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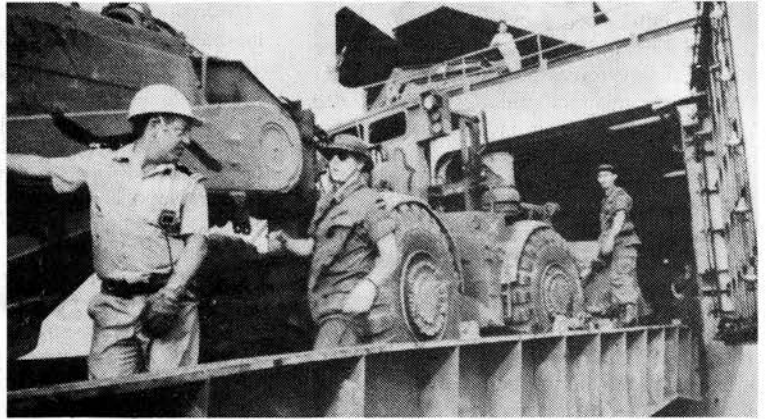
the Americas

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## Reagan's Hoax of Sandinista Invasion Used to Deepen U.S. Role in 'Contra' War



White House manufactured incident to boost military, logistical aid to Honduran army.

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Curb Popular Upsurge**

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**Duvalier's Ouster Draws  
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**U.S. Attack on Libya — Act of Aggression**

# Nicaraguan people fight for right to live in peace

By Doug Jenness

For the first time since Washington's mercenary war against the Sandinista government of Nicaragua began, U.S. forces last month openly participated in joint military action with Honduran troops in support of the Nicaraguan *contras* (counterrevolutionaries).

The White House is now seeking to use Green Berets to train *contras* in Honduras and El Salvador and at U.S. military bases in the United States. And if the Reagan administration succeeds in getting Congress to approve its \$100-million aid package for the *contras*, U.S. advisers in Honduras will begin teaching the mercenary forces how to use top-of-the-line Stinger anti-aircraft missiles to be provided by the Pentagon. This is the same weapon Reagan has decided to give Afghan and Angolan counterrevolutionaries.

By openly involving U.S. military forces in the war against Nicaragua, Reagan is attempting to make it more difficult for Congress to refuse military aid to the *contra* gangs.

Shortly after the House of Representatives narrowly rejected his \$100 million aid proposal on March 20 and just before the Senate approved military assistance for the *contras* one week later, the president launched a provocative campaign against Nicaragua's government for allegedly invading Honduras. The State Department branded Nicaragua "an aggressor state" and churned out one lie after another condemning this "invasion."

The White House rushed \$20 million of "emergency" military aid to Honduras. This included funneling to the *contras* some of the military equipment Reagan has been asking Congress to supply to them.

Fourteen U.S. helicopters, manned by 50 U.S. pilots and crewmen, ferried more than 700 Honduran troops to positions near the Nicaraguan border. The Pentagon promised to continue transporting weapons, ammunition, food, and other supplies as long as the Honduran troops remained in that region.

## Invasion hoax

The White House first announced that 1,500 Sandinista troops (some officials said 1,000, while others claimed as many as 2,200) had entered Honduras. This, they charged, was the Sandinistas' largest and deepest penetration into Honduras.

When the facts finally began to surface, it became apparent that Reagan's account was pure fabrication. There was no invasion of Honduras. What happened was that Sandinista troops, faced with repeated invasions by *contra* forces based in camps some 10 miles inside the Honduran border, sought to defend Nicara-

guan sovereignty by clearing out these rightist camps.

Sandinista troops had crossed the border hundreds of times before in hot pursuit of *contra* invaders without the Honduran or U.S. governments making an issue of it.

In a column in the April 3 *New York Times*, Anthony Lewis pointed out that even "the United States has long supported the right of nations to pursue attackers across borders, as part of international law's right of self-defense."

Moreover, according to Honduran officials, the Sandinista force was only about 800 soldiers, half the number Reagan claimed.

Far from being an aggressor state as Reagan maintains, Nicaragua is defending itself from the aggression being waged against it. U.S.-organized and -financed thugs commanded by former National Guardsmen from Anastasio Somoza's regime have been invading Nicaragua from bases in Honduras and Costa Rica for five years. They pillage and burn villages and murder, maim, and rape Nicaraguan citizens. This aggression has cost nearly 14,000 Nicaraguan lives and gigantic economic damage.

Moreover, Washington maintains a formidable and menacing military presence near Nicaragua's borders. Under the cover of virtually permanent military maneuvers in Honduras, the Pentagon has constructed 14 military bases. It has built or improved eight airstrips and is currently building another one 15 miles from the Nicaraguan border.

Maneuvers involving 4,500 U.S. soldiers were taking place at the very time Reagan launched his smear campaign about a bogus Sandinista invasion.

Transporting Honduran troops to the Nicaraguan border to counter an alleged invasion, however, was not just a provocative practice run. It was a military action that could have brought Honduran and U.S. troops into combat with Sandinista forces. It clearly revealed that the inescapable logic of the CIA-organized mercenary war, if it continues to deepen, will draw other Central American countries, as well as U.S. GIs, into the conflict.

As Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega noted at a March 28 news conference in Managua, "We are facing a Vietnamization of the struggle in Central America." (See article on p. 236.)

This worries many Honduran government officials and politicians. Officially the Honduran government is attempting to avoid direct clashes with Nicaragua and doesn't admit that *contra* forces operate on its soil. During this latest incident, Honduran officials didn't publicly acknowledge the Sandinista "invasion" or call for emergency help until after a couple of

days of intensive prodding from Washington.

Some Honduran figures expressed irritation over Washington's heavy-handedness. One top official told the *New York Times*, "The United States' interest was that this situation have the connotation of an international incident. We had no interest in this."

## Congress crumbles

The response in Congress to Reagan's scam about an invasion was further retreat. "At the sound of these alarms," the *New York Times* editors wrote March 27, "you could watch the resistance in Congress crumbling. Suddenly the borders of Honduras had become a sacrosanct American cause. Suddenly 'striking at sanctuaries' — by the Sandinistas — had become a vicious aggression."

On the same day that this editorial appeared, the Senate approved Reagan's aid request by a 53 to 47 vote, making only minor modifications in the bill rejected by the House.

Under the plan, \$25 million could be spent immediately for "nonlethal" assistance and defensive weapons, including portable surface-to-air missiles.

The remaining funds could be spent 90 days later in installments of \$15 million every three months. The funding would start July 1 if the administration determined that there was no reasonable chance to negotiate the major changes it sought in Nicaragua policy.

Congress could disapprove the further expenditures, but only by a two-thirds vote.

The plan provides for bilateral U.S.-Nicaragua negotiations only if the Managua government begins discussions with the *contras*.

An alternative proposal introduced by Democratic Senator James Sasser differed primarily in placing no conditions on U.S. negotiations with Managua. It was defeated 67 to 33.

House Speaker Thomas O'Neill, who had voted against Reagan's *contra* aid package a few days earlier, declared that had the House known of the Sandinista "invasion" before it voted on the *contra* aid bill, the vote might have gone in favor of the *contras*.

House members, however, get another chance to vote on military aid. Currently they are scheduled to consider the Senate-approved bill on April 15. Pressure is mounting on the legislators to adopt this bill or a close version of it.

The current mood in Congress reflects a shift from a year ago when the body rejected President Reagan's request for military aid but finally agreed to appropriate \$27 million in so-called nonlethal assistance. Aid to the *contras*, which began in 1981, was suspended in 1984 after it was revealed that CIA agents helped mine Nicaraguan harbors.

Senator Sasser contends that the main reason for the turn in sentiment was that there is "a clear and convincing case" that the Nicaraguan government "betrayed the promise of its own revolution."

This statement expresses the growing agreement by liberals in Congress that the Sandinista government is the key problem in Central America and that Washington should pres-

sure it to change its ways. This has led to greater acceptance of open military assistance to the contras.

### Nicaragua's right to exist

There is no clear voice in Congress that says Nicaragua's Sandinista government has the right to exist even if Washington strongly disagrees with its policies.

Although the U.S. government has fundamental differences with the governments of the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba, it has been forced to accept that they exist and is not currently organizing to overthrow them. This is a victory that the working people of those countries won through struggle.

Nicaraguans are simply fighting for this same right to peacefully coexist in the world with countries whose governments oppose its policies. This is what Reagan and a mounting consensus in Congress are denying them.

The Reagan administration, in fact, keeps upping the ante on the conditions the Sandinistas must meet in order to prevent further U.S. military escalation against Nicaragua.

At the beginning of his administration, Reagan insisted that Managua should not transport arms to the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) guerrillas in El Salvador. Despite repeated attempts, however, the White House has been unable to produce one scrap of proof that the Nicaraguan government was doing this.

Reagan then declared that if Nicaragua improved its military capabilities by obtaining jet fighters from the Soviet Union, Washington would view this as an upset in the balance of power in the region. This, it announced, would require U.S. military action. So far, the Sandinistas have not obtained jet fighters, although it would be perfectly within its rights as a sovereign nation to do so.

The White House also stated that if Nicaragua invaded any of its neighbors in Central America, that would be viewed as an act of aggression warranting military intervention. Yet, despite its recent efforts to depict Sandinista actions against contra border camps as an invasion, it has failed to persuade the people of the world and the United States that this is the case.

The Nicaraguan government's policy, in fact, has been the opposite. It has attempted to normalize relations on its border with both Costa Rica and Honduras. Just a few months ago Managua established an agreement with the Costa Rican government whereby the border will be monitored by international observers.

For five years the Nicaragua government has been urging international supervision of its borders with Honduras, and during Reagan's recent invasion scam it reiterated its proposal for a joint border patrol.

But none of this satisfies Reagan. He demands that the Sandinista government negotiate with the contras. This would mean beginning to turn the power won by the workers and peasants over to the very Somocista forces whose tyrannical rule they toppled

seven years ago. There is nothing else to negotiate with the contras about. This outrageous demand tramples on the democratic right of the Nicaraguan people to choose their own government.

But unless the Sandinistas say "uncle," Reagan pledges to continue brutalizing them.

Despite its enormous military power, however, the Yankee Goliath is not assured of victory. In the past year the Sandinista armed forces dealt the contras clipping blows, curtailing their destructive raids into Nicaragua.

Moreover, a big majority of the U.S. population opposes escalation of Washington's war.

This sentiment is reflected in the unprecedented decision by the governors of Maine and Massachusetts to bar participation by Na-

tional Guardsmen from their states in maneuvers in Honduras. Other state governments are also considering taking this step. In the past few years thousands of Guardsmen have been exercising with regular army troops in Central America.

All this points up the urgent need to organize antiwar actions, and that there is the possibility to do so. In the past few weeks, in response to Reagan's stepped-up moves against the Sandinistas, emergency protests have been held in many cities and universities throughout the United States.

An international campaign of actions against Washington's proposed aid to the contras and the contra war could make a difference in helping Nicaragua's workers' and peasants' government win the right to exist in peace. □

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# Ortega warns of 'Vietnamization'

Hits use of U.S. military personnel in Honduras

By Cindy Jaquith

MANAGUA — "We are now facing a Vietnamization of the struggle in Central America," Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega told a news conference here March 28.

By sending U.S. helicopters, piloted by U.S. military personnel, to the Honduran-Nicaraguan border area, said Ortega, the Reagan administration has taken "concrete steps that directly commit U.S. troops in support of the mercenary forces" attacking Nicaragua.

He warned that if this leads to a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua, not only many Nicaraguan youth, but many U.S. youth as well will die.

The news conference was held the day after the U.S. Senate approved \$100 million in military aid to the mercenaries. While sharply condemning the vote, Ortega stressed that "this is not the most serious thing. The most serious act is the use of U.S. helicopters piloted by U.S. pilots" which "have been used to move troops of the Honduran army to the edge of the border with Nicaragua, a border area that is in extreme conflict, that is extremely tense."

Taking up the charge that the Sandinistas had invaded Honduras, Ortega explained the actions of Nicaraguan troops in recent days. "There have been no battles between Honduras and Nicaragua," he emphasized. "Rather, there have been battles between our army, defending the sovereignty and integrity of Nicaragua, with the mercenary forces who had their camps in Honduras and are trying to penetrate our territory."

The day before, Nicaragua's Ministry of Defense had released a communiqué reporting that Sandinista troops had dealt 600 casualties to the mercenaries, killing 350 of them, "at several points in Honduran-Nicaraguan border territories."

"Our troops also destroyed several camps of importance to the enemy, including their principal training center," the Defense Ministry said, "and put out of action some means of transport including one helicopter."

The Sandinista daily, *Barricada*, called the operation "the principal military blow to the counterrevolution in the last few years."

Ortega said that Sandinista troops would continue defensive operations in the border area and Washington should consider the implications of its deepening role there. "There's no question," he warned, "that to the degree the U.S. Army gets involved, through its helicopters, advisers, and soldiers, in support of the mercenaries, U.S. officials, U.S. advisers, and U.S. helicopters are running the same risk as the mercenaries."

And, he said, with the official introduction of advisers and helicopters in direct support of

the mercenaries, "what the U.S. Congress is doing is committing itself to a policy of intervention in Nicaragua."

Ortega appealed to the U.S. government to open talks with Nicaragua to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict, and reported that the Sandinistas had urged the Contadora and Lima support groups to intervene. (The Contadora Group is made up of the governments of Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela, and seeks a negotiated settlement in Central America. The Lima Group, in turn, supports the Contadora nations in their efforts, and is made up of Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Uruguay.)

"We are prepared to have a dialogue with the United States," said Ortega, over matters of security and the war in the area. "What we are not prepared to discuss with the U.S. government — or with anyone else — is our internal situation, the kind of political, social, and economic regime we have." These questions, he said, are being decided by the Nicaraguan people in upcoming open hearings on the country's draft constitution.

Nor, he said, would the Nicaraguans accept Reagan's demand that they negotiate with the mercenaries. "We will never have a dialogue with them," he asserted.

Following this opening statement, Ortega answered questions from the media.

"You said the counterrevolution has its bases in Honduras. Where exactly was this camp you destroyed?" asked one reporter.

"Honduran territory, or a part of it, has been occupied by the mercenary forces," answered Ortega. "That is, Honduras has lost its sovereignty over a part of its territory. The mercenaries launched their attack [from there] against Nicaragua and thus the area has been converted into a zone of war. The U.S. government and the CIA are robbing Honduras of its territory and giving it to the mercenary forces."

Asked if this was a "new criterion" for defining Honduran sovereignty, Ortega said, "No, it's not new."

Another reporter asked why the Sandinistas decided to make their military move now.

"We insist in the first place that there was no clash between Honduras and Nicaragua," replied Ortega. "Nicaragua has not attacked Honduras. What exists is a territory that has been occupied by the United States and the mercenary forces. It is in Honduras, bordering on Nicaragua. From there, the mercenaries penetrate our country. So, we've done nothing more than mount defensive operations in this whole border area. In these operations, we occupied and destroyed their central training center, as well as other camps."

"When the mapmakers of the world define



DANIEL ORTEGA

Fred Murphy/IF

political boundaries, they draw lines," said an NBC-TV reporter. "They don't talk about war zones or lost sovereignty. The lines that the mapmakers draw — did Nicaraguan soldiers cross that line or not?"

Ortega answered: "The mercenary forces, advised by the U.S. government, are the ones crossing from Honduran territory into our territory to assassinate our people; to destroy the people's property, schools, and health clinics; to assassinate children and women. Our forces are doing nothing more than defending themselves in the border area. We are violating no principles. The one who is violating the principle of sovereignty is the United States."

He pointed out that the Nicaraguan commanders of the mercenaries have insisted all along that their bases are in Nicaragua. The Honduran government "has denied that mercenary camps exist in Honduras," he explained.

Asked whether the Nicaraguan attack on the mercenary base was "a bad political move" given the debate in Congress, Ortega said that that debate "is over the best way to destroy the Nicaraguan revolution." The Nicaraguan people, he explained, "cannot defend ourselves through such a discussion. We are not a colony of the United States."

Ortega repeated that Nicaraguan troops would continue defensive operations in the border area "so that the mercenary forces don't advance one single inch into our territory." If U.S. helicopters "attack us, if they penetrate our territory, they will be shot down," he declared. □

# Gulf of Sidra attack — a U.S. act of war

*Part of Washington's drive to bring down Qaddafi government*

**By Ernest Harsch**

From threats, secret CIA plots, and economic embargoes, the U.S. rulers have moved to direct and overt military aggression in their drive to bring Libya to heel.

Backed up by the largest naval armada assembled in the Mediterranean since World War II, U.S. planes firing guided missiles sank at least two Libyan ships in the Gulf of Sidra and bombarded Libyan missile installations near the town of Sidra. Although no Libyan casualty figures have been released for the attacks on March 24 and 25, dozens are believed to have been killed. Washington claimed that its forces suffered no casualties.

This was a carefully organized provocation, planned out in Washington weeks in advance. As a cover, U.S. officials continued their propaganda campaign about Libyan "terrorism" and elevated the issue of Libya's claims to the Gulf of Sidra into a pretext for war.

But the real aim of the attack was to advance Washington's overall campaign to bring down the Libyan government of Muammar el-Qaddafi and to reassert imperialist domination over that country of just 3.5 million people.

To that end, the Pentagon deployed 3 aircraft carriers, an estimated 6 to 12 nuclear submarines, 28 other warships, 250 planes, and 18,000 military personnel off Libya's coast. Some of these ships and planes deliberately sailed into or flew over the Gulf of Sidra, in defiance of Libyan warnings that such moves would be considered acts of war. U.S. officials claim Libyan SAM-5 missiles were then fired at the interloping ships and planes and that the war fleet simply responded in "self-defense."

This blatant act of aggression was supported by members of both parties in Congress, ranging from loyal Republican Party supporters of Reagan administration policy to Democratic Party liberals. "The administration's handling of this matter is on the right course," Democratic Congressman Thomas O'Neill, the speaker of the House of Representatives, declared.

Washington's imperialist allies generally backed the U.S. position on the Gulf of Sidra dispute. Some, such as the British government of Margaret Thatcher, gave a ringing endorsement of the U.S. military response. But a few, including the Italian government, were mildly critical of Washington's reliance on military force, warning that it would further increase political instability in the region.

Throughout the Middle East and Africa, the U.S. attack was roundly condemned. Not one Arab government — including those like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait that are

closely allied with Washington — failed to denounce it.

Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yassir Arafat declared, "Regarding the insolent, treacherous U.S. aggression against Libya, we support Libya without hesitation or reservations and with all our capacity."

The Nicaraguan government — itself a target of U.S. aggression — issued an official statement categorically condemning Washington's "unjustified attacks" on Libya.

The African National Congress of South Africa declared that Washington's attacks on Libya "are clearly part of its policy of state terrorism" that is also directed against Nicaragua, Angola, and other countries.

The Soviet government sharply denounced the U.S. aggression against Libya, calling it an act of "piracy." But an official Soviet spokesperson, Vladimir Lomeiko, likewise stressed, "We're not taking part in that conflict in any way."

Moscow has provided Libya with considerable military assistance, and Soviet technicians are reported to be training Libyans at the Sidra missile site. According to a report in the April 3 *New York Times*, "The Soviet chargé was summoned to the State Department shortly before [the U.S. attack on the Sidra site], and Soviet experts had left the base when the U.S. Navy hit."

## Washington's pretexts

Publicly, U.S. officials have insisted that the military maneuvers were staged solely to challenge Libya's claim to the entire Gulf of Sidra, which Washington and its allies consider to be international waters. Although Libya claims sovereignty over the gulf extending up to 120 miles from its shoreline, Washington only recognizes a 12-mile limit.

But this dispute was only a pretext. Some of Washington's allies, including Canada and Iceland, have made comparable or even greater claims to disputed territorial waters without provoking a U.S. military response. And Washington never even charged that Libya had interfered with any commercial maritime traffic in the gulf.

There is another sign of U.S. hypocrisy as well. When U.S. warplanes were fired on after coming within 100 miles of Libya, Washington insisted that this was an unprovoked attack justifying counteraction. Yet Washington itself claims a 200-mile zone of airspace around the borders of the United States in which it maintains a "right" to shoot down any approaching enemy aircraft. Why is Libya denied a similar right?

Over the years, the U.S. authorities' chief

justification for going after the Libyan government has been its alleged support for "international terrorism." This is a frame-up.

When U.S. officials talk about "terrorism," they always include popular liberation struggles like those in Palestine, Ireland, southern Africa, Central America, and elsewhere. Since the Libyan government has backed many of these struggles, that automatically constitutes support for "terrorism" in Washington's eyes.

Such accusations, moreover, seek to divert attention from the real source of international terror — the world system of imperialist domination headed by Washington itself.

Nor have the U.S. authorities ever proved any Libyan involvement in specific terrorist actions. In 1981 they claimed that Libyan "hit squads" were converging on the United States to assassinate Reagan and other officials; that story later turned out to be a concoction by the U.S. and Israeli intelligence agencies. Although Reagan claimed "irrefutable" proof of Libyan involvement in the December 1985 terrorist attacks on the Rome and Vienna airports, no actual evidence was ever presented.

Most recently, U.S. officials have sought to seize on the bombings of a TWA airliner on route to Athens and a nightclub in West Berlin frequented by U.S. troops. While U.S. officials have admitted that there is no evidence of a Libyan role in either bombing, that has not prevented them from trying to smear Libya. Both actions, a White House official insisted, seemed to fit a "pattern of indiscriminate violence" waged by Libya against U.S. citizens.

It is on the basis of such fanciful conjecture that Washington claims a right to strike at Libya militarily.

## 'Stimulating Qaddafi's fall'

Washington's anti-Libya drive has nothing to do with combating terrorism or safeguarding maritime routes. It is first and foremost an effort to bring down a government that refuses to bow to U.S. dictates.

Secretary of State George Shultz himself hinted at Washington's real goal when he declared during the Gulf of Sidra clashes that Qaddafi "belonged in a box."

Privately, U.S. officials have been quite explicit about their aims. Referring to a meeting two weeks before the Gulf of Sidra provocation at which Reagan, Shultz, and other officials planned out the details of the action, the April 4 *Washington Post* reported that Shultz underscored "a critical but little-mentioned goal of the Reagan administration's recent actions toward Libya — to build enough pressure on Qaddafi from within and without to de-

stabilize his regime eventually."

An earlier acknowledgement of this aim came in a 1984 CIA "vulnerability assessment" of Libya, which stressed, "No course of action short of stimulating Qaddafi's fall will bring any significant and enduring change in Libyan policies."

U.S. efforts to overturn the Libyan government have been under way for some time. Under the Reagan administration and its predecessors, there has been a series of covert plots orchestrated by the CIA and other imperialist intelligence agencies to assassinate Qaddafi or foment military coups against his regime. There have also been a number of open and direct moves:

- In 1977 the U.S.-backed regime in Egypt provoked a brief border war with Libya in which Egyptian planes bombed and strafed targets within Libya.
- In 1981 U.S. naval and air forces carrying out "maneuvers" in the Gulf of Sidra shot down two Libyan jet fighters.
- In 1982 Washington banned the import of Libyan crude oil into the United States.
- In June 1985 Washington expelled a Libyan diplomat accredited to the United Nations, claiming that he was involved in "terrorist" actions.
- In January 1986 Reagan ordered a total ban on all trade, commercial contracts, and other transactions with Libya, as well as the freezing of all Libyan assets in the United States. He likewise demanded that all U.S. citizens living or working in Libya leave immediately or face possible prosecution. (Disregarding Reagan's order, an estimated 800 U.S. citizens are still there.)

The very day Reagan announced this economic embargo, he allocated increased money and personnel to CIA covert operations against Qaddafi. Around that same time, the planning for the Gulf of Sidra provocation also began.

### The Egyptian card

Some of Washington's anti-Libya actions are being planned in concert with its regional and imperialist allies. "We wrote many contingency plans," a top CIA officer told *Time* magazine. He said these included a joint U.S.-Egyptian operation designed to topple the Qaddafi government; coordinated moves with the French military forces, involving offensive operations from both the Mediterranean and Chad; and covert action involving other North African governments. "We even approached Israel," the CIA official revealed.

Citing officials in both Washington and Cairo, *New York Times* correspondent R.W. Apple reported that the Reagan administration was actively seeking "to persuade Egypt to agree to a joint American-Egyptian military operation either to oust Colonel Qaddafi or to weaken him enough that the Libyan military would do the job."

Confirmation of this came in a report by Ibrahim Nafeh, editor of the semi-official Cairo daily *Al-Ahram*, in that paper's March 31 issue. He revealed that Washington's decision to seek a joint U.S.-Egyptian military assault

against Libya came at a July 1985 meeting in Washington chaired by then National Security Adviser Robert MacFarlane. According to Nafeh, several visits by U.S. officials to Cairo followed, including one by Vice Adm. John Poindexter, MacFarlane's successor as national security adviser, who offered to give the Egyptian regime military aid to carry out the action.

"The Americans," Nafeh commented, "see the Egyptian-Libyan border, which is about 1,000 kilometers long, as providing Egypt with a good opportunity to attack Libya with U.S. aid."

Apple's report in the *Times*, citing U.S. officials, said that "one plan under discussion would have involved an Egyptian ground attack followed by a request for United States assistance" and that "United States involvement might include a major Air Force bombing operation."

Although Egyptian officials indicate that they have not agreed to such a joint attack, the danger remains real. Since their 1977 war with Libya, Egyptian forces have been massed along the border several times, most recently at the end of November 1985, at the same time that U.S. naval forces in the Mediterranean were put on alert.

Such joint U.S.-Egyptian initiatives are only one facet of the imperialist efforts to increase the regional pressures on Libya and to try to isolate it internationally.

Paris has played a major role in this in Chad, on Libya's southern border. In February several hundred French commandos were rushed to Chad to help the proimperialist regime there contain a rebellion by Chadian guerrillas in the north. The White House also quickly dispatched \$10 million in U.S. arms to the Chadian regime. Seizing on the fact that the guerrillas have received Libyan assistance, this intervention was carried out under the guise of combating "Libyan aggression."

The proimperialist regime in Tunisia, bordering Libya on the northwest, has likewise taken hostile actions toward Libya. French radar installations in Tunisia are used to monitor Libyan military movements.

Until it was overthrown following a popular upsurge in April 1985, the Sudanese regime of Gaafar al-Nimeiry also participated in this anti-Libyan front. Since then, however, the new Sudanese government has adopted a friendlier stance toward Libya and has accepted Libyan military aid. Washington has responded sharply, calling this stance "most unwise" and cutting off U.S. assistance to Sudan.

Since the Gulf of Sidra clash, Washington is once again pressing its West European allies to break political and economic ties with Libya. Although CIA Director William Casey has complained that "many of our friends and allies are rather slow" on imposing sanctions against Libya, some steps have been taken. On April 5, the French government expelled two Libyan diplomats from France.

The constant pressure on Libya is designed to wear down the Libyan people and to probe for weak points in the government and officer

corps that can be exploited by Washington. This comes at a time of economic difficulties for Libya. Due largely to the fall in world oil prices, Libya's oil income plunged from \$22 billion in 1980 to \$8 billion in 1985, seriously disrupting Libyan economic plans and causing some shortages of consumer goods.

### Looking for a coup

U.S. officials hope that these combined pressures will trigger a coup. According to a report in the April 4 *New York Times*, congressional sources and White House officials "say that the recent clashes between the Sixth Fleet and Libyan forces in the Gulf of Sidra were part of an Administration strategy aimed at provoking dissidents in the military ... to overthrow Colonel Qaddafi."

So far, however, the options for an internal proimperialist coup are limited. According to a report in the *Washington Post*, sources familiar with the CIA's plans for undermining the Libyan government have noted "the absence of a large, well-organized and committed group of opposition forces either inside or outside the country." There was a lack of "Qaddafi contras," as one source put it.

Some liberals have argued that actions like the Gulf of Sidra attack, rather than encouraging any existing domestic opponents of Qaddafi, will instead tend to strengthen Qaddafi's position by rallying national support.

The absence of any significant, organized internal opposition greatly complicates Washington's efforts: It would make direct military action to overthrow the Libyan government much more costly, both militarily and politically. The Pentagon, according to a *Washington Post* report, has estimated "that it would take up to six divisions — more than 90,000 troops — to overthrow Qaddafi in concert with Egyptian forces."

Such a massive U.S. invasion would bring considerable U.S. casualties and increased antiwar protests within the United States. It would also spark a sharp international reaction, particularly in the Middle East.

That is why Washington prefers to line up regional proxies and seek out forces within Libya that can do its dirty work.

In the meantime, the U.S. rulers continue to escalate their threats and provocations. By keeping the propaganda campaign about "Libyan terrorism" in high gear, they are preparing for further attacks. One unnamed "top U.S. official" told *Newsweek* magazine, "The next act of terrorism will bring the hammer down."

U.S. military planners have already selected a wide array of Libyan targets for attack, ranging from military installations to oil pipelines and storage facilities. In addition, the April 6 *New York Times* reported, Secretary of State Shultz "has said the American public has to be ready for the possibility that innocent civilians might be killed in attempts by the United States to retaliate." □

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# Masses drawn into political life

*Duvalier's ouster opens door to organization, discussion*

By Margaret Jayko

The overthrow of the dictatorship of Jean-Claude Duvalier in Haiti on February 7 opened the door for the Haitian people to begin to participate in political life for the first time in decades.

Under the 29-year reign of terror, first of François "Papa Doc" Duvalier and then of his son, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" — both of whom dubbed themselves president-for-life — the country was run by a tiny, exclusive clique of rich landowners and businessmen. The Duvalier dynasty brooked no opposition — most opponents were exiled, imprisoned, tortured, murdered, or some combination of these.

This set-up was largely financed by Washington and other imperialist powers, which poured US\$200 million a year into Haiti.

To terrorize the population, Duvalier relied on his personal armed militia, known as the Tontons Macoutes ("bogeymen" in Haiti's native Creole). Trained by former German Nazi officers, these torturers and murderers routinely extorted cash and crops from peasants and small merchants.

In *operasyon dechoukaj* — "Operation Up-root" — the name given to the struggle of the Haitian people to destroy every aspect of Duvalierism — the Macoutes were a central part of the people's wrath.

Having freed themselves from the suffocating weight of Duvalierist repression, thousands of Haitians of all social classes are beginning to discuss and debate the solutions to the immense problems facing their country, the poorest in the Western Hemisphere. Malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, and unemployment flourished under Duvalier. And all social classes were victims of the large-scale extortion, corruption, and outright theft the Duvaliers institutionalized in order to enrich themselves and their cronies.

On a recent one-week trip to Haiti, Jackie Floyd, Harvey McArthur, and I were able to get a glimpse of some of the ways the Haitian people are beginning to organize to improve their conditions of life.

Nobody seems to expect much from the current military-dominated government. Most people we talked to thought that if anything is going to be done, the Haitian people are going to have to do it themselves.

Many political exiles are returning — including former presidents, left-wing political activists, and prominent bourgeois opponents of the Duvaliers. While we were there in mid-March, the main visible activity being carried out in the name of political parties was statements by these returning politicians.

With the increasing sentiment for an elected civilian government to replace the current three-member junta and for a new constitution, open political party organizing will no doubt accelerate.

## Fight to organize unions

The tens of thousands of Haitians who work in U.S.-owned factories, government offices, hospitals, and other institutions have begun to fight for higher wages and decent working conditions, as well as for the firing of corrupt pro-Duvalier company officials. They are also battling for the right to organize unions.

Under the Duvaliers, trade union activity was virtually nonexistent. This was an important element of the "good investment climate" that attracted U.S. factory owners to Haiti. The rarely enforced minimum wage is \$3.00 a day.

We were able to talk briefly with Jean Auguste Mesyeux, the secretary-general of the Independent Federation of Haitian Workers (CATH), at the union's new public headquarters in the capital city of Port-au-Prince.

Mesyeux told us that before they organized CATH in 1980, many activists "worked within the Macoutes unions," that is, the old company

unions.

CATH organized unions in textile, electronic, sporting goods, and metal working plants.

Some peasants were also members of CATH, he said. Seventy-five percent of Haiti's population is engaged in agriculture.

The Duvalier government refused to recognize CATH and worked with the company unions to disrupt the federation. When the union tried to protect its members, arrests and disappearances resulted.

Mesyeux was arrested on Dec. 22, 1980. He was tortured in the notorious Dessalines Prison and in the basement of the National Palace. Eventually he was able to flee to Canada. Mesyeux returned in October 1985, as the struggle against Duvalier was going into high gear.

CATH participated in the anti-Duvalier mobilizations. One activity of the federation was distributing leaflets urging Haitian workers not to go to the Dominican Republic this year, where they are forced to cut sugar cane under slave-like conditions.

The sending of more than 20,000 Haitians to the Dominican Republic each year is the result of a contract between the Duvaliers and the Dominican government. The Haitian regime was paid a fee for each laborer sent to the Dominican sugar harvest. Haitians cut most of the neighboring country's sugar cane crop.

The secretary-general introduced us to two women workers who had just been fired from their jobs at a factory where they handstitch baseballs. Haiti is the biggest producer of baseballs in the world.

The women told us that a brief work stoppage had been conducted at their plant to demand higher wages. When the two of them started talking about organizing a union, that was too much for management, which fired them both. CATH is fighting to get their jobs back.

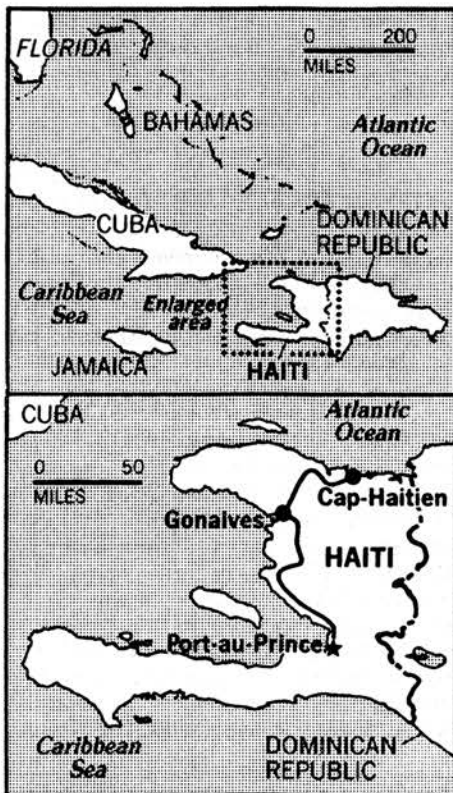
## Neighborhood committees

We spent one afternoon with a group of students and unemployed youth in Port-au-Prince who had formed a neighborhood committee in response to a call by Radio Soleil. A Catholic church radio station, Radio Soleil was a prominent voice of the opposition under Duvalier.

Radio Soleil had called on youth to build committees to organize people throughout the country.

The first task this committee had taken on was to clean up its street — Rue Chareron.

Cleaning the streets is not a trivial question in this crowded, poverty-stricken city. Garbage is scattered everywhere, and it's not un-



usual to see adults and children washing in stagnant puddles in the streets.

### Literacy campaign

Most children in this neighborhood don't go to school, our hosts told us. Haiti's illiteracy rate is around 80 percent.

We stopped at a building that was a public school under Duvalier. The committee had taken it over and is fixing it up. They intend to use it in the literacy campaign that the Haitian Bishops' Conference has announced.

Everywhere along the street were red and blue banners, the symbol of the struggle against Duvalier. And the most common sign here, like everywhere else we went, was "Chak 4 ans" — every four years. This means elections every four years — no more presidents for life.

The leader of the neighborhood committee, Yves Lamothe, told us they had all participated in anti-Duvalier demonstrations.

Their committee was formed on March 8. Its purpose, he stressed, was not simply to clean up the streets, but to "change people's mentality." Key to this, he said, was unifying Haitians to solve the big problems facing their country.

### 'Democracy, freedom and justice'

By all accounts, Gonaïves, a city on Haiti's northwest coast, was the vanguard of the anti-Duvalier struggle. It was the killing of three students by soldiers in Gonaïves last November that helped spark the massive anti-Duvalier protests.

We met four members of the student organization at Immaculate Conception, a secondary school where one of the three students was murdered. Their group began three years ago as a cultural club, which soon began having political discussions about "democracy, freedom, and justice." For this, they were vic-



Margaret Jayko/IP

Leaders of a committee of unemployed and student youth in Port-au-Prince's Rue Chareyron.

timized by the Macoutes.

With the overthrow of Duvalier, they are part of efforts to form a nationwide student federation. They intend to participate in the literacy campaign and hold weekly meetings in the shantytowns around Gonaïves to try to organize the unemployed and peasants.

### Operation Uproot in the Philippines

We had a brief discussion with them about international issues. They said the people of the Philippines are conducting their own Operation Uproot against Ferdinand Marcos.

They asked us what we thought Washington's attitude was toward the rebellion in Haiti. We responded that the U.S. government opposed the mass struggle of the Haitian people,

and that Washington would even resort to military intervention if it thought it necessary to keep Haiti's people under its thumb.

"If they come here," one of the students responded, "we'll do the same thing they did in Vietnam. Even children will fight. It's a national disgrace that the U.S. invaded before." He was referring to the invasion and occupation of Haiti by the U.S. Marines in 1915. They stayed until 1934.

Some Haitian political forces have raised the need for a new constitution to be drafted by an elected Constituent Assembly on the basis of universal suffrage and the right of political parties to organize. These youths told us they, too, thought Haiti needs a new constitution written by an elected body.

### Committee to Renovate the North

Cap Haïtien is Haiti's second-largest city after Port-au-Prince. This northern population center is universally referred to as "Le Cap." We went there looking for the Committee to Renovate the North, which we had read about in newspapers in the United States.

We were able to interview two of the seven members of the committee — Lucie Depuy, who owns a radio station in town, and Hervé Leveille, a pharmacist who owns several drugstores and a sugar cane plantation.

The committee was organized in February, right after Duvalier got the boot, at a community meeting at city hall attended by several hundred people, including top army officers.

As in many other cities and towns, the municipal government, dominated by Duvalier elements, was gone. There was a total vacuum of governmental structure and authority. So prominent business people, professionals, church people, and other educated individuals stepped into the breach.

Tontons Macoutes and other pro-Duvalier elements were being brought to justice in the

## A donation to 'IP' from West Germany

A reader from Frankfurt, West Germany, recently sent *Intercontinental Press* a small financial contribution. In the accompanying note he said, "More than any other magazine I want *Intercontinental Press* to have the broadest possible circulation among interested readers."

He explained that he began subscribing to *IP* in mid-1979. He especially liked *IP*'s coverage of the German elections in 1980, he said.

His contribution is particularly appreciated because he indicated that his income is less than the minimum wage. We welcome all donations, no matter the size. It's small contributions from many readers that keep *IP* going. Income from subscriptions and newsstand sales are insufficient to cover our costs, and we depend on assistance from our readers.

The comments that we get from our readers testify that contributing to *IP* is a worthwhile investment.

A new reader from Allendale, Michigan, obtained *IP*'s address from the book, *Nicaragua: the Sandinista People's Revolution*, published by Pathfinder Press.

He was so inspired by *IP* that he wrote asking how he might join us in our struggle. We put him in touch with members of the Socialist Workers Party in Detroit who are the principal distributors of *IP* in that area.

And a longtime reader from Sweden, who recently sent us an address change, urged, "Keep on making a good journal!"

If you can help us keep on making a good journal, please send a financial contribution, large or small, to *IP*, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014.



countryside, and symbols of the dictatorship were being destroyed. Popular demonstrations were continuing to press the demands of different social sectors.

Those attending the meeting, Depuy and Leveille explained, wanted to channel these demands in order to put an end to what they described as the "looting, sacking, and killings" occurring in and around Le Cap. The committee was organized, Depuy said, to "prevent things from getting out of hand," to organize an orderly transition of government authority.

A seven-person committee was elected. It meets every night.

The committee collects complaints about hated officials that people want removed and funnels them to the central civilian and military authorities. And it proposes individuals to replace them.

#### 'A time of demands'

"Now is the time of demands," said Depuy. "Everybody wants everything. Everyone wants lower prices." Workers are asking for higher wages too, she added. "Now, everyone can breathe. Everyone can talk loud and strong — that's why they're still speaking out," she said.

For example, people wanted the chief of the rural police ousted because of his brutality and thievery. The committee proposed a new one and the chief was changed.

#### Peasants take back land

The committee went to the countryside to try to convince the peasants to stop killing suspected Macoutes. They proposed, instead, that the peasants turn in the names of these criminals, which the committee would turn over to the police.

Many peasants are also trying to get back land that was stolen from them by Macoutes and other Duvalier cronies. Some have simply taken over land that was rightfully theirs. "We're trying to get them to wait," said Leveille, to do things through the "proper authorities."

The pharmacist told us that their committee works with similar committees in towns in the interior.

The Committee to Renovate the North called on the army to control a protest against the escape from the country of a notorious Duvalierist, Leveille told us. In his view, the protest "got out of hand." He said that the committee specifically requested that no units be sent that had engaged in repression under Duvalier.

Catholic church authorities, many of whom played an important role in the fight against Duvalier, urge the citizens of Le Cap to work through this committee.

Working people, peasants, and students are continuing their mobilizations to press for their demands to be implemented, putting pressure on this committee to continue to implement many important democratic reforms.

Both Depuy and Leveille are outspoken against Duvalier. But they are also far better off than the vast majority of Haitians. We

asked Depuy why she opposed the former dictator.

She answered: high taxes; no elections; undemocratic constitution; Duvalier's cronies controlled everything; and "people need food, water, and work, and you couldn't get that under Duvalier."

#### Konbit Solidarité

On our flight from Miami to Haiti, we shared the plane with one of many prominent exiles coming back to their homeland. Father Gerard Jean-Juste, a fighter for the rights of Haitian immigrants in the United States, was bringing a check for \$31,000 collected in Miami for Konbit Solidarité. This is a national and international project to raise approximately \$800,000 to rebuild schools that were destroyed in the anti-Duvalier struggle.

Many schools in Haiti had been named after the former tyrant or his equally hated wife, Michele Bennett, and were targets of protesters. Schools that remained open after the students launched a national boycott were also often targets of attack.

On March 16, there was a live telethon for Konbit Solidarité. Thousands of people packed into the auditorium of Saint Louis school in

Port-au-Prince.

We saw one factory worker present a check for \$38 from his coworkers. He explained that the youth had to make a revolution. Now Haitians are worth something, he declared proudly — a sentiment we heard many times during our visit.

We talked to a member of the Konbit Solidarité Central Committee. He described it as a private organization that serves a function parallel to the government. Well-known individuals in each town — priests, nuns, teachers — organize committees. There are collection centers in stores, marketplaces, slums, and schools.

A first telethon had raised \$200,000. At the one we attended, \$150,000 more had been raised by 7:00 p.m. The collector estimated that about \$150,000 had been collected from rich people and \$200,000 in 1-, 2-, and 10-gourde contributions (1 gourde = US\$.20).

The committee will rebuild the schools itself — it doesn't intend to turn the money over to the government. Then maybe it will take on other projects, he said.

"It's the right time," the committee spokesperson said, explaining their success. "People think they can do something now." □

## 'New York Times' has second thoughts on proposal to close down Radio Martí

In a March 21 editorial, the *New York Times* called for closing down Radio Martí, the station set up last May by the U.S. government to broadcast into Cuba. The *Times* editors complained that President Reagan's launching of Radio Martí had blown up a 1984 agreement between Washington and Havana for the return of 2,746 Cuban émigrés, currently held in U.S. prisons.

The *Times* charged that these prisoners, who came to the United States in 1980 as part of the Mariel exodus, are "criminally dangerous." Confined in overcrowded conditions in U.S. jails, their frustrations have led to riots, the *Times* editors contended. Moreover, the jailing costs the U.S. taxpayers \$40 million a year. The *Times* argued that "it would be irresponsible to jeopardize U.S. communities by freeing them, but it would be cruel, and costly, to keep them imprisoned."

The agreement on migratory relations signed by the Cuban and U.S. governments in December 1984 also specified that Washington would grant 20,000 visas a year to Cuban nationals residing in Cuba who want to emigrate to the United States.

The Cuban government terminated the agreement when Reagan suddenly began broadcasts on Radio Martí, which is operated under the direction of the U.S. Information Agency.

Radio Martí hasn't attracted much of an audience, the *Times* editors wrote. "It seems to be producing little constructive propaganda at substantial cost. It prevents repatriation of the

detainees to Cuba and blocks new immigration from there, which was the other half of last year's bargain."

The *Times* editorial seemed to reflect a rift in U.S. ruling circles over the price that had been paid for launching Radio Martí.

But then, 10 days later, a second editorial appeared in the *Times*, headlined "Second Thoughts on Radio Martí."

This statement represented a sharp turnabout by the *Times* editors. They said they had been "unfair to Radio Martí" in their previous editorial. Moreover, "contrary to our statement, the station appears to have found a responsive audience and filled a void in Cubans' information. Contrary to our fears last year, it has avoided propaganda and supplemented, not duplicated, commercial Spanish-language broadcasts from Florida."

All this, the *Times* conceded, "weakens our argument for turning off Radio Martí as the price of receiving an immigration agreement by which Cuba was to take back the criminals. . . ."

The *Times* editors suggested that instead of shutting down Radio Martí Washington should offer to relax the ban on U.S. tourists visiting Cuba in order to induce Havana to reactivate the migratory agreement. This, they argued, would give Cuba more hard currency and the U.S. greater "cultural influence" in Cuba.

The *Times* editors don't say what or who persuaded them to "discover our misperceptions" about Radio Martí. But it's hard to imagine such a sharp turnabout without some governmental pressure. □

# Filipino workers strike U.S. bases

Mass picketing backs up union demands

By Russell Johnson

OLONGAPO, March 24 — The Subic Bay U.S. naval base, which surrounds this city, has been sealed off since Friday evening, March 21, by "human barricades" at every entrance and along the fence line. No one can enter the base.

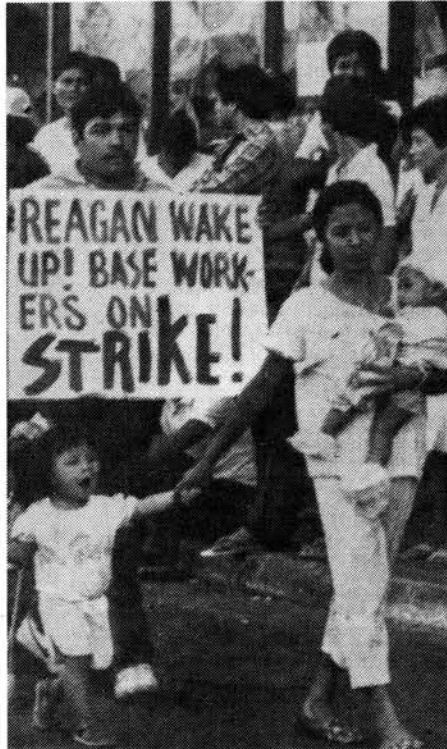
The barricades are the focal point of a militant general strike by the 20,000-strong Federation of Filipino Civilian Employees Associations (FFCEA) at all U.S. military installations in the Philippines. The strikers are protesting the refusal of the U.S. authorities to arrive at a collective bargaining agreement acceptable to their 22,000 Filipino civilian employees after more than 10 months of negotiations.

## Fighting spirit

The fighting spirit of the base workers was very evident when I visited the picket lines today. Hand-painted placards carried slogans such as "If Reagan loves Cory, then give justice to her countrymen in the bases" and "Attention: President Cory beware of U.S. aid while U.S. Filipino base workers are abused." Uncle Sam effigies hung from ropes.

Cheers went up from the men and women at the barricades at one gate when it was announced over a megaphone that a journalist had arrived to report their struggle to U.S. working people. Many workers would flash the "Laban" sign of the "people power" revolution. It was explained to me that the strike was an example of "workers' power." The pickets explained that over the weekend, 500 workers and students from nearby Bataan had appeared at the base to demonstrate their solidarity with the struggle.

Tension has mounted in the strike after a vicious, unprovoked attack on the Subic Bay pickets the first evening. A group of off-duty



Strikers and families picketing Subic Bay naval base.

U.S. marines tried to force their way through the picket lines. Seizing a placard handle, they beat a number of workers and then drew switchblades. Six Filipinos were hospitalized, including three with serious stab wounds.

This was not an isolated incident. At neighboring Clark Air Base on March 24, U.S. military policemen were reported to have attacked strikers with clubs in support of servicemen trying to break the picket line. Workers had to intervene to prevent the military police from dragging a union leader into the base.

## Visit with stab victims

I visited two of the stabbing victims of the Subic Bay incident at the Olongapo General Hospital. Reynaldo Torres — a mess man at the Public Works Center food services canteen on the base earning 13.36 pesos per hour (approximately US\$0.66) — was lying on his stomach on a cot.

He told me he was among a 1,000-strong picket line at the main gate when six marines in civilian clothes tried to push through the crowd. He was clubbed over the head and stabbed several times in the back with a flick knife. The marines then fled, pursued by angry workers. His wife carefully peeled his bandages off

so that I could photograph his badly lacerated back. Torres' wife said there had been previous incidents of Filipinos being beaten up by drunken U.S. servicemen in the streets of Olongapo.

I also visited Leonardo Empeño, a leading mechanic in the Transport Equipment Department of the Public Works Center who earns 26.68 per hour, approximately \$1.25. He was attached to an intravenous tube and was obviously in great pain. He had been punched to the ground and then received deep stab wounds in the back.

## Power struggle at City Hall

The hospitalized strikers face an additional problem. The Olongapo city administration is the subject of a bitter power struggle. The mayor was a supporter of Marcos, and all those city employees dependent on his patronage are resisting his replacement by a new mayor appointed by the Aquino government. This has meant that the injured workers have been unable to obtain X-rays because there is no city official to authorize the hospital to purchase X-ray film.

FFCEA President Roberto Flores spoke to me in his office just outside the main gate of the naval base. The office was a hive of activity, with dozens of workers coming and going on strike business.

Flores explained that his union had been negotiating with the U.S. military since May 7, 1985, in an effort to come up with a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA). The union made numerous concessions. However, the negotiations reached an impasse January 14 when approval could not be obtained from the United States for a clause entitling base workers to severance pay when they resigned their employment.

## Severance pay is key issue

Flores said the union regarded the severance-pay question a necessary part of any minimum package acceptable to the FFCEA members. "The ranks were impatient," he said. "The CBA should have been settled six months ago. We could not justify the delays any longer to the membership." So the strike was called, and the human barricades went up at Subic Bay, Clark Air Base, and the other U.S. military installations.

The union leader told me that the average wage for a Filipino worker at the base was 16 to 20 pesos, or less than \$1 per hour. Although this is somewhat higher than many other Filipinos get, it is a paltry sum compared with what U.S. personnel working alongside the Filipinos at the base are receiving.

## Bases strike ends

On April 1, after this article was written, a tentative agreement was reached and the next day the strike at the U.S. bases ended. The settlement will give each worker a one-time bonus of 2,000 pesos (about US\$100) and a regular subsidy of 110 pounds of rice every three months.

The 12-day strike, the longest ever at a U.S. military installation in the Philippines, forced a five-ship naval task force to cancel a port call at Subic Bay Naval Station. Most U.S. servicemen were confined to the bases for the duration of the strike.

Flores gave the example of a Filipino computer programmer earning less than 40 pesos an hour working along with a U.S. programmer earning 600. One of the longstanding demands of the union has been the ending of this wage inequality.

#### Not part of anti-Marcos movement

The FFCEA, affiliated with the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, was not part of the militant anti-Marcos labor movement that targeted the removal of the U.S. bases from the Philippines as one of its democratic and nationalist goals. But it is clear the base workers are being deeply affected by the "people power" upheaval that continues across the country and by their brutal treatment at the hands of the U.S. military.

## Hotel workers show confidence

*'Marcos had to go'*

#### By Russell Johnson

MANILA — A visit to the workers' picket line outside the swank Holiday Inn on the harbor front here gave a feel for the growing confidence and consciousness of the Filipino working class after the overthrow of dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Opposite the Holiday Inn stands the Cultural Center of the Philippines, a huge monument to Imelda Marcos' pretentious extravagance that, like the pyramids of the Egyptian pharaohs, was literally built on the bodies of many of its workers.

While the Holiday Inn may not have the bodies of workers in its foundations, it has been no less brutal in its exploitation, the picketing workers explained. It was owned by top Marcos crony Roberto Benedicto. The workers were forced into a company union, the Holiday Inn Employees Association, called "management union" for short because of who was looting its funds, among other reasons.

Last September some of the Holiday Inn workers who identified with the militant May First Movement union federation (KMU) filed a formal complaint with the Ministry of Labor and Employment over misappropriation of union funds. Six workers were immediately and illegally fired. A month later, 84 more Holiday Inn workers were "retrenched."

Following the second firings, a picket was mounted outside the hotel October 20. It was dispersed by the military. A month later, a second attempt was made to set up a picket line. This time, Benedicto arranged for another Marcos crony, the mayor of the Pasay section of Manila, to have all the picketing workers jailed.

The overthrow of the Marcos regime and the fleeing overseas of his major cronies, such as Benedicto, opened new possibilities for the fired workers to renew their struggle, the 20 pickets outside the hotel March 22 told me. So the picket line was reestablished March 20.

The first day, it was attacked by police

A statement signed by Jose Diokno, chairman of the Presidential Commission on Human Rights and the Anti-Bases Coalition in Manila, is calling for a Filipino investigation into the stabbing of the six workers.

"The incident is one of a long string of abuses committed by American servicemen against Filipinos," the statement said. "In all cases the servicemen involved never faced Philippine courts — they were transferred out of the country before Philippine law could catch up with them. This recent incident and other incidents in the past show American disrespect for Philippine lives, laws, and sovereignty."

The Philippine minister of labor has organized a meeting between the union and U.S. authorities for March 26. □

wielding bats. The representatives of the workers went to Camp Crame, the center of the military rebellion against Marcos, to complain. The harassment was called off.

The pickets told me that three of the six workers originally fired had filed a new complaint against misappropriation of union funds

and demanding immediate reinstatement with back pay. The complaint was filed with the labor ministry under its new head, Augusto "Bobbit" Sanchez. They explained that the other three had not filed a complaint so that the picket line could be legally maintained while the ministry considered the case of those who filed the complaint.

There was more confidence that, one way or another, they would win their case.

Under Marcos, they explained, "there was only justice for the rich." But they expected things to be different now, particularly if the new government of Corazon Aquino continued on its current course. They said they were impressed by Aquino's commitment to carrying out her election promise to release all political prisoners.

In response to a question, it was explained that most of the pickets had participated in the people's uprising of February 22–25. Some had heeded the call issued over the Catholic radio station and went with their neighbors to Camp Crame and Camp Aguinaldo in support of the military rebels against Marcos. Others had marched with the KMU to the Malacañang Palace, where the dictator himself was holed up.

Why had they gone? "Because enough is enough. Marcos had to go."

Struggles like that of the Holiday Inn workers are mushrooming across Manila and in the provinces. They augur things to come. □

## Interview with KMU leaders

*Unionists back call for constituent assembly*

#### By Deb Shnookal

MANILA — The Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU — May First Movement), the militant trade union federation founded in 1980, has welcomed the new government of Corazon Aquino and pledged its willingness to cooperate with it. The KMU is a central component of Bayan, the anti-Marcos coalition that boycotted the February 7 snap presidential election.

KMU Secretary-General Bobby Ortaliz and Secretary for Mass Campaigns Nick Elman spoke to *Intercontinental Press* at the KMU offices March 12. They stressed that while the KMU gives "vigilant and principled support" to the Aquino government, they recognize that the structures of the dictatorship have not yet been eliminated. They were particularly concerned that all of Marcos' antilabor laws be repealed.

Ortaliz proposed that "Cory" Aquino align herself with the "cause oriented" mass organizations, and explained that the KMU supports Bayan's call for the election by popular franchise of a representative convention to shape a new constitution to replace that of Marcos.

Elman told *Intercontinental Press* that the KMU is encouraging all the major union federations to unite together to help the government achieve a genuine economic recovery. He said they welcomed the appointment of Augusto

"Bobbit" Sanchez as minister of labor in the Aquino government.

Sanchez has pledged that government employees will be granted the right to organize unions and to strike. He has proposed that failing businesses, especially those mismanaged by Marcos cronies, should be nationalized and run by the workers, and that workers' profit-sharing be instituted in all companies.

In a press statement issued March 16, KMU Chairman Rolando Olalia said that the government's views on labor are "most welcome for workers." He said that "with the new government's thrust for labor, we are optimistic that the Filipino workers can get their righteous benefits denied them during the reign of dictatorial rule under Marcos."

Sanchez has also promised the unions that "heads will roll" in the National Labor Relations Commission, which has jurisdiction over all labor disputes, and at other agencies of the Ministry of Labor and Employment inherited from the Marcos regime.

The March 20 *Malaya* reported that Sanchez was cheered at a meeting with unions when he promised to revise the Marcos Labor Code "after getting feedback from trade union leaders on what actually are the repressive laws obtained in the code." □

# Statement of Filipino union

## KMU demands workers' rights, democratic reforms

[The following is the text of a statement by the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU — May First Movement) union federation, issued in the wake of the Marcos regime's overthrow.]

\* \* \*

The Kilusang Mayo Uno salutes the Filipino people for the victorious role that it played in ousting the Marcos fascist gang from its despotic rule. The people's victory has shown that no sand castle of fascist rule can withstand the tidal wave of a people's uprising.

The Aquino administration, being a product of a democratic struggle, is an entirely different government from the open despotic rule of the U.S.-Marcos fascist dictatorship. It is in this regard that a democratic rule, [with] respect for civil and human rights, is now expected to dawn upon our political horizon. We expect the Aquino government to respect trade union rights and the gains of the genuine trade union movement during the dark days of open fascist rule.

Conscious of the leading role workers play in society, we should know that the struggle for a democratic and sovereign Philippines has not ended yet; in fact it has just entered another phase. The fight to uplift the economic and political rights of the impoverished and repressed Filipino workers continues to be our urgent task.

The Kilusang Mayo Uno, as the vanguard of genuine, militant, and nationalist unionism, puts forward the following demands for the immediate promotion of workers' rights and welfare:

1. The restoration of the unconditional right to strike, the repeal of all antilabor laws, and the drafting of a new Labor Code;
2. A stop to the wage-freeze policy of the IMF-WB [International Monetary Fund-World Bank] and its import liberalization imposition;
3. To make the MOLE [Ministry of Labor and Employment] responsive to the needs and demands of the workers and towards the immediate resolution of labor cases;
4. Recognition of the right of government employees to unionize;
5. The abolition of Medicare and Pag-ibig [housing fund deductions] and expansion of SSS [Social Security System] and GSIS [Government Service Insurance System] coverage;
6. The capture and prosecution of military, policemen, and criminal elements involved in picket-line and labor-related killings and violence;
7. The release of all political and trade union detainees and prisoners;
8. The formulation of viable economic, educational, health, and cultural programs for all workers;

9. Punishment or elimination of illegal recruiters, assistance in securing guarantees on wages, working conditions, and the right to organize of all overseas workers;
10. Investigation of the Welfare Fund;
11. Adherence to international standards and recognition of the right to organize of Filipino seamen in international shipping;
12. Restoration of maternity benefits to pre-marital law levels;
13. Introduction of legislation to prevent discrimination against women workers;
14. Investigation of the social amelioration fund;
15. Abolition of learnership and apprenticeship and regularization of all workers and employees after six months;
16. Genuine abolition of the "Cabo" system.\*

\*A form of superexploitative labor contracting practiced on the sugar plantations and elsewhere. — IP

While the welfare and rights of the Filipino workers are our immediate concerns, the struggle for a democratic society and national sovereignty will continue to be the duty of an enlightened and militant Filipino working class. To free our people from the bondage of feudal relations and imperialist domination, the following demands must be met to ensure national reconciliation and recovery:

1. Adoption of a policy of genuine industrialization;
2. Implementation of a genuine land reform program;
3. Solution to the unemployment problem;
4. Nationalization of all basic industries;
5. Removal of all U.S. military bases and the opposition of the installation of any foreign military base in the Philippines.

The challenge of our times and the opportunity of the future awaits us. We recognize the Aquino government as the product of the sovereign will of the Filipino people, and we support the democratic reforms that it has initiated. Hand in hand, the floodgates of democratic reforms and processes shall engulf the remnants of the fascist dictatorship.

The great masses of the Filipino people has issued us a challenge. We shall not fail. □

## Pathfinder books promoted in Manila

By Russell Johnson

MANILA — On March 22 a launching of books on Cuba, Nicaragua, and Latin America was held at the National Press Club here. The launching was organized by the Sydney, Australia, representatives of Pathfinder Press, a New York-based publisher, and Great Books Trading of Manila. The event introduced a range of Pathfinder's titles, as well as the English-language books from the newly established José Martí publishing house in Cuba and a number of other books on revolutionary struggles in Central and Latin America, South Africa, and elsewhere in the world.

Attended by over 50 people, the book launching reflected the new democratic rights that were won by the "people power revolution" that toppled the Marcos dictatorship February 22-25.

In opening the launching, Tony Nieda, president of the National Press Club, said, "we hope that by launching these books in Manila today we will be helping Filipinos gain an insight into what really happened last month in those four days of February."

Ana María González, Cuba's ambassador to the Philippines, also addressed the meeting. She said she was very pleased that these books will now be available in the Philippines, especially because the truth about Cuba has been so distorted in the media.

González said that there had been many historical links between Cuba and the Philippines. Both had been Spanish colonies and had fought for their independence from Spain at

the same time.

She pointed particularly to the book *Fidel Castro: War and Crisis in the Americas* and its relevance to the Philippines, which, like Latin America, faces a spiraling foreign debt and the threat of U.S. imperialism.

Ed Garcia, a lecturer on Latin American studies at the University of the Philippines, spoke on the relevance of the Latin American experience for Filipinos. He emphasized the need to study the lessons of Chile, which attempted the "peaceful road to revolution," and why it failed.

The Philippines, he said, had a history of "unfinished revolutions." The goal now is to "finish what was started in February," Garcia stated.

Garcia concluded by saying that he hoped one day a similar book launching would take place in Latin America with books on the Philippines experience.

Deb Shnookal from Pathfinder Press in Australia commented that the main feature of the books being launched was the sharing of experiences of revolutionary struggles around the world as explained by the participants themselves.

She drew attention to the books now available on the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, especially the writings of African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela.

A number of media representatives were present at the book launching and the event was reported on TV Channel 9.

A member of the Australian embassy staff in Manila also attended the launching. □

# Mass rallies in major cities

## *Demonstrators demand direct presidential elections*

By Will Reissner

Greatly encouraged by the overthrow of the Marcos regime in the Philippines, a series of mass demonstrations against South Korea's right-wing dictatorship have taken place in some of the country's largest cities.

The protests support an opposition campaign to gather 10 million signatures demanding direct presidential elections in late 1987. South Korea has 40 million inhabitants.

Under the present constitution imposed by South Korean dictator Chun Doo Hwan after he seized power in 1980, a new head of state is to be chosen in 1988 by a 5,000-member electoral college. Opponents of the Chun regime note that the indirect election will lead to the selection of Chun's handpicked successor as South Korea's next president.

When the signature-gathering campaign was launched in February, the Chun regime responded by arresting dozens of opposition figures, raiding offices of the New Korea Democratic Party, and sending police onto 129 college campuses searching for materials related to the petition campaign.

Hundreds of activists in the petition campaign were placed under house arrest in the last two weeks of February.

The regime's repression, however, has been unable to crush the campaign, which has become a focal point for unity in action among opposition political parties, student groups, religious figures, and human-rights organizations. On March 11, some 4,000 people were able to march in Seoul, South Korea's capital, in support of this drive.

### **National coalition formed**

Six days later eight leaders representing five major political and religious groups met to form the National Liaison Organization for Democratization.

The five groups at the meeting were:

- the New Korea Democratic Party, the largest opposition political group;
- the Council for the Promotion of Democracy, which is headed by the two leading opposition politicians, Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung;
- the United Minjung Movement for Democracy and Unification, a coalition of 19 human rights and religious organizations, headed by rights activist Rev. Moon Ik Hwan;
- the National Council of Churches, which comprises six Protestant denominations with a membership of 4 million people; and
- the Korean Catholic Council for Justice and Peace.

On March 9 Roman Catholic Cardinal Stephen Kim Su Hwan endorsed the petition drive. Christians — 2 million Catholics and 8

million Protestants — make up about one-quarter of South Korea's population.

The unity around the petition campaign has forced the Chun dictatorship to retreat from naked repression against the movement.

### **'Another Marcos'**

A mass demonstration supporting the petition campaign took place in Pusan on Sunday, March 23, when a crowd of as many as 40,000 people chanted "down with dictatorship" and listened to speeches by opposition leaders. Pusan is South Korea's second-largest city.

Kim Young Sam told the crowd that South Korea's ruler will be "another Marcos" if he does not permit reforms. Kim warned Chun Doo Hwan that "this is his last chance. In the Philippines they overthrew dictatorship, and we are going to overthrow dictatorship here."

The second major opposition figure, Kim Dae Jung, was prevented by police from traveling to the Pusan rally, and to the subsequent rallies in other cities. But the Pusan crowd heard a tape recorded message from him over loudspeakers.

Pusan is a heavily industrial city where in 1979 workers mounted powerful demonstrations against the regime of Chun's predecessor, Gen. Park Chung Hee.

While the regime did not try to physically prevent the Pusan rally from taking place, the government attempted to cut the participation in the event by scheduling a festival on a popular beach at the same time. Many workers also were called to work that weekend.

With the huge outpouring of support in Pusan for the petition campaign fresh in mind, the government increased its efforts to cut down the turn-out for a similar rally in Kwangju on March 30.

A popular professional baseball game was rescheduled to conflict with the event, with free admission, door prizes, and a show by well-known entertainers. Local men in the military reserves were called up for weekend exercises, and elderly residents were offered free bus trips into the countryside.

Nevertheless, more than 50,000 people took part. The event was held in the largest downtown plaza, popularly known as "Democracy Square." The square had been the site of similar mass demonstrations in May 1980, when the people of the city rose up in a week-long insurrection against Gen. Chun Doo Hwan's coup. Hundreds of residents of the city were murdered by army troops and police during the 1980 rebellion.

"To achieve democracy is the only way to soothe the souls of the victims of the Kwangju incident," Kim Young Sam told the crowd.

Kim Dae Jung, who was again prevented from addressing the rally in person, pointed in a taped message to similarities between the situation in the Philippines and South Korea. "In both," he said, "dictatorship has been up against the people's desire." Crowds chanted "down with dictatorship."

Thirty-five busloads of riot police from as far away as Seoul were brought into Kwangju and hidden in alleys and police stations, ready to move against the crowd if necessary.

After the rally broke up, several hundred young people skirmished with police.

South Korean television on April 1 quoted Chun Doo Hwan's remarks to his cabinet on the opposition rallies. "Some politicians will not abide by laws while they are crying out for democracy. These destructive activities will be dealt with according to the law," he warned.

In Taegu, South Korea's third-largest city, 30,000 to 50,000 demonstrators took part in an April 5 rally demanding direct presidential elections. The protest took place on the day that President Chun left for a visit to Western Europe.

### **'People don't believe government'**

Kim Young Sam told the crowd: "Right now the Korean people do not believe what the government tells them. If the government cannot be trusted, then the Korean people should choose another that can be trusted."

Police turned back Kim Dae Jung on the road to Taegu. His speech, however, was read to the crowd.

In a separate demonstration in Taegu the same day, up to 5,000 students linked arms and marched through the streets shouting slogans against the Chun regime and U.S. government support for it. They carried effigies of President Reagan and Chun.

Police broke up the student demonstration as it approached the city hall, firing tear gas into the crowd.

Another mass demonstration is slated for the port of Incheon, near Seoul, on April 20.

U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger arrived in Seoul April 1 for three days of consultations with South Korean military figures. Washington has 40,000 U.S. troops, armed with nuclear weapons, permanently stationed in South Korea.

At the end of the visit Weinberger and South Korean Defense Minister Lee Ki Baek issued a joint communiqué stating that "their two countries must remain specially vigilant during the period leading up to the 1988 Olympics."

The 1988 games, scheduled to take place in Seoul, are a cornerstone of the South Korean government's drive for international recognition and acceptance of its "two Koreas" policy.

The North Korean government, which opposes the continued division of the Korean nation along the 1953 armistice line that ended fighting in the Korean War, has called for the 1988 Olympics to be shared between North and South Korea and has warned that many countries will boycott the games unless the co-hosting proposal is accepted. □

# Bulgarian free in 'pope plot'

After anti-Soviet conspiracy collapses

By Will Reissner

The "Bulgarian connection" show trial ended in Rome March 29 with the acquittal of three Bulgarians charged with conspiring to assassinate Pope John Paul II.

The claim that the Bulgarian secret service, acting for the Soviet KGB, had organized the attempt on the pope's life in order to strike a blow against the Polish Solidarity trade union movement was based solely on the testimony of Mehmet Ali Agca, a Turkish ultrarightist gunman serving a life sentence in Italy for shooting the pope in St. Peter's Square on May 13, 1981.

More than four years of investigation by Italian authorities — including a 1,200-page indictment of the Bulgarians and 14,000 pages of testimony during the 10-month trial itself — failed to produce any evidence backing Agca's claims.

Sergei Antonov, a Bulgarian airline clerk who was held in prison or under house arrest from November 1982 until the trial's end, was allowed to return to Bulgaria on April 1. The two Bulgarian diplomats charged in the case were never in Italian custody.

Despite the lack of any evidence linking the Bulgarians to the attempt on the pope's life, they were acquitted only for "lack of proof." This is one step short of a full acquittal under Italian law. Defense attorneys will appeal for a full acquittal.

During the trial Agca freely admitted that he had "invented" much of his story about the Bulgarians and refused to substantiate his other charges.

In court, the Turkish gunman proclaimed himself the reincarnation of Jesus Christ, a claim he repeated throughout the trial.

As far back as December 1984 a Vatican weekly had reported similar statements by the Turkish gunman. Yet the Italian state prosecutors chose to go forward with the trial solely on the basis of Agca's rantings.

The "Bulgarian connection" trial showed the lengths to which an imperialist government will go to slander the Soviet Union and its allies.

## Ludicrous testimony

Mehmet Ali Agca, the man who actually shot the pope, had a long record as a hired thug for the ultraright Grey Wolves organization in Turkey, where he had already been convicted of murdering a left-wing journalist.

While serving a life sentence for that murder, Agca walked out of his Turkish jail with the complicity of officials of the right-wing military junta then ruling the country.

After his escape, Agca wrote to the Turkish daily *Milliyet* warning that he would kill Pope

John Paul II during the pope's visit to Turkey in November 1979.

Why the Bulgarians, or their supposed Soviet overseers, would imagine that killing the Polish-born pope would calm the situation in Poland was never explained.

From the start, Agca's description of how the "plot" was organized was ludicrous. Common sense indicates that if the Bulgarians had been involved with Agca, they would have tried to limit the number of people Agca could implicate and would try to cover the trail leading back to the Bulgarian embassy.

But according to Agca, whose testimony provided the basis for the prosecutor's whole case, he met with all three Bulgarians a dozen times while preparing the attack on the pope. Many meetings, Agca claimed, took place in public restaurants, although not one witness to the meetings was ever found.

Agca claimed he even met with the Bulgarians in their apartments. When he needed to contact them, he phoned the embassy.

On the day of the shooting, said Agca, all three Bulgarians took him to St. Peter's Square, and stayed with him there, in plain sight of passers-by, until shortly before the shooting.

After Agca shot the pope and was captured, and presumably could implicate the Bulgarians, all three conveniently remained in Rome for more than a year.

When Agca finally told his tale about the "Bulgarian connection" to the authorities, he repeatedly changed his descriptions of the three Bulgarians.

The Italian police then helpfully gave Agca photos of 56 Bulgarians in Italy, letting him pick three. This insured that whomever Agca picked would be Bulgarian.

No trace of the 3 million West German marks Agca claimed the Bulgarians had paid him was ever found.

Agca's information on details like the interiors of the Bulgarians' apartments, he later admitted, came from newspapers and television reports.

## The real conspiracy

While the court's massive investigation never yielded a shred of evidence confirming a "Bulgarian connection" to Agca, the court ignored evidence of a more obvious conspiracy to frame the Bulgarians.

The claim that the KGB was behind Agca was first made by Paul Henze, former CIA station chief in Turkey, in an October 1981 *Wall Street Journal* article, and was picked up by Claire Sterling in a 1982 article in *Reader's Digest* magazine.

Sterling, a Rome-based U.S. "journalist," had been on the payroll of the *Rome Daily American* while it was still owned by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

Her article, laying out the scenario that the Soviet KGB organized the shooting to deal a blow against Solidarity, relied on information fed her by Henze.

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

In October 1982 Arnaud de Borchgrave, another "journalist" with close ties to Western spy agencies, told Italian authorities that French intelligence sources also knew that Bulgarians had been involved in a plot to kill the pope.

Henze, Kalb, and de Borchgrave were all members of an academic think tank body that issued a 1984 report on "The International Implications of the Papal Assassination Attempt: A Case of State-Sponsored Terrorism."

These key figures in the frame-up have been widely quoted as "experts on terrorism" and were instrumental in shaping the public presentation of the "Bulgarian connection" case.

Claire Sterling wrote extensive articles for the *New York Times* on the case and was featured as a commentator by television network news programs.

Henze was hired as a consultant on the "Bulgarian connection" story by the *New York Times*, *Newsweek* magazine, and NBC News.

Agca first began implicating Bulgarians in May 1982, after visits to his prison cell by agents of the Italian secret services, who offered to commute his life sentence in return for cooperation.

In the course of this trial and another in Naples, details of the Italian secret services' use of imprisoned gangsters to coach Agca were revealed. The prosecutor showed little zeal in following up on this.

Gen. Pietro Musumeci, then deputy chief of Italian military intelligence, met with a mob leader in prison in 1982 and urged him to secure Agca's cooperation in implicating the Soviet Union and its allies in the pope's shooting. Agca was offered freedom and a job as a mob gunman if he cooperated.

Agca was also repeatedly visited in jail by a Catholic priest who was later arrested as a prison courier for the mob.

Dr. Francesco Pazienza, a leader of a powerful and secret right-wing group operating in Italy as Masonic Lodge P-2, visited Agca in prison more than one month before Agca first talked about Bulgarians and "promised me liberty and a French passport" in return for cooperation, Agca admitted.

Masonic Lodge P-2 was led by Pazienza, General Musumeci, and Gen. Giuseppe Santovito, head of Italian military intelligence.

The real crime in Rome was that this anti-communist conspiracy was covered up and that the mockery of the "pope plot" trial was allowed to go on for so long. □

# 'State of emergency' ends, protests mount

*Repression fails to curb countrywide upheaval*

By Ernest Harsch

Nearly eight months after it was first imposed, the apartheid regime's draconian state of emergency was officially lifted March 7. That same day, more than 300 detained political activists were released, most of them members of the United Democratic Front (UDF), the main anti-apartheid coalition.

Ever since it was first proclaimed in July 1985, the lifting of the state of emergency had been a key demand of anti-apartheid activists. There were celebrations to welcome back the freed political detainees, but their mood was restrained.

"The formal lifting of the state of emergency in no way reduces the severe repression directed against legitimate extraparliamentary opposition," 74 freed UDF leaders declared in a statement. "Coupled with the fact that many detainees continue to languish in prison under security laws, this tempers our joy in being released and reunited with our families."

Oliver Tambo, exiled president of the outlawed African National Congress (ANC), which is leading the struggle for a democratic South Africa, also noted that the lifting of the state of emergency brought no real change. "When the state of emergency was proclaimed there was already an undeclared state of emergency," he said. Since then, the police and army "have been handed enormous powers, and they can kill, massacre, and arrest whom they like."

The toll in lives has already been considerable. According to the liberal South African Institute of Race Relations, at least 1,237 people were killed in political violence between Sept. 1, 1984, and Feb. 28, 1986, the vast bulk of them Black protesters shot down by the police and other apartheid security forces. When the state of emergency was imposed there had been an average of 1.7 killings a day. By the end of 1985 the average had risen to 4.1 a day.

More people have been arrested and detained than at any time since the big crackdown of 1960 (when the ANC and other anti-apartheid groups were banned). During 1985 alone, according to the Detainees' Parents Support Committee (a UDF affiliate), some 25,000 people were arrested on charges of public violence, arson, terrorism, treason, intimidation, etc. Another 11,000 people were detained without any charges brought against them.

## 'Our answer is struggle'

As a result of such continuing repression, Tambo affirmed, "Our answer is struggle. We will go on struggling, and our struggle is political and armed."

The ANC leader also observed that the

apartheid regime in Pretoria had decided to lift the formal emergency restrictions so as to improve its image, with the aim of staving off new international sanctions.

The U.S. and British governments — which have routinely seized on every sign of "reform" in South Africa, however slight or meaningless, to justify their refusal to break all economic, political, and military ties with the apartheid regime — quickly hailed Pretoria's announcement.

This was despite the fact that the apartheid authorities have themselves made it clear that there will be no significant lessening of police repression. Minister of Law and Order Louis le Grange declared that with the lifting of the state of emergency the regime's security laws would be reviewed so that they could be applied "more easily and with more efficiency."

The UDF's National Executive Committee commented, "We are particularly concerned that by amending existing legislation to deal with incidents of unrest the government is going to broaden the already draconian provisions of the Internal Security Act. The effect of this is that a de facto state of emergency will exist throughout our country."

Pretoria and the UDF have put forward counterposed assessments of the state of emergency's effectiveness in curbing popular protest. According to President Pieter Botha, the situation in the country had "improved sufficiently" to enable the authorities to end the state of emergency. The UDF, on the other hand, stressed that the crackdown "has failed to suppress the desire of our people to be free."

That much is obvious. In fact, the resistance has tended to increase as more and more sectors of the population have become actively involved in the struggle to sweep away the hated apartheid system.

The state of emergency was initially imposed only in the regions around Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth, which were at that time the main centers of popular unrest. But within weeks major upheavals began rocking Cape Town, South Africa's second largest city, impelling the regime to extend the state of emergency to that area in October. Black townships around Durban, Pretoria, and other cities have also been swept by repeated strikes, demonstrations, and student and consumer boycotts. These actions have involved all three sectors of the Black population — Africans, Indians, and Coloureds (of mixed ancestry) — as well as some anti-apartheid whites.

## Workers to the fore

In late 1985 a powerful new force was brought into the struggle with the formation of

the half-million-member Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), embracing a majority of the country's democratic trade unions. At its inauguration and since then, COSATU has forthrightly condemned the oppressive apartheid system.

A weekend meeting of COSATU's central executive committee, held in the huge Black township of Soweto in early February, resolved to launch a national campaign against the notorious pass laws. According to union General Secretary Jay Naidoo, COSATU would proceed with the campaign despite Botha's pledge that Africans would no longer have to carry the old pass books after July 1. Instead, they will have to carry new identification documents that will be mandatory for everyone, Black and white. Naidoo pointed out that African movement and residency will still be specially restricted through the "influx control" laws, the migrant labor system, and the rural Bantustans to which millions of Africans are confined.

The COSATU leadership body also rejected Botha's announcement that he would set up a new advisory council on which some Africans would be allowed to sit. It termed this "another fraudulent attempt to perpetuate white minority rule" and stated that "only a complete and immediate dismantlement of apartheid, the release of our authentic leaders, and the unbanning of the authentic organisations of the oppressed majority will create the climate where a democratic South Africa can emerge."

Several weeks later, a high-level COSATU delegation traveled to Lusaka, Zambia, to meet with Tambo and other leaders of the ANC and its allied South African Congress of Trade Unions. They issued a joint communiqué in which the three groups pledged to struggle for "the establishment of a system of majority rule in a united, democratic, and non-racial South Africa," in which Blacks and whites would have equal rights.\*

During the COSATU delegation's visit to Lusaka, Naidoo publicly called for the unbanning of the ANC. He likewise blasted the U.S., British, and West German governments for their collaboration with Pretoria.

Militancy has also been on the rise on the shop floor. COSATU affiliates in the metals, food, and mining industries have recently been developing a relatively new strike tactic for the South African labor movement — the use of factory occupations, sit-ins, and "sleep-ins," as they are sometimes called. The largest have been carried out by 2,000 members of the

\*The text of this communiqué was reprinted in the April 7 issue of *Intercontinental Press*.

Metal and Allied Workers Union in the East Rand and by 7,000 members of the National Union of Mineworkers, who stopped production at the Blyvooruitzicht gold mine for a week by sitting-in underground.

Besides striking around economic grievances, Black workers have increasingly downed their tools to protest police repression and to back up the political and social demands of the Black communities in which they live. The "stayaway" — a form of general strike in which workers refuse to leave the townships to go to their jobs in the "white" cities — has spread throughout the country, including into many smaller towns.

During February and March alone, there have been stayaways in some dozen cities and townships, including Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage, Alexandra, Brits, Tembisa, Ratanda, Randfontein, Soshanguve, Mamelodi, Witbank, and Warmbaths. Most lasted just a day or two, since Blacks generally cannot afford to lose too many days' pay. But the stayaway in Witbank lasted a week and the one in Warmbaths nearly two weeks, reflecting the depth of their residents' anger and determination.

The most spectacular stayaway came on March 21 to commemorate two anniversaries on that date: the 1960 police killing of 69 protesters at Sharpeville, and the 1985 slaughter of 43 others in Langa, near Uitenhage.

Memorial rallies and demonstrations were held throughout the country, some of them drawing tens of thousands of participants. Police attacked protesters with gunfire and tear gas in Johannesburg, Durban, and Port Elizabeth. Although stayaways had been called in other regions as well, Port Elizabeth and nearby Uitenhage saw the greatest response.

The Port Elizabeth offices of the UDF and COSATU had issued a joint statement supporting the stayaway call. Declaring that March 21 marked a very important moment "in the history of our struggle and is a testimony to our commitment to end social injustice," the two groups demanded that it be made a paid national holiday. They also called for the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, the unbanning of the ANC, the unconditional return of exiles, and a halt to all price increases.

A report in the March 23-24 Paris daily *Le Monde* estimated that 600,000 Black workers in the Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage region took part in the protest strike. A survey conducted by a local research body known as the Labour Monitoring Group found that 99 percent of all African workers in both industrial cities joined the stayaway. It also found that 83 percent of Coloured workers in Uitenhage struck, as well as 23 percent of Coloured workers in Port Elizabeth. (This unevenness reflects the fact that many more Coloured workers are organized by COSATU unions in Uitenhage than in Port Elizabeth.)

Some 35,000 demonstrators took part in the commemoration action in Uitenhage's KwaNobuhle township. A monument was



Support for African National Congress is growing.

erected there, dedicated to the "memory of our martyrs whose blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of the people's total liberation."

#### Mass boycotts

Black communities have frequently resorted to boycotts as a form of struggle. In some townships, particularly in the Transvaal, rent strikes have been under way since the beginning of the upsurge more than a year and a half ago. A few have scored some gains. In Soweto, for example, the local administrative council announced in March that rents were being reduced by 50 percent, following a series of protest meetings to plan a rent strike.

During the latter half of 1985, mass consumer boycotts of white-owned businesses were held in several key regions, particularly in the Eastern Cape. In some cases, white merchants, hurting from the drastic fall-off in business, began clamoring for the government to make some concessions.

In December 1985 most of these consumer boycotts were temporarily suspended. In East London, Black township leaders announced a lifting of the boycott until March 3 to see if the white-run East London City Council would meet their demands. The council made only a few cosmetic and ineffective concessions, so the boycott was reactivated on schedule. In East London, Port Elizabeth, and elsewhere, activists have begun exploring the possibility of organizing a countryside consumer boycott.

Student activists, as well as their parents and teachers, have also been seeking ways to better coordinate their struggle for a nonracial and democratic education system. By January most student strikes (which had involved hundreds of thousands of students) were temporarily suspended. On March 30 in Durban, a broadly representative national conference of student activists, parents, teachers, and political lead-

ers discussed future strategy for the education struggle. It urged students to remain in their classes and to use the schools to propagate an anti-apartheid "people's education." It also urged township residents to employ consumer and rent boycotts to back up the students' demands and called for a national three-day stayaway beginning on June 16, the 10th anniversary of the massive 1976 student rebellions.

In many Black townships, the apartheid regime's local governmental structures have collapsed. Hundreds of Black policemen have been driven out. Under pressure from the communities, scores of members of local Black administrative councils have resigned. In the Eastern Cape, only 17 of 45 such councils are still functioning.

In an effort to partially fill the vacuum of authority in the townships, new forms of local organization have emerged. Since late 1985 residents have elected "street committees" in Alexandra (near Johannesburg), Mamelodi (near Pretoria), and numerous Black townships in the Eastern Cape. Often set up on a block-by-block basis, these committees help direct a wide variety of township activities. They organize demonstrations and funerals, operate "people's courts," and carry out other tasks.

#### The countryside stirs

Less publicized than the protests in the main urban centers, but just as significant, has been the spread of popular struggles to the smaller provincial towns and remote rural communities.

One example is the largely rural eastern Transvaal. The same month that the state of emergency was imposed, the residents of the small African township of eMgwenya launched a rent boycott. This soon spread to other African townships in the area. Police attacked the protesters, killing a number of them. And the population responded by attack-



ing symbols of apartheid oppression, including some of Pretoria's Black collaborators. In January all the members of the regime's local Black community council in nearby KwaZanele were forced to flee. In eMgwenya, "all the Development Board buildings have been burnt to the ground, four out of six community councillors have resigned and the only high school is being boycotted," the January 23 Johannesburg *Weekly Mail* reported.

Another example is KwaMandlenkosi, a township of just 6,000 Blacks outside Beaufort West in the heart of the Cape Province's *karoo* (dry tableland). In August 1985 the residents launched a consumer boycott of all white-owned businesses in the town, prompting the local Afrikaner Chamber of Commerce to call on its members to drop all discriminatory employment practices. The boycott was organized by the Zankhanyo Civic Association, a UDF affiliate. "Walking through KwaMandlenkosi is a little like walking through the aftermath of a war," the Nov. 21, 1985, *Cape Times* reported. "The streets are impassable, every corner has been barricaded by residents to stop police coming in — not barricades made of tyres or barrels, but massive boulders piled up in low walls."

In early February hundreds of African farm workers in the northern Transvaal went on strike, refusing to work on about a dozen farms in the area, because, as they told a journalist, they were being paid "slave wages and forced to work under appalling conditions." This was one of the first strikes yet among Black agricultural laborers, who remain almost entirely unorganized.

The Bantustans, the impoverished rural African reserves set up by Pretoria, are likewise being buffeted by outbursts of protest. Most recently, BophuthaTswana and Lebowa have experienced the greatest unrest.

Beginning in late 1985, BophuthaTswana has been hit by student boycotts, mass demonstrations, and labor unrest. In January some 20,000 members of the National Union of Mineworkers struck several platinum mines in the Bantustan, and were fired as a result. The townships of Soshanguve, Mabopane, and GaRankuwa have been rocked by stayaways and student protests.

A secret report on this unrest (which had been prepared by BophuthaTswana officials and leaked to a South African newspaper) recorded hundreds of "violent" incidents in the Odi and Moretele districts alone.

Large parts of Lebowa, located in the northern Transvaal, have been engulfed by student demonstrations and school boycotts as well. Several students were killed in clashes with the police in the Motetema region, and some arrested students charged that they were tortured by police. A protest march by women to the local police station was blocked. In one incident at Seshego, Lebowa's chief minister, Cedric Phatudi, had to flee protesting students who pelted his car with rocks.

#### Contacts with ANC

South Africa's unprecedented upheaval has

shaken up all aspects of political life in the country, including among sectors that had previously acquiesced to the apartheid system.

The Progressive Federal Party (PFP), the main white liberal parliamentary opposition party, has been thrown into turmoil by the sharpening polarization. A sector of the PFP remains content to play "loyal opposition" to President Botha's ruling National Party. But some PFP members and supporters have been pushed toward supporting campaigns initiated by the UDF and other anti-apartheid groups.

Exposing the depth of the PFP's crisis, party leader Frederick van Zyl Slabbert unexpectedly resigned from parliament and party leadership in February. Several other prominent PFP figures resigned in solidarity with him. Slabbert openly expressed his disillusionment with bringing about any real change through the white-dominated parliamentary structures and proclaimed his new goal of seeking to promote negotiations among various political forces in the country, including the ANC. A statement by the ANC's National Executive Committee hailed Slabbert's decision to resign and called on others in parliament, the Bantustans, and similar apartheid bodies to follow his example.

A month later, Enos Mabuza, the head of the KaNgwane Bantustan, became the first Bantustan leader to visit Zambia for discussions with the ANC. So far, the Bantustan leaders have been among Pretoria's closest Black collaborators. Most remain so, but Mabuza's move is a significant break that reflects the extreme pressures they are under (KaNgwane itself has recently experienced some demonstrations and student boycotts).

Mabuza met with the ANC in his capacity as the leader of his Inyandza movement, which claims 100,000 members among South Africa's Swazi speakers. Following the talks, a joint communiqué issued by the two delegations noted that the ANC had "emphasised the need for the greatest possible organisation of all the people of our country to join in united action against the apartheid regime" and reaffirmed "the importance of the armed struggle." Mabuza proclaimed his movement's support for "majority rule in a united, democratic non-racial South Africa," while reaffirming Inyandza's commitment to achieving that goal through "nonviolent" methods. The two delegations agreed on the need to intensify the campaign for the release of Mandela and other political prisoners.

Upon his return to South Africa, Mabuza said that Inyandza had "no differences with the UDF's aims; our roles are complementary." He said that apartheid structures — including KaNgwane itself — were "outmoded." He indicated that he might eventually resign from the Bantustan administration.

ANC leader Tambo called the talks with Mabuza "historic" and said they should be used in a "joint offensive to rally all our people together." He appealed to inhabitants of the Bantustans to step up their fight against apartheid. "For the Bantustans to end, it's all up to us," he said.

Just before Mabuza arrived in Zambia, ANC publicity director Thabo Mbeki commented on the string of visits to the ANC's Lusaka offices from various South African delegations, often against Pretoria's explicit opposition. These have included white and Black religious figures, student leaders, trade unionists, academics, businessmen, newspaper editors, and capitalist politicians.

Among some of those previously aligned with the apartheid regime, there is concern about the future, Mbeki noted, marking "the beginning of the break-up of the power structure. . . . Even the army will have problems because it is a conscript army subject to all the pressures that the general public is subject to. There are 'homeland' [Bantustan] leaders who are also subject to pressures, and we hope some of them will desert Botha's camp as well. Out of all this I think you will get a realignment of forces."

#### 'We march to freedom'

Since the beginning of the current upsurge in August 1984, popular support for and identification with the ANC has increased markedly in South Africa.

This has led to greater recruitment to the ANC's underground structures and its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation). According to government figures, there were 136 guerrilla actions in 1985, compared with 44 the previous year.

The bulk of these actions were carried out by young Black fighters. But a few whites have been involved as well. In February 21-year-old Eric Pelser, a former draft resister, was sentenced to nine years in jail for "treason." He admitted in court that he was a member of Umkhonto we Sizwe and had undergone guerrilla training. The following month, Marion Monica Sparg, a former journalist, was arrested on charges of carrying out a series of bombings of police stations, including the main police headquarters in Johannesburg.

The most visible expressions of popular support for the ANC have come during the many mass funerals for victims of the apartheid police. Coffins are frequently draped in the green, black, and gold colors of the ANC. Mourners chant slogans in support of Mandela, Tambo, and other ANC leaders. Youths often carry wooden replicas of AK-47s or dance *toyitoyi* dances in praise of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

On March 5, up to 60,000 people (including several hundred whites) packed the main stadium in Alexandra, outside Johannesburg, to bury 17 people shot down by the police. "Green, black and gold flags and banners of the outlawed ANC fluttered in the gentlest of breezes," the March 7 Johannesburg *Weekly Mail* reported. "Freedom songs and slogans chorused from thousands of throats." Among the songs, "One praised the MKs, as members of Umkhonto we Sizwe are known, as the crowd acted out the firing of AK 47s."

Winnie Mandela, wife of the imprisoned ANC leader, attended. Since she could not legally address the public gathering, a message was

read on her behalf, declaring, "No amount of bullets can stop an idea whose time has come. Over the blood of our sons and daughters, we march to freedom."

Albertina Sisulu, a leader of the UDF and wife of jailed ANC leader Walter Sisulu, spoke. To roars of approval from the crowd, Sisulu called the regime in Pretoria "a government of frightened cockroaches."

Ten days later, on March 15, up to 30,000 people packed the sports stadium in Guguletu,

a Black township in Cape Town, to bury seven alleged Umkhonto guerrillas who had been ambushed and murdered by police.

A South African Press Association dispatch broadcast over the government-run radio network noted that Guguletu "became a virtual stronghold of the African National Congress" for the day. "Strict control of the crowd . . . was maintained by marshals wearing United Democratic Front T-shirts and others in khaki uniforms with ANC ribbons and epaulets. . . . The coffins were placed on trestles before the

main podium, and throughout the service mourners, many of them young white men and women in UDF T-shirts and ANC colours, took turns to stand silently at either end of each casket with a clenched fist raised to shoulder level in the ANC salute."

Speakers from the UDF, Release Mandela Committee, COSATU, Cape Youth Congress, and other groups addressed the crowd. Popular slogans included, "We won't stop fighting" and "The people will govern." □

## Liberia

# A dictatorship propped up by Washington

## *Doe gets \$70 million in U.S. aid after rigged elections, massacres*

**By Ernest Harsch**

In recent months the Reagan administration has demonstratively reaffirmed its backing for the dictatorship of Gen. Samuel Doe in Liberia.

Public U.S. expressions of support for Doe — and more than \$70 million in new U.S. economic and military assistance — have come in face of growing charges of widespread human rights abuses by his regime. They have also come at a time when political and social unrest in that West African country has revealed the extent of popular discontent with Doe's repressive, proimperialist rule.

Chester Crocker, Reagan's assistant secretary of state for African affairs, has taken the lead in seeking to justify the White House's stance on Liberia.

Speaking before several congressional committees in December and January, Crocker sang praises to the October 1985 Liberian elections, which were widely acknowledged to have been rigged by Doe's party. The actual voting on election day, Crocker claimed, "went off very well indeed." He argued that this was "the beginning, however imperfect, of a democratic experience."

The U.S. authorities, in fact, had originally urged Doe to hold the elections as a way to give his regime a democratic facade, and thus make it politically easier for Washington to continue its open backing.

Answering criticisms about Doe's vote fraud, Crocker wrote in a letter to the editor published in the February 17 *New York Times* that the Liberian elections, whatever their "shortcomings," had taken place "in a part of the world where the norm is single-party rule."

One Liberian opposition figure commented, "The racism in [Crocker's] statement is evident. He is saying that because people voted peacefully, and because the president [Doe] didn't dare claim more of the vote, that it's all right for him to have sequestered the ballots and doctored the results; after all, this is Africa."

Crocker also attempted to whitewash a massive crackdown that Doe launched in the wake of an abortive coup attempt in November. The numerous reports that Doe's troops had massacred hundreds of rebel troops and civilians were just exaggerated "rumors," according to Crocker.

In his congressional testimony and his letter to the *Times*, Crocker repeatedly stressed "the extent of U.S. interests in the country — e.g., key communications facilities and major investments." Cutting back U.S. aid to Liberia, he maintained, "could provoke chaos and bloodshed," as well as "protracted political violence" and "serious ideological cleavages" in Liberian society.

Crocker did not explicitly mention Haiti or the Philippines, where Washington was at that very moment abandoning the dictators Duvalier and Marcos after popular upsurges made their continued rule untenable. But he did indicate that Washington considered the Liberian regime to be more stable for the moment, stressing that Doe "seems to have the power to govern."

Therefore, Crocker concluded, "we're urging that we hang in there" and continue providing Doe with significant aid.

The White House has brushed aside non-binding resolutions adopted in December and

January by both houses of Congress calling for an end to military assistance to Liberia until free elections are held there. For 1986 it has earmarked \$65.4 million in economic assistance and \$4.7 million in military aid.

This is, nevertheless, down from the previous year, when Washington provided Doe with \$81 million in economic and \$12 million in military aid. By trimming the amount somewhat, it has sent a signal to Doe that his repression should be less blatant.

### A U.S. semicolony

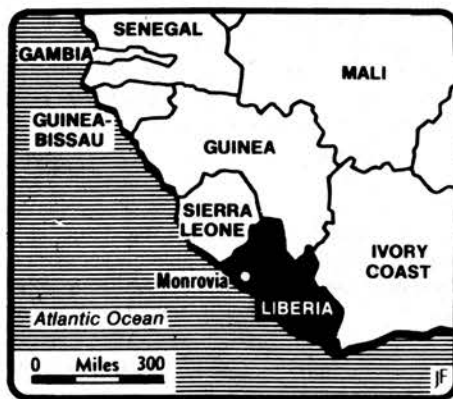
U.S. interference in Liberia is nothing new. It has been going on for a century and a half.

The Liberian state was founded by freed Black slaves from the U.S. South. Beginning in 1821, tens of thousands were resettled along the African coast by various U.S. missionary societies, with U.S. government backing. In 1847 these former slaves proclaimed Liberia an independent republic, the first on the entire African continent.

But this state was dominated by a tiny caste of Black settlers, who came to be known as Americo-Liberians. Today, they make up just 3 percent of the total population of 2 million. For most of Liberia's existence, these Americo-Liberians controlled the government and professions, ruling through the True Whig Party, the only legal party in the country.

The indigenous African peoples, who make up the vast bulk of the population, were discriminated against. Most were denied the franchise, since only those with a certain amount of property could vote. Education was limited, by and large, to descendants of the settlers, leaving about three-quarters of the population illiterate.

At the same time, Liberia has been independent in name only. It is, in fact, a U.S. semicolony. Its economy is dominated by U.S. corporations, which today have some \$450 million in direct investments there. Foremost among them is Firestone, whose Liberian holdings include the largest hevea rubber plan-



tations in the world. Liberia does not print its own currency, but uses the U.S. dollar.

In addition, Washington has a Voice of America transmission center in Liberia that broadcasts to all of Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Asia. There is a U.S. telecommunications station and an air and naval navigation center. Some 3,500 U.S. citizens work in Liberia at these installations and with the U.S. corporations. Also, U.S. military forces have access to the Robertsfield air base 30 miles east of Monrovia, the capital.

#### A stalled 'revolution'

By 1979-80, the pent-up social tensions in Liberian society began to burst through to the surface. Although the True Whig Party of President William Tolbert sought to maintain its monopoly on political activity, several left-wing and anti-imperialist organizations emerged. Foremost among them were the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) led by Togba-Nah Tipoteh and Amos Sawyer and the Progressive People's Party led by Gabriel Bacchus Matthews.

When the Tolbert regime announced a sharp increase in the price of rice in April 1979, thousands poured into the streets of Monrovia to protest. Police fired into the crowds, killing more than 100.

But this massacre did not stifle the unrest. It continued to mount. And demands for democratic rights came increasingly to the fore.

In this context, a small group of soldiers headed by Doe (who was then a master sergeant) carried out a coup on April 12, 1980. Tolbert was summarily shot and more than a dozen of his top officials were publicly executed a week later.

After 133 years, the political domination of the tiny Americo-Liberian elite was broken. The new governing body was a military council of sergeants, corporals, and privates, most of whom were from Liberia's indigenous tribal groupings.

Reflecting the popular pressures for social and political change, this council proclaimed that its takeover was the beginning of a "revolution." It named a cabinet that included a number of progressive political figures, such as Matthews and Tipoteh. It initiated a few democratic reforms and made overtures to the workers' states and governments like those of Libya and Ethiopia.

Alarmed by this sudden turn of events, Washington quickly intervened to head off a genuine revolutionary situation. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Moose — and later his successor, Chester Crocker — made a series of trips to Monrovia to reestablish U.S. dominance with lavish offers of economic and military assistance. They succeeded.

Within a year, the Doe regime began to move markedly to the right. Through a succession of trumped-up coup plot charges, Doe eventually purged all the left-wing figures from his government. Some fled the country, and some of Doe's opponents within the military council were executed.

The Doe regime's timid initial moves to-



GEN. SAMUEL DOE

ward an independent foreign policy were dropped. Ties with Washington became even more slavish than they were under the previous government. By 1981, U.S. Green Berets had arrived in Liberia for a series of training exercises with the Liberian armed forces. The CIA station in Monrovia grew to be the largest in all of Africa. Within four years of Doe's coup, official U.S. aid had risen tenfold, making Liberia a larger per capita recipient of U.S. aid than any other country in sub-Saharan Africa.

Doe often parroted U.S. policy positions. He frequently sought to blame political instability in Africa on "communist subversion" or "Libyan terrorism." He provided refuge to proimperialist Ghanaian exiles seeking to overthrow the radical government of Jerry Rawlings in Ghana.

In 1983 Doe restored diplomatic relations with Israel and became the first African head of state in 12 years to visit Jerusalem. This was followed by Israeli economic ties and police and military assistance.

#### Corruption, tribalism, repression

Doe's domestic policies also negated his "revolutionary" pretensions. The one group in Liberian society to benefit most from the coup was the military itself. All military personnel were granted substantial salary increases. Doe promoted himself to general. Soldiers and officers used their power to exact bribes and pay-offs, with some troops becoming rich overnight. This aroused resentment not only among ordinary citizens, but also among businesspeople who fell prey to the army's extortion operations.

Meanwhile, imperialist corporations were given new incentives and benefited from strict labor controls, including a ban on strikes. The regime even discussed abolishing a constitutional provision restricting land ownership to Black Liberians, a move that would allow U.S. and other foreign corporations to openly buy up farms and plantations.

"Liberia is indeed one country where a pro-business attitude is the norm," Crocker approvingly declared in late 1983. "Liberia is actually soliciting additional private sector investment."

Contrary to early hopes, the end to the political monopoly of the Americo-Liberian elite did not bring policies aimed at forging a united Liberian nation. Rather than seeking to end ethnic discrimination and favoritism, Doe sought to advance his own particular tribal grouping, the Krahn, who make up 5 percent of the population. Krahn have been preferentially promoted into leading military and administrative positions, fostering frictions between them and Liberians of other tribal backgrounds.

Meanwhile, a sector of the old Americo-Liberian hierarchy has forged an alliance with Doe and recovered some of its power and prerogatives.

As the Doe regime has adopted increasingly unpopular policies, it has had to rely more and more on outright repression to maintain its rule.

Left-wing groups, such as MOJA, have been forced to function largely underground. Hundreds of political figures and activists have been arrested. A special measure, Decree 88A, was promulgated making it a crime to spread "lies, rumors, and disinformation," engage in labor action, or criticize the head of state.

Strikes by dock workers, miners, and other workers have been broken through legislation and police action.

Teachers accused of propagating "socialism" were sacked, and hundreds of high school students were expelled from school for daring to demonstrate. In 1984 troops invaded the University of Liberia and fired on students who were protesting the arrest of MOJA leader Amos Sawyer; more than a dozen were killed.

By the time Crocker praised Liberia's "democratic experience," Doe had already achieved the distinction of being responsible for more executions than all his predecessors combined.

#### A 'remarkable' election?

Although the U.S. authorities continued to back Doe, they nevertheless preferred that he clean up his regime's image a little and provide a safety valve for some of the political conflicts that were building up in Liberia. To that end Washington pressed Doe to hold elections and adopt a civilian facade.

This he did, though under the strict control of his military clique.

In 1984 Liberians were allowed to vote on a new constitution, which bore some of the trappings of the U.S. Constitution. Doe formally abolished the military council and set up a hand-picked Interim National Assembly with himself as president. He announced that elections would be held in 1985 for the presidency and other offices.

Doe dressed more often in civilian garb and set up the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL), dominated by his military cronies and some figures from the former True

Whig Party.

He then named a Special Elections Commission that was staffed mostly by NDPL supporters. Its purpose was to legally register parties deemed "qualified" to run in the elections. Not surprisingly, of the 11 parties that had emerged, the NDPL was the first — and for months the only — party to win approval. All the others were disqualified or tied up in complex and expensive court challenges.

Concerned that a one-party election would lack any credibility, the U.S. authorities stepped up their pressure by threatening to withhold financial aid if other parties were not allowed to run.

Doe dutifully ordered that three of them be approved: the Liberian Action Party (LAP), the Liberian Unification Party (LUP), and the Unity Party (UP). All three openly look to Washington for political support, and the LAP and UP in particular are led by former True Whig leaders. U.S. officials, seeking to hedge their bets in case Doe should fall, established some contacts with these parties.

While certifying a few conservative parties, Doe's elections commission continued to disqualify the two main left-wing groups: the Liberian People's Party, led by MOJA's Amos Sawyer; and the United People's Party of Bacchus Matthews. From various reports, both groups retain significant popular support.

Despite the restrictions on what parties could run, the Oct. 15, 1985, election did mark a democratic gain in one respect. With the new constitution's scrapping of the old stipulation limiting the franchise to property holders, the vast majority of Liberians were allowed to vote for the first time in the country's long history.

But apparently this right to vote did not mean that Liberians had a right to have their votes counted.

After initial tallies indicated that Doe's NDPL was running last among the four parties, the election commission called a temporary halt to the vote counting. It named a special counting committee stacked with Doe supporters. In the two weeks between election day and October 29, when the results were announced, there were numerous reports of burned ballots and disappearing and switched ballot boxes.

According to the committee's tally, Doe won with 51 percent of the presidential vote. The NDPL was said to have won 21 of the 26 seats in the Senate and 51 of 64 in the House of Representatives.

All three parliamentary opposition parties denounced the election as a fraud, as did other groups in the country. But in Washington, State Department spokesperson Bernard Kalb proclaimed the election "remarkable" and said that any irregularities "were an exception to the general rule." Nevertheless, there was some U.S. concern over the transparent character of Doe's election rigging and the way he treated the other parties that look to Washington.

#### Coup bid and bloodbath

Blocked from removing Doe through elec-

toral means, some of his opponents tried a military coup.

On the morning of November 12, Liberians awoke to broadcasts over a religious radio station proclaiming that Doe had been overthrown by troops led by former army commander Gen. Thomas Quiwonkpa.

Although a political conservative, Quiwonkpa had a reputation as the one member of Doe's former military council who was not considered personally corrupt. He had been ousted as army commander in November 1983 following a rift with Doe, and had gone into exile.

Over the radio, Quiwonkpa called for "the liberation of our people from fear, brutality, and bloody tyranny" and appealed to "the students, the workers, and all patriotic citizens to stand with us as we do battle against the forces of injustice and corruption."

Within minutes of the broadcast, thousands of Liberians poured into the streets of Monrovia for festive celebrations of what was believed to be a successful coup. Election posters and billboards of Doe were torn down throughout the capital.

But Doe was able to rally his forces and counterattack. He relied especially on the Executive Guard, an elite force composed mainly of Krahns. Celebrating civilians were mowed down in the streets and rebel troops were overwhelmed. Three days later Quiwonkpa himself was hunted down and killed. According to several eyewitness news accounts, his body was dismembered and publicly displayed as a warning to the population.

Shortly after Doe regained control, Reagan sent a message assuring him of continued U.S. support. This was partly intended to counter speculation of U.S. involvement in the coup bid, a possibility that cannot be discounted. Quiwonkpa had been living in the United States until shortly before he tried to oust Doe, and the first news abroad that his coup was under way came from the U.S. State Department.

Whatever the facts of the coup attempt itself, Doe used it as a pretext to unleash a massive crackdown. Besides the many demonstrating civilians who were killed, hundreds of suspected Quiwonkpa supporters in the armed forces were rounded up and murdered. According to a firsthand report by journalist Tunde Agbabiaka in the Dec. 16, 1985, London weekly *West Africa*:

Throughout the night of November 12 and 13, diplomats living around the [Barclay training] barracks, which is close to Gen. Doe's seven storey residence and office, reported intermittent gunfire as hundreds of suspects were reportedly being shot without trial. Hundreds of anxious families who came to ask for relatives could be seen returning home in tears after colleagues in the army had broken the official code of secrecy to announce that their loved ones had been killed. As for the corpses, the government could not hand over the bodies of those who had been killed because they had all been thrown into mass graves around Camp Sheffling located some ten miles from the city.

Many of these victims were of Gio back-

ground (from Quiwonkpa's tribal grouping), as well as from the related Mano. At least 500 people in Nimba county, where many Gios are concentrated, were reported to have been massacred as well.

The Moroccan news agency estimated that 1,500 people were known to have died in the coup bid and subsequent crackdown. Doe's minister of justice, Jenkins Scott, disputed this, stating that "only" 600 had been killed.

Scores of prominent political figures were briefly detained, and several are being brought to trial on "treason" charges, including some leading LAP figures. Another 157 military and paramilitary personnel are to be court-martialed.

Relying primarily on armed force, Doe has for the moment succeeded in maintaining his rule. It is this that Crocker had in mind when he noted that Doe "seems to have the power to govern." And as long as Doe is willing and able to protect U.S. imperialism's interests in Liberia, that is qualification enough for continued U.S. economic and military support. Washington's claim that it is seeking to encourage democratic reforms serves as a political cover for this aid.

But the extent of the Doe regime's long-term stability still remains uncertain. Despite the severe repression, there have been continued outbursts of popular opposition.

In late February a mass rally at the University of Liberia demanded an end to the prohibition on political activities on campus. In early March, following an arson attack on the offices of the independent *Daily Observer*, the Press Union of Liberia called for a three-day news blackout to protest repression against the news media.

Primary and secondary school teachers, who had not been paid for several months, went on strike March 1. Within two weeks more than 1,000 teachers had joined the action. School children took to the streets to back the teachers' pay demands. When attacked by riot police, they defended themselves with sticks and rocks, leading to fighting in a number of districts of the capital.

The target of the students' anger was evident — they carried placards declaring, "No to the Doe dictatorship." □

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# Salvadoran unions reject austerity, war

*UNTS open letter condemns Duarte regime's policies*

[A new union grouping, the National Union of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS), was established at a broad union assembly held in El Salvador's capital, San Salvador, February 8. The founding meeting involved some 1,200 delegates from more than 100 union, trade, and professional organizations. A broadcast over Radio Venceremos, the voice of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), hailed the creation of the UNTS as the "broadest labor front ever in the country's history." The UNTS has more than 300,000 members.]

[Included within the UNTS is the National Federation of Salvadoran Workers' Unions (FENASTRAS), the country's largest union federation, which has suffered considerable repression from the Christian Democratic government of José Napoleón Duarte. (For a speech by FENASTRAS leader Héctor Recinos given at the federation's November 1985 convention in San Salvador, see the Dec. 16, 1985, *Intercontinental Press*.) FENASTRAS is also part of the May 1 Committee, a grouping of progressive unions and other organizations that has likewise affiliated to the UNTS.]

[In addition to a number of independent unions and cooperative associations, the UNTS also includes the Popular Democratic Union (UPD). Formed in 1980 when Duarte first came to power, the UPD was closely allied with Duarte's Christian Democratic Party and received major backing from the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), a largely CIA-financed organization that is tied to the AFL-CIO union federation in the United States. But last year the UPD broke with the AIFLD and it has increasingly spoken out against the Duarte regime's policies.]

[Shortly before the UNTS was formed, the Duarte regime imposed an austerity program at the insistence of the U.S. embassy. Opposition to the program was a major topic of discussion at the UNTS's founding conference. So was the regime's U.S.-backed war against the liberation forces of the FMLN. The UNTS called for the reopening of a dialogue with the FMLN and the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR). The UNTS also criticized U.S. military aid to the Duarte regime, stating, "The U.S. government can continue to give us economic aid if it wishes, but it must be for the promotion of social development programs, not for the war."]

[On February 21 the UNTS organized a demonstration of 80,000 through the streets of San Salvador to protest the regime's austerity program. This was one of the largest demonstrations in the capital in several years.]

[The following are major excerpts from a February 26 letter sent by the UNTS to United

Nations Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuellar. It appeared also as a paid advertisement in the February 28 San Salvador daily *El Mundo*. This translation from the Spanish is taken from the March 7 *Daily Report* published by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce.]

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The National Union of Salvadoran Workers — comprised of the Popular Democratic Union (UPD), Confederation of Cooperative Associations of El Salvador (COACES), Salvadoran Workers Federation (CTS), General Association of Finance Ministry Employees, and the May 1 Committee — states the following:

The seriousness of the situation is obvious if we bear in mind that, as President Duarte recently stated, the Salvadoran state needs an enormous amount of economic resources to maintain the war. Despite receiving large economic and military aid from the U.S. government and having transferred significant amounts of funds from national education, health, and other programs to the defense sector, the state has had an average annual fiscal deficit of 500 million colones in the past five years.

In order to overcome that fiscal deficit, the government of José Napoleón Duarte, encouraged by the International Monetary Fund and the Ronald Reagan administration, has resorted to the imposition of a number of economic measures that are totally unpopular. The problem of the fiscal deficit can be resolved through them, but at the expense of the hunger and misery of the workers and the people in general.

It is also important that we point out that the measures imposed by the government have the clear objective of taking funds from the people to finance the war that the people do not want and that Duarte is determined to continue because he does not want to hold a dialogue with the FMLN-FDR forces.

In view of this situation, our organization held the "National Assembly for the Survival of Workers" on February 8. After analyzing the country's situation in the presence of more than 1,500 delegates of the workers and dozens of national and international journalists, we presented and approved the measures that we would propose to President Duarte to resolve the national crisis and the workers' situation.

On Feb. 19, 1986, we sent a letter to President Duarte on the measures approved in the aforementioned assembly.

On Feb. 21, 1986, responding to the call issued by the UNTS to the workers and the people in general, more than 80,000 people marched through San Salvador's streets to protest against "the economic stabilization and reactivation program or economic package" imposed by the Duarte government. This huge march was irrefutable proof that the people reject such a program and that they reject the war.

In the face of this demonstration of popular discontent, Duarte, instead of responding in an intelligent manner and like a real democrat, is responding negatively. Instead of talking with the UNTS and thus listening to the clamor of 80,000 people, the Christian Democratic government has turned a deaf ear and launched a psychological campaign to discredit the workers.

We are addressing your respectable international organization because we are concerned about the attitude adopted by the Duarte government against the UNTS. Through the Culture and Communications Ministry, it has not only tried to confuse the people, but, using names of fictitious organizations, it has been intimidating and terrorizing the workers, especially those organized in the UNTS, linking them to the guerrillas. In paid advertisements it has insinuated that the measures proposed by the UNTS were based on broadcasts of Radio Venceremos on February 17. That is false because, as we said earlier, those measures were presented and approved in the national assembly of workers held on February 8, in other words, nine days before the previous mentioned radio broadcast.

This Duarte government attitude worries us not only because it seeks to evade, through lies and intimidation campaigns, the proposals that we have made regarding the economic package and the armed conflict, but because in El Salvador the action of linking an organization or an individual with the FMLN is tantamount to a death sentence. That is precisely what the Duarte government is irresponsibly doing.

We want to state that we publicly hold the Duarte government responsible for the disappearance, capture, or assassination of any leader or rank-and-file member of the UNTS.

In view of the aforementioned, we ask the previously mentioned organizations to mediate so that the current process of the organized working people will develop in accordance with their needs and aspirations and so that they will mediate for the reestablishment of justice with peace for all Salvadorans.

We hope that your organization will attentively observe the case brought up by the UNTS. □

# The deepening of the agrarian reform

*FSLN leaders on changes in land reform law, U.S. aggression*

[On January 22 and 23, the Nicaraguan National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG) held a national assembly of its full-time staff. Some 400 peasant organizers met in El Crucero, near Managua, to prepare for the first national peasant congress, which will be held April 25-26. They approved an internal document to guide their work.

[The opening and closing sessions of the assembly were open to the press. UNAG President Daniel Núñez addressed both sessions. Commander of the Revolution Víctor Tirado addressed the closing session, speaking for the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

[UNAG was founded in April 1981, one and a half years after the 1979 Sandinista revolution that overthrew the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship.

[UNAG had 124,000 members as of January 1986. Many are poor peasants working in cooperatives or on their own plots of land. Many others are farmers with larger landholdings who employ some hired labor. A significant number are big capitalist landlords. These three groups are often referred to in Nicaragua as "small, medium, and large producers." Those capitalist landlords who do not actively support the counterrevolution and are cooperating with government production programs are also sometimes referred to as "patriotic producers."

[The UNAG staff assembly took place shortly after the Nicaraguan government decreed important changes in the country's land reform law. In 1979 the revolutionary government had expropriated the holdings of Somoza and his close supporters. It then passed a land reform law in 1981. In all, 2.84 million manzanas of land [1 manzana = 1.73 acres] were expropriated by the end of 1983, and the amount in the hands of large landowners fell from 36 percent in 1978 to 13 percent in 1983.

[However, in 1984 and 1985, a total of only 101,000 manzanas was expropriated. Large landlords still owned 11 percent of the land at the end of 1985. Nicaraguan officials estimate that today 20 to 30 percent of Nicaraguan peasants either have no land or not enough to live on.

[On Jan. 11, 1986, the government decreed major changes in the Agrarian Reform Law. They remove previous acreage limits on properties that could be affected by the agrarian reform and give the government greater authority to nationalize lands "for the public need or social interest."

[On January 30 Daniel Núñez granted an interview to *Intercontinental Press* correspondents Harvey McArthur and Héctor Carrión. In

it he took up the land reform, the general situation in the countryside, and the perspectives and activities coming out of UNAG's staff assembly.

[Núñez joined the FSLN in 1972. He was then a large rancher, raising 1,000 head of cattle on 3,000 acres of land. He was imprisoned for his opposition to the Somoza dictatorship in 1974, and his lands were confiscated. He and other imprisoned FSLN leaders were released in December 1974 in exchange for Somozaists seized by Sandinista commandos. He worked as an international representative of the FSLN and returned to Nicaragua to fight in the 1979 insurrection.

[Núñez then headed the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform for the north-central region of Nicaragua in the new revolutionary government. He was elected president of UNAG in July 1984 and was elected to the Nicaraguan National Assembly as an FSLN candidate in the November 1984 national elections.

[Below we are printing our January 30 interview with Núñez, followed by excerpts from the remarks of Commander Víctor Tirado at the closing session of the UNAG assembly. The translation and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

## Interview with Daniel Núñez

*Question. Of the 124,000 members of UNAG, how many are small, how many are medium, and how many are large producers, and what are the criteria for defining who is a small, medium, or large producer?*

*Answer.* We are an agrarian people, a nation of peasants. We are the product of the underdevelopment and anarchy in which this country developed under two long dictatorships that we suffered in this century: that of the Conservatives, which lasted 30 years, and that of the Somozas, for 45 years. Thus this is a country where it is difficult to start to harmonize the economy and its different sectors.

So, when UNAG arose on the national scene after the triumph of the revolution, we found ourselves with disorganized and dispersed sectors.

Previously, these producers were organized by COSEP, the Supreme Council of Private Enterprise. COSEP had its organizations of ranchers and coffee, cotton, and rice growers. It claimed to represent these sectors, but really it was the intermediary that bought their products to export them to the European or U.S. markets. COSEP then kept the proceeds, the profits. In other words, these organizations exploited the producers, but did not benefit them.

When we began UNAG, we first organized the sectors of small and medium production, because they were the most representative. In our country, they represent 60 percent of the national production and own 60 percent of the land. This sector includes the Credit and Service Cooperatives and the Sandinista Agricultural Cooperatives.<sup>1</sup>

Another sector is the large producers, who were organized by COSEP. We began to make inroads in this arena and won over some producers and some sectors that had collaborated with the revolution and with the Sandinista Front. They had stood up to the dictatorship and had taken a patriotic stance, we could say, and we began to bring them into our ranks. We organize one-third of the large producers.

Twenty percent of the land is held by the state.

Hence, to summarize, we can say that UNAG represents one-third of the large producers of the country, as well as small and medium producers and the cooperatives. We do not want the other two-thirds of the large producers, since they are with COSEP.

Hence, in broad terms, we represent producers who together produce 54 percent of the export products such as meat, coffee, and cotton, 80 percent of the corn and beans, and some 90 percent of the fruits and vegetables.

*Q. At the assembly of UNAG staff, you projected a national campaign to recruit 20,000 more peasants to UNAG by the time of the national congress in April.*

*A.* Yes, 20,000. It will be a salute to the congress.

*Q. Does this mean that there are still many peasants who are not affiliated with UNAG?*

*A.* Yes, that's true. I think that with these 20,000 we will cover a large percentage of this sector.

share government services and financing. In Sandinista Agricultural Cooperatives farmers pool their lands and jointly work them as a single enterprise.

I should say that even though some are not affiliated to UNAG, they are really with us. We haven't formally enrolled them because we haven't had time. But they feel like they're part of UNAG.

*Q. How much land has been distributed to peasants since the 1979 revolution? We have read that some 80,000 peasant families have received titles to land, but that most of this was not a new distribution of land, but rather giving formal legal titles to peasants who previously worked state or communal land without ownership papers.*

A. Not all the 80,000, but a large part.

*Q. So the rest of the land distributed was*

A. State lands. The state has given 10 percent of the agricultural land of Nicaragua to the peasants who did not have land.

The rest was entitlement of peasants who were working marginal lands but without titles.

*Q. We have been at meetings where peasants propose to the government specific properties that they think should be expropriated from big landlords and given to landless peasants or cooperatives. Will UNAG as an organization take on such a role and point out where the Agrarian Reform Law should be applied?*

A. We have said that the agrarian reform must take up where it left off. Many large landowners remain in Nicaragua, landowners who have 10,000 manzanas, 8,000 manzanas, 7,000 manzanas, 5,000 manzanas, there are many of them. One must point out that 80 percent of the land is in private hands.<sup>2</sup>

So the expropriations should affect those sectors who have much land but are not using their land efficiently.

If there is a state farm that is inefficiently used, and the peasants are demanding this land, it should be given to them, because there can be no privileges for anyone. I think this is important.

We are going to watch carefully to see that the land reform is just, that it starts with those at the top. And I think that it will remain with them for a while, since here the problem is not a lack of land. There is plenty of land here.

If it was not for the policies of the counterrevolution, the agrarian reform law would not have affected many landlords. If there is anyone who the Nicaraguan landlords should complain to, it is Reagan for having fielded an army of assassins.

*Q. To what extent is the demand for land due to the displacement of peasants by the war, and to what extent to demands from peasants who never had land? Since the army is pushing*



DANIEL NÚÑEZ

Héctor Carrión/IP

*the contras out of some areas, will this open up lands for peasants to return to and thus help ease the pressure on the land?*

A. The great pressure from the people is to smash the counterrevolution. That's the primary pressure. Here, what we demand is peace.

I would say that if the war ends tomorrow, the pressure on the land will end the day after tomorrow, because the peasantry will once again return to the lands they left. And that is why I say that the deepening of the agrarian reform is due to the aggression.

If Cuba had not faced attacks like the Bay of Pigs invasion, the radical, profoundly Marxist revolution would not exist there.

But another point. We have such strength in this country, such moral strength — which is most important — that if we say to the peasant: "Look, brother, right now we are not giving you the land, we are giving you arms to fight," he will understand this and seize the rifle and go confront the counterrevolution.

So one should not think that we are carrying out the agrarian reform because the contras are forcing us to do so. No, it is a human question.

*Q. In an article on the land reform, Barricada said that in 1985 there was a sharp break with the past practice of giving land only to peasants in cooperatives and that more land was being given to individual peasants. Is this true, and why?*

A. Yes, it is true. I think it is correct. You have to respect the will of those who have received the land. We cannot collectivize the peasantry if they are not voluntarily ready to be collectivized. Nothing that involves submission is good. You have to respect the will of man.

*Q. When peasants see that working together in a cooperative is more efficient, then they will decide to join one?*

A. There have been different experiences. It

depends on the development of each country and on the specific situation it is going through.

We, for example, are living under a war of aggression. [Without the war] we could have had more time for training, for providing services and technical assistance to these cooperatives.

The important thing now is to produce. Each man must feel that he has his land, that it belongs to him.

Later on we will see if, as a general rule, individual plots are more efficient — and in that case, we will give out land individually. If the collective farms are more efficient, then we will work collectively. This will also depend on the attitudes and militancy of the respective individual and cooperative sectors.

*Q. In the report you presented to the UNAG assembly, you said that UNAG has played an important role in undermining the contras in the countryside. Could you explain this more?*

A. UNAG has had a decisive role in breaking up the contras in the war zones. During 1985 we organized more than 1,000 peasant assemblies throughout the country. We went into the war zones where the counterrevolutionaries were fighting.

When we organized assemblies with the peasantry, we strengthened them with our presence. While we were strengthening their political consciousness, helping with transportation, prices, etc., the counterrevolutionaries would come. If they found someone harvesting coffee or corn, they would assassinate them. The peasants thus came to see who were their friends and who were their enemies.

So they told us: "We need arms to defend ourselves. When the counterrevolutionaries come here and find us unarmed, that is when they kill us."

So we took steps to arm the cooperatives, to arm the peasantry.

The results were obvious this year when we were able to harvest coffee in zones where we were not able to do so in 1984–85.

*Q. In the discussion at the UNAG assembly, you placed great importance on the alliance of workers and peasants in Nicaragua. Could you explain exactly what this means?*

A. Look, in Nicaragua at this time, the peasantry has more weight than the working class. This is understandable, since we are an agrarian nation, not an industrial one.

The workers and the peasants have always marched together. The workers came out of the peasantry. The peasantry did not come out of the working class.

Hence there is a complete identity. I would not speak of an alliance. Rather, it is a complete class identity, or ties, almost genetic, one could say.

While, as Sandino said, the workers and peasants will go all the way, who was it who joined Fidel in the mountains, in the Escambray? The peasants. Who joined Sandino? He built his army based on peasants from Las

2. This 80 percent includes land held both by cooperatives and by individual owners, from poor peasants to wealthy landlords.

Segovias.

If we look at the peasant, we consider that he is the most noble, the most pure, the most good. Evil comes from the city to the countryside, not from the countryside to the city.

The workers have much to learn from the peasants. And the peasants, too, have much to learn from the workers. Hence, it is a question of two sectors that, rather than forming an alliance, see that they were made from the same mold.

*Q. At a recent meeting in the countryside, we met members of a cooperative who were city workers and had moved to the countryside to take up agricultural production. Is this an exception, or is this a campaign you are now promoting?*

A. It is not an isolated process. It is a dialectical process of the social transformations in our country.

It was even a demand of Sandino 50 years ago: that the workers of the city should go to the countryside to relate to their peasant brothers.

So I would say that in Nicaragua this is like a historical law. And we think that we should do everything possible to convert this into a national slogan: workers of the city to the countryside.

*Q. Could you explain the role that you see UNAG playing with respect to the state farms?*

A. The state farms are a national interest that must meet the needs of the social and economic development of Nicaraguans. Hence we cannot just let them be run by the state sector. All the people must participate.

The people must watch carefully to see that the administrators are managing this important sector, which doesn't have a specific owner, since its owner is the Nicaraguan people.

Therefore we say that we must be vigilant with a sector that does not belong to those who administer it, to see that the administrators do the work they are paid to do, and do it well.

*Q. Also at the UNAG assembly, you placed great importance on the plan to establish a rural supply company run by UNAG. Could you explain this more?*

A. If we want to win respect and confidence and further strengthen our ties with the productive sector, we have to provide them with services. We cannot become demagogues, shouting here and there but actually doing very little for them.

Therefore, we think that we must have a supply company to guarantee supplies for these sectors. We call it ECOPA [Company of Cooperatives of Agricultural Producers].

We have obtained \$1.2 million in financing for this from the Swedish government. We are obtaining other aid from the Dutch and Italian governments and from some British nongovernmental organizations.

This is important because, while the U.S. government gives the mercenaries hundreds of

millions of dollars to assassinate our people, there are other countries that give us tools, resources, and medicines to cure our people.

This also has helped us see more clearly that there are two sectors in the world: those that build and those that destroy. Those that love and those that hate. And while the U.S. government hates the people of Nicaragua, there are other peoples and other governments that support the government of Nicaragua.

*Q. Will this supply company also help deal with the problems of shortages, hoarding, and speculation?*

A. It is helping us meet these problems. For example, we have bought machetes, rubber boots, nails, and some common medicines. We sell them directly to the peasants, eliminating the speculators. We sell them at prices much lower than those of the black market, and, in many cases, even lower than in some state companies, that is, at stable prices.

*Q. Does UNAG have specific international solidarity or material aid campaigns it is carrying out now?*

A. We have gone to different countries. In 1985 we made two trips: one to the United States and one to Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, France, England, Holland, and Belgium.

This shows that we are carrying out a campaign to make the peasants' problems known.

We have found unlimited solidarity in these countries. We have had relations on a government level and with nongovernmental organizations. Also with organizations of the working class and with producers, including with large producers in England.

We have relations with producers in Canada, the United States, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Honduras. We are an organization reaching outside of our country. There is no revolution that can maintain itself without international support. And that is called solidarity.

We have met brothers in Cuba, in Poland, in Bulgaria. We are citizens of the world. We are not an island, nor are we in another galaxy. We are in Nicaragua, in a little piece of Latin America.

*Q. Is there a particular message you would like to send to the workers and farmers of the United States?*

A. I would like to call on the people of the United States to listen to those U.S. citizens who have come to Nicaragua and returned to the United States and become spokespeople for the Nicaraguan people, who are fighting for their independence.

The U.S. people should not passively allow the U.S. government to continue committing the crimes it has committed in Nicaragua. Nicaragua has suffered 14 direct U.S. interventions. We have known nothing but the Big Stick policy, with the exception of the Carter administration, which was understanding of the policies of the revolution.

Reagan has become, we could say, the Hitler of the Nicaraguan fascists.

We Latin Americans have had only bad experiences with the U.S. governments. That is, we are not anti-imperialist because we want to be so.

We are not anti-North American, since we like the people of the United States. Clergymen, intellectuals, workers, peasants, and producers have visited here, all of whom we have welcomed as our brothers.

This includes some prominent people such as William Bierman, vice-president of Seagrams, a multinational corporation, whom I respect very much. I know Blase Bonpane, a priest, who is also a major figure.

I know many North Americans, and I ask: how is it possible that this people allows itself to be governed by lunatics?

I think that what you have in the U.S. is not really democracy. It is a superficial democracy, I would say, that has turned the people of the United States into a country of consumers of things, of objects, without taking into account that we must transform the world, or that it is ideas that will rule the world, not weapons.

It is not by accident that we Nicaraguans say, "We fight against the Yankee, enemy of humanity." We have seen them in Vietnam, in Guatemala, in the Dominican Republic, in Nicaragua, in El Salvador, and in Honduras.

When they talk about the Soviets, well, we haven't seen Soviets here. I know Cuba, and I do not know of a single Soviet-owned mill there. I don't know of a single Soviet factory there.

It is incredible, this specter of communism that is presented in the United States.

We are not afraid of communism. Neither are we afraid of capitalism. What we are afraid of is dictatorship. Dictatorship we know, we lived under it, and we know that it is the worst plague that can afflict a people.

Look, I admire the teachings that I find in the Gospels. I did not have to turn to Marxism-Leninism to humanize and sensitize my thinking, my consciousness.

And Christ lives today in Nicaragua. Where? In the cooperatives, in the hospitals, in the schools, and even in the liberating rifle of each fighter. We make war to kill evil. This is something the imperialists cannot understand.

Hence it is important that the world advances. That there is struggle in South Africa, that there are struggles in Latin America. That there are struggles within the United States itself.

*Q. Do you have any final comment on UNAG and your work?*

A. I want to stress that UNAG arose as a response of the revolution to the historic struggles of the peasantry. The peasants are the ones who suffered most from the dictatorships, the aggression, and the U.S. interventions.

Hence, we are not allies of the revolution. We are a force, part of the backbone of this revolutionary process. □



# Speech by Víctor Tirado

Comrade Daniel Núñez; comrades presiding over this assembly; comrade peasants:

Daniel Núñez said that UNAG is an anti-imperialist, democratic, revolutionary, and Sandinista organization. I think that's correct. That's the content of this organization. From that standpoint you discussed incentives and you discussed the worker-peasant alliance.

This is a very important concept, defining the worker-peasant alliance.

On the one hand we have — from the peasants' side — a law called the Agrarian Reform Law. The worker must give his total support to the Agrarian Reform Law, in the immediate sense and in order to be consistent from a political, ideological, and revolutionary standpoint. Doing so is a demonstration of the worker-peasant alliance.

What support can the peasant give to this alliance, to the workers' movement? We're going to mention several to begin with. The peasant movement supports the workers' movement by backing the national system of wages.<sup>1</sup> This is one of the first important principles of the alliance of the worker-peasant movement.

After that, there's another: how to eliminate the speculator; how to get supplies to their respective places; how the workers' movement can make products so they get to the peasants at a fair price. And vice versa: how the peasant movement can also produce basic foods and get them to the workers at a fair price. This defines the alliance.

We say that the revolution is based on this great alliance of the working people — because the workers of the city — just like the peasants — are working people who defend this revolution.

We could add another point, the fundamental aspect of this revolution, its essence, which consists of maintaining sovereignty and dignity, consolidating our independence, and struggling against the [U.S.] aggression. This, too, demonstrates the alliance between the workers' movement and the peasant movement.

The aggression has not receded, nor has it been abandoned by the U.S. government. And when we say that, we mean that aggression and intervention are not that far from our borders.

## Land reform

We cannot isolate ourselves from the context of intervention when we come here to discuss the problems of the peasants. Rather, we must be convinced that the aggression is one of the primary elements that deeply affect our economic development.

You've talked about the land reform. We're

1. The National System for the Organization of Work and Wages was set up in 1984. It establishes categories for each major occupation in Nicaragua and sets a uniform, national wage or salary rate for each category.



Michael Baumann/IP

VÍCTOR TIRADO

carrying out a land reform in the middle of this aggression, in the middle of an anti-Sandinista campaign on the part of all the reactionary forces, inside and outside Nicaragua.

I've said before and I'll keep on repeating it — our land reform has different foundations and elements than other land reforms in Latin America. We want to carry out a land reform that is political and economic as well, a reform that resolves social and economic problems.

What is our land reform about? The changes in the Agrarian Reform Law are aimed at affecting a sector of the agricultural population. That sector will have to be affected. No land reform anywhere in Latin America or in the world has been carried out without affecting some sector.

We point this out because we don't want just a political land reform but an economic one.

What does economic mean? It means that the land reform is going to apply to parcels of land when needed in terms of the economic development of the revolution, the country, and the people. When a plot of land is needed for economic development, this land will be given to the peasant, even if it means affecting a large producer, no matter how efficient he may be. And the peasant will have to make good use of that land and surpass the production goals set for him.

That's land reform in a revolution that is marching toward a transformation and toward a new society.

The revolution is you, the revolution is the Sandinista Front, the revolution is the army, the revolution is the workers, and the revolution is all those sectors of the population that are ready to participate in revolutionary transformations and against the imperialist aggression.

UNAG should keep on pushing social transformations in the countryside: schools, health care, transportation, roads, etc. But UNAG isn't only defending the peasant sector. It's UNAG that is defending the workers, and even the patriotic producers. It's UNAG that's consolidating all the social demands that our people won on July 19, 1979.

The doors are open to anyone who wants to join UNAG to defend these principles. As far as the Sandinista National Liberation Front is concerned, UNAG will remain a broad organization, uniting within it the large, medium, and small producers, under the principles of the revolution.

UNAG should not be a movement of peasants in misery, of impoverished peasants. Let UNAG be a movement capable of transforming the countryside, developing it, and bringing it to such economic levels that this can become a new society. In doing so, you play an important role, and it's here that the interests of the workers and peasants really come together. Because the alliance of the workers and peasants is material, it's political, and it's ideological.

## International question

We cannot put aside the international question. If UNAG only examines particular problems, or only examines national problems, your political and ideological level cannot develop.

You need to be aware of what's happening in the world, and especially in a country where there are two buildings, one called the White House and the other called the Pentagon.

What does the U.S. government want? It wants to eliminate this revolution so the counterrevolutionary forces can come and join in the policies dictated by the U.S. government.

This has not been the tradition of our people, and it never will be. The tradition of the Nicaraguan people has been the tradition of Zeledón, of Sandino, of Rigoberto López Pérez, of Carlos Fonseca,<sup>2</sup> of all our heroes and martyrs and of all the leaders and combatants who have fallen since the triumph of the revolution.

How can we accept the idea of the U.S. Congress discussing \$100 million for the mercenaries so they can come here and destroy this revolution?

This is why we've called on the international community, the Latin American community, and the governments of Central America to unite and make an effort so that these funds are not approved in the U.S. Congress.

It would be a bad precedent if they approve it and the international community accepts that without making any statements, without op-

2. Benjamín Zeledón led the resistance to the 1912 invasion of Nicaragua by the U.S. Marines. Augusto César Sandino, Nicaragua's national hero, commanded the peasant army that waged a six-year guerrilla struggle against the marines in the 1920s and early 1930s. Rigoberto López Pérez executed Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza García in 1956. Carlos Fonseca was a founder and the central leader of the FSLN until his murder by the National Guard in 1976.

posing it. It would mean we've entered a different stage in the history of humanity.

But I think that the international community is conscientious and realistic. It will turn its back on such a project.

We're going to keep up our struggle in the diplomatic and political arena to prevent approval of the mercenary aid.

And we're going to struggle in the domestic arena from the point of view of democracy, about which the U.S. government makes so many accusations. We're going to demonstrate that here in Nicaragua there's even more democracy than in the United States.

It's not democracy because several political parties exist, not because there are 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, or 18 parties. Democracy is not measured by the number of political parties that go on the electoral stage and then the one that gets the majority of votes wins.

We passed beyond that political democracy on Nov. 4, 1984.<sup>3</sup> What we're now moving

3. Nicaragua held elections for president, vice-president, and national assembly on Nov. 4, 1984.

forward on is uniting political democracy, electoral democracy, with economic democracy. And for that reason, your presence as UNAG, the discussion of your problems, the criticisms you made here, are part of our economic and political democracy.

You came to discuss and resolve the big problems of the revolution, the failures and errors of the revolution and its leaders.

When you're here, when you're out picking coffee, when you're carrying out the big tasks in our economy, that's democracy. It's not just reduced to economic democracy, either. It's also political democracy. Because in the end, you're the ones who are going to decide the future of this revolution.

#### Resolving problems

That's why this assembly is important. You come to raise the problems, to confront them, to resolve them. When we're looking at a problem, let's not be afraid of it. Let's look at it just as it is.

When the FSLN came onto the political and

revolutionary stage in Nicaragua, we never imagined we were going to triumph in a specific period of time. We advanced with a strategy to win without measuring the time.

So when we have state problems, bureaucratic problems, or whatever type of problem within the revolution, let's try to resolve them, but let's not set a specific time limit. We're going to resolve all the problems, but we can't set a time period, because revolutions don't have time limits, they're processes.

We need to work and keep moving forward with the work. Without work, there's no economic development, no economic solutions, no consolidation of the revolution. Work enhances and dignifies man. Take on work as a response to the revolution, as the heritage of all humanity — and not just that of capitalism, or feudalism, or slavery. There will always be work. What's different in this sense is that the exploitation of man by man is going to end. And that's the goal of humanity.

Free homeland — or death!

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## India

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# One year of Rajiv Gandhi's regime

## *Rightist economic policies, poverty, religious strife*

By M. Navid

BOMBAY — The economic policy of the Rajiv Gandhi government represents both continuity and change. It continues along a course that was charted earlier by both the 1977-80 Janata Party government and the post-1980 government of Rajiv's mother, Indira Gandhi, who was assassinated in late 1984. But it also represents such a dramatic acceleration in this direction that it is without doubt the most right-wing capital accumulation program in India's post-independence history.

For the first time ever, in the seventh economic plan, investment in the private sector (including agriculture) is higher than in the public sector. The corporate sector and trade have an allocation of Rs. 540,000 million [1 rupee = US\$0.08], while public sector industry gets Rs. 200,000 million. The private sector (especially industry) is to be promoted through liberalization of imports and a degree of delicensing, as well as promoting competition, but within a framework that allows all sectors of industry (big, medium, and small) to thrive. In addition, industry has been provided with fiscal incentives of all kinds.

In agriculture one can expect a steady increase in production of food grains, along with certain commercial crops, as irrigation and other aspects of capitalist farming methods expand. Production of food grains will more than keep pace with population growth, although in the absence of equitable distribution, mass poverty and malnutrition will continue to exist.

Poverty eradication is not a priority of the new regime. The government is leaving that to schemes like the Integrated Rural Development Programme and National Rural Employment Programme.

But these schemes give disproportionate benefits to the not-so-poor. They do not alter rural asset holdings or the existing patterns of access to cooperative or collective assets. And whatever equity effects they might have are substantially counterbalanced by the inequitous effects of the other dimensions of economic growth.

For example, employment opportunities are declining in agriculture, which already accounts for around 70 percent of the total labor force, as this sector's share of the gross national product falls even further from the 37 percent of today to 33 percent by 1989-90.

While the proportion of those below the poverty line might remain stable or even decrease slightly, the absolute number of people below the poverty line is likely to rise. Studies between 1966-67 and 1977-78 show that the limited decline in relative levels of poverty has little to do with the effect of the special poverty eradication programs. It is this trend that may be continuing. What is more, disparities among the poor themselves are almost certainly going to increase, with the poorest becoming even worse off.

In the short term (the period of the seventh plan), the Indian economy may well achieve an average growth rate equal to or slightly

above the 5.2 percent average of the sixth plan period. But even if the most optimistic forecasts of growth rates between now and the year 2000 are achieved, this will only mean that the average Indian at the turn of the century will have a consumption standard of living equal to that of the average Chinese of today. But he will still be worse off than today's average Chinese in areas like housing, education, health care, and protein intake.

The general direction of the Indian economy, reinforced by the policies of the Rajiv Gandhi government, is away from equity and self-reliance. What is emerging more and more clearly is "two Indias," with industrialization, "modernization," and growth catering to the "first India," that is, the relatively well-off, the growing rich, upper-middle, middle, and upwardly aspiring lower-middle class of both town and country that by the year 2000 could well amount to more than 200 million people out of a total population of 1,000 million. Class polarization, especially in the countryside (where agricultural laborers already constitute more than 40 percent of the rural population), is going to grow.

It is also quite clear that unemployment in all its forms is going to become an ever more acute problem. Not only is capitalist agriculture increasingly less able to absorb the growing labor force, industry is also less able than ever to absorb them because of the definite labor-saving pattern of capitalist moderniza-

tion that is taking place in Indian industry.

But neither rising inequality nor rising unemployment constitute serious short-term or medium-term economic problems for Indian capitalism, whatever their long-term economic implications or their possible political repercussions. From Indian capitalism's point of view, the dangers represented by the Rajiv Gandhi government's general economic orientation are different and have been taken note of by economists within or close to the government. So while one can certainly point to certain dangerous trends within the bourgeois project of capital accumulation in India, a little over a year is too short a time to insist that these trends have become actualized to the point where they have crossed critical levels of danger.

The two most serious problems with the new economic policy are the possibilities of a major "resources crunch" within a few years and the relative backwardness of Indian technology.

The possibility of a serious "resources crunch" is associated with the fact that inadequately controlled liberalization of imports can seriously worsen the balance of payments position (although the country's comfortable debt position affords space and time for maneuver) and that countermeasures like hiking administered prices on oil and oil products, among other things, as the government has just done, will contribute to inflation.

The shift in emphasis toward promotion of the private sector reinforces the existing neglect of the public sector, which can only strengthen the likelihood of a crisis of inadequate investment in the infrastructural industries of coal, power, and rail transport, and of a similar crisis of investment in the capital-goods sector.

The private sector, by the very nature of its orientation (toward elitist consumption), simply cannot generate the resources necessary to bring about the required investment in these areas. And this is in spite of a veritable "investment boom" in the private sector, where funds generated by the corporate sector from the capital and share market are 25 percent higher than last year and five times higher than they were in 1980-81.



Closely connected to the problems in the capital goods sector is the whole question of shifting technologies. The worldwide shift in technologies for a whole range of industries (steel production, processing industries, electronics, etc.) is leaving India stranded and with little choice but to import certain key technologies. This has negative effects on the balance of payments position as well as on indigenous efforts at technological innovation. But the alternative is to accept a considerable degree of backwardness in the name of self-reliance.

The problem is posed clearly in the electronics industry, where the government does not appear to have a well thought out overall perspective. The electronics industry is a very important technological spearhead for the future.

Should India go in for building a comprehensive semiconductor industry of its own as the foundation for its own more self-reliant computer-electronics industry? Or should it go in for comparative advantage in the international division of labor, in less complex micro-computer systems and software capabilities? Each approach has its advantages and disadvantages. But the worst thing would be to straddle the two choices in confusion, when the relative backwardness of India's electronics sector is already a matter of serious worry.

#### Class portrait

The class portrait of 1985-86 shows an urban working class that has, on the whole, been quiet. While there have been various strikes, there was no major workers' strike on industrial, let alone political, issues that could be said to have had a national or even an extralocal resonance.

In this respect, the first year of Rajiv Gandhi's tenure has not been different from the pattern immediately preceding it and following the historic textile strike.<sup>1</sup> Worker-days lost due to strikes in 1981 totaled 21.2 million. The corresponding figures for subsequent years (statistics for 1985 are not yet available) are 10.7 million for 1982, 12.3 million for 1983, and 15.9 million for 1984.

In brief, working-class resistance at the industrial level is at best slowly recovering from the demoralization and defeats of recent years.

In fact, strike statistics of this kind can even be a notoriously misleading indicator of the level of working-class resurgence or strength. For one thing, strikes are often weapons of last resort of the weaker sections of the work force, while workers in highly modern, private-sector firms have a whole range of methods through which they can increase pressure on management in a controlled manner so that negotiated solutions can be arrived at considerably before the need to go on strike arises.

As a generalization, it would be more or less accurate to say that the Indian working class as

a whole has not organized its resistance to management in the same way that the latter has organized its assaults on the working class. In the last year, the level of strikes was not high, but there were more jobless, as firms resorted to voluntary retirement schemes, reclassifications, etc., as well as taking on more temporary staff or workers on contract so as to make the labor market more "flexible" for themselves.

The Rajiv Gandhi government also seemed to show more awareness of the need to have a strategy for dealing with labor than did the trade union federations or the major left parties themselves. So the central government has actively promoted a program of economic modernization that will result in less labor absorption in industry than before. It has less commitment than ever to doing something for unorganized industrial labor in the small-scale enterprises and shows an ability to combine stick and carrot to weaken and divide the working-class movement as a whole.

On the one hand, the yearly bonus (having the legal status of a deferred monthly wage) is now to be given to workers drawing up to Rs. 2,500 a month, whereas earlier the limit had been Rs. 1,600 per month. At the same time, the government is encouraging privatization of sections of industry formerly in the public sector, which will undoubtedly have negative effects on the employees, as will the encouragement of more closures of "sick" enterprises in the name of promoting competition and efficiency.

The draconian Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA), which bans strikes and lockouts in "essential services," was originally promulgated in 1981 for a period lasting four years. But in August last year the central government unsurprisingly extended the life span of the ESMA.

About the only serious example of organized mass resistance was the statewide, one-day strike in West Bengal in September 1985, which was supported jointly by all the trade union federations, including the West Bengal unit of the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC).<sup>2</sup>

This action was organized by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)), which governs the state. It was turned into a full *bandh* (general strike) in order to protest the growing number of closures by firms in the state. It demanded the reopening and rejuvenating of closed and sick industries, the nationalization of jute and textile mills, and an end to the retrenchment and dismissals of workers.

Obviously these demands had to be supported by the workers' movement. But the motivations of the CPI(M) state government in West Bengal had as much to do with getting the central government to allow and facilitate more public and private (including multinational) investment in the state as it had to do with de-

1. The Bombay textile workers' strike, which began in January 1982, involved a quarter of a million workers and lasted for 18 months. — IP

2. The INTUC is the trade union federation that is politically aligned with Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Party. — IP

fending the workers' right to employment.

In fact, the CPI(M) seeks to project itself more and more as a "responsible" party, able and willing to manage capitalism efficiently in West Bengal. Is there any surprise then that out of the three states (Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal) that invariably top the list in the number of worker-days lost per year due to industrial strife, West Bengal for the first time lost more worker-days due to lockouts than to strikes? Industrialists have had every reason to applaud (and they have) the CPI(M)'s efforts to rule "constructively" in West Bengal.

In the rural areas there have been continual struggles by agricultural workers, but these have not had more than a local impact.

In a major sense, the most important class aspect of the Rajiv Gandhi government has been the self-confidence that the new dispensation in New Delhi has imparted to the urban middle, upper-middle, and upper classes. For the first time they see a government that is explicitly and publicly orienting itself to their aspirations and needs. The urban bourgeoisie (all sections of it) have strongly welcomed the Rajiv Gandhi government's economic strategy.

Why then the series of raids on big and medium-sized businesses and on corrupt tax officials? The explanation for this seemingly puzzling destabilization of business by a strongly probusiness government may be straightforward enough. The government, which has reduced taxes, wants to prevent the possibility of a dangerous budget deficit emerging by frightening the businesses into being more honest in the matter of tax returns.

There is also no reason to doubt that the government does wish to carry out a qualified "cleaning up" of the whole system, and to curb the black market. Nor is the present government oblivious to the political payoff of greater popularity among workers, the lower-middle class, and even sizable sections of the middle classes as a result of such actions.

### **Caste and religious conflicts**

Both caste and communal (religious) conflicts, which often intermesh, have grown in the last few years.

In 1985 the single most significant and powerful agitation was launched in Gujarat by the upper castes and the higher ranks of the Other Backward Castes (OBCs) against the lower ranks of the OBCs and the scheduled castes ("untouchables") and tribes.

This caste war became very sharp and brutal, with the upper castes achieving an important success in getting the state government both to select a new chief minister and to go back on its earlier commitment to extend the percentage of jobs and school positions reserved for the oppressed lower castes. This victory was almost total and represented a significant setback, which the impressive but belated mobilization by the oppressed castes did not adequately offset.

Even in Gujarat, as part of this caste war, communal tensions and conflicts increased. Elsewhere there was a distinct rise in Hindu

chauvinism and in communalism of all kinds.

The Assam accord, which later cost the Congress Party victory in the Assam assembly elections, clearly pandered to the chauvinism of the Assamese Hindu middle classes, who formed the backbone (though not the sole component) of the Assam agitation.

The accord shamefully and unjustifiably disenfranchised a large section of the Muslims. It also facilitated a polarization of communities, with the Assamese Hindus rallying around the newly formed communal party, the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), and the Muslim minority gravitating to another newly formed organization, the United Minorities Front.

The Congress Party was left with a much-reduced presence. The left (the CPI[M]), which had a principled position opposing the Assam accord, was itself wiped out in this political polarization along communal lines.

The Shah Bano case, in which a 75-year-old Muslim woman filed successfully for maintenance (reasonable alimony) from her ex-husband of more than 40 years, created an enormous furor among the Muslim fundamentalist groups. The latter mobilized the anger of the Muslim male population on the grounds that the Supreme Court had no business overruling Muslim Personal Law as sanctioned by the Koran.

The reactionary character of religious personal law (whether Muslim, Hindu, Christian, or Sikh) and the need to replace it with a uniform civil code was one thing. The communal use that was made of the Muslim reaction by communal Hindus and their organizations and parties like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the Shiv Sena, the Bharatiya Janata Party, etc. was another.

Lost in all this communal uproar on both sides was the central issue that all religious-based personal laws oppress women and that women of all religions, supported by progressive groups and men, must campaign against all such practices, without falling into the trap of seeing the Shah Bano case as an issue of minority Muslims versus everyone else.

### **Bourgeois political arena**

Bourgeois politics have been dominated by three interrelated trends: the ongoing internal decline of the Congress Party as anything more than an electoral machine; the rise of a more "nonpolitical" administrative, managerial, and pragmatic approach at the head of the Congress Party; and the growth of regional parties and formations, with a shift in the relationship between the central government and the states in favor of the latter.

The seemingly undisputed stature of Rajiv Gandhi as head of the party and government cannot disguise the growing evidence of deepening dissent and dissatisfaction within the Congress Party. The state Congress parties in Gujarat and Maharashtra are suffering from barely submerged factionalism, while the recent electoral defeats in Assam and Punjab have thoroughly demoralized the state parties there.

Adding to these tensions is the emergence of a more "imperial" high command or coterie surrounding the new prime minister, whose watchwords are "efficiency" and "management."

The cabinet reshuffle that took place last year was the biggest since the 1960s. Although the appointments took some account of caste and regional factors, they were basically motivated by the aim of getting "new blood" into prominent positions. Arun Singh and Arun Nehru (Rajiv Gandhi's cousin and the number two man in the government despite his minor official status) may have no political experience to speak of and no real base, but they have undoubtedly been the major beneficiaries of the reshuffle.

Gone was any attempt, à la Indira Gandhi, to establish a system of checks and balances between different party factions, which are themselves reflective of various caste and regional pressures at work outside and inside the Congress Party.

Within the space of one year, a new arrangement has emerged. There is still no alternative to the Congress Party at the national level. This is testimony to the weakness of the opposition, certainly not to the party's own popularity or strength. At the regional or state level, where alternatives do exist, the Congress Party is steadily losing ground. Given the vagaries of electoral politics, this cannot be said to be irreversible. But it is nonetheless very disturbing for the Congress Party high command.

Assam and Punjab have gone to the opposition Asom Gana Parishad and Akali Dal. In West Bengal, the CPI(M) has staged a significant comeback in recent by-elections, with Siddharth Shankar Ray, the one Bengali Congress leader of comparable stature to the CPI(M) chief minister, Jyoti Basu, suffering a massive defeat.

In the south, Andhra Pradesh is in the hands of Rama Rao's Telegu Desam. Karnataka is the only Janata Party stronghold, with chief minister Ramakrishna Hegde understandably delighted with Rajiv Gandhi eschewing efforts to topple him as his mother would undoubtedly have sought to do. In Tamil Nadu the Congress Party is very much a junior partner of the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, while in Kerala no ruling coalition can ever be assured of stable rule, so the Congress Party

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can just as easily find itself out of power at the next elections.

Kashmir is in the hands of the Congress Party only because of previous manipulation, and the opposition National Conference is undoubtedly the dominant force.

Recent by-elections have confirmed the decline of the Congress Party outside the "Hindi belt" of north India. But even in this region the victory of Syed Shahabuddin, a Muslim opposition MP in Bihar, where there is a significant Muslim minority, has perturbed the Congress leadership. It seems to have been a consequence of the Shah Bano case.

So it is hardly surprising that the prime minister has recently sought to reassure Muslim fundamentalist groups that the central government has no intention of overriding Muslim Personal Law and is investigating the possibility of the Muslim clergy itself being entrusted with the power to disburse maintenance to divorced Muslim women. This would be a shameful concession to Muslim chauvinism.

The general electoral approach of the Congress Party under Rajiv Gandhi's leadership has diverged in some important respects from Indira Gandhi's attempt to base the Congress Party more and more on the intermediate castes while striving to maintain its influence within the core minorities as far as possible. The end result of Rajiv Gandhi's approach may not be all that different from his mother's strategic aims, but the thinking behind it is.

The new high command is basing its approach on the recognition that more than half of the electorate is now under 40 years of age and that one-fifth are first-time voters. It has carried out detailed "market surveys" to confirm this.

The high command also believes that the values of the younger generation in the urban middle classes serve as a role model for the aspirations of those below. Therefore, if Rajiv's Congress Party tunes in to these values and projects itself as the party of this younger generation of the middle class, it will, in passing as it were, assure itself of the support of the rising generation in the classes below.

But there is only very partial validity in this assumption. Such intra-class aspirations cannot substitute on a consistent basis for or deflect from fundamental caste and class aspirations and interests, which will inevitably lead to tensions and clashes, disturbing this rosy picture.

There is also the serious problem of instability (in bourgeois terms) posed by the disjunction between the Congress Party dominance at the center and the growing opposition influence and rule in the states. The Assam accord and the victory of the AGP only store up trouble for the minorities and threaten a serious communal conflagration in the future. The AGP has already taken steps to institutionalize its power within the permanent state-level civil administration by making wholesale changes in personnel at the upper levels of the bureaucracy, putting in its own men.

Nor is the Punjab accord any assurance of

future stability.<sup>3</sup> The Akali Dal victory did not really alter the communal character of the voting pattern. Hindus voted against the Akali Dal. The one significant change from the past is that for the first time Mazhabi Sikhs ("untouchables") voted for the Akali Dal rather than for the Congress Party, itself an indication of how polarized the communal situation has become.

Moreover, the Akali Dal is filled with factional strife and personal rivalries. The result is that it is unable today to fight effectively against the Damdami Taksal, which has taken over the Golden Temple.<sup>4</sup> The longer they stay, the more their occupation gets legitimized and the weaker becomes the Akali Dal and the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, which administers the temple.

This is in fact the moment of truth for S.S. Barnala, Punjab's chief minister and leader of the Akali Dal. If he does not evict the Damdami Taksal, and this can only be done by force, then a dynamic will set in (that is, direct central government intervention) that will only worsen the communal situation in Punjab. There are already signs of a revival of terrorist activity.

If the Akali Dal, because of its inherent communalism, seems unable to improve the situation, the central government, because of its pandering to Hindu communalism, cannot reassure Sikhs. This will facilitate the ability of the fundamentalists to take over the leadership of the Sikhs in general. In this context it is important to note that the central government has not shown itself at all serious about bringing the murderers of Sikhs during the anti-Sikh riots in Delhi to book.

Apart from the specific issues of Punjab and Assam, the overall results of the new shift in the relationship of forces between the central government and the states is twofold:

- the growth of the influence at the regional

3. In July 1985 Rajiv Gandhi signed an accord with then Akali Dal leader Harchand Singh Longowal, with the aim of easing communal conflicts in that state. Tensions had been high ever since the June 1984 Indian army assault on Sikh militants occupying the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the holiest Sikh shrine, in which thousands of Sikhs were massacred. Those tensions led to further violence, as well as to Indira Gandhi's assassination by several Sikhs.

The July 1985 accord provided for more lenient treatment of Sikh political prisoners and for an inquiry into anti-Sikh rioting in New Delhi and elsewhere following Indira Gandhi's assassination. The accord also provided for the transfer of Hindi areas of Punjab to the neighboring state of Haryana in order to increase the Sikh majority in Punjab. Likewise, Chandigarh, which until then was the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana, was to become the capital of Punjab only.

Some Sikh groups condemned the accord as a "sellout," and Longowal was assassinated a month later. S.S. Barnala became the new Akali Dal leader. — IP

4. In January 1986, Amritsar's Golden Temple was again occupied by Sikh militants, belonging to one of the same Sikh fundamentalist organizations, the Damdami Taksal, involved in the earlier takeover. — IP

level of the rich peasant lobby, and

- the increasing abandonment of law-and-order functions to the state governments.

In the case of Andhra Pradesh, this has enabled the state government to carry out the most brutal repression in over a decade against the far left, usually Maoist groupings that are mobilizing among sections of the rural poor. The repression extends to urban-based civil liberties groups, which have sought to spotlight the violations of basic democratic rights by the Rama Rao government.

#### The left and social movements

If the Maoist far left is suffering acute repression in Andhra Pradesh, its influence elsewhere is declining for reasons that have more to do with its failure of political perspective than with direct repression.

The CPI(M) government is carrying out a program of selective harassment of far left sympathizers and members in mass organizations, without as yet graduating to a direct attack on the far left parties or groups as such.

The CPI(M) itself is now a thoroughly bureaucratized reformist party whose primary interest is to consolidate itself regionally in West Bengal and Tripura and come back to power in a popular front coalition in Kerala. It has for some time abandoned efforts to extend itself in the Hindi heartland, with or without the help of the Communist Party of India (CPI).

The CPI(M)'s greatest preoccupation is to assure its own governmental continuity in eastern India. Therefore, it seeks to restructure center-state relations in the direction of greater autonomy and powers for the states and to encourage greater capitalist investment (public and private) in West Bengal and thus halt if not reverse the relative decline of the region. To this effect, the CPI(M) is now a more efficient prison guard of the West Bengal working class than any bourgeois party would be.

While the CPI(M) continues to pay lip service to the fight against Congress "authoritarian" rule, this is nothing but a tired cliché. The party is now a full participant in the electoral game and would be prepared even to lend qualified political support to Congress Party rule at the center provided it got a sufficient regional quid pro quo. There is a hint of this in the CPI(M)'s new emphasis on a "left and secular front," rather than the earlier "left and democratic front" (the Congress Party is considered by the CPI(M) to be more secular than some other bourgeois parties), and in the new emphasis given to protecting "national security" from internal and external disruptive forces.

Efforts at bringing about unity between the CPI(M) and CPI have failed miserably, as they had to, with two bureaucratic leadership apparatuses unable to decide on the spoils of office in any joint organization. For the near future, the CPI and CPI(M) can be expected to continue with existing policies of supporting Rajiv Gandhi's "progressive" foreign policies, criticizing his right-wing economic and social policies, and periodically talking about the need for left unity, without any real unity

emerging at the practical level even between the mass organizations or fronts controlled by the two left parties.

With regard to the "new social movements," only the autonomous women's movement can reasonably be optimistic about the possibility of sustained development in the new future. The biggest and most representative national conference of autonomous women's groups, representing more than 170 groups from throughout the country, was held in Bombay in late December. By all accounts it was a significant success.

Awareness of women's oppression among ever wider sections of the population can only grow. But the problems of linking the women's movement to the trade union and labor movements remain formidable, due to weaknesses on both sides.

While the Bhopal disaster and the recent gas leak in New Delhi have generated greater awareness of the problems of pollution, the antipollution drive is still very much in its most embryonic state. This is generally true of all environmentalist groups, and of the infant peace and anti-nuclear weapons groupings.

The health movement is increasingly divided between those with a radical orientation and those willing or likely to be coopted by the government. The government, as part of its strategy of absolving itself of any responsibility for establishing a proper and expanding public health system, is more than willing to financially and otherwise encourage voluntary health groups to take on these responsibilities in rural and urban slum areas. In sum, the government is pursuing a strategy of privatizing and commercializing health care, and it is vital that the radical health groups do not consciously or unconsciously fall into the trap of encouraging these efforts.

#### Foreign policy

As far as the foreign policy of the Rajiv Gandhi government goes, there has been no substantive change from that of its predecessor toward Washington and Moscow.

Washington may find the Rajiv Gandhi government's economic perspective much more to its liking and the new prime minister a less abrasive personality than Indira Gandhi, but these are superficial aspects that do not in themselves lead to fundamental policy shifts. The "economic tilt" to the West has been there for a long time, as also the "security tilt" to the Soviet Union, within the wider framework of adherence to the Nonaligned Movement.

What has changed somewhat is the government's attitude toward Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Sino-Indian relations will remain at an impasse until the border question is resolved, and here there has been a recent hardening of the Chinese positions.

With regard to Sri Lanka, Indira Gandhi was not above seeking to destabilize the Sri Lanka government by supporting the Tamil guerrillas and leaving India's commitment to Sri Lanka's "national integrity" in doubt.

Rajiv Gandhi, on the other hand, has not

only emphasized that India insists on a resolution of the Tamil question within the framework of island unity. He has also acted in a manner that has worried the Tamil Nadu state government and the Tamil refugees and guerrillas in the south of India, while at the same time encouraging the Sri Lankan regime of Junius Jayewardene to believe that it might be able to get Indian support in imposing an unjust solution on the Tamils.

New Delhi has had to backtrack at times from strongly pro-Jayewardene statements and its efforts to curb Tamil political activists. This reflects the weight of objective reality and the limited maneuvering room for any Indian government, no matter who heads it. But the general impression today is of a government that is more willing than its predecessor to placate the Sri Lanka government, even at the expense of the Sri Lankan Tamils.

With respect to Pakistan, New Delhi has found itself reacting to Pakistani initiatives, on the nuclear weapons question and on Indo-

Pakistani relations in general.

On the nuclear question, both countries are currently pursuing a policy of nuclear ambiguity, but Pakistan is more willing to close the nuclear option for good provided India is also prepared to do so. Pakistan has put forward a four-point proposal: for a joint signing of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, mutual inspection of nuclear facilities, bilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons, or establishing a South Asian nuclear weapons-free zone. This has clearly put the Indian government on the defensive, since it will not accept any of these proposals and yet cannot put forward any convincing proposals of its own to promote denuclearization of the region.

The result is a government policy toward Pakistan fluctuating between competition with Gen. Zia ul-Haq to be more "sincere" about improving Indo-Pakistani relations and warnings about the hypocritical intentions of Pakistan to weaken India and promote Western or "Islamic" interests. □

## DOCUMENTS

### 'An ambitious, timely project'

'Workers Press' reviews book on Comintern

By David Bruce

[The following review is reprinted from the March 22 issue of *Workers Press*, a weekly published in London. *Workers Press* is put out by the wing of the Workers Revolutionary Party that broke with WRP cult figure Gerry Healy in October 1985. *News Line* was the WRP's daily newspaper before the split, and Healy's supporters have retained this name for their newspaper.]

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Since this valuable book has been in print for nearly two years, a word of explanation is due.

It was policy in *News Line* not to acknowledge any publishing activities under the auspices of the American Socialist Workers Party.

That this "nest of spies" has managed to produce some very fine books might therefore

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*The Communist International in Lenin's Time, Vol. 1, Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International (Documents 1906-1917, the Preparatory Years)*, Monad, £8.75.

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have escaped the attention of our readers.

*Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International* is a case in point — we take this opportunity to set this on record and thank Pathfinder's London office [47 The Cut, London SE1 8LL — IP] for supplying a review copy at this late date.

Monad has embarked on an ambitious and timely project: the publication, often for the first time in English, of the principal docu-

ments, articles, etc. of the Third International.

Except for articles by Lenin, material which has been published before has here been retranslated and annotated. "Classic" works by Lenin, like *Imperialism, The Collapse of the Second International*, etc. have been omitted so there is little chance of unnecessary duplication.

Although it is planned to produce a total of four volumes covering the period up to the end of the Fourth Congress (1921), this first volume starts with the Stuttgart Congress of 1907 and continues up to the February Revolution of 1917.

Many of us will be largely unfamiliar with this material and it makes fascinating and instructive reading. On the Stuttgart Congress, we can compare Lenin's contemporary report:

"On the whole, the Stuttgart Congress brought into sharp contrast the opportunist and revolutionary wings of the international Social-Democratic movement on a number of cardinal issues and decided these issues in the spirit of revolutionary Marxism," with Zinoviev's 1916 reappraisal, written with Lenin's approval:

"The revolution of 1905 did not triumph. But it did awaken the peoples of Asia and blew a fresh wind of freedom even into Europe. . . .

"By that time, (1907) however, opportunism had in essence already won the upper hand in the International. . . .

"The revolutionary Marxists, whose representative was Rosa Luxemburg, were only a small minority at Stuttgart. The opportunists and 'Center' indisputably made up the overwhelming majority.

"But the logic of the situation was on the side of the revolutionary Marxists. Only they consistently defended the interests of millions of workers of all countries.

"And the working masses, who were invisibly present at the congress, *compelled* the official leaders of the Second International to adopt much of what the revolutionary Marxists proposed through the words of Rosa Luxemburg."

The second section is called "Resisting the Threat of Imperialist War" and concentrates on the developments in German social-democracy (SPD) from 1907 to 1914.

Pressure on the SPD caused by German colonial expansion was highlighted by the notorious "Hottentot" election which followed genocidal massacres of Herero and Khoikhoi tribes. They had rebelled against German rule in 1906 in what is now Namibia.

The opportunist wing argued that electoral safety lay in avoiding the contentious subject of foreign policy, while the revolutionaries sought to overcome bourgeois influence in the working class on the colonial and military questions.

The general history of sections three to nine will, perhaps, be better known as it covers the period from the collapse of the Second International through the formation of the "Zimmerwald Left," its internal evolution, and the months preceding the February Revolution of 1917.

Nevertheless, this material is invaluable. Documents are reproduced from Kautsky and other of the chauvinist social-democrats in Germany.

We can read leaflets published by the Petrograd Bolsheviks in 1915 showing a clearly defeatist line (calling for the imperialist slaughter to be turned into a civil war against the Russian bourgeoisie).

### Slogan

There is priceless material from the German Internationalists Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg and from the Russian Bolshevik Shlyapnikov as well as the debate on the "United States of Europe" slogan, etc.

Particularly pertinent are three articles from Trotsky, Radek, and Lenin on the Easter Rising of 1916, reproduced in the section, "The Discussion in the Zimmerwald Left."

Lenin and Trotsky appraise the significance of the Easter Rising somewhat differently. Trotsky says that:

"The historical basis for a national revolution has disappeared even in backward Ireland."

But adds:

"Thus, the 'national revolution' in Ireland too has amounted in practice to a workers' revolt. . . ."

He pours scorn on Plekhanov's "praise" of the Irish peasantry's failure to support the Easter Rising.

Radek claims that:

"As something that could endanger Britain's international position, *the Irish question is played out.*"

April 21, 1986

Lenin replied with his customary precision and polemical skill:

"Many comrades, who were not aware of the morass they were sinking into by repudiating 'self-determination' and by treating the national movements of small nations with disdain will have their eyes opened by the 'accidental' coincidence of opinion held by a Social-Democrat (the phrase here meaning a revolutionary) and a representative of the imperialist bourgeoisie!!"

In view of the current discussion in the WRP on our position on the Irish national liberation struggle, which is more akin to Radek's than either Lenin's or Trotsky's, the discussion on self-determination alone justifies buying this book.

Also relevant to this discussion is the record of the debate in the German party. A section of the Reichstag deputies (MPs), under pressure from the Spartacists (the communist wing of the Social-Democratic party) and of the movement of the working class against the hardships of the war, voted not to continue war credits.

Liebknecht's response was characteristically firm and swift:

"A policy that rejects principled internationalism . . . adheres to the concept of national defense and makes supporting or opposing the government and the war dependent on the current military situation or on some kind of declaration of war aims differs from that of the party majority only by being less consistent."

The book ends with a section called "Toward the New International." At the time, Zinoviev wrote:

"Every attempt to reestablish the (Second) International through a mutual amnesty by the discredited opportunist leaders is . . . a plot against socialism."

### Position

Lenin and others explained "that a split is inevitable" and appealed to the best elements of the old International to break from a vacillatory position. The slogan clearly was:

"For the Third International!"

This first volume in the series is more than welcome. John Riddell's editing is excellent and the translations are clear and accessible. The notes are short but comprehensive.

A selection of illustrations is included together with an index, glossary, and a detailed chronology.

It is a pity that a few extra pence on the price was not allowed for thread-sewing — this book is an invaluable reference not only for historians but for revolutionaries studying a vital period in our history.

This copy, at least, will take a battering in the months to come.

Note:

Volume II is scheduled for June this year and will comprise relevant documents covering 1918 and 1919. Volume III, due in September, is to reproduce the entire proceedings of the First Congress.

Recommended to all readers of *Workers Press*. □

## 10 AND 20 YEARS AGO

### Intercontinental Press

Africa Asia Europe Oceania The Americas

April 19, 1976

On April 5, in the central square of Peking, tens of thousands of persons held a day-long demonstration that startled the world.

The protest action came in the midst of a growing struggle in the Chinese bureaucracy. One of the issues appears to be the succession to Mao Tsetung, now eighty-two years old and reportedly in declining health.

The protest came in reaction to the removal early in the morning of thousands of wreaths placed in honor of Chou En-lai at the Martyrs' Monument in Tien An Men Square the previous day.

An April 6 Reuters dispatch from Peking reported that once the demonstrators had gained entrance to the square, secondary-school students placed new wreaths at the monument.

"Cheered on by the crowd," Reuters said, "they raised a photograph of Mr. Chou. The demonstrators then surged across to the steps of the Great Hall of the People, apparently with the intention of presenting a petition.

"They failed, and some skirmishes developed. A car was overturned, and youths danced upon it."

A sizable number of persons sought to enter the Great Hall, where only weeks ago top Maoist bureaucrats had clinked glasses with former President Nixon.

## WORLD OUTLOOK

PERSPECTIVE MONDIALE

(Predecessor of *Intercontinental Press*)

April 8, 1966

The Cuban delegation at the twenty-third congress of the Communist party of the Soviet Union sounded a refreshingly militant note at a gathering that otherwise appeared committed to stressing "peaceful coexistence" and the partial rehabilitation of Stalin.

According to the April 1 issue of *Izvestia*, Armando Hart Davalos, the head of the Cuban delegation, called for greatly increased material aid to Hanoi and to the Vietnamese freedom fighters. He insisted that "the necessary risk" must be taken to help them win against the invading U.S. imperialist forces. Hart was quoted as saying:

"It is necessary to undertake final efforts and give decisive aid in order to transform the territory of north Vietnam into a cemetery of American aircraft.

"It is necessary, if the conditions demand, to be ready for battle in Vietnam with the aim of defending the territorial integrity and the very existence of this fraternal country."

An account in the New York press said that Hart's speech caused a "commotion" in the hall.

# Israeli terror attacks mount

## *Week-long occupation designed to check opposition*

By Steve Craine

A year ago the Israeli army was in the process of withdrawing from the one-quarter of Lebanon it had occupied since June 1982. By the third anniversary of that occupation, the vast majority of Israeli troops were out of the country, and all territory had been relinquished except a strip just inside the border, which the Israeli authorities unilaterally designated their "security zone."

But in recent weeks the Israeli armed forces have escalated their direct military intervention well beyond this zone.

In February Israeli troops staged a week-long search-and-destroy operation north of the occupied strip, invading some 20 villages and rounding up thousands of Lebanese civilians. This was followed on March 24 by the most intensive shelling of a Lebanese town since the occupation ended. Three Lebanese were killed. A few days later 15 more people were killed and 25 wounded by Israeli air strikes near the port city of Sidon.

In early 1985 the Israeli government had decided it could no longer maintain a permanent occupation of a large portion of southern Lebanon. The principal objective of its 1982 invasion — the ouster of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) from its Lebanese bases — had been accomplished. But by late 1984 it was becoming more difficult for the Israeli army to hold on to Lebanese territory.

The long occupation had created new enemies for the Tel Aviv regime, especially among Lebanon's Shiites, the major religious group in the south. Shiite organizations, including some that had initially welcomed the Israeli invasion, took part in a powerful mass resistance movement that significantly raised the cost to the occupiers. And the mounting Israeli death toll in Lebanon increased the unpopularity of the occupation in Israel itself.

Israeli strategists looked for a way to maintain their influence in Lebanon, while avoiding the growing problems of continued occupation. The phased pullout of the first five months of 1985 was therefore accompanied by one more round of bloody assaults on the local population, to drive home the message that Israeli forces would be ready to reenter the country at any time.

The withdrawing army also set up its "security zone" across the southernmost part of Lebanon. Within this 3- to 12-mile-wide strip, up to 1,000 Israeli troops remained in control. There, they worked in conjunction with the South Lebanon Army (SLA), a local militia made up primarily of Christians, which was created and financed through the Israeli intelligence service as a surrogate power in the area and a counterforce to the Lebanese government and anti-Israeli militias.

In late 1985 and early 1986 a number of minor cross-border rocket attacks have been launched from Lebanon. Settlers in northern Israel began to claim they were in danger, though until late March not a single Israeli was injured in any of these attacks. The fears of Israeli settlers had been used before by Tel Aviv as a pretext for the 1982 invasion, and the same fears are being encouraged again.

Meanwhile troops in the "security zone" have been finding their position there less and less secure, as ambushes of Israeli patrols are on the rise.

In mid-March PLO spokesman Salah Khalaf announced that the PLO's fighting force, which had been pushed out of Lebanon by the Israeli invasion, was rebuilding in the refugee camps around Beirut.

### Looking for excuse to intervene

To confront and reverse these developments, the Israeli government was looking for a way to directly reimpose its military muscle in Lebanon.

On February 17 two Israeli "advisers" to the SLA were abducted by Shiite militiamen while patrolling in the Israeli-occupied zone. Within hours, several armored battalions were rolling north from Israel, through the "security zone," and into the southern Lebanon heartland.

The 3,000 Israeli troops seized an area east of Tyre that included some 20 villages and held on to it for nearly a week.

As the *Washington Post* pointed out after the week-long occupation ended, what had been described as a search mission had "evolved into a massive hunt for weapons and an operation that appeared designed to disrupt the infrastructure of the various Shiite Moslem militias operating in southern Lebanon, north of the Israeli-declared security zone."

Altogether at least 3,000 Lebanese were questioned during the operation, and by the time the Israelis withdrew, 50 to 100 were still in detention.

Ali Dakik, who was interrogated in his home village of Haris, told U.S. reporters, "After writing down our names, one or two at a time would be called in for questioning. We could hear screams, and sometimes they never came back. They blindfolded 21 or 22 men, tied their hands behind their backs with telephone wires, and drove them away in trucks."

Other witnesses reported that the troops brought with them lists of names and specifically asked for members of Shiite political and religious organizations.

Many victims of torture by Israeli troops and SLA militiamen reported their experiences to the press. Hassan Dib took reporters to a school in Shaqra, which borders on the secu-

rity zone and was still nearly abandoned a week later after the Israeli troops ended their incursion.

He showed them a cubicle in the school where he said he had been questioned and tortured. His SLA interrogator tied a rope around his neck and pulled on it with each question, he told them. "He never gave me the chance to respond or confess, if this was the aim, boxing me each time I tried to open my mouth."

Israeli military spokesmen in Tel Aviv denied that Israeli troops practiced torture in Lebanon, but they refused to extend this denial to cover the militiamen of the SLA, saying, "That's another story."

In some villages, the Israeli invasion met strong local resistance. On the fourth day of the operation, Israeli soldiers came under fire near the village of Sreifa. The army retaliated by pounding a group of 30 homes with shellfire for three hours. Three Cobra helicopter gunships strafed nearby olive groves and helped direct the fire of the Israeli tanks. Dozens of Lebanese in the town tried unsuccessfully to down the helicopters using grenades and small arms.

### Marketplace shelled

The next incident was the March 24 shelling of Nabatiye. The Lebanese government described the bombardment as the worst since the Israeli occupation troops withdrew from the area last year.

Three people were killed and 22 wounded in the town's central market when shelling started without warning early Monday morning just as crowds were gathering for the opening of the market. Mondays and Thursdays are market days in Nabatiye, a mainly Shiite town of 40,000 that has traditionally been southern Lebanon's main meeting place for traders of vegetables, tobacco, sheep, and cattle.

Three days later Israeli planes struck two Palestinian refugee districts outside Sidon. Witnesses said the planes came in two waves, about 20 minutes apart. Most of the casualties — 15 dead and 25 wounded — came in the second attack, after rescue teams had arrived to assist victims of the first one. The same area, allegedly a gathering site for PLO supporters, was also bombed in January.

The Sidon bombing followed by only one and a half hours a PLO rocket attack on a military academy in the northern Israeli settlement of Qiryat Shemona. Four Israelis were slightly injured when one Katyusha rocket landed at the school. They were the first civilian casualties suffered in Israel as a result of rockets fired from Lebanon since the June 1982 invasion. Fatah, the largest group in the PLO, took credit for the attack.

Although it was generally assumed that the Sidon bombing was in retaliation for the attack on Qiryat Shemona, an Israeli army source told the *Washington Post* that the air strikes were part of an ongoing strategy to disrupt guerrilla activity in southern Lebanon. As such, all three of these recent attacks are signs of a continuing step-up of aggression by Tel Aviv against its northern neighbor. □