in the Social Democratic movement of the time.

"When you come to the Possibilists," wrote Engels, "you simply state they have sold themselves to the government, without an iota of proof or a single fact. If you can't say other than that about them, better say nothing . . . the bare assertion . . . has no effect whatsoever."

The bare assertions in this document, however luridly posed, certainly do not prove that the IC as a "sorry little gang of liars" are the inheritors of a "foul" history. Nor, of course, does the assertion that they are a "sorry gang of liars" prove it. And I don't care a fig whether North is an "infant prodigy" or not! I am concerned with his politics, where they come from in the development of the IC and the Workers League.

To reduce everything to the manoeuvres and motives of leaders tells us nothing about the role of leadership or about the movement itself and its relationship to the world-shaking changes since 1939. Invective stops us answering questions before we begin.

I am fundamentally opposed to the conceptions of North and his supporters on the "world party" and his refusal to carry through a struggle against "Healyist" philosophy and practices in the IC. His "authority" is based on the Eighth Congress of the IC, the congress which, out of the very air, declared the IC the nucleus of the world party. Every proceeding at that congress, every word which came out of it, is a monument of "Healyism."

However, the struggle against the IC's false foundation cannot be carried out by denunciation. We must fight through, and answer, concrete questions. How did subjective idealism show itself in the IC? How was the Permanent Revolution destroyed while being academically defended? What did North's criticism of Healy's "dialectics" mean?

Mike Banda describes the whole history of the FI as a "sorry repugnant tale." However, if the history of the FI is that which comes out of this document, then we cannot stop at the assertion that this repugnant story only begins after Trotsky's death. An immediate question must be asked: If Trotsky's programme could only attract this sorry band of adventurers, manoeuvrers, and repellent individuals, what is to be said for that programme?

Before the war, when Trotsky was alive, Fenner Brockway and other centrists used to declare that the Trotskyist movement was by its very nature fractional and nurtured splits. Stalinist fellow-travellers would say it was the repository of malcontents, sectarians, and generally impossible people. Were they right? Is Mike Banda going towards agreeing with them when he declares that: "Not even in Trotsky's time was there a cadre capable of sustaining his monumental work. Not surprisingly he spent the last few years conflicting with almost every group in the FI — the Chinese, the Indochinese, the French, and above all the SWP. . . ."

Why not add that throughout the history of the Left Opposition, Trotsky was in conflict with all sorts of people who supported him in all parts of the world? Has any real Marxist not been engaged in struggle continuously inside his own movement?

Let us start with Comrade Banda's point (2) which reads:

The history of the FI, unlike the history of the previous internationals, has proved to be far more complex, tortuous, contradictory, and protracted, leaving little room for complacent analogies and facile comparisons and defying even the prognosis of LT about the rapid growth of the FI following upon the Second World War.

Contrary to Trotsky, what we have seen is an uninterrupted series of crises, splits, betrayals, treachery, and confusion — a process characterised by a total lack of strategy and perspective, a manifest failure in theory and practice to grasp the nature of the epoch and concretise and enrich Trotskyism as contemporary Marxism.

It must be noted, first of all, that the history of all the internationals is far more tortuous, contradictory, and protracted than any of their members foresaw. Crises and splits certainly, and indeed, betrayals, treachery, stagnation, and confusion, are to be found in their history.



Leaving aside facile comparisons — although we are not told by Comrade Banda what they are — there were crises and splits in the First International with the Bakuninists and with the English trade union leaders. It was eventually necessary to transfer the headquarters to America and then dissolve the International.

As to the Second International — at its beginning there were two conferences which claimed to be the International. There were bitter struggles between Engels and Hyndman, between the Marxists and the revisionists. Finally, there was the great betrayal at the beginning of the First World War.

The Communist International (do we need to mention this?) also had a tortuous, crisis-ridden history. The very fact that we have had four internationals shows how complicated the development of international leadership has been.

### Difference

The important difference, of course, between the Fourth International and the other internationals is that it never was a mass movement. When it was formed and during the war, the majority of its members did expect to be a world party leading masses of workers in the period after the war. They expected Stalinism to be destroyed in the revolutionary wave engendered during the war or immediately afterwards. The old bureaucracies arose on the defeats of the working class, therefore the rise of the working class would destroy them — this appeared incontrovertible. The Communist Parties would betray the coming world revolutionary events and Stalinism would be finished.

In September 1939, Trotsky wrote in "The USSR in War": "If this war provokes, as we firmly believe, a proletarian revolution, it must inevitably lead to the overthrow of the bureaucracy in the USSR. . . ."

He declared further:

The question certainly stands as follows: Will objective necessity in the long run cut a path for itself in the consciousness of the vanguard of the working class; that is, in the process of the war and these profound shocks which it must engender, will a revolutionary leadership be formed capable of leading the proletariat to the conquest of power?

The Fourth International has replied in the affirmative to this question, not only through the text of its programme, but also through the very fact of its existence.

The "profound shocks" engendered by the war did not resolve the central question of socialism. That remains what it was in 1939. It is in relation to this that we have to understand the prolonged development, crises, and contradictions of Trotskyism.

Does the history of the Fourth International show that historical necessity cannot carve out a path in the consciousness of the vanguard? Mike Banda's bulletin does not face that question squarely but its whole direction is answering: Yes! We are left with the picture of a Fourth International attracting only the practitioners of cowardly, opportunist policies — an organisation devoid of any expression of "historical necessity."

However, Trotsky's confidence in the revo-



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BILL HUNTER

lutionary nature of the working class was not misplaced. The very problems posed to the Fourth International in the last decades came to some extent from the very revolutionary potential of that class after the war and the retreats forced on imperialism. The Transitional Programme of the Fourth International retains its vital power as a guide in the struggle for socialism. The labour, trade union, and Stalinist bureaucracies remain incapable of leading the working class to socialism.

There remains a crisis of leadership that can only be overcome by the leadership of a principled Trotskyist international. Once more, in the erection of it, there is more on the ground than there is on the map.

However, the whole struggle for socialism has been tortuous and contradictory; it has been more complicated than the general outline of the development of the working class in *The Communist Manifesto* of 1848.

It was in 1938 that the founding conference of the Fourth International was held. No one can deny that there is a great question in that, nearly 50 years later, there does not exist a Fourth International with any authority among the world's masses. But, being a serious question, it demands a serious answer and not a blast of one-sided invective.

It further demands an answer, not for oneself. It demands an answer for, and to, the comrades who have gone through the experience of the split and are breaking from the philosophy and the politics of an opportunist propaganda sect. The questions of internationalism are being posed before this cadre in a way they have not been posed to a Trotskyist movement for many years.

The theoretical development of the Fourth International out of the conditions of its development was unable to meet the reality which obtained. This did not arise because the leaders of the Fourth International were people who congenitally made mistakes. They certainly made mistakes, they certainly had weaknesses, but the biggest weakness in the Fourth International was that it was not able to devel-

op theory in relationship with a mass movement.

All the leaders who moved to the right and broke with the Trotskyist movement — in France, in America, in Britain — from the end of the war to the end of the '40s, in one way or another, pointed to the failure of history to honour the "promissory note" of Trotsky.

For Trotsky himself, of course, his prognosis would be conditional. He did not consider that Marxism gave him the properties of a seer. He was concerned primarily with essential contradictions, with the conflict of living forces which cannot conform to the dead letter. He knew, as Lenin remarked, that there are no laws without exception. There *are* laws of human development, however. The crisis of Stalinism, which proved to be more tortuous, etc. than foreseen, has also proved that there is a conflict between the historically necessary movement of the working class and the bureaucracy. The basic question of 1938 — socialism or barbarism — remains, only posed far more critically. Then it meant the barbarism of fascism or war. Now it is socialism or fascism or nuclear destruction. The decline of capitalist society continues; it remains an epoch of wars and revolutions.

The great contradictions did not work out in what we now may see as the simple form in which the majority of members of the Fourth International expected it. It behooves us, however, when looking at history to attempt to place ourselves in the context of the time. We certainly learn nothing if we dismiss the activities of those we are surveying — even if policies were wrong — with a contemptuous sneer. Such an attitude, which was evinced over Indochina, taught us nothing about Trotskyists there. They were dismissed as hopeless sectarians in a phrase — see Stephen Johns' articles in the *Fourth International*. Perhaps they were sectarian, but that was *our* movement, and to dismiss their policies in two or three words shows more about what Trotsky called the "worship of the accomplished fact" — the victory of the Vietnamese Communist Party — than it does about the desire to develop theory.

During the war, in many cases, the Trotskyists were just beginning to make their links with the working class. Throughout the world they were members of mainly propaganda groups, built during the war. There was thus a tendency to mechanical and formal thinking. Mike Banda declares that dialectics had long ceased to inspire the FI. As if it had all been learned at the beginning and then thrown away. Aren't we learning that, in the period when we declared more for dialectics than any Trotskyist movement has ever done, we all the more rapidly moved further away from dialectical materialism? Further, are not we learning a dialectical lesson in that we are finding that North, who defended dialectics against Healy on an academic plane, at the same time takes his authority from the Eighth Congress of the IC. That Congress embodies, not the traditions of Trotskyism, but is built on, and impregnated with, the subjective

idealism of Healy. That is the case also with the resolution of the Twelfth Congress of the Workers League of America which took place only last July.

From the declaration of the Fourth International and before, the struggle for dialectical materialism against French rationalism, British empiricism, American pragmatism, and other expressions of bourgeois ideology was continuous. It came out mainly from conflicts on the relationship of the Trotskyist organisations to the working class and over its programme and policies. A very worthwhile task would be to trace this conflict, but in all the concreteness of its stages. It is not done by a dismissive wave of the hand. That is in no way better than the IC Bowdlerisation of history in which the explanation of British Trotskyist history is just simple "nationalism." By dogmatic nostrums we understand nothing. For example, in relation to what North says: the overriding result of the national development of Britain is in British empiricism, insidiously pervading the labour movement including the Trotskyist movement. In America, of course, it is pragmatism.

The unity of pragmatism and empiricism, we might add, was expressed in tactics adopted by the minority faction in Britain at the end of the struggle for entry and also in the beginning of the Pablo split. Suffice to say on this at present that the last document of the minority faction, before the IS suggested the division of the two sections of the RCP, was written by a leader of the SWP under the name of the minority, deliberately to blow up the situation in the RCP. When later, after the refusion of 1949, I asked Healy why the regime in the RCP and restriction of the minority were exaggerated, he told me the document had been written as a tactical weapon to help forward the division.

We learn nothing by the characterisation of leaders without taking, as concretely and completely as possible, the issues at stake at various stages of the development of the Fourth International. We are left with nothing to build on. If Trotsky had to fight leaders of the international on all fronts, then the most important thing for comrades, surely, is to be told what his positions were and urged to build on them.

Let us follow through some of the issues in Comrade Banda's points. Comrade Banda refers to these issues, in order to sustain the picture of the Fourth International since Trotsky as the repository of one bunch of scoundrels after another — the personality interpretation of history.

In Point (4) he refers to Trotsky conflicting "above all" with the SWP, "in particular with J.P. Cannon in the famous discussion on the capitulation of the SWPA to Left-Rooseveltianism and their refusal to consider the U.S. CP as a legitimate part of the working class. This capitulation — let us recollect — was preceded by Cannon's previous disgusting accommodation to Norman Thomas and the US Socialist Party in '34-'35."

What do we learn from that? That Cannon was a "disgusting" capitulator. We learn nothing

in fact about Trotsky's real contribution on work in the trade unions in this discussion of 1940; we learn nothing about what he tried to teach in regard to Stalinism.

We might say here, in parenthesis, that Trotsky's contribution here has a great deal of relevance to some of the statements of IC members in their attack on Cliff Slaughter over the by now well-known handshake!

The discussion took place between Trotsky and several American comrades, some prominent in trade unions, as were the comrades in the Minneapolis teamsters. It was held in June 1940, just after the split with Burnham and Shachtman (see *In Defence of Marxism*) and immediately after the machine-gun attack by Stalinists on Trotsky's house in Mexico.

Cannon had asked if tactics applicable to the "socialists etc." were also applicable to the Stalinists. He went on:

There is a strong tendency to regard the Stalinists as different. Not as a labour tendency. The crassest expression of this tendency is exhibited in the American Labour Party in New York. They regard the Stalinists, not as a working-class party, but as an agency of a foreign power. This was the position of Lovestone and Hook on the Browder passport case. It was Burnham's position on the CC. We held for critical defence. If O'Neal for example, was arrested we would defend him similarly. There is no fundamental difference between O'Neal of the Second International and Browder as representative of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Both are treacherous to the Labour Movement. Burnham held that the Stalinists are not a labour movement at all. That they are like the German Nazis. We should defend neither. This point is important in elaborating our general political tactics. . . .

#### Movement

So Cannon begins by saying that the Stalinists are a part of the labour movement, and how Burnham was fought on this.

Trotsky drives the point home:

Of course, the Stalinists are a legitimate part of the workers' movement. That it is abused by its leaders for specific GPU ends is one thing, for Kremlin ends another. It is not at all different from other opposition labour bureaucracies. The powerful interests of Moscow influence the Third International, but it is not different in principle. Of course we consider the terror of the GPU control differently; we fight with all means, even bourgeois police. But the political current of Stalinism is a current in the workers movement. If it differs, it differs advantageously. In France, the Stalinists show courage against the government. They are still inspired by October. They are a selection of revolutionary elements, abused by Moscow, but honest.

Later he goes on:

We must consider them from the objective Marxist viewpoint. They are a very contradictory phenomenon. They began with October as the base, they have become deformed, but they have great courage.

Then comes a statement which will surely shock all those who get no further than the formula (albeit a very true statement) that there are rivers of blood between Trotskyism and Stalinism. Remember the recent attempt to assassinate Trotsky. We find Trotsky saying the following: "We can't let the antipathies of our

moral feelings sway us. Even the assailants on Trotsky's house had great courage. I think we can hope to win these workers who began as a crystallisation of October."

Here is the real content of Trotsky's criticism of the American comrades. He says:

We see them (the Stalinists — WH) negatively. How to break through this obstacle? We must set the base against the top. The Moscow gang we consider gangsters but the rank and file don't feel themselves to be gangsters, but revolutionists. They have been terribly poisoned. If we show them we understand, that we have a common language, we can turn them against their leaders. . . .

We should republish this discussion on June 12-15, 1940, even in duplicated form as it was circulated in the Socialist Labour League many years ago. We learn nothing if we settle for the slick description of Trotsky conflicting with the "capitulation of the SWP to left-Rooseveltianism."

The discussion took place just nine months after the Stalinists, in line with the Stalin-Hitler pact, made a drastic turn in opposition to the imperialist war. Their leader Browder was imprisoned on passport charges. The CP supported strikes, denounced Roosevelt as a "fascist" and put Browder up for President.

The discussion at this series of meetings centred around the attitude to the Stalinists, particularly in the trade unions. The resistance from members of the leadership was to a turn to Stalinist workers. They had made advances in the previous years when the Stalinists were pursuing a right Popular Front line and had formed alliances in unions to fight Stalinist bureaucratic control.

Cannon began the discussion by saying:

. . . The general perspective is quite optimistic. The Stalinists are the problem. By their change in line they dealt a heavy blow. We were forging ahead when they made the switch, paralysing our work. The workers are unable to distinguish the real difference between us, especially with the faction fight compelling us to give undue emphasis to our defence of the Soviet Union.

In the discussion which follows, Trotsky is fighting for a policy to break the rank and file from Stalinist leaders and to prepare a struggle from the Stalinist ranks when the Party changes its policy again — which he expected even then. The leaders resisted. They had built their trade union faction by alliances against Stalinist bureaucratic leadership operating right-wing policies and, yes, in some cases with "progressives" who supported Roosevelt. Trotsky was not opposed to these alliances as such. He had this to say:

These progressive bureaucrats can lean on us for advisers in the fight against the Stalinists. But the role of an adviser to a progressive bureaucrat doesn't promise much in the long run. Our real role is that of third competitor. Thus the question of our attitude toward these bureaucrats — do we have an absolutely clear position towards these competitors? These bureaucrats are Rooseveltians, militarists. We tried to penetrate the trade unions with their help. This was a correct manoeuvre I believe.

We can say that the question of the Stalinists would be resolved in passing insofar as we succeed in our main manoeuvre. But before the presidential



campaign and the war question we have room for a small manoeuvre. We can say (to the CP — WH) your leaders betray you, but we support you without any confidence in your leaders, in order to show you that we can go with you and to show that your leaders will betray you. It is a short manoeuvre not hinging on the main question of the war. But it is necessary to know incomparably better the Stalinists and their place in the trade unions, their reaction to our party. It would be fatal to pay too much attention to the impression that we can make on the pacifists and our "progressive" bureaucratic friends. In this case we become the squeezed lemon of the bureaucrats. They use us against the Stalinists, but as the war nears they call us unpatriotic and expel us. These Stalinist workers can become revolutionary, especially if Moscow changes its line and becomes patriotic.

To be sure, Trotsky was concerned with deeper issues in finding a correct manoeuvre for the party. He was concerned that the trade union comrades, leaders in the party, were resisting a response to a changed situation under adaptation to alien pressures arising from previous trade union work. However, consider how he viewed the question and how he handled it.

At the beginning of the session on that last day, Hansen begins by giving Trotsky a lead-in. Possibly Hansen, who was Trotsky's secretary at the time, had discussed with Trotsky how to proceed the following day.

Hansen said:

Yesterday Comrade Trotsky made some remarks about adaptation to the so-called progressives in the trade unions, he mentioned the line of the *Northwest Organiser* (a trade union paper in Minneapolis run by our comrades) and also our attitude in connection with the elections and the Stalinists. I wish to point out that this is not something completely new on Comrade Trotsky's part. More than two years ago over the Transitional Programme, he discussed exactly the same position, with due regard for the differences in time and that then it was not the elections but the Farmer-Labour Party that was to the fore. Comrade Trotsky has also written some letters regarding the Stalinists and the need for a more positive line towards them. In the past faction fight too, Comrade Trotsky mentioned in his polemic, "From a Scratch to a Danger of Gangrene," the following point, which he underlined: More than once the party will have to remind its own trade unionists that a pedagogical adaptation to the more backward layers of the proletariat must not become transformed into a political adaptation of the conservative bureaucracy of the trade unions. I am wondering if Comrade Trotsky considers that our party is displaying a conservative tendency in the sense that we are adapting ourselves politically to the trade union bureaucracy.

Trotsky answered:

To a certain degree I believe it is so. I cannot observe closely enough to be completely certain. In observing the *Northwest Organiser* I have observed not the slightest change during the whole period. It remains apolitical. This is a dangerous symptom. . . .

Turning to the Stalinists does not mean that we should turn away from the progressives. It means only that we should tell the truth to the Stalinists, that we should catch the Stalinists beforehand in their new turn.

### Today

This is an important discussion for today because Trotsky brings out lessons on trade union work, the building of a party, and the

dangers which all trade union factions face. The linking of all this to the cowardice and capitulation of one man — Cannon — is to degrade the discussion and teach us nothing. These were the problems in a Party that was making a central contribution to world Trotskyism at the time. You will, of course, have none of these problems in a Party isolated from the working class and degenerating into a sect. So nothing is learned and we apply our abstractions to smother everything that lives and moves. Such a discussion could not have taken place in the WRP during the last decade and a half. It will, however, occur in the Trotskyist movement of the future and will signify a beginning of its penetration into the working class.

One final quote from this discussion. Trotsky had complained that it had been agreed the previous January to have a campaign on a presidential candidate. Said Trotsky: "We were to address Tobin. We were to propose to him that we would vote for him if he were nominated. Even Lewis. We were to begin the campaign for a labour president. But not a thing was done. Nothing appeared. Nothing in the *Northwest Organiser*."

Dobbs: "Perhaps it was my fault. . . ."

He was cut across by Trotsky: "No. That is the bad Hitler theory of history. . . ."

Trotsky had not the slightest interest in interpreting the issues before the meeting in terms of individuals.

Continuing with point (4) Mike Banda declares that: "In Britain the most active group — the WIL — refused for four years to affiliate to the FI."

That is untrue. It comes from Healy's snatches of history. I want to use this opportunity to give the record. North, also adopting a selective approach to history, has based his conclusion of a long record of British opposition to internationalism on an odd quotation from Cannon and Healy. I, therefore, add as an appendix to this document, a further document which deals with the history of the WIL and was written in answer to Comrade North. It also has a relevance to Comrade Banda's document.

In point (5) of his document, Comrade Banda says that the war "accelerated the disorientation of cadres — a process which was undoubtedly assisted by the repression of the Nazis and the criminal activities of the Stalinists and Social Democrats in the occupation. However, in the U.S. there were no such extenuating factors and here the greatest betrayal of Trotskyism took place, in the Minneapolis trial."

### Papers

A reading of wartime Trotskyist papers — the British *Socialist Appeal*, the American *Militant*, and other papers and journals does not give the impression of "disorientation." Any criticism of the Trotskyist movement during the war based on a serious objective survey must accept that generally, the Trotskyist movement conducted a struggle against imperialist war and upheld the principles of the

Fourth International. The French Trotskyists published *La Verite* as the first workers' paper to appear under the occupation. They worked underground, and some were arrested by the Gestapo on lists supplied by the Stalinists.

Trotskyists worked inside the German army, and French and German Trotskyists produced a paper, *Arbeiter und Soldat*. Some of them were executed. Most members of the Trotskyist movement in Europe were recruited during the war. Only a handful of German Trotskyists survived the concentration camps. The leading cadres in Austria were placed on trial and executed by the Nazis. One of them was beheaded in front of his young brother. Experienced leaders were destroyed in France, Belgium, Holland, and Czechoslovakia. The Polish party was wiped out.

Mike Banda condemns Trotskyists out of hand because he says they did not participate in the resistance movements. We could on this and other questions have an educative discussion. However, it is a discussion which must be conducted by first laying out the positions. Let me just say here that the position of the French Trotskyists, first, in a copy of *La Verite* published in June 1942, criticised the political adventurism of the Stalinists with their support for individual terrorist acts which did not do much damage to the oppressors but cost the lives of revolutionists. It supported all forms of sabotage of a mass character, for example slow-downs in the factory. By this time, incidentally, the French Trotskyists were producing a printed paper about every 15 days, with a run of about 3,000 copies, limited because of difficulties in securing paper. When the Resistance Movement grew in strength, the Trotskyists opposed the demand for the unification of the various forces belonging to the resistance movement from the workers' formations to De Gaulle. Let us start, however, with the documents. The line of the European Trotskyists as I remember it was for participation in all organs of mass resistance but opposition to organisations led by the bourgeoisie, Allied agents, and agents of the Soviet bureaucracy.

After the war, the IS reported that the policy had been to promote everywhere the differentiation between workers and capitalists, and that: "it was necessary to develop thoroughly the elements of civil war which existed in a veiled or open form throughout the struggle of the masses under the occupation."

Was this policy a desertion of "revolutionary defeatism"?

A few words on what Mike Banda says on revolutionary defeatism and the American SWP. In November 1941, 28 members of the SWP and the Minneapolis Teamsters Local 544-CIO went on trial. The Minneapolis Trial was the greatest betrayal of Trotskyism, declares Mike Banda, and asserts that:

The strategy and tactics of revolutionary defeatism were shamelessly abandoned by Cannon, Hansen, and Novack in favour of a semi-defencist policy and this act of criminal betrayal was endorsed by the IEC and IS and challenged only by G. Munis.

Cannon's political cowardice and capitulation to

the backward sections of the U.S. working class became the pattern for the WIL-RCP in Britain and his book *Socialism on Trial* became the gospel for world Trotskyists and the basis for further revisions of Trotskyism after the war.

### 'Gospel'

Like other assertions, his readers are expected to accept this on his say-so. With all due respects to a friendship with Mike Banda going back over 30 years, I have to reply: "Absolute rubbish." What is meant by the words "gospel for world Trotskyism"? What sort of Marxist precision do such phrases mean, coupled with assertions which contain no attempt to elucidate what any of the political positions were?

*Socialism on Trial* containing Cannon's testimony at the Minneapolis trial was certainly an exceedingly popular pamphlet. It had a wide circulation in Britain under the name of *The ABC of Communism*. I do not now possess a copy of this pamphlet which was based on the court record, nor do I now have a copy of the criticism by Munis of the way the trial was conducted. I do know that I felt, as the majority of Trotskyists of the time felt, that Munis' pamphlet was sectarian, as were the general policies of his group.

### Counts

The main counts of the indictment of the 28 were "conspiracy to overthrow by force the government and to oppose the authority thereof" and a count of "advocating the desirability of overthrowing the government by force and violence."

The attraction of the pamphlet, as I recall it, was that, in the form of question and answer, it pinned the responsibility for violence upon the ruling class. Further, the prosecution had charged that the accused had conspired with an "ideal formula" based on the Russian Revolution. It was alleged by the prosecution that the Czarist regime was overthrown by a coup and a conspiracy. Because of this, Goldman, the defence lawyer and one of the accused, was able to lead Cannon through the history of the Russian Revolution and the Trotskyist position on it.

If I remember correctly, the criticism of Munis related to the "military policy" which Cannon supported. America, by the way, was not in the war at the time of the arrests, but declared war immediately after the trial. This "military policy," however, was advanced by Trotsky. It was an attempt to develop transitional demands in a period of militarisation. I think we will find that, in respect of war, all Cannon's testimony is based on Trotsky's articles. Of course, the military policy can be criticised, it was criticised by the RSL in Britain, but whoever does so should fire at the right target.

To give comrades an idea of what the "military policy" was, here is a quotation from a letter of Trotsky's dated August 13, 1940:

The liberals and democrats say:

"We must help the democracies by all means except military intervention in Europe." Why this

stupid and hypocritical limitation? If democracy is to be defended, we should defend it also on European soil; the more so as this is the best way to defend democracy in America. To help England — to crush Hitler — by all means, including military intervention, would signify the best way to defend "American democracy." The purely geographical limitation has neither political nor military sense.

That which workers find worth defending, we are ready to defend by military means — in Europe as well as in the United States. It is the only possibility we have of assuring the defence of civil liberties and other good things in America.

But we categorically refuse to defend civil liberties and democracy in the French manner; the workers and farmers to give their flesh and blood, while the capitalists concentrate in their hands the command. The Petain government should now form the centre of our war propaganda. (Trotsky is referring to the capitulation of the French ruling class to the Nazis as expressed in Marshal Petain who became ruler of Vichy France — WH.) It is important, of course, to explain to workers that the genuine fight against fascism is the socialist revolution. But it is more urgent, more imperative, to explain to millions of American workers that the defence of their "democracy" cannot be delivered over to an American Marshal Petain — and there are many candidates for such a role.

The "military policy" demanded schools under the control of the trade unions for the training of worker officers.

If we are to discuss *Socialism on Trial* and the military policy let it be from what Trotsky called "an objective Marxist viewpoint." Let the positions be properly laid out and an attempt made to understand the context in which they were advocated. Denunciatory definitions asserting the very things that have to be proved hinder that discussion.

That applies to every point of this document which I cannot here follow through point by point. However, there are one or two more comments which must be made.

Again, if we are to have a discussion on entry let us make it a proper discussion. Surely that is elementary if we consider the complete lack of perspective and confusion on Labour Party work in the past period. One of Comrade Banda's passing references is to entry in America and Britain. There is the phrase: "Cannon's disgusting accommodation to Norman Thomas and the U.S. Socialist Party in '34-'35."

Presumably, this is a reference to the fusion of the American Trotskyists with the Workers' Party of Muste and their subsequent entry into the Socialist Party. The very fact that we have to *presume* this is so, is in itself an indictment on the clarity of the document.

If we refer to a "disgusting accommodation," what does anyone learn from that? Are we opposed to entry on principle now? If we want to take up Trotsky on entry (not Cannon — the source: Trotsky) then by all means let us do so. That means, if we are serious, let us come to the question with records in hands and, again, not just with invective. I think Trotsky was right when he posed entry as a permissible tactic. However, a discussion which sought to *prove* positions could once again prove valuable.

Before I pass off this question, let me say that there is nothing correct in the specious dismissal of the experience in Britain. We are told that entry in Britain was an example of the "most shameless toadying to bourgeois democracy in W. Europe." It is denounced as the "transformation of the Healy group into an adjunct of the Bevanite left."

An adjunct of the Bevanite left? We have to remember that while we were in the Labour Party it came to the verge of a split over "Bevanism." Bevan himself came within one vote of being expelled. By linking the Bevanites with the dock struggle we played a big role in widening that division. We were never an adjunct to the Bevanites in the Labour Party, whatever the formulations in William F. Warde's article under Healy's name in *Labour Review*. In the Korean War we stood against the chauvinism that ran through the LP in the first six months, consequently *Socialist Outlook* lost the support of left MPs. We stood with China against imperialism and clashed with the Tribunitaries over China's demand for Quemoy.

What can our comrades build on if they are told that all that history has shown is the perfidy of Cannon and Healy? If entry was so disastrous then let us not reduce serious questions of history to: Yah! Yah!

By all means let us draw up the balance sheet of entry in France, America, and Britain. But a balance sheet, not impressionistic totals! One thing at least will come out. The fact that the open work of the RCP collapsed and that the minority led by Healy had been proved correct in the eyes of the Trotskyist cadre was a big step in establishing Healy's authority. Further, the roots of the *Militant* tendency are in these years of struggle for entry in the RCP and the entry itself. There are a hundred and one educative aspects to these experiences.

There is much more to take up in this document — the Second Congress, he says, supported the formation of Israel — I can only find the opposite. There are his references to syndicalist policies in relation to Pilkingtons and other struggles in Britain, etc. However, these will have to be left out of this document.

### Assist

Our discussion on the history of the Fourth International must be directed to assist those who want to resolve the crisis of leadership which Trotsky posed in the Transitional Programme. If our purpose is not to help the cadre who rose up against Healy, then we were better not writing at all. The comrades who carried through the split with Healy and want to build on it, the majority comrades in the WRP, are concerned very deeply with the problems of the Fourth International because of their experiences in the past three or four months. A great development of thinking is taking place in our Party as a result of the reality of struggle. It is the split which has brought every comrade to thinking on basic problems.

This struggle is the starting point of all knowledge in the Party today. Very correctly, one comrade in the North West, has insisted



once or twice at aggregates that the IC "missed the split." He does not mean that they missed it physically. He means that they missed it in that they have not the slightest intentions to probe it and penetrate its meaning in their thought, or learn from the experiences of WRP members.

The question of whether the WRP is a revolutionary party, which came up at the special conference, is not to be answered by abstracting aspects of history with our emotions as a guide, nor through a contemplation of ourselves. We answer it from the standpoint of a participant in the split and the struggle it opened up in the WRP.

We start with the reality that there exists in the WRP a revolutionary struggle, a struggle of men and women who have been driven back to the principles of the revolutionary movement, who have grasped eagerly at what has been revealed in the first four Congresses of the Communist International on how communists develop the concept of power in the working class out of the reality of all workers' struggles. They are grasping at the meaning of transitional demands and at the writings of Trotsky on how Trotskyists should intervene in the working class and labour movement.

Out of the struggle with Healy — who taught us, in life, what subjective idealism is — real advances in theory are being prepared out of the struggle of the Party.

The majority split with Healy on the axis of the Transitional Programme — that the crisis of humanity is the crisis of working-class leadership. That was the central question involved in revolutionary morality. Every comrade who was incensed at Healy's activity and participated in his expulsion was answering the question: What sort of leader does the working class and its revolutionary vanguard need?

The force which overturned Healy is a revolutionary force because it is asking for revolutionary answers. Its existence, in itself, answers the question as to the contradictory nature of the WRP and whether it has been destroyed as a revolutionary party. There also is to be found the answer to whether there is anything in the history of the Fourth International except a sorry tale of "betrayals," "perfidy," and "corruption."

At the meeting of the majority CC members and visitors when Comrade Banda's document first appeared, one could see various comrades representing the past stages of British Trotskyism. Prewar and wartime Trotskyists, recruits from entry into the LP, from the Communist Party crisis, from the youth of the '60s and '70s, and recruits during the period when weaknesses accelerated into degeneration and corruption. All those comrades, like their counterparts throughout the Party, were not attracted to Trotskyism by perfidy and betrayals, but out of their desire to fight as communists.

Yes! In that meeting there were people who carried out tasks for Healy; there were people who were both victims and executioners. If the question was taken metaphysically we would distribute various degrees of guilt and innocence. A fruitless task! We cannot postpone our fight for leadership at any time, and we

both pay for and overcome our mistakes, and even grave errors, in that fight. The IC wants to distribute revenge as a substitute for a struggle to develop revolutionaries. They remove the right from leaders of the WRP who want to correct their mistakes to assist the Trotskyist movement to root out "Healyism." That must earn our sharpest condemnation! The fight of people, who participated in the "Healyite" regime, to correct the party — that is based not on its degeneration but on its revolutionary roots.

The dialectical contradiction is that by ruthlessly pursuing a struggle against "Healyism," theoretically and politically, nationally and internationally, the errors and the most obscene of corruptions and degenerations can be the source of a movement the like of which has not been seen since Trotsky died. That is possible because the consciousness of the crisis of leadership has made an enormous leap through the split. Authority of leaders has now to be won politically; discipline has now to be built on conviction and political relationships. Leadership is posed before every member — that every member of the party is an officer in the proletarian army gains a new meaning for party members. Members see their own development as Marxists in connection with the development of the working class.

#### Spirit

In the Party there can be a real spirit of Bolshevism, not the "self-critical" humiliation, which is a carry-over from Stalinism and became a terrible feature of the WRP and the IC. Instead, we can have the critical atmosphere of a Bolshevik party where comrades will fight questions out seriously and, like Lenin, be at times in a minority on a question, with the confidence that experience would prove the issue.

The very fact that we reached the depths we did therefore means we can spring to great heights. Cognition can become, not an individual method of thought, to be learned like "positive thinking." It can advance through the Party. Theory can develop in connection with penetrating and intervening in the contradictions in the working class.

Comrades are coming into struggle against subjective idealism and anti-Marxism in a way never before experienced in the Trotskyist movement because there was never before such a degeneration. The questions of leadership are posed to the advanced guard as never before. That is the source of progress. There is a desire to take leadership and there is an evasion of leadership which finds its most organised and acute expression in the minority faction and the IC. They resist the real meaning of the split and a ruthless carrying through of the struggle against "Healyism." They ignore the central question of how to build a world party with sections which have a mass following.

To face that question we have to make a serious objective Marxist appraisal of the past of the Fourth International. That cannot be begun by reducing the past to a negative as Comrade Banda has done. □

## 10 AND 20 YEARS AGO

**Intercontinental Press**

March 15, 1976

On March 18 and 19 the Privy Council in London, the highest court in the British Commonwealth, is scheduled to hear the appeal of Desmond Trotter. If the appeal is denied, Trotter faces death by hanging.

A militant on the Caribbean island of Dominica, the twenty-one-year-old Trotter has been held in solitary confinement since his arrest in May 1974 on a frame-up murder charge. Trotter was accused of killing an American tourist despite the testimony of numerous witnesses that he had been sick at home with a severe asthma attack when the killing took place.

As a leading member of the Movement for a New Dominica, and the editor of its monthly publication, *Twaway*, Trotter was a marked man. During the late 1960s he had been a central leader of the Black Power movement that emerged in Dominica at that time. He was an organizer and main speaker at African Liberation Day demonstrations on the island in 1971, 1972, and 1973.

## WORLD OUTLOOK

PERSPECTIVE MONDIALE

(Predecessor of *Intercontinental Press*)

March 11, 1966

The U.S. State Department tried manfully to maintain its posture of waiting a "decent interval" before recognizing the plotters who overthrew Kwame Nkrumah. A "decent interval" is the traditional diplomatic device used by the State Department to bolster the argument that the U.S. does not intervene in the internal affairs of other countries and that its hand is never involved in sudden overturns like the one that occurred February 24 in Ghana.

But when the legal head of the Ghanaian government went unexpectedly to nearby Guinea where he was given a tremendous welcome as an exile and victim of CIA machinations, the striped-pants crew in Washington panicked and threw decency to the winds. On March 4, just eight days after the Ghanaian generals pulled their coup d'état, the State Department recognized them.

The speed of the move, said John W. Finney, Washington correspondent of the *New York Times* [March 5] was a "deliberate attempt to support the new Government against any bid by the deposed President, Kwame Nkrumah, to reassert power."

In the lower part of Manhattan, the banking and stock-market moguls are also rallying behind the new military regime. The appeal made by Lieut. Gen. Joseph Ankrah March 3 for an immediate loan of \$50,400,000 was at once given a sympathetic hearing in Wall Street.

# 100,000 march for abortion rights

## Respond to government, right-wing attacks

By Candace Wagner

WASHINGTON, D.C. — More than 100,000 supporters of abortion rights filled the streets here March 9 in a "March for Women's Lives." Its central demand was to "keep abortion and birth control safe and legal." This protest, combined with a West Coast march planned for March 16 in Los Angeles, was the biggest action for women's rights in U.S. history.

The marches were initiated by the National Organization for Women (NOW), the largest women's rights group in the United States, to defend the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion. More than 475 local and national organizations endorsed the actions.

The crowd in Washington was predominately young, with contingents from more than 400 college campuses. Their chants reflected the enthusiasm and determination of the marchers, as well as an understanding of the broad nature of the attacks by the Reagan administration. "Not the church, not the state, women must decide our fate!" rang out, as well as "Fund contraception not contras," referring to Reagan's campaign for \$100 million for the Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries, known as contras.

Washington's Pennsylvania Avenue was a sea of white and purple banners and sashes (the colors of the campaign for women's suffrage of the early 1900s). As the first marchers reached the Capitol grounds, others were passing the White House chanting loudly, and thousands more were still lined up at the assembly point for the three-mile march.

Participation in the march was organized from across the country. Some 500 women's rights supporters came from Texas, a 1,300-mile trip. Texas has been the site of more right-wing terrorist bombings of abortion clinics than any other state.

Members and officials of a number of unions marched. The Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), an official body of the AFL-CIO union federation, was a sponsor of the actions. CLUW had a contingent that included members of Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers union from Austin, Minnesota. They are involved in a historic strike against the Hormel meatpacking company (see article on page 173). Many marchers were seen wearing "Boycott Hormel" and "P-9 Proud" buttons.

Joyce Miller, national president of CLUW, spoke at the rally. "Today," she said, "we focus on the right of women to control their own bodies: the right to choose whether and when to have children. This basic struggle is particularly critical to the 48 million women in

the work force. Out of the right to control one's body comes the right to economic security and economic freedom. To lose this right relegates women to the lowest-paying, lowest-status, dead-end jobs."

The Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles marches came in response to growing attacks on women's right to obtain abortions.

Right-wing terrorists have been bombing abortion clinics across the country for three years now. By pushing for a constitutional amendment to outlaw abortion, the Catholic church hierarchy and the Reagan administration have given encouragement to the bombers. Only a few have been caught and prosecuted.

Several states have passed laws requiring parental consent for those under 18 years of age to obtain an abortion. Other states are attempting to require burial for aborted fetuses or deny state funding for hospitals that perform abortions.

An important focus of the "March for Women's Lives" was the demand that federal funding be restored for abortions for poor women. In 1977 Congress passed the Hyde Amendment, which cut off government funding for abortion. Black women, Latinas, and other victims of racist discrimination are hit hardest by this law.

NOW, along with several Black women's groups, sponsored an all-day program in Washington, D.C., in February to discuss re-

productive rights in the Black community and to organize participation in the national marches. The speakers' platform at the March 9 rally included a number of Blacks and Latinas.

"No forced sterilization!" appeared on a number of banners March 9. This demand is seen as an important part of the struggle for women's "right to choose" when and if to have children. Forced sterilization of Black, Latina, and Native American women has been widespread.

The speakers' platform at the Washington action included a broad range of speakers, from women's rights leaders to politicians to "prochoice" Catholic nuns.

"Our message is simple," Eleanor Smeal, national president of NOW, explained. "We knew the time had come for people to stand up and be counted for women's lives. Our message is simple. You cannot play with women's lives any longer."

A number of speakers addressed the links between the struggle for abortion rights and international struggles. Gaye Williams of the National Political Congress of Black Women asked the crowd: "How does Mr. Reagan have the unmitigated nerve to dare ask for \$100 million. \$100 million not to feed starving Black children in America, but to send that \$100 million in guns to kill Nicaraguan children? Is this the 'right-to-life' he wants us to support?" ("Right-to-life" is the name many opponents of abortion rights give themselves.)

The big cheers that followed this question showed the deep antiwar sentiment of many of the marchers.

Williams continued: "Today we stretch our hands across the water to Africa to join Winnie Mandela and offer our full support for her people's struggle."

"Her raised fist is the signal that we will triumph, all of us together." □



Part of march on Capitol to defend women's right to choose abortion.

Ernest Harsch/IP