

# INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

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A quarter of a million people marched in London June 28 demanding economic sanctions against the South African regime.

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# 'Boycott South Africa'

By Ernest Harsch

Demands for economic sanctions against the apartheid regime have mounted since the June 12 imposition of a state of emergency throughout South Africa. "Break all ties with apartheid!" "Boycott South Africa!" and "Sanctions now!" have been common slogans at the recent anti-apartheid protest actions held in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe.

This has been in response to the repeated calls for sanctions from leaders of the freedom struggle within South Africa itself. For instance, Winnie Mandela, an outspoken opponent of apartheid and wife of Nelson Mandela, the imprisoned leader of the African National Congress (ANC), stated in a telephone interview with Radio Havana, broadcast in Cuba June 18:

We do not see any choice for a peaceful solution other than the application of measures that strangle the regime economically and isolate it completely. Let the foreign companies not be an obstacle in our struggle. Let them not finance the bloodshed. Let them not finance the armament with which the regime kills us each day.

Each time that we bury one of our dead, each time we pick up our brothers fallen on the streets, we know that the main allies of the bloodshed are the governments of the United States and Great Britain.

I do not think that at this point there is a better choice than economic sanctions against the regime. . . .

As the call for sanctions has been picked up around the world, a sharp spotlight has been thrown on the role of Pretoria's main economic partners — in particular the U.S., British, and West German governments and corporations. Although all three powers have so far resisted the sanctions demand, they are now coming under increased pressure to break their links with Pretoria.

On the very day the state of emergency was proclaimed, a Commonwealth negotiating team known as the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) issued a report on its efforts to arrange talks between Pretoria and the ANC. Concluding that the apartheid regime was not interested in a peaceful resolution of the conflict, the EPG called on the Commonwealth countries to adopt "effective economic measures" against it. This proposal will be considered at a Commonwealth summit conference scheduled for August.

Since the British government of Margaret Thatcher has been the main Commonwealth member opposing sanctions, the EPG proposal has put it on the spot. Several African states belonging to the Commonwealth have openly called for severing diplomatic ties with London if it fails to approve sanctions against Pretoria.

Thatcher has also felt the heat from the large and active anti-apartheid movement within Britain. On June 28, the largest anti-apartheid

action yet held in that country took place in London; organizers estimated that 250,000 people participated. One of the main slogans of the action was "Sanctions now!"

Criticism of Thatcher's stance has likewise come from within the halls of Parliament, primarily from Labour Party members, but also from some parliamentary representatives of her own Conservative Party.

Reaffirming her position, Thatcher maintained that sanctions were "negative" measures that would increase unemployment within both South Africa and Britain — an argument that Black leaders in South Africa as well as British trade unionists have rejected.

Reflecting the pressures that her government is under, however, Thatcher had an official of the British Foreign Office meet with ANC President Oliver Tambo June 24. Previously, the Thatcher government had refused any ministerial contact with the ANC.

Two days later, Thatcher and other European Economic Community (EEC) heads of state met in The Hague to debate proposals for South African sanctions. The Danish and Greek governments called for a total ban on trade and investment in South Africa, and the Dutch government argued for limited trade restrictions. But London, backed by the West German and Portuguese governments, strongly opposed such proposals. As a result the EEC failed to decide on any new sanctions.

The Reagan administration in Washington has also come under greater fire for its close ties with Pretoria. On June 14 some 100,000 protesters marched and rallied in New York City in the largest anti-apartheid action ever held in the United States.

Four days later, the House of Representatives unexpectedly passed a bill calling for withdrawal of all U.S. investments from South Africa and a ban on all South African trade. It was the first time that divestment legislation

had passed either house of Congress.

A White House spokesperson immediately responded, "Our position on that remains the same. We are adamantly opposed to punitive economic sanctions." That same day the U.S. and British representatives in the United Nations Security Council vetoed a resolution calling for limited economic sanctions against Pretoria for its attacks on neighboring Angola.

Although the House divestment bill is given little chance of passage in the Senate, it nevertheless strengthens the hand of those who are pressing for an end to U.S. collaboration with the apartheid regime.

Beginning on June 16 — the 10th anniversary of the 1976 Soweto uprisings — a five-day anti-apartheid conference opened in Paris. Organized by the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid, it focused largely on the question of sanctions. Although representatives from more than 130 countries attended, the U.S., British, and West German governments boycotted the conference.

Speaking to the gathering, ANC President Tambo condemned those three governments as "co-conspirators and participants in the commission of a crime of immense dimensions." If they continue to oppose sanctions, he said, "they give one more proof of not only their reluctance to do anything about the apartheid system but also perhaps their commitment to its maintenance in one form or another."

By acclamation, the Paris conference adopted a declaration calling on the UN Security Council to impose comprehensive and obligatory sanctions against the apartheid regime. It likewise condemned the U.S. policy of "constructive engagement" with Pretoria.

From Paris, Tambo traveled to Geneva to address the International Labor Organization. Instead of waiting on the U.S. and British governments to act, Tambo said, unions around the world should impose their own embargoes against Pretoria.

"Meaningful sanctions," Tambo added, are the only way the international community can stop the apartheid regime from "embarking on mindless massacres and massive destruction throughout the region of southern Africa." □

## Pretoria meets resistance, protest

By Ernest Harsch

Despite a heavy screen of press censorship in South Africa, it is clear that active resistance to the apartheid regime and its draconian state of emergency continues on a massive scale.

Protests, strikes, guerrilla actions, and other forms of opposition have been reported not only in the big urban centers like Soweto, Durban, and Port Elizabeth, but also in a number of small towns and rural areas. This has included the Bantustans (rural African reserves) of KwaNdebele, Ciskei, Lebowa, and BophuthaTswana.

Because of the ban on all outdoor or indoor political rallies, church services remain one of

the few means through which residents of Black townships can express their opposition to Pretoria's crackdown. When Winnie Mandela, wife of imprisoned African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela, attended a church service in Soweto on June 22, her clenched-fist salute was answered with shouts of "Amandla!" (power) from the crowd.

Beginning on June 18, members of the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa launched a series of strikes in some 60 retail outlets to protest the police detention of the union's leaders. This union is a key affiliate of the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU), the

country's largest union federation.

Transport workers near Pretoria have likewise gone on strike, as have Black fruit pickers in the Western Cape and some 1,200 workers at a fish canning plant in Cape Town.

These actions have come in the wake of the June 16 general strike, in which millions of Black workers across South Africa stayed away from their jobs to mark the 10th anniversary of the Soweto rebellions. ANC President Oliver Tambo called the June 16 action a "resounding success, the greatest national strike in the history of South Africa, an act of defiance before South African military might."

Although many union leaders have been picked up by the security police, some have managed to evade arrest and continue to function clandestinely. One of them, COSATU Secretary-General Jay Naidoo, told a reporter that although the state of emergency had made it "very difficult to continue normal union activities," Pretoria is finding it "impossible to kill off the union movement in South Africa."

In workplaces across the country, Naidoo explained, many of the union federation's 600,000 members are discussing ways to counter the state of emergency. "We want the end of the state of emergency," Naidoo said, "and we want the release of our leadership."

On June 23 the last four defendants in one of Pretoria's main political show trials were acquitted in Pietermaritzburg after a key piece of prosecution evidence was ruled inadmissible. All four defendants — Thozamile Gqweta, Sisa Njikelana, Sam Kikine, and Isaac Ngcobo — are leaders of the South African Allied Workers Union, an affiliate of both COSATU and the United Democratic Front (UDF), the massive anti-apartheid coalition. Twelve other UDF defendants in the same case were acquitted in December. But another 22 UDF leaders continue to face treason charges in a Johannesburg trial.

Since the Pretoria regime had signaled its intention of imposing the state of emergency several days before it was actually declared on June 12, many UDF leaders and activists had time to go into hiding. Most UDF National Executive Committee members have evaded detention, as have hundreds of local leaders of the front. Operating clandestinely, they continue to provide some direction to the anti-apartheid campaigns.

On June 13, for example, three prominent UDF leaders in Port Elizabeth — Henry Fazzie, Stone Sizani, and Mkhuseleli Jack — briefly emerged from hiding to hold an illegal press conference. They announced that Blacks in the Port Elizabeth area would carry out a rent boycott to protest the state of emergency. Fazzie, an ANC activist who spent 21 years in prison with Nelson Mandela, has also taken part in UDF meetings in Johannesburg and Cape Town since the latest crackdown began.

Many local organizations, such as the popularly elected "street committees," have likewise continued to function. According to the June 19 *Washington Post*, "Street committee meetings have been held almost nightly since the emergency was imposed and UDF

leaders have been in attendance."

Under cover of the state of emergency, the apartheid authorities have given the police free rein to try to crush this continued resistance. An estimated 4,500 activists have been detained and nearly 100 people have been killed since the emergency was declared.

Hardly a day goes by without Pretoria announcing new repressive measures, such as further press restrictions, a ban on political T-shirts, and the imposition of curfews on Black townships. On June 20 new laws were added to the permanent statute books giving the regime

powers to detain political opponents for up to six months without charge and to declare "unrest areas" in which the police would enjoy total freedom of activity.

"As much as the South African racist regime is prepared to fight to the last man," Winnie Mandela defiantly declared in an interview with a British television station, "so are we determined to fight to the bitter end."

Mandela added, "Whether Margaret Thatcher and Reagan continue supporting Pretoria to this day, we shall win in the end. We shall liberate our country." □

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# U.S. senator opens slander campaign

*Drug charges are used to pressure government on canal, Contadora*

## By Steve Craine

A U.S. Senate committee allegedly investigating the drug trade in Latin America has turned its attention to slandering the government of Panama, after leading a similar attack against Mexico.

The Western Hemisphere affairs subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has accused Panama of being the linchpin of the region's drug trade. And an administration official claims Panamanian armed forces head Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega is the "facilitator" of most drug deals that move through the country.

Appearing on a June 22 nationally televised interview program, subcommittee chairman Jesse Helms of North Carolina said Noriega was "head of the biggest drug trafficking operation in the Western Hemisphere."

The subcommittee also heard accusations that Panamanian officials provide arms to revolutionary guerrilla movements in Latin America.

Major big-business papers, especially the *New York Times*, contributed to the effort to brand Panama an international pariah for its alleged role in distributing drugs. On June 12 the *Times* prominently featured a lengthy article about Panama based entirely on anonymous statements from "senior State Department, White House, Pentagon, and intelligence officials."

This article broadened the Helms subcommittee's arrogant interference in the internal affairs of Panama by including charges that General Noriega, who is the de facto political leader of the country, had ordered the murder of a political opponent. The article also stated that he had been providing intelligence information simultaneously to the U.S. and Cuban governments for 15 years.

A few weeks before beginning its probe of Panama, the Helms subcommittee had convened in secret to hear U.S. officials make similar allegations about corruption and drug smuggling in Mexico. Some Mexican government officials were accused of growing, as well as transporting and selling, illegal drugs.

The Mexican government, and even many U.S. government officials, strongly protested the frame-up nature of the charges made before the Senate subcommittee. One U.S. drug enforcement officer admitted the accusations are "just wrong." A Mexican state governor accused of owning four marijuana-growing ranches turned out to own no ranches. And although his predecessor as governor owned two ranches, there was no evidence that they were used for growing drugs.

Within a week of the hearing, all its most

serious and specific allegations had been refuted. But for several days the committee's wild accusations received prominent coverage in the mass media in the United States.

## Washington's real concerns in region

Both the Mexican and the Panamanian governments have frequently taken stands on foreign policy questions that are not to Washington's liking, making them targets for attack. Moreover, a certain amount of anti-U.S. rhetoric has been used by both governments to win popular support at home.

Mexico and Panama, along with Colombia and Venezuela, were the initiators of the Contadora process aimed at negotiating an arms limitation agreement for Central America. The Reagan administration has been trying hard to prevent their mediation efforts from getting in the way of the U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary war against Nicaragua's Sandinista government.

In Panama, hostility to the U.S. government has been especially strong since a 1968 coup brought Gen. Omar Torrijos to power. His government opened friendly relations with Cuba and negotiated a set of treaties with the United States that promise the return of Panamanian sovereignty over the Panama Canal on Dec. 31, 1999.

These treaties, which came after big protests against U.S. control of the canal, are immensely popular in the country and won Torrijos an anti-imperialist reputation. General Noriega served under Torrijos as head of military intelligence and now presents himself as the defender of this tradition.

Since the ratification of the Panama Canal treaties in 1978, Washington has been concerned about guaranteeing its continued access to the canal after it relinquishes direct rule.

The U.S. government also wants to be able to hold on to the several strategic military bases near the canal, where some 10,000 U.S. troops are permanently stationed. The status of these bases after the year 2000 may still be negotiated between the U.S. and Panamanian governments.

Some figures in Washington were very unhappy with the canal treaties and may want to prevent their implementation. Helms and Reagan were among the most vociferous opponents of their ratification and made opposition to "giving away America's canal" a cause célèbre of the Republican Party right wing.

## 'Fact-finding' expedition

In late May the Helms subcommittee extended its fishing expedition by sending four committee representatives to Panama City on a

"fact-finding mission." There they gathered information on Panama primarily from officers of the U.S. Army's Southern Command, which directs U.S. troops there and throughout Latin America.

Panamanians protested the committee's representatives by picketing outside their hotel. The Panama City newspaper *Crítica* denounced the visit, saying its real mission was to undermine the implementation of the Panama Canal treaties and to gather information on the progress of the Contadora talks.

At a press conference in Panama City, Helms staffer David Sullivan began laying the groundwork for extending the slanders against Panama. He claimed his investigation had discovered that "nothing is done in Panama without the approval of the top command, nothing happens without it knowing." And he added that the Panamanian and Mexican governments are "very similar, almost like twins."

Sullivan's boss, Senator Helms, said in his June 22 interview that it "may be entirely necessary down the road" to reassert U.S. rule over the canal. "That depends," he threatened, "on how the present situation involving Mr. Noriega is handled." Helms did not preclude possible U.S. military intervention but said that would be for the president to decide.

## 'Times' joins campaign

The *New York Times* took Helms' campaign to the U.S. public with a front-page article by Seymour Hersh in its June 12 issue. The article added charges that General Noriega laundered money coming from the drug trade and going to guerrilla groups such as M-19 in Colombia.

The alleged connection with M-19 was based on typically flimsy evidence. Unnamed "American intelligence officials," Hersh wrote, "told of viewing reconnaissance film, believed to have been taken by a high-flying U-2 [spy plane], depicting M-19 aircraft off-loading drugs at a Panamanian Air Defense Force airstrip. Arms were said to have been loaded into the craft for its return to Colombia."

Hersh stated that some in the CIA were reluctant to blow the whistle on General Noriega's alleged illegal activities because they viewed him as an "invaluable asset" for his willingness to provide information on Cuba and Nicaragua. Others, however, told him they suspected Noriega of passing some U.S. secrets on to the Cubans as well.

The *Times* also claimed to have uncovered new evidence linking General Noriega to the assassination of a political opponent, Dr. Hugo Spadafora, last September. When then-president Nicolás Ardito Barletta called for an in-

vestigation of Spadafora's murder, Noriega forced him to resign, leaving Noriega unquestionably the most powerful man in Panamanian politics.

Some human rights groups in Panama, such as the Panama Human Rights Commission, have refused to get involved in calls for investigation of this murder. They argue that the investigation is being aided by Helms and the U.S. embassy and is therefore an affront to Panamanian sovereignty regardless of the facts of the murder.

The charge that Noriega ordered the killing is not new, however, though it had not previously received the kind of publicity in the United States that it is getting now.

Similarly, another accusation raised by Hersh in the *Times* 10 days later takes on new meaning in light of the recent slanders of Panama. On June 22 the paper revived the long-standing charge that the military, under Noriega's direction, had rigged the vote count in the May 1984 election that brought Barletta to the presidency.

#### Washington supports vote-stealing

At the time of that election, the Reagan administration was interested in making a transition in Panama to civilian rule. It was pressing a similar strategy in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, encouraging the military dictators there to acquire some democratic cover.

The last elected government in Panama had been deposed in 1968, and since then the military had ruled in its own name or through a string of appointed figurehead governments. Washington assumed that an elected government would provide more stability and be better equipped to head off any radical opposition to the maintenance of U.S. influence in the country and over the canal.

Washington even helped pick the candidate it felt could accomplish this and who would also be most agreeable to U.S. economic demands. The State Department, Defense Department, and White House approved and promoted the candidacy of Barletta, a former student of Secretary of State George Shultz and a vice-president of the World Bank. Many in Washington, according to the *Times*, felt that Barletta's opponent, former president Arnulfo Arias, would be too nationalist to go along with U.S. demands.

It is generally conceded that Noriega ordered the ballot counting stopped when it appeared that Arias would win. The official victor was not announced until two weeks later.

The State Department's position at the time was that there had been no irregularities in the voting or the count. But a report by a group of observers that included a former U.S. ambassador to Panama and a former U.S. congressman concluded that the election was stolen. And in July an official U.S. embassy staff report detailed many cases of fraud.

Nevertheless, Secretary of State Shultz attended Barletta's inauguration in October and declared that his election offered "Panamanians of all political persuasions a new opportunity for progress and national development."

At that time Barletta was Washington's man in Panama, and General Noriega was cooperating in the attempt to set up a civilian government (though without giving up his position as the kingmaker).

In the 11 months that Barletta was in office, however, a promised economic miracle never materialized. His attempts to impose the belt-tightening measures prescribed by Shultz and the World Bank were met with big protests and strikes in November and December 1984 and again in July 1985.

This failure, coupled with Barletta's apparent willingness to allow an investigation of the Spadafora assassination, led to General Noriega's decision to force him out of office in September 1985.

Washington signaled its displeasure with the demise of its experiment in democracy by canceling U.S.\$32 million in economic aid. Later the U.S. Congress diverted a \$12 million training grant slated for the Panamanian military and sent it to Guatemala instead.

Noriega, however, continued to cooperate with U.S. military authorities even after these punitive actions.

Panamanian and U.S. troops took part in joint maneuvers in January, and recently U.S. planes were allowed use of Panamanian airfields while repairs were being made on one of the U.S. bases in the canal zone.

Noriega and his new president, former vice-president Eric Arturo Delvalle, have also gone ahead with imposing the austerity measures Barletta attempted to implement. Despite a 10-day protest strike in March, led by the country's major union federation, the economic plan was put through the legislature.

But Helms, the *Times*, and other forces in Washington clearly want to put pressure on Noriega or even force his ouster in order to advance U.S. imperialist interests in Central America.

The *Times* editors explained in a June 24 editorial entitled "Alarm About Panama" some of their reasons for running Hersh's articles. "How can Washington promote democracy and narcotics control in Central America while it is compromised by ties to General Noriega?" they asked. "And how could it disengage from his regime without jeopardizing its own interests in Panama?" The "deeper lesson," according to the editorial, is that "entrusting vital foreign stakes to corrupt leaders may momentarily appear as clever realpolitik, but usually explodes in crisis."

Washington's needs in Panama were also well summarized by a "senior American diplomat" quoted in Hersh's June 12 article. "It's precisely because we have long-term strategic interests in Panama, with the canal, that it's important to have reliable people we can deal with," he said.

In addition to the canal itself, these long-term interests include a recently expanded spying operation centered at Howard Air Force Base near Panama City. From there, the National Security Agency can monitor all of Central and South America. The base is also the departure point for spy missions against Nica-

ragua.

In relation to the Contadora negotiations, Washington is looking for more cooperation from all the governments of the region for its anti-Sandinista campaign. A former CIA official explained the reason for the campaign against Mexico by noting that CIA Director William Casey "felt the Mexicans were not team players on Central America."

#### Panamanians oppose intervention

Panamanians, both supporters and opponents of the present government, denounced these U.S. interventions into the national affairs of their country. The president of the governing Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) charged that the purpose of the first *Times* article was to disrupt the turning over of the canal.

Rolando Ordóñez, a leader of the National Council of Organized Workers (CONATO), which led the antiausterity protests in March, called the charges against Noriega "lies." "We are concerned about this at CONATO," he added, "because we already have many political problems in the country. This situation makes matters more difficult."

The Panamanian People's Party (PPP) called the charges "part of a new imperialist escalation aimed at . . . install[ing] a pro-U.S. regime that will docilely follow Reagan policies directed against Contadora to trample on the Sandinista revolution, destroy the Salvadoran people's struggle, harass Cuba, and have all the countries in the Central American region, including Mexico, come under the yoke of the State Department and the Pentagon." □

## Brazil, Cuba reestablish diplomatic relations

After a break of 22 years, Brazil has reestablished diplomatic relations with Cuba, the government in Brasília announced June 25.

The Brazilian decision came after nearly a year of exploratory talks and two months of direct negotiations that concluded in Paris in June. Brazil's action means that most Latin American governments have restored diplomatic relations with Havana.

In the early 1960s Washington succeeded in pressuring all the governments of Latin America, with the exception of Mexico, to break relations with the revolutionary government in Cuba. A July 1964 meeting of foreign ministers of the Organization of American States (OAS) voted to condemn Cuba and directed all OAS member governments to suspend diplomatic ties and impose trade sanctions.

Since the mid-1970s, however, more and more Latin American governments have joined Mexico in recognizing Cuba, and in 1975 the OAS formally lifted its sanctions. □

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# 'We fight to defend our land'

*Cooperative members discuss May 31 defense against 'contra' raid*

**By Harvey McArthur  
and Ruth Nebbia**

LA DALIA — "We're not soldiers, but we fight to defend our land," said Isaiás Espinoza Velásquez, one of the survivors of a murderous attack by U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary terrorists (*contras*) on the Daniel Téllez cooperative here May 31.

For four hours, 35 peasant militiamen fought 200 heavily armed *contras* until Sandinista army reinforcements arrived. Fifteen of the defenders and a child were killed.

This was the first time *contras* have attacked the Téllez cooperative, which is located deep in the mountains of northern Nicaragua, about 40 miles northeast of the city of Matagalpa. It was organized two years ago with 280 men, women, and children. They received 2,500 acres of land through Nicaragua's agrarian reform and raise cattle and cocoa to sell in the city and grains and vegetables for their own consumption.

Isabel Valenzuela, 48 years old and the cooperative's director of production and defense, said that they were doing well before the attack. They had sold 600 calves in April and were repaying their loans and planning improvements for the cooperative.

The settlement had 40 homes built with the help of Swiss volunteers and donations from Swiss workers. The homes are small, wood-frame buildings with concrete floors and tin roofs. They each have three rooms and a large roofed porch that serves as kitchen and general work area. There was also a school and a small health center staffed by a nurse.

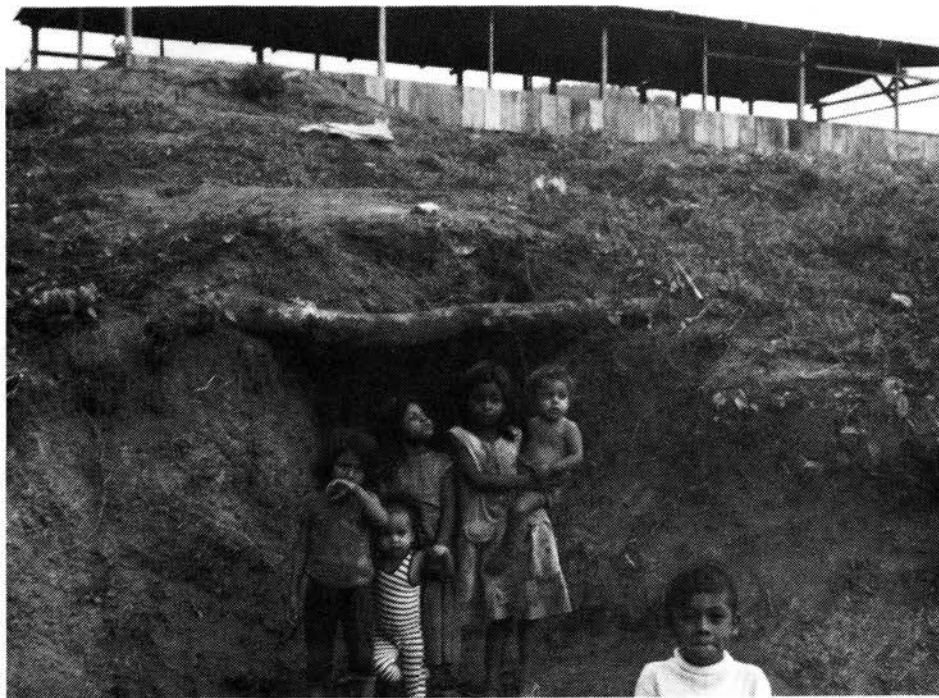
## **Self-defense cooperative**

This is a self-defense cooperative, where the peasants themselves organize military defense from *contra* attacks.

The buildings cluster together on a small hill nestled in the rolling mountains here. To the west, the buildings are dominated by a mountain crest that looms several hundred feet above the settlement. At its top stands a dugout observation post, part of the permanent vigilance and self-defense. Other observation posts overlook the settlement from smaller hills to the north and east. Three dugouts with log-and-dirt roofs near the houses provide shelter for the women and children in case of attack.

"We are just armed peasants," Valenzuela said. "There are no soldiers here. We're not trying to attack anyone. We fight only when the enemy attacks us." The 35 peasant militiamen were armed only with AK-47 rifles.

May 30 was Mother's Day in Nicaragua.



Ruth Nebbia/IP

Children of Daniel Téllez cooperative outside shelter a few days after "contra" attack.

"We had special festivities throughout the area that day," said Daniel Prado, a local organizer of the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG) who works with the Téllez cooperative. "The *contras* took advantage of this to sneak their task force in close without being detected. We estimate that 200 participated in the attack."

The *contras* moved in at 4:00 a.m. the next morning, Valenzuela told us. Their surprise attack first overran the observation post on the heights west of the cooperative. Four of the five peasants on guard duty there were killed.

Once they controlled the heights, the *contras* began to pound the settlement with mortars, RPG-7 rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and M-79 grenade launchers. Hundreds of craters dot the ground near the school and the defense posts — survivors estimate that as many as 600 shells fell on the settlement.

As the first explosions began, women and children dashed from the homes to seek shelter in the dugouts or fled to the nearby stream to hide from the *contras*. Xiomara Flores Ortiz, an eight-year-old girl, was killed as she ran from her home toward a shelter.

The *contras* continued pounding the settlement with mortars and grenades and then attacked from the south to try to overrun the buildings. Peasant militiamen fought tena-

ciously to stop them but were overwhelmed. Nine were killed or seriously wounded in fighting before the *contra* force could reach the buildings. Bits of flesh and hair were still lying in a trench near the school four days after the attack.

"Pilar Ortiz was wounded but still alive when the enemy overran the school," Isaiás Espinoza told us. "They tortured him, mutilated his face, and then slit his throat." Ortiz was a member of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and leader of the cooperative.

The *contras* systematically set fire to the school and to 14 homes; all that remains now are the concrete foundations and twisted sheets of tin. One eight-year-old girl told us, "They burnt our clothes and my home. We were very scared."

The mercenaries also overran the dugouts where women and children were hiding. "They fired an M-79 grenade at one of the dugouts," Valenzuela told us. "It exploded against the roof, injuring many of those inside." His wife and six-year-old son were among the wounded.

"One of the women ran out of the dugout," he continued. "She screamed, 'Don't shoot! Don't shoot! There are no soldiers here. We are only women and children.'"

"The contras yelled back: 'You are women of dogs and deserve to die,'" Valenzuela said. "They entered the dugout and told the women to leave the cooperative that day or they would be back and kill them all. 'The FDN rules here,' they yelled as they pointed their guns at the children." FDN are the initials of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, the largest of the U.S.-organized mercenary groups.

The fighting lasted nearly four hours. Only when army reinforcements approached at 8:30 that morning did the contras withdraw. "This is what saved us," Valenzuela said. "We were running low on ammunition and the enemy had overrun the settlement. They would have burned everything and massacred all of us if the soldiers had not arrived."

#### Peasants demand more arms

In addition to the 15 militiamen and little girl, 22 peasants, mostly women and children, were wounded. Thirty-eight children lost their fathers in the attack.

"We hurt the contras too, even though we only had rifles," Valenzuela said. "From the signs we found later, we caused at least eight, maybe more, casualties among the contras."

"We had no support weapons," Valenzuela and other survivors emphasized. "The contras were well armed and all we had was our rifles. If we had had a mortar or grenade launcher, or even just one machine gun for each observation post, the enemy never would have overrun the settlement."

There is a growing discussion in Nicaragua on the need for more weapons, especially since the mercenaries focus their attacks on isolated farms or cooperatives rather than facing the Sandinista army directly. UNAG leader Alcides Rodríguez said that there are 1,000 men waiting for arms in cooperatives in this zone alone. None have heavy weapons, though UNAG has asked the Nicaraguan government to see if the cooperatives can be better armed. "And there are many women peasants who want arms too," Rodríguez added.

One older woman, who lost her husband and two of her sons in the attack, told us that her 15-year-old daughter wants to join the army now. "If I were strong enough, I'd take up arms too," the mother said. "My 11-year-old boy also wants to go."

The peasants we spoke to were determined to stay and rebuild the cooperative, though Valenzuela said that some were terrified and wanted to leave.

"Under the Somoza dictatorship," Isaiás Espinoza explained, "we didn't have anything: no land, no medical care, no housing, no education. With the revolution, we peasants now own the land."

"Since 1984, we have been building up this cooperative," he continued. "It is our future. And now the enemy comes to destroy it. We fought so our children will have a future — so they will not be trampled underfoot as we were before."

UNAG is working to bring more families into the cooperative as soon as they can rebuild the homes. Meanwhile, Rodríguez told us,

other cooperatives are sending brigades to do the work of the peasants who were killed. Swiss volunteers have returned to help with the reconstruction. The Red Cross has provided emergency aid, and UNAG is appealing to other relief agencies and international farm groups for assistance.

#### 'Reagan and imperialism responsible'

Francisco Zeledón, a regional leader of UNAG, told us that such large-scale attacks were unusual now. "We have about 80 cooperatives in this zone," he said. In the 1983 to 1985 period "40 of them were attacked, some two or three times. But we consolidated the defense in this zone during 1985, and the contras have not attacked so much since. They now mainly plant mines in the roads or ambush or kidnap isolated peasants."

The Matagalpa-Dalia road was mined twice during the four days between the attack and our visit, UNAG leaders said. Both times, peasants spotted the mercenaries and reported them to government officials, and the roads were cleared without casualties.

Zeledón, Valenzuela, and others told us that they thought the May 31 attack was a special effort by the mercenaries to demonstrate their abilities before the U.S. Congress resumes debate on the \$100 million funding for the contra war. "This suffering, these tears, are a product

of the \$100 million," Espinoza told us. "Reagan is the one to blame. For him, it is a crime that the FSLN is helping us build houses for our families. For Reagan and the contras it is a crime that the peasants are able to develop themselves."

Twenty-year-old Silvio Dávila Picado, whose father and three brothers died defending the cooperative, agreed. "It is Reagan and imperialism that are responsible." Dávila is mobilized in the Nicaraguan army now. He came home after the attack to find only his mother, his sister, and a young brother alive. He is seeking early demobilization from the army so he can remain in the cooperative with his family. "And I hope they let me bring an M-60 [machine gun] when I'm demobilized, so our defense will be stronger," he told us.

As North American reporters visiting the cooperative right after the attack, we found a warm and friendly reception. Valenzuela, Dávila, Espinoza, and others, though obviously exhausted, were eager to spend hours talking to us about what had happened — and to send a message to the U.S. people.

"We have heard of the solidarity protests in the United States," Espinoza said. "We know that the people are not in agreement with Reagan. We ask you to continue with the protests. We want peace here and in all of Central America." □

## 'Don't let me miss an issue of IP'

Recently one of our regular readers in Reykjavík, Iceland, sent a payment to renew his annual subscription to *Intercontinental Press*. "I want to continue where my last subscription ended even if I am a little late to renew it, because I don't want to miss a single issue. *IP* is very important to me. If I don't get it I feel that I can nowhere get information about the most important events in the world. So please, don't let me miss an issue."

From a reader in another Nordic country — Sweden — we also received an enthusiastic endorsement, this in the form of a check for \$150. We hope this is a harbinger of growing interest in *IP* that will lead to increased circulation in Sweden.

In addition to renewing their *IP* subscriptions and contributing financially, some readers help to win new readers by selling subscriptions. For example, a few weeks ago we received bank drafts for two, one-year subscriptions sold by a reader in Vancouver, British Columbia, located on Canada's Pacific Coast. He urged us to "keep up the good work!" We hope he does likewise. If every reader sold at least one new subscription, we'd make a substantial advance in our circulation internationally.

Also from Canada we received a note from the Central American Information Centre in Calgary, Alberta, asking for in-

formation about *IP* and subscription rates.

A reader in West Boxford, Massachusetts, who had let her subscription lapse several years ago, sent a check to re-subscribe. "In light of recent international events," she wrote, "I would be interested in having the subscription effective early in April, so that I would get any issues addressing the Libyan news."

She asked if we have yearly indexes for the back volumes of the *IP* that she missed. The answer is yes. In the last issue of each year we carry an index for the entire year. Readers can order single copies of any year-end issues from 1979 through 1985 for \$1.25 each.

From San Diego, California, we received one of our favorite tributes. A reader wrote that she has a very high regard for *IP* "and the special articles and analyses of the news; also because you refrain from editorializing. That is something rare in a publication. I also like your frequent documentation that speaks for itself."

That's about the finest recommendation we can imagine for why people should subscribe and contribute financially to *IP*. Because we simply report the facts.

If you can help us please send a contribution, large or small, to *Intercontinental Press*, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014.

# Opposition charges election fraud

General Ershad's party wins poll held under martial law

By Will Reissner

Bangladesh's capital city was paralyzed May 14 by a general strike called to protest government manipulation of the results of the May 7 parliamentary elections. Stores and offices in Dhaka were shut for six hours, and buses and taxis stayed off the streets.

The strike had been called by the opposition Awami League to protest fraud and voter intimidation by the government's Jatiya Party in the elections.

On the day of the voting, as many as 20 people were killed and 500 injured by bomb blasts, shootings, and other attacks throughout the country. Gangs from the Jatiya Party openly stole ballot boxes and even took over whole polling places.

Bangladesh's 100 million people have been ruled by a succession of military regimes since a 1975 coup overthrew and murdered Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the political leader who had headed Bangladesh's successful struggle for independence from Pakistan in 1971.

The present ruler, Lt. Gen. Hussain Muhammad Ershad, has ruled under martial law since he seized power in a 1982 military coup. His regime has come under mounting pressure, from all classes of society, to lift martial law and hold elections.

## Fourth try

This was the fourth time that Ershad had tried to hold restricted parliamentary elections in hopes of defusing the growing opposition and legitimizing his martial-law regime.

On three previous occasions, all the opposition forces refused to take part in the elections because Ershad would not lift martial law before the voting. Each time the elections were canceled.

This time, however, Ershad vowed the elections would take place with or without opposition candidates. Ershad was finally able to convince the Awami League, led by Sheikh Hasina Wajed, daughter of the murdered leader of the independence struggle, to take part in the contest.

The Awami League, which had previously governed Bangladesh under Mujibur Rahman, had originally decided to boycott the election because General Ershad refused to restore basic rights and lift martial law before the voting.

Just before the March 22 deadline for election registration, however, the league reversed its stance. According to Rodney Tasker, reporting from Dhaka in the May 22 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, "many foreign and local political observers believe that there was a private, loose accommodation reached between

the government and the Awami League before the election."

Tasker added that "it is widely believed" that in return for the Awami League's agreement to take part in the election, the party was promised government funds to cover its campaign costs and that "there would be no obstacle to the league receiving a face-saving number — perhaps one-third — of the 300 national assembly seats."

The Awami League's decision to contest the elections under martial law led to the defection

of five of the political parties in the electoral alliance it headed.

The country's other major political grouping, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), stood by its earlier decision to boycott the elections. Its leader is Begum Khaleda Zia, widow of Gen. Ziaur Rahman. He had ruled the country between 1975, when he seized power, and his assassination in a military coup in May 1981. Begum Khaleda Zia dismissed the election as "a blueprint to legalize the illegal military government."

## Instability since independence

Until 1947, Bangladesh had been part of the British colony of India. When the British colonialists were forced to grant India its independence, they partitioned the country along religious lines, establishing a predominantly Muslim state of Pakistan and a predominantly Hindu India.

But because India's Muslim population was concentrated in the far west and far east of the country, the new Muslim state of Pakistan was established as a country divided into two parts separated by more than 1,000 miles of Indian territory.

The only common link between the people of West Pakistan and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) was the Muslim religion.

In customs and language, the Bengali people of East Pakistan had far more in common with the people living in the neighboring Indian state of West Bengal than with those in West Pakistan.

Although East Pakistan had the majority of the new country's population, the bulk of its industry as well as its financial, commercial, and governmental centers were in West Pakistan, which quickly came to dominate the new country.

Very soon after the partition of India, the new rulers of the Pakistani state instituted policies resulting in a steady transfer of wealth from East Pakistan to West Pakistan.

In December 1970, the Awami League led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman won 167 of the 169 seats allotted to East Pakistan in the Pakistani parliament, giving the Awami League an absolute majority in that body.

Rather than accept Bengali authority over Pakistan's state apparatus, the country's military ruler at that time suspended the newly elected assembly and strengthened martial-law provisions that

were already in effect.

Seeing its electoral victory stolen, the Awami League began to agitate first for full autonomy for East Pakistan and then for an independent state of Bangladesh.

In March 1971, the Pakistani army attempted to brutally crush the growing independence struggle. Up to 1 million Bengalis were killed and nearly 10 million were forced to flee into India for safety.

For months Bengali guerrillas — the Mukti Bahini — resisted the Pakistani army. Then on Dec. 3, 1971, the Indian army crossed into East Pakistan and quickly defeated the Pakistani forces.

Soon after, an independent Bangladesh was established with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at its head.

Since then, however, the people's hopes that independence would usher in a period of social change and economic growth have been dashed. Economic crisis and sharp social and class conflicts brought prolonged political instability.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was murdered in an August 1975 military coup that also took the lives of his wife, three sons, and two daughters-in-law.

After two other coups in quick succession, Gen. Ziaur Rahman consolidated his hold on power. But after surviving 20 attempted coups, he was murdered in a successful 21st attempt in May 1981.

Lt. Gen. Hussain Muhammad Ershad overthrew Ziaur Rahman's successor in yet another military coup in 1982. Although Ershad has not had to face any attempted military coups since he took power, there has been mounting civilian opposition to his regime, which like its predecessors has done little to improve conditions for the impoverished masses of Bangladesh.



During the election campaign, Begum Zia drew larger crowds than candidates of the Awami League as she urged a boycott of the voting.

Before the campaign ended, Zia and the whole BNP leadership were placed under arrest. She was again confined to her home after the election results were announced.

Zia accused the Awami League and the Ershad government of forming an "unholy alliance" to reduce Bangladesh to subservience to its huge neighbor, India.

The Indian government has been generally supportive of Ershad's dictatorship.

On domestic issues there are few differences between Ershad's Jatiya Party and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. This was reflected in large-scale defections of BNP office-seekers to the JP.

Since seizing power, Ershad has denationalized 35 jute mills, 33 textile mills, and two banks, winning him the support of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce.

In initial election results announced on May 11, Ershad's Jatiya Party won 132 of 264 seats (results were voided in 36 districts and new elections were scheduled in them).

The Awami League took 70 seats, other parties in the Awami-led coalition won 20 seats, the Muslim fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami took 10, the Communist Party of Bangladesh took 5, and independents won 27.

#### 'Lost all credibility'

In an article in the May 31 *India Today*, correspondent Tavleen Singh wrote: "Well before counting began, Ershad's extraordinary exercise in democracy had lost all credibility and it was clear that the results had been tailored to look as fair as possible with the Awami League and the Jatiya Party running neck and neck at one point."

Before the counting had even started, Sheikh Hasina Wajed called a press conference to accuse Ershad of wholesale theft of the election. "Rigging is a very small word," she said, "what happened here was hijacking."

General Ershad has indicated that the first job of the new parliament will be to ratify all the martial-law ordinances he has decreed in the four years since seizing power. Ershad told one press conference that if the new parliament

did not endorse his decrees he would dissolve the body.

Ershad has also stated that martial law will continue in effect until after presidential elections are held, in which he will be a candidate. These elections are not expected to be held before November at the earliest.

Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries on earth. In the rural areas, home to 90 percent of the population, more than 50 percent of the peasants have no land.

The literacy rate has *dropped* by 1 percent in

the past five years, to about 26 percent of the population, leaving nearly three out of every four people unable to read or write.

At least one-third of the population is unemployed.

Exports — primarily jute fiber used for making burlap bags and twine, hides, and tea — earn the country only about US\$950 million per year (a minuscule figure for a country of 100 million people), while the import bill is about \$2.5 billion. The difference must be made up by foreign aid, of which Bangladesh will receive about \$1.8 billion this year. □

## Belgium

# Mass protests sweep country

## Workers mobilize against government austerity measures

By Hilary Eleanor

[The following article is taken from the June 16 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a fortnightly review published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

On May 31 in Brussels, a massive demonstration of 150,000 people was the most recent in a series of strikes and mobilizations against the austerity measures proposed by the government. Three general strikes have been held since the beginning of May despite reluctance on the part of some of the national union leaderships to really lead the resistance or to build united national action between the Socialist and Christian trade unions.

The Belgian government, led by Prime Minister Wilfried Martens, is proposing an austerity plan aimed at saving 200,000 million Belgian francs (4,444 million U.S. dollars) which would result in thousands of job losses. The working-class response to these proposals has been remarkable, not least because mobilizations against the austerity plan began before any official announcements had been made. Workers began to fight back when newspapers started to leak the outlines of the proposals.

At the beginning of April, 18,000 miners in Limbourg, Flanders, began to take action against the threat to 3,000 jobs. On April 21 they began all-out strike action to secure an agreement for no pit closures or job losses. Public-sector workers also moved into action quickly when they realized that the austerity proposals would seriously threaten their jobs.

• May 1: The Socialist federation of public sector unions (CGSP) showered demonstrations with leaflets calling for a strike. This was only one of many actions nationally which prepared the 24-hour general strike on May 6.

• May 6: The strike was successful, with no trains, trams, or buses running. Post, telecommunications, radio, and television were also paralyzed. The most important event was

the establishment of a common front between the CGSP and the two Christian union organizations — the media and communication union (SCCC), which includes railway workers, and the federation of public sector unions (CCSP), which includes government employees.

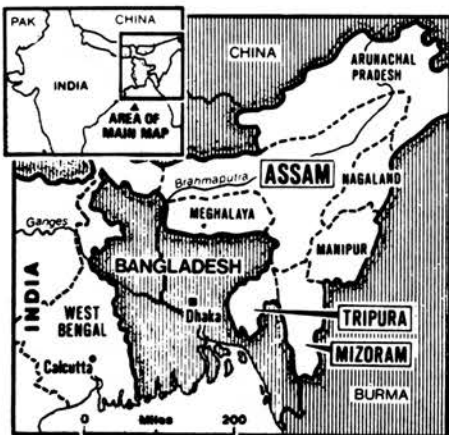
But united action had yet to be realized in the state education sector. Here, the CGSP left it up to the regions to decide whether or not to strike, with the result that only the teachers in the Antwerp region joined the May 6 strike. Other regions held information meetings and demonstrations, neither of which were followed up.

Among the rank and file there was a real determination to fight. Railworkers at Charleroi organized a cross-sectoral meeting of the Socialist-led Belgian General Federation of Workers (FGTB), which declared: "We won't wait for the end of the month to act." A national demonstration against the austerity measures was planned for May 31. Under pressure, the FGTB leadership decided to call a 48-hour strike in the week preceding May 31.

• May 7: A demonstration of teachers in the private sector rallied 15,000 people in Brussels. This was a major blow to the politics of austerity, given that traditionally this sector supports the government. Better still, the demonstration was supported by the CGSP.

• May 12: After the bank holiday weekend, a 24-hour strike was called for May 16. This time, the CGSP teachers built for the strike across the whole movement. Even though the Christian CCSP was still reluctant to build united actions, the strike was more successful than on May 6.

• May 23: The 48-hour strike was sustained on May 23 and 24. In Wallonia (the French-speaking part of Belgium) there was a total strike in the public sector, but support in the private sector was weak. In Flanders (Flemish-speaking Belgium) a minority joined the strike, but they were very militant. Massive pickets were held to stop members of the Christian unions from working, resulting in the



police intervening in a number of cases.

• May 24: The government finally made its austerity plans public. They have been careful not to adopt any measures likely to rub the Christian unions the wrong way and push them towards united action with the Socialist unions. That said, the austerity plan is very severe, and proposes abolishing 28,000 jobs.

The cuts will affect mainly education, the civil service, and social security and will be accompanied by reductions in pension, health, and unemployment benefits. In the area of social security, more people will be expected to pay the patients' contribution, which is extended to include treatments such as X-rays and dental care that have been reimbursed in the past. Women in particular will be hit by the proposal to severely reduce — or even in some cases abolish — benefits for unemployed people who are cohabiting. The attacks on benefits also affect workers in the private sector, but these are less evident.

Following the publication of the austerity plan, the Christian unions, as foreseen by Martens, backed down. On the railways, the SCCC withdrew its strike call and announced that it would no longer pay strike benefits. Consequently the dynamic of the struggle of the railworkers — who constituted the most advanced section of the mass movement — dried up. Only the railworkers in the Hainaut province, where the Socialists lead the union, continued to strike.

• May 31: The national demonstration in Brussels had been planned for two months by the FGTB and the Socialist parties. Even though the national leaderships left it up to the regions and federations to mobilize, over

150,000 people turned out to show their opposition to the austerity plans.

A national union official was reported as saying on May 31 that the demonstration would mark the end of the month of strikes and mobilizations as far as the Socialist unions are concerned. But the fightback has led to a radicalization in the Socialist parties in Flanders and Wallonia and in the FGTB, and local strikes and stoppages will continue. On June 2, the Socialist FGTB made a call for further national protests.

There are two major problems now facing the mass movement against the austerity drive. One is the reluctance of the Christian unions to participate in united action, although they are now also demanding negotiations with the government on the budget reductions. The second problem has been the difficulties in mobilizing workers in the private sector. So far there have been very few strikes in the private sector — at Cockerill Sambre, ACEC, and Caterpillar.

The Belgian section of the Fourth International, the Socialist Workers Party (POS/SAP), predicts that unless there is a cross-sectoral call for action, the private sector won't be mobilized.

Even so, the dynamic of the mass movement in Belgium against the austerity proposals is such that it will be very difficult for national union leaderships or the Socialist parties to just turn off the tap when it suits their own interests. In the context of a European situation where there are few major fightbacks against the austerity drive of the ruling classes, the development of the struggle in Belgium will be an important one to watch. □

only one indication of the snowball effect that the privatization of TF-1 would have.

What the TF-1 workers feared in particular was that privatization would lead to layoffs, since the American networks have been reducing their staffs considerably in the context of the economic crisis and lower advertising revenues.

The government, moreover, apparently chose public broadcasting as the first battleground of privatization for ideological reasons. In this area, it thought it could present a sell-off to private capitalists as an extension of individual freedoms. Léotard claimed that his proposal would “increase the spaces for freedom and healthy competition in the country's communications system.”

In fact, the major buyer is likely to be the press mogul Robert Hersant, who has not distinguished himself as a contributor to the expansion of human freedoms, any more than [British press boss] Rupert Murdoch.

So, the rightist government's attack on public broadcasting has tended to rebound. Before the proposal for selling off TF-1, public opinion polls showed a majority favorable to privatization. Now they show a major shift against it. That has led other sections of public workers threatened by privatization schemes, such as postal and telecommunications workers, to tend to rally around the defense of public broadcasting.

The unpopularity of the privatization scheme is also shown by campaigns in defense of TF-1 launched by mass-circulation magazines such as *Télérama*, *Événement de Jeudi*, and *l'Autre Journal*.

Furthermore, the rightist partisans of “liberty” could not hide their reactionary big teeth. For example, the secretary of state for tourism, Jean-Jacques Descamps, said on May 17: “The TV is the most socialist, the most rotten economically and socially.”

After the May 21 strike in Paris, the regional broadcasting personnel took the lead in the fight, which is being led by an “Inter-Union Coordinating Committee of the CGT and CFDT” (the majority union in the industry) and the National Union of Journalists (SNJ), as well as an action committee formed at TF-1 called “La Télé est à vous” (“The TV Belongs to You”).

On Saturday, June 7, 10,000 people rallied in the Place de la République in Paris against the privatization. There was also a significant demonstration in Toulouse. Other actions are proposed later in June.

The fight in defense of public broadcasting in France also has an international significance, since it comes in the context of attacks on public broadcasting in a series of European countries — for example Britain, as well as Sweden, where there is a proposal to open TV to advertising for the first time. □

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## France

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# Government to sell public TV

## *Privatization plan sparks union protests*

[The following article is taken from the June 16 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a fortnightly review published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

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The proposal of the new French minister of culture and communications, François Léotard, to sell off the main public TV channel, TF-1, has shaped up as the first major battle over the rightist government's policy of privatization.

On May 21, 50 percent of the personnel of TF-1 participated in a one-day strike against privatization. Thousands rallied at the Eiffel Tower to protest against the proposal.

Today, the French public broadcasting service employs 18,000 people, divided among three channels (TF-1, Antenne-2, and France Régionale-3); a public broadcasting depart-

ment (TDF); a TV production company, the Société Française de Production (SFP); a national radio corporation, Radio France (which includes also Radio France Internationale and Radio France Outre-Mer, an overseas territories service); two computer management agencies (GIRATEV); and a communications service (FMI).

This figure of 18,000 employees in French public broadcasting compares with 24,000 employees of the two BBC channels in Britain.

In all, the French public broadcasting system has an annual budget of 14,000 million francs, about 2,000 million U.S. dollars. For the sake of comparison, the turnover of the major U.S. TV network, CBS, was 360.6 million dollars in 1985.

The proposed sell-off of TF-1 was clearly intended to be the wedge for a much wider privatization. For example, about 50 percent of the SFP's orders come from TF-1. That is

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# Vietnam outlines conservation policy

*Grapples with legacy of wartime environmental destruction*

[The following are excerpts from a report issued in June 1985 by Vietnam's Committee for Rational Utilization of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection. The full report, 72 pages long, outlined a long-term conservation policy.

[The report was authorized by nine Vietnamese specialists working with a consultant for the Conservation for Development Center of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). The Swedish International Authority provided financial assistance, and the World Wildlife Fund-India took responsibility for publishing the English-language version.

[The excerpts are preceded by a preface by Vo Nguyen Giap, former defense minister of Vietnam.

[The preface and excerpts are reprinted as they appeared in the February 1986 issue of *Vietnam Today*, the quarterly publication of the Australia-Vietnam Society.]

\* \* \*

## Preface by Vo Nguyen Giap

In 1975 the people of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam finally succeeded in the reunification of the whole country after 30 years of an almost constant war for independence: first against the French and second against the United States and their local allies. During these wars, the population and environment of Vietnam suffered terribly and the countryside was exposed to such levels of deliberate destruction as to give rise to a new word in the English language, "ecocide."

The people of Vietnam have emerged victorious from the battlefield only to find awaiting them a hard heritage — the equally challenging problems of restoring their damaged and degraded environment and rebuilding their economy and impoverished production systems.

This recovery must be well planned and based on sound ecological (conservation) and economic (development) principles. But the scale of the task is monumental.

The population of Vietnam has doubled over the last 10 years to over 60 million persons today. This gives us one of the highest mean densities for any agricultural country in the world of about 200 persons per square kilometre [over 500 per square mile].

Meanwhile Vietnam's natural resources — the material basis for improving living conditions — are limited, but the needs of the people for them continue to increase. It is necessary to develop more croplands and more wood for fuel and construction. But the forests are

shrinking, the soil is being eroded, and its fertility declining. The area of barren land in Vietnam increases daily and already occupies almost one-third of the total area of the country. Deforestation leads to soil erosion, which damages construction projects, silting up dams and reservoirs and leading to increased frequency of floods and drought, lowered water tables, and decreased fishery production.

Vietnam is on the road to establishing a socialist industrial basis for economic growth and recovery. For this, it is necessary to exploit more and more of its natural resources: fuels and oil, minerals, wood, animals, water, and land. As we develop our industry, the environmental conditions of the urban and industrial regions as well as some rural or new agricultural areas become polluted. As the ecosystems of the mountains, deltas, and coastal and estuarine zones are submitted to strong impact of human activities, they are easily degraded.

Unless development is rationally planned and unless the productive capacity of the country's life-support systems is maintained through adequate conservation measures, the land of Vietnam will be degraded and the population impoverished.

Most sectors of development have drawn up restrictions and regulations to rationalise resource use and impose sensible environmental standards, but the activities of one sector, such as forestry, affect those of other sectors, for instance agriculture or hydro-energy to such an extent that cross-sectoral planning in the form of a national strategy is clearly needed.

The National Conservation Strategy (NCS) for the Socialist Republic of Vietnam attempts this task. By close linkage of *conservation* needs with *development* objectives, the strategy outlines an approach to the optimal, sustainable utilisation of the country's renewable and non-renewable natural resources for the well-being and survival of its human population.

## Executive summary

After an evaluation of the numerous factors to the environmental conditions in Vietnam and an analysis of the current trends in the utilisation of natural resources in the context of rapid population growth, the Committee for the Rational Utilisation of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection (Programme 52-02) is of the firm conviction that what Vietnam faces today is a grave ecological crisis.

If current trends in environmental degradation are allowed to continue unchecked, it is predicted that soon after A.D. 2000 there will be no natural forests left in the country. De-

forestation will lead to a loss of water penetration in the watershed regions, which will in turn result in a number of environmental problems. These include a high incidence of floods and drought causing massive damage to property, loss in agricultural production, seasonal failure of water supplies in some areas, heavy siltation — which can frustrate the country's costly efforts to develop hydro-power — rise in the occurrence of typhoons and consequent damage caused by them, and a shortage of fuel for domestic uses. The country will no longer be able to feed its growing population and will have little else to sell in return for food on the international market. Cities will become over-congested and heavily polluted. Internal strife will be precipitated and national security weakened.

In order to prevent this alarming scenario, it is necessary to launch a major nationwide campaign of environmental awareness and to create a new conservation ethos among the people of Vietnam.

The National Conservation Strategy outlines the principles and means by which this environmental consciousness can be achieved. The main recommendations for priority action include bringing the population growth rate down to zero as soon as possible, launching a massive reforestation programme by planting millions of trees to restore the hydrological balance of the land, establishing a National Board of Environmental Coordination at the ministerial level with wide cross-sectoral powers to formulate and enforce new environmental legislation and regulations.

The National Conservation Strategy for Vietnam is not a fringe or luxury document. It is, in fact, a strategy for national survival. It attempts to demonstrate how to obtain the greatest lasting benefits from the nation's renewable and non-renewable natural resources.

In the case of renewable resources — soil, water, forests, or living species — the emphasis is placed on achieving maximum sustainable yields that do not deplete the resource base in question. These yields are limits which cannot be exceeded without causing damage to the resource base and reducing future productivity. Yields cannot be indefinitely increased to meet increasing demands. Rather, demands must be stabilised at those maximal limits by stabilising human population growth.

As is evident, the environmental problems are too great for the Government to tackle alone, and to enforce any solutions. This endeavour requires the fullest cooperation of the people who should be made to realise the importance of restoring and maintaining the environment. To this end, a major promotion of environmental awareness should be undertaken



U.S. planes sprayed thousands of acres with herbicides during war.

by means of all available media — press, radio, television, propaganda machinery, school programmes, training courses, people's movements, societies, etc. This is a long-term task and the National Conservation Strategy has been designed in such a way that it can be regularly reviewed, revised, maintained, and followed up by appropriate implementation.

Some areas covered by the National Conservation Strategy relate to international issues which require the increased involvement of Vietnam in international programmes — in particular the management of many of the transfrontier resources, such as the major rivers which originate outside the country's boundaries. Conservation is a worldwide problem which cannot be tackled in isolation. The National Conservation Strategy outlines ways in which Vietnam can increase its involvement at the international level.

The National Conservation Strategy is an alarmist document, and rightly so, but it is not pessimistic. The grave environmental problems *can* be solved. The resource base *can* be recovered, and the Vietnamese people do have the energy, discipline, and resourcefulness to overcome these problems just as they have successfully faced the task of liberation and reunification.

## International implications

Conservation of renewable natural resources should not be conducted by countries in isolation. Conservation is a global imperative. The distribution of natural resources crosses international frontiers so that responsibilities for their management are shared. Even when an endemic resource is entirely confined to one nation, that country holds a global as well as a national responsibility for its protection.

In some cases, one country may be responsible for the protection of a wild species from

which it gains little benefit but upon which another country may be heavily dependent. Thus, Brazil contains the wild stocks and close relatives of the rubber tree *Hevea*, but has virtually little rubber industry itself. Even so, conservation of these wild species is vital to the economy of Malaysia and, to a lesser extent, Vietnam. For these reasons, several international agencies have been established with worldwide operations to help conserve natural resources and assist in environmental planning. They must also seek ways to get those countries that use and depend on the natural resources of the developing countries to contribute to the cost of conserving those species in the wild. In the case of Vietnam, there are eight areas in which international implications must be kept in mind. These are:

### Management and utilisation of migrant species

Vietnam is the winter home of many northern bird species including species of potential food or trade value, such as ducks, waders, rails, storks, cranes, and ibises. Management of such populations should be coordinated with the countries in which such species breed, for instance, to determine species status or for research through banding, etc. The International Convention on Migratory Species is a useful forum for coordinating such cooperation.

### Management of shared transfrontier resources

International cooperation is needed for effective management of shared transfrontier resources, such as mutually vital protected forests or individual species. For instance, the whole world population of Kouprey *Bos sauveli* [a type of ox] is distributed along the borderlands between Thailand, Kampuchea, Laos, and Vietnam. Only an international effort can manage such a species including the

establishment of transfrontier reserves and cooperation in catching poachers who dodge back and forth across national boundaries.

### Management of resources of international concern

In cases where Vietnam is fulfilling an international responsibility by protecting resources of worldwide concern, such as qualitatively or quantitatively unique species or features or combinations of both, it can considerably benefit through the use of international programmes such as the "World Heritage Convention" of UNEP and the Man and Biosphere (MAB) programme of UNESCO.

### Management of transfrontier watersheds

Most of Vietnam's rivers extend well beyond its national frontiers. Extensive deforestation of these upstream catchments has direct adverse consequences on Vietnam's agricultural programme. Vietnam must get the cooperation of other countries to agree on common land-use policy and water management (e.g. pollution control, diversion, or flow checks) and should assist such countries to achieve more rational use of these vital catchments. The Mixed Commission for the Mekong Project, of which Vietnam is a member, is a good example of this type of cooperation.

### Control and organisation of international trade

Considerable benefits can be achieved by entering into international agreements to control trade in natural resources. For instance, one of the most effective means to stop illegal trade is through participation in CITES. Vietnam should also establish bilateral agreements with its immediate neighbours and possibly with ASEAN who are developing their own trade agreement. In addition, a common marketing policy is vital if countries selling the same products to a monopoly buyer are not to be played off against each other in a price undercutting game.

### Participation in international cooperative efforts

Vietnam could benefit through greater participation in international cooperative efforts, such as the UN Decade of Drinking Water and IUCN's programmes to save "Marine Resources," "Tropical Rainforests," "Endangered Plants," "International Wetlands," and UNEP's "Regional Seas Programme."

### Access to foreign aid and technical assistance

As a developing country with a low per capita income, Vietnam is entitled to considerable international aid and development assistance. Primary sources of aid which could be channeled into the environmental sectors include: several UN agencies, such as FAO,

UNEP, UNESCO, ESCAP, UNICEF, and WHO; direct assistance from friendly socialist countries (USSR, GDR, and others); bilateral assistance from other friendly countries (Sweden, Netherlands, Norway, etc.); loans from international development banks (World Bank, Asian Development Bank); assistance from international aid organisations (WWF, IUCN, Earthscan, IEED, International Red Cross, USAID, OXFAM, etc.); and exchange and technical cooperation with other develop-

ing countries (India, Cuba, Burma, etc.).

Some countries which may not wish to enter into direct bilateral assistance arrangements with Vietnam may be willing to channel funds through international organisations. The Conservation for Development Centre (CDC) of IUCN is an agency which regularly fulfils this intermediary role. Assistance can take many forms — funds, equipment, training, technical assistance, information, or loans. Vietnam

should try to make more use of these possibilities.

#### Preservation of cultural heritage

International assistance and concern could be mobilised to help in the preservation of Vietnam's rich cultural heritage, both living (art, dance, folklore, language, tradition) and dead (archaeology, historical monuments). The various programmes of UNESCO are particularly relevant in this context. □

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## Nicaragua

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# 'Contra' war endangers environment

## *Undermines conservation programs initiated by Sandinistas*

[The following article is reprinted from the May 29 issue of the English-language *Baricada Internacional*, published weekly in Managua.]

\* \* \*

When Lorenzo Cardenal says the war is the principal cause of the deterioration of ecosystems in Nicaragua, the facts backing his argument leave no room for doubt. Over the last few years, the counterrevolution has burned 400,000 acres of forest, killed 30 forestry workers, destroyed the buildings in a national park, and, on that same occasion, kidnapped the administrator and two park rangers.

Cardenal is the director of National Parks, a branch of the Natural Resources and Environmental Institute (IRENA). This institution functions as a government ministry and was created in September 1979 to administrate the rational use of the country's resources, badly damaged by reckless exploitation during the Somoza regime.

Since then, IRENA has implemented a series of programs aimed at conserving native flora and fauna and protecting the environment.

One of the most important projects has been the reduction of use of chemical pesticides in the cultivation of cotton by introducing natural methods of pest control. In coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, pest predators have been introduced along with cordons of forests to provide a natural habitat for them, and mixing of crops and crop rotation have been increased. In addition to the benefits these methods have brought to the ecosystem, they have saved the country some US\$2 million a year in the importation of pesticides.

Land reform has also had a substantial impact on the environment. During the Somoza regime, large estate owners forced the poorest *campesinos* off their lands and out to the agricultural frontiers, to the detriment of woodlands. An equitable distribution of arable land through agrarian reform has helped hold back deforestation and has been much more effective

than any law could have been. The importance of this achievement can be understood when one remembers that Nicaragua has the largest expanse of tropical rainforests in Central America and the fourth-largest in the world, north of the Amazon.

In recent years, two national parks and a wildlife conservation area have been created. One park, aimed at preserving the jungle on the Atlantic seaboard near Costa Rica, has been closed since a 1983 counterrevolutionary attack. The other, on Zapatera Island in Lake Nicaragua, was created to protect important archaeological finds, as well as the habitat of native birds and aquatic species.

On the southern Pacific Coast, a reserve has been established for an endangered species — the sea turtle. Between 50,000 and 60,000 female turtles come to these beaches each year to lay their eggs, which have historically been eaten as an alternative protein source by the people of the area. Turtle eggs have become a delicacy throughout the country. The indiscriminate exploitation of this animal forced IRENA to create a conservation area to enable the species to reproduce naturally.

Other programs the institute carries out are the prevention of flooding in the capital by reforestation in the surrounding hills and a project involving the purification of the residual water from the Momotombo geothermal energy plant. However, the war takes its toll on these plans.

The ecological repercussions of U.S. intervention are not limited to Nicaragua, but are found throughout the isthmus. The counterinsurgency strategy carried out by the Salvadoran and Guatemalan armed forces have included the use of chemical and biological weapons in areas where the guerrillas operate. In Honduras, the U.S. Army has introduced dangerous, communicable diseases such as AIDS and new strains of venereal diseases. Furthermore, the installation of U.S. military infrastructure has meant the destruction of thousands of acres of woodlands.

As the war in Nicaragua has affected areas

where the greatest reserves of natural resources are located, the exploitation of these resources on the Pacific seaboard has increased. The situation has been further aggravated by the migration of the population to areas that afford more security: some 200,000 people have migrated in this manner in recent years.

The enormous resources consumed by the war effort leave precious little to be devoted to other necessities, and conservation of the environment is not high in the priorities. More than 40 percent of the national budget is allocated to defense-related activities, and the bulk of what is left is distributed between health and education.

"But all this is nothing compared to the effects a direct intervention by the United States would have on our country, not to mention the extension of the conflict to the rest of Central America," declared Cardenal.

Much can be learned by studying the ecocide caused by the war in Vietnam. There, U.S. planes dumped 100,000 tons of napalm and nearly 19,000 gallons of Agent Orange defoliant: nearly half of Vietnam's national territory was damaged. Furthermore, over a million acres of forest were destroyed for building military infrastructure; by the end of the war, Vietnam was riddled with 25 million bomb craters.

With this in mind, California's Environmental Project on Central America (EPOCA), working with Central American scientists, encourages field studies to evaluate the environmental impact of militarization in the region.

The first drafts of studies drawn up on El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua all concluded that war is the principal environmental problem in Central America.

"One of the major tasks facing Central American ecologists," declared Cardenal, "is to publicize the damage caused by U.S. intervention and raise the consciousness of the international conservationist movement about the serious threat to the ecosystem posed by military escalation." □

## STATEMENT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

# Shut down all nukes!

## Nuclear power plants can't be made safe today

[The following statement was adopted unanimously by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on June 14.]

\* \* \*

The Fourth International calls on all working-class, ecological/environmental, and farmers' organizations to intensify and generalize a campaign for an immediate moratorium on the building of new nuclear power stations and for the closure of all existing nuclear power stations. All appropriate methods of mass struggle, including those such as mass demonstrations, mass petitions, and referenda, should be used for that purpose, depending on the political and social conditions of each country.

The consequences of the Chernobyl accident only confirm the lessons of the previous Three Mile Island accident in the United States and similar accidents in Britain, France, Germany, and elsewhere, and the warnings of many honest scientists and trade unionists in the power

industry.

There are *no safe nuclear power stations, and they cannot be made safe today*. Maintaining them in operation under conditions where *nobody knows* what accidents are possible and what would be the consequences is irresponsibly running the risk of incalculable disasters to current and future generations which will stop at no frontiers.

This threat is too great to leave the life-and-death decision on the existence of nuclear power stations simply in the hands of "experts" or government departments. The peoples must have the right to vote on their closure, whatever the specific form this takes in each country (referenda, general elections, special elections, etc.).

Immediate moratorium on construction of new nuclear power stations!

Close all existing stations!

Radiation knows no borders!

No nukes!

## West German nuclear leak spurs protests

Fifty angry West German farmers used their tractors and harvesters to block the gates of a nuclear power plant in the Ruhr Valley town of Hamm on June 2. They were protesting the planned reopening of the reactor despite a major radiation leak that happened on May 4.

The farmers and many other Germans were outraged that the accident at the Hamm experimental reactor had been covered up for weeks. The company that operates the unit claimed increased radiation in the area was due to the accident at Chernobyl in the Soviet Union 10 days earlier. But independent studies have since shown that only about 30 percent of the rise in radiation levels was attributable to Chernobyl, while the rest had its source in Hamm.

The farmers, who lost crops and livestock affected by the radiation, accused the plant's operator of lying and the state government of ignoring the potential hazards of the facility. Although it now admits a major leak took place on May 4, the company refused to shut down operations until May 30, claiming nothing out of the ordinary had happened.

The day after the farmers' protest and another demonstration at a local town council meeting, the North Rhine-Westphalia state government ordered the plant to remain shut down.

The federal government in Bonn is also feeling the pressure from the rise of antinuclear

protest around the country in recent months. On June 3 Chancellor Helmut Kohl announced the creation of a new ministry for the protection of the environment and nuclear safety.

Opinion polls indicate a "dramatic swing" in the public attitude away from support for nuclear power. Even the right-wing Free Democratic Party, the junior partner in Kohl's government, voted to review its official position supporting increased reliance on nuclear generation of electricity.

Antinuclear demonstrations of tens of thousands have been organized on several occasions in recent months in West Germany. The government has met most of these actions with massive force. At a March 31 protest on the site of a nuclear processing plant in Wackersdorf, Bavaria, 3,000 cops, 40 water-cannon trucks, and some 300 other vehicles were mobilized against 100,000 protesters.

On June 7 three demonstrations — at Hamm, Wackersdorf, and Brokdorf, near Hamburg — drew a total of about 65,000 people. At Brokdorf, where a power plant is scheduled to go on line soon, a ring of police roadblocks forced demonstrators to walk across country for as much as two or three hours to reach the protest site. More than 6,000 national police, equipped with water cannon and helicopters, were deployed against the demonstrators. Nevertheless some 40,000 were able to join the action. □

## Polish police arrest Solidarity activist

After searching for him for four and a half years, Polish security police captured union leader Zbigniew Bujak in late May. Bujak was the most prominent member of the former Solidarity union movement still carrying out clandestine union activities.

Several days later, Polish authorities announced that he would be tried by a military court on charges of plotting to overthrow the government. Government spokesperson Jerzy Urban claimed that Bujak had links with "foreign subversive centers," which he did not name.

The real reason for the Polish government's hostility to Bujak was his advocacy of workers' rights. When Solidarity was first formed out of the August 1980 Gdansk shipyard strike, Bujak emerged as a leader of the union in the giant Ursus tractor factory in Warsaw, and soon became head of the union's Warsaw region.

Following the imposition of martial law in December 1981, Bujak was among the highest-ranking union leaders to evade arrest. With other Solidarity activists, he formed the clandestine Provisional Coordinating Committee (TKK) to help direct resistance to the military crackdown. Despite an intensive, nationwide hunt for him, Bujak managed to elude the security police, while issuing statements and interviews and helping organize protest activities.

Following his capture, Solidarity supporters in several cities rallied in his support. A protest of 1,500 in Krakow chanted, "There is no freedom without Solidarity or Bujak!" In Gdansk, former Solidarity chairman Lech Walesa praised Bujak before a crowd of several thousand. "Lacking any success, the authorities look upon this capture as an achievement," Walesa said. □

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# Meatpackers in Alberta on strike

*Win support from unions, farmers, New Democratic Party*

[The following article is based on reports from Edmonton and Red Deer, Alberta, written by Paul Kouri, Mary-Ellen Marus, and Jim Upton for *Socialist Voice*, a fortnightly newspaper published in Montreal that reflects the views of the Revolutionary Workers League of Canada.]

\* \* \*

Meatpackers in the western Canadian province of Alberta scored a victory June 19 in one of two strikes that had shut down the province's two slaughterhouses since June 1.

Amidst cheers and chants of "We're Number One," more than 400 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) at Fletcher's Fine Foods in Red Deer ended a militant 18-day strike on terms that marked a resounding victory for the union.

A strike against Gainers, the other giant meatpacking plant in the province, continues as owner Peter Pocklington, a multimillionaire who plays a leading role in Canada's Conservative Party and owns the Edmonton Oilers professional ice hockey team, vows never to sign another contract with the United Food and Commercial Workers.

More than 1,000 workers at Gainers in Edmonton have been on strike since June 1.

The United Food and Commercial Workers is the same international union to which strikers at the Hormel company in Austin, Minnesota, belong. The Hormel workers have been locked in a bitter strike since August 1985.

### Strong solidarity

The strike at the Alberta meatpacking plants, which together butcher more than 8,000 hogs each day, gained strong solidarity throughout the labor movement in the province.

At a rally of 10,000 people at the Alberta Legislature on June 12, Canadian Labor Congress President Shirley Carr likened the Gainers strike to the general strike that rocked Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1919.

"In that most famous of Canadian strikes," said Carr, "the forces of the employer, the police, and the courts were used to crush the Winnipeg workers' fight for economic and social justice."

Carr vowed "the labor movement will not let Pocklington starve his employees into submission, nor let the police beat our people into

submission." This pledge was met with cheers from the crowd of construction workers, food workers, nurses, teachers, and others.

"Keep up the fight," Carr urged the strikers. "You have the union movement across this land with you."

The rally, the largest labor protest in Alberta since the 1930s, also heard John Oberg express the support of the National Farmers Union, representing thousands of working farmers. "We have a major mandate to take the message to the country that workers and farmers are in the same boat, that we had better work together and support each other," Oberg stated.

A prolonged and thunderous roar of "NDP! NDP! NDP!" greeted Ray Martin, leader of the Alberta New Democratic Party, Canada's union-based labor party. Martin's vow that the NDP will introduce a bill to make it illegal to cross a picket line during a legal strike was met with chants of "no more scabs" and "NDP!"

In last May's provincial elections, the NDP increased its representation in the legislature from two seats to 16.

The support for the striking meatpackers as well as the growing support for the NDP reflect a response to escalating employer attacks on construction workers, public-sector workers,



Striking meatpackers attempt to prevent scabs from entering Gainers plant in Edmonton.

oil workers, and others as Alberta's economy has gone from boom to bust due to the decline in prices for oil and farm products.

Alberta Federation of Labor President David Werlin told the rally, "People have been watching the television day after day, trying to find the difference between Chile, South Africa, and Edmonton," referring to the violence used by the cops and riot squads against the Gainers strikers.

Since the strike began, hundreds of Gainers workers and their supporters have mobilized at the plant gates to prevent specially fortified buses from carrying scabs through the picket lines and into the plant.

The workers have defied court injunctions limiting pickets to 12 per gate and have resisted efforts by hundreds of police, including the Edmonton riot squad and the SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) team to break through the picket lines and escort the scabs into the plant.

At the conclusion of the June 19 meeting at which Fletcher's workers voted to endorse their new contract, union local President Albert Johnson told the membership, "We won the battle here. Now we have to do everything we can to help the workers up at Gainers."

Under the contract accepted by Fletcher's workers, the starting pay increased from \$7.50 per hour to \$9.38 (one Canadian dollar equals US\$0.72). Fletcher's agreed to restore benefits it took away from workers in the last contract and to grant further pay increases every six months.

The company will also drop lawsuits against

the union for profits lost during the strike.

The 24-year-old president of the UFCW local at Fletcher's told *Socialist Voice* that Fletcher's "had an easy time for three years on the backs of the workers. In the 1984 negotiations they just took and took and took with no resistance because we weren't able to put up a fight."

During this year's strike, however, hundreds of local members walked picket lines in an effort to keep scabs from entering the plant. Three UFCW pickets at Fletcher's were seriously injured and 127 were arrested.

The local members were joined on picket lines by nurses, public-sector workers, other UFCW members, and members of the New Democratic Party.

The union was also able to win considerable sympathy and support from hog farmers. With the only two meatpacking plants in Alberta shut down by strikes, farmers had the choice of trying to take their hogs across the picket lines or shipping them out of the province at a higher cost to themselves.

Some hog farmers, generally the bigger and better-off ones, scabbed or sent their hired hands to scab on the meatpackers' strikes.

About a week after the Fletcher's strike began, however, the union was able after persistent efforts to set up a booth at the annual congress of the provincial pork producers' association, where they distributed material about the strike.

According to Johnson, the strikers "had the busiest booth by far. We talked ourselves hoarse to farmers who wanted information on

the strike. Even those who came in ranting, raving, and cursing us the first time mostly came back later and talked to us in a different frame of mind."

According to Johnson, "We were able to make our point with them. Our impression is that they started to put pressure on the company to settle."

In winning their strike, the Fletcher's workers reversed a series of union defeats at the plant going back to 1983.

That year the company demanded reopening of the contract, which had another year to run. It got the local union leaders to approve wage cuts of \$3 an hour for newly hired workers. Once the contract was rewritten, most of the union officials took management jobs with the company.

Fletcher's also tried unsuccessfully to decertify the union. Although this failed, the union entered negotiations for a new contract in 1984 in a weak and divided position. The company was able to lower starting pay from \$8.09 to \$7.50 per hour. It wiped out all benefits to workers with less than five years in the plant and took away half the benefits of workers with less than 10 years' seniority.

But since the takebacks began, the work force in the plant has more than tripled, and many new workers stepped forward to get involved in the union. A newer, younger, and more militant leadership was elected.

When Fletcher's tried to take a hard line in this year's bargaining, it faced a stronger, more united membership that succeeded in defeating the company on the picket line. □

# Newfoundland strike was landmark

## *Public workers fought to win, prepare for next round*

**By Bob Braxton**

[The author spent three weeks in Newfoundland during the public employees' strike as a reporter for *Socialist Voice* and *Lutte Ouvrière*. Both publications appear fortnightly in Montreal and reflect the views of the Revolutionary Workers League, the Canadian section of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

MONTREAL — The 35-day "illegal" strike this spring by 5,500 members of the Newfoundland Association of Public Employees (NAPE) was the most important labor battle in Canada since major public-worker struggles in Quebec and British Columbia in 1982 and 1983.

Despite court injunctions, 126 arrests on the picket lines, threats of 30-day suspensions for all strikers, and a massive government propaganda campaign, the workers refused to budge on their demands for pay parity with other government workers and for the abolition of Bill 59, which severely limits Newfoundland public-sector workers' right to strike.

Their determined attitude won the NAPE workers massive popular and union support in Newfoundland.<sup>1</sup> They also began to attract significant backing across Canada, as unionists solidarized with a militant fightback against the same kind of concession demands and government strikebreaking measures they are facing.

The strike ended April 6 when — under the threat of a general strike by all workers in the province — the Newfoundland Conservative government of Brian Peckford promised, in writing, pay parity and amendments to Bill 59.

Once the workers returned to work, however, the government reneged on its promises. Faced with what one union official described as government "lies and cheating" and a total breakdown in negotiations, NAPE is threaten-

ing to resume the strike September 2.

The strike began March 3 when 1,200 workers in highway-maintenance and snow-clearing crews walked off the job. They were joined March 7 by 800 building maintenance and security personnel. One week later, the stakes escalated once again when 3,500 administrative and clerical workers walked off the job.

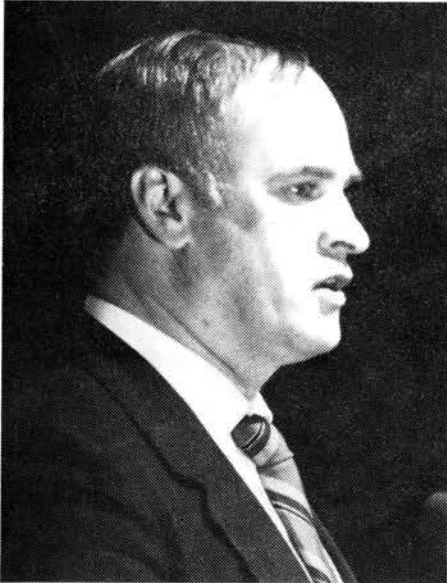
Workers in Newfoundland are afflicted with 35 percent unemployment, the lowest incomes in Canada (69 percent of the Canadian average in 1976), and the highest cost of living.

Wages of provincial government employees are low even by Newfoundland's standards. Those on strike averaged only \$14,000 per year, or about \$7 per hour [one Canadian dollar equals US\$0.72]. One striking worker, for instance, after 17 years employment on the roads was receiving only \$13,800 per year. The sole support for a family of four, his salary falls \$6,000 below the official poverty line — barely enough for food and rent.

To make matters worse, the striking workers averaged some \$3,500 per year less than employees doing exactly comparable jobs in other

1. Newfoundland and Labrador became Canada's tenth province in 1949. The vast majority of its population of 579,000 live on the island of Newfoundland. The remainder (31,000) live in Labrador on the mainland. The province's capital and largest city is St. John's, with a population of 155,000.





Bob Braxton/Socialist Voice

### FRASER MARCH

NAPE bargaining units.

This injustice lay at the very heart of the struggle. For 35 days the province resounded with the main chant of the strikers: "What do we want? Parity! When do we want it? Now!"

Maintenance and general service workers started to fall behind when the Peckford government imposed insignificant salary increases in 1982. In 1984 the government decreed a two-year wage freeze. When they went on strike in March, the workers had been without a contract for two years.

To make sure the workers could never catch up, in 1983 the government adopted Bill 59. The bill allows the provincial government to designate up to 49 percent of the members of any public sector bargaining unit as "essential" employees with no right to strike. For example, under Bill 59, 800 of the 2,000 government maintenance workers were declared to be "essential," including nearly all of the highway snow-clearing vehicle operators.

According to Bill 59, strike votes cannot be taken until the union accepts essential employee designations. Although government and unions are allowed to negotiate over which employees are to be considered essential, disagreements are to be resolved by another government body, the province's labor relations board.

NAPE, the largest public workers' union in the province, with some 15,000 members, refused from the beginning to accept Bill 59. The unionists argued that the legislation gives their employer — the government — an "unfair advantage" in dealing with its employees, making it almost impossible to wage an effective strike. Bill 59 is "designed to destroy this union and destroy free collective bargaining," asserted NAPE President Fraser March.

NAPE is challenging the bill before the courts on the basis of the Canadian Charter of Rights. In November 1985 the International Labor Organization found that Bill 59 violates an international convention signed by Canada

in 1948.

NAPE went on strike without abiding by the provisions of the bill. Unions have a "responsibility" to "break the law" in defense of fundamental rights, March argued, even if such action constitutes a "social revolution."

### Government repression

Confronted with such overt defiance of its laws, the Peckford government tried everything it could to intimidate the strikers and turn the public against them. In the very first hours of the strike, injunctions were served against participants in the "illegal" work stoppage and picketing. When the union defied the injunctions, the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary was called on to search NAPE's offices and confiscate minutes of meetings, notes, and press releases. Tapes, notes, and articles concerning the union were seized from various news media in the capital city, St. John's.

On March 12 the government ordered the constabulary to arrest striking workers at the main entrance to the Newfoundland legislature and government buildings. In the next four days, there were 126 arrests for peaceful picketing. Those arrested included March (twice),

National Union of Provincial Government Employees (NUPGE) President John Fryer, Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labor (NLFL) President Bill Parsons, and Newfoundland New Democratic Party (NDP) Leader Peter Fenwick.

Two NAPE officials were jailed for seven days when they refused to accept court restrictions in exchange for their release. The government announced that all striking workers faced stiff fines and even imprisonment for walking picket lines, and that strikers would be handed automatic 30-day unpaid suspensions once they returned to work.

But this repression did not work. On the contrary, it stiffened NAPE members' resolve to fight this battle until victory. One week after the arrests began, 3,500 clerical workers joined the picket lines.

Despite bitter cold, icy winds, and freezing rain, picket lines were determined and high-spirited. The first days of the clerical workers' strike were like a festival as thousands of workers — half of them women and most without previous strike experience — got a taste of the freedom that comes from struggle. At Atlantic Place in the center of St. John's, strikers

## Good response to socialist press

Seeing a newspaper like *Socialist Voice* was a totally new experience for most Newfoundlanders.

"My God! There hasn't been a left group selling papers here in at least five years!" That was the reaction of one longtime political activist in St. John's on seeing the *Voice*.

I was somewhat apprehensive about the reaction I would get to a socialist newspaper featuring stories on Nicaragua and South Africa. I quickly discovered these worries were unwarranted.

NAPE strikers and other Newfoundland workers were impressed that someone had come all the way from Montreal to cover the strike. They were open to socialist ideas (many confided that they were newly converted partisans of the NDP) and more than eager to shell out 50 cents (and often more) to read a socialist newspaper that supported their strike.

Nor are Newfoundland workers cut off from what is happening in the world. The week I arrived was a week of solidarity with South Africa, featuring union vigils and a tour of the island by a member of the African National Congress.

During my second week there, two Newfoundland fishermen returned from an East Coast fishermen's brigade to Nicaragua. They gave interviews praising the Sandinista government's attempts to develop the economy and denouncing U.S. President Ronald Reagan and the *contras*. During the first strike rally I attended, strikers'

placards promised the Peckford government the same fate the Philippine and Haitian people had recently meted out to "their" dictators.

During my first few days in Newfoundland, I had to carefully ration the 60 *Voices* I had brought with me so they wouldn't all disappear at once. Then 150 more copies were flown in, and I sold 75 during my first day of serious sales on St. John's picket lines.

A second bundle containing another 250 papers was hurriedly sent, just in time for the March 27 rally in St. John's, where I sold all 70 papers I had with me in just 45 minutes. Yet a third bundle arrived some days later.

In a trip to Corner Brook on the other side of the island, I sold 10 to 15 papers — in the pouring rain — to workers entering the plant gates at the giant Kruger pulp and paper mill. That night, I sold 40 papers to teachers registering for the annual convention of the Newfoundland Teachers Association.

In total, I sold 261 single copies of the paper and distributed 175 complimentary copies, mainly to NAPE strikers and other unionists. In addition, unionists, activists in the women's movement, solidarity militants, and students purchased 18 subscriptions to the *Voice* (including two received in the mail after my return), 6 copies of *New International*, 4 of *Intercontinental Press*, and 4 *Militants*.

— Bob Braxton

danced in the streets. Confederation Building, home of the provincial legislature, was surrounded daily by mass picket lines at every gate. With some 90 to 95 percent of union members on strike, government services rapidly ground to a halt.

The sight of more than 5,000 low-paid workers fighting for their rights in defiance of arrests, the courts, cops, government — and the weather — brought forth an unprecedented wave of solidarity from the people of Newfoundland.

Around St. John's, honking was heard continuously, as drivers of cars, buses, and trucks voiced their support at over 40 NAPE picket lines. Students and unemployed workers joined picket lines; small businessmen offered strikers free donuts, coffee, and beer and gave them special discounts.

### Massive labor solidarity

NAPE's strongest support came from unionists in Newfoundland and across Canada. Many saw the NAPE battle as part of a larger, cross-country confrontation between government and public workers and their unions.

Through the 1960s and 1970s, Canadian public employees waged big battles to form unions, improve wages and working conditions, and win the right to strike. Their successes played an important part in boosting the portion of unionized workers in Canada from 30 percent of the work force in 1960 to 38.2 percent in 1979. Wages rose, and health, education, and other services improved.

With the beginning of the last economic recession in 1980, private-sector employers took advantage of double-digit unemployment and plant closings to force the workers to give up contractual gains that they had previously

won. And they insisted that the big-business political parties in government deal out the same medicine and rein in militant government workers and unions.

The federal government took the lead in 1982 by imposing wage controls on its employees and sharply cutting its subsidies to provincial governments for health, education, and other social-service expenditures. In 1982 and 1983, the Quebec and British Columbia governments announced massive cutbacks in social spending, wage freezes and cuts for public employees, and harsh restrictions on their unions' right to strike.

These attacks led to the two biggest recent labor confrontations in Canada prior to the NAPE strike: the 1983 battles by Quebec's "Common Front" and by "Operation Solidarity" in British Columbia. Despite union defiance of antistrike legislation in Quebec and a massive months-long struggle in British Columbia, the workers went down to defeat.<sup>2</sup>

These were major defeats. Governments had taken on militant public workers in two of Canada's most highly unionized provinces and won. As a result, other provincial governments began to impose similar measures. The leadership of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), for its part, retreated further into class-collaborationist schemes such as supporting tariffs on imports in order to help Canadian employers be more competitive.

Federal government cutbacks had a particularly devastating effect on Newfoundland, already Canada's poorest province. Federal government subsidies of various sorts account for over half the provincial budget. Moreover, the province's traditional industries — fishing, pulp and paper, and mining — were mired in a deep recession.

But by introducing Bill 59, imposing wage freezes, and now confronting the NAPE, the Peckford government has clashed head-on with one of the most dynamic and militant labor movements in the country.

### Unions build their strength

Hard-fought public- and private-sector strikes and the province's first-ever teachers' strike led to the defeat of the antiunion Liberal Party government of Joey Smallwood in 1971. And they helped win the right to strike for government employees in 1973. NAPE's transformation from a quasi-professional association to a militant union began during this period.

The 1970s and early 1980s were also marked by successful battles for union recognition and decent income and working conditions in the province's largest industry — fishing. Beginning with the Burgos strike in 1971, major confrontations in the industry led to the formation of what is today the province's largest union, the 20,000-member Fishermen's Union, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1252.

The Fishermen's Union unites the vast

majority of the province's 14,000 full-time independent fishermen, up to 10,000 processing plant workers, and 2,000 trawlermen (wage workers on offshore fishing boats, or trawlers). The union has played a decisive role in beginning to overcome historic divisions between city and outport (small fishing towns), between workers and small commodity producers. (There are only about 450 commercial farmers in Newfoundland.)

As a result of these battles, the province's unionization rate now stands at 43 percent, the highest in Canada.

In 1984 Newfoundland unions staged a dress rehearsal for the NAPE strike when 850 telephone workers and 800 trawlermen struck their respective employers. The central demand of the telephone workers was wage parity, that is, parity with phone workers in the neighboring Maritime provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island) and parity for the mostly female operators with unionized male workers.

A vast solidarity movement developed in support of the strikers, particularly the telephone workers. All the major unions in the province banded together with women's organizations and others to form the Coalition for Equality. After striking for more than eight months, both telephone workers and trawlermen won substantial gains.

In reaction to the antilabor stands of the province's big-business parties, the Conservatives and Liberals, more and more Newfoundland workers began to turn toward the New Democratic Party (NDP), Canada's labor party.

In December 1984 the Fishermen's Union formally affiliated to the NDP. In the provincial elections of early 1985, hundreds of unionists, fishermen, Coalition for Equality activists, and others actively participated in the NDP campaign, which included many workers and fishermen as candidates. Over 40,000 people voted NDP, the vast majority for the first time in their lives, and the NDP's percentage of the popular vote quadrupled from 3.9 to 14.5 percent.

When the NAPE strike erupted, it catalyzed the solidarity and militancy in the Newfoundland labor movement and struck a chord for unionists across Canada. Public workers were taking a militant stand, defying antiunion legislation, and building overwhelming popular support. NAPE could win! When the Peckford government arrested scores of union leaders and members, a mass labor solidarity movement began to develop.

### Daily support rallies

In St. John's, up to 1,500 strikers were joined in daily mass rallies inside the lobby of Confederation Building by nonstriking NAPE members and other unionists, as well as students and the unemployed.

When clerical workers went on strike in the province's second-largest city, Corner Brook (population 30,000), 1,500 workers demonstrated their support. For over an hour, pulp and paper workers, construction, telephone,



Bob Braxton/Socialist Voice

Picket in St. John's.

2. See "Canada: Deepening worker resistance," by Steve Penner, in *Intercontinental Press*, March 5, 1984.



and hospital workers, and other NAPE members surrounded the Sir Richard Squires Building where many provincial government services are located.

In a number of areas, there were spontaneous wildcat strikes as workers walked off the job in support.

The CLC and dozens of unions representing public and private employees, including the United Auto Workers — Canada, the Steelworkers, and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers, sent telegrams of support to NAPE, denouncing Bill 59 and the arrests of unionists and defending public workers' right to strike. NUPGE President Fryer justified defiance of unjust laws like Bill 59 in defense of union rights. He walked the NAPE picket line and was arrested March 17.

"A state of siege has now enveloped the entire province," NLFL President Parsons told reporters March 21 as the strike ended its third week with no government concessions. The next day the NLFL held an emergency meeting to step up solidarity actions. Sixty delegates attended, representing at least 80,000 unionized workers. The federation established a solidarity fund and began holding support rallies across the province.

The first rally was held March 26 in St. John's. Over 1,500 cheering, chanting people, from every major union in the city, defended NAPE's defiance of Bill 59. Fishermen's Union President Richard Cashin pointed out that twice before Newfoundland governments had passed laws in order to break strikes and smash unions.

In 1959 the Smallwood government broke a militant strike of some 12,000 loggers by launching an all-out police assault on the strikers and decertifying their union, the International Woodworkers of America. This defeat set back the labor movement in the province at

least a decade. In 1966-67, Smallwood introduced legislation to break a hospital workers' strike. In both cases, the strikebreaking laws were eventually repealed, but not until after the strikes had been broken.

"Never again," promised Cashin, "will we allow the legislature, with the stroke of a pen, to take away the basic rights of us Newfoundlanders."

Nancy Riche, secretary-treasurer of NUPGE and an executive member of the CLC, pledged that the strike would be helped "financially, morally, and every way it can be from here to British Columbia. . . . The workers across the country will not allow the government of Newfoundland and Labrador to starve you off the picket line." She announced that NUPGE was donating \$1.5 million to the strike and that the CLC was sending out a request for financial support to all its affiliates.

Cashin and March declared that if necessary Newfoundland workers would launch a general strike on behalf of the NAPE strikers.

"If the government doesn't come to the bargaining table and be reasonable and negotiate like fair-minded people," said March, "then the day will come in this province when not a wheel will turn, not one school will teach, and not one hospital will serve." If we "don't have the right to exist," then "we must bring down the Peckford government."

A second rally was held April 2 in Labrador City, a mining community of approximately 4,000 people. Five hundred workers jammed the meeting hall to show their support, the overwhelming majority of them Steelworkers who work in nearby iron ore mines.

The Ontario Provincial Service Employees Union announced it was donating \$250,000 to NAPE; the 9,000-member Newfoundland Teachers Association pledged \$600,000.

The combination of the determination of the

strikers, broad public support, the development of a mass labor solidarity movement in the province and across the country, and the very real threat of a provincewide general strike finally forced the government's hand.

On April 2 Peckford announced he was acceding to the union's demands. On April 6 a back-to-work agreement was signed promising wage parity and no reprisals against strikers, along with a "Memorandum of Understanding" declaring the government's acceptance of the right to strike. On April 7 strikers returned to work for 96 hours or as long as fruitful negotiations continued toward a satisfactory collective agreement.

#### Government breaks promises

But as soon as the strikers took down their picket lines, government negotiators began to renege on the agreement. Wage parity was offered, but only beginning in 1979. Other issues still outstanding in the dispute include the 2,000, 30-day suspensions, Bill 59, and the criminal charges against those arrested on the picket line. The government launched another massive advertising campaign to undermine support for NAPE.

The union leadership decided against re-launching the strike immediately, arguing that a summer strike would be ineffective and would lose public support. But on May 14 March stated that the strike would resume September 2 if no satisfactory agreement is worked out over the summer.

Even though the government was able to break the momentum gained by the strike, NAPE members remain adamant in their demands for parity and a decent contract. Peckford's betrayal has taught them another valuable lesson: gains are won through masses of workers taking to the streets, not through the promises of sweet-talking capitalist politicians.

Though many union leaders and members now believe it was an error to go back to work without a contract, they are convinced their struggle can still be won. Militants are pushing for an even broader shutdown in the fall, one that will bring even more public workers out on strike.

The 1986 NAPE strike is already a landmark for labor in Canada. It provides concrete proof that with determination and labor solidarity, the cops, courts, and governments and their unjust laws can be defied, and big victories can be won.

Unionists across North America can support the NAPE workers as they prepare for the resumption of their strike in September by demanding that Bill 59 be withdrawn, all suspensions and criminal charges dropped, and the workers' demands met.

Send solidarity messages to NAPE, P.O. Box 1085, St. John's, Newfoundland A1C 5M5, Canada. Telephone (709) 757-0700. □

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# On the battle lines against imperialism

*Foreign policy defies U.S. threats, aggression*

By Ernest Harsch

From the very outset, the Libyan revolution has been in sharp conflict with imperialism. This has been marked in the foreign policy followed by the Libyan government since 1969, as well as in the measures taken to lessen the imperialist grip on Libya itself.

The anti-imperialist thrust of the Libyan revolution has come in reaction to that country's long history of foreign domination, first by the

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This is the last of a series of three articles on the Libyan revolution. The previous articles described the origins of the revolution, its anti-imperialist measures and domestic policies, and the class and social conflicts that have accompanied it.

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Ottoman Turks, then by the Italian colonialists, and finally by U.S. and British imperialism. It was spurred by the subservient policies of King Idris I, who gave the imperialist oil companies free rein and leased out parts of Libya for U.S. and British military bases.

The Libyan people were also affected by political developments elsewhere in the region, despite the monarchy's efforts to keep them isolated from "subversive" outside influences.

The greatest such influences came from neighboring Egypt, where a revolution overthrew King Farouk in 1952 and soon brought to power a radical nationalist government headed by Gamal Abdel Nasser. During the 1956 Anglo-French-Israeli military intervention in Egypt, groups of Libyans, armed by the Nasser government, attacked British and U.S. installations in Libya. Muammar el-Qaddafi, then a high school student, was expelled from school in 1961 for organizing pro-Egyptian protests in Sebha. The 1967 Middle East war, which ended with the Israeli occupation of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, sparked mass demonstrations and strikes in Tripoli and Benghazi.

Through these struggles, the Libyan people acquired a greater national awareness of their own. They also increasingly viewed their country as an integral part of the broader Arab world.

With the 1969 overthrow of the monarchy by a group of young nationalist officers led by Qaddafi, Libyan domestic and foreign policy no longer slavishly followed imperialist dictates. The Libyan people for the first time began to acquire a voice of their own, and to project their views internationally.

The U.S. and British military bases were soon expelled, Italian capitalists and settlers were expropriated, and foreign-owned banks

were nationalized. When the British authorities supported an Iranian takeover of two small islands in the Persian Gulf in 1971, the government nationalized British Petroleum's Libyan holdings. This marked the beginning of a series of nationalizations of imperialist oil companies.

The new Libyan government spoke out on a wide variety of international questions. It condemned the Israeli occupation of Palestine and denounced imperialist support for the Israeli regime. It advocated the admission of the People's Republic of China into the United Nations and demanded the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam.

A June 11, 1972, ceremony in Tripoli — to mark the second anniversary of the U.S. evacuation from the Wheelus air base — provided an example of the new government's style. Both U.S. Ambassador Joseph Palmer and British Ambassador Peter Tripp were invited, but found it difficult to sit through Qaddafi's speech. According to a report in the next day's *New York Times*:

Mr. Tripp walked out when Colonel Qaddafi accused Britain of collusion with the Zionists in handing over Palestine to the Jews in 1948. . . .

Then Colonel Qaddafi declared his regime was supporting 25 million blacks in the United States against what he termed "American arrogance, the white superiority complex."

Ambassador Palmer then walked out. . . .

Colonel Qaddafi also accused the United States of backing the Israeli occupation of Arab territories conquered during the 1967 war.

Alarmed by such independently expressed views, both London and Washington responded with hostile acts.

David Stirling, a founder of the elite Special Air Service (SAS) regiment of the British army, planned a raid in 1970 to free some of the ousted king's supporters from a Tripoli jail and trigger a coup to restore the monarchy. Although the plan was called off at the last moment, it nevertheless served as a warning that the imperialists would not passively sit by.

A more serious warning came in May 1973, when the U.S. Sixth Fleet conducted threatening military maneuvers off the Libyan coast and U.S. jets engaged Libyan planes inside Libyan-claimed airspace, triggering a Libyan war alert.

Such U.S. provocations were to become frequent in later years. But they did not dissuade the Libyan regime from continuing to express its views on key international issues.

## Looking toward Arab unity

One of the central themes of Libyan foreign policy has been the need to forge unity among

the different Arab states of the Middle East and North Africa.

This reflects the early influence of Nasser's pan-Arab views. It is likewise rooted in Libya's own particular circumstances as a small country of just 3.5 million people. Since the Libyan economy generally suffers from a shortage of labor, the government has viewed closer ties with other Arab states as a way to facilitate the recruitment of foreign workers.

Such alliances also help strengthen Libya in its conflict with imperialism.

In his speeches, Qaddafi has referred to the divisions introduced by the European colonial powers as a major weakness. The Arab world, he has said, has been carved up into "municipalities." Speaking to a March 2, 1986, session of the General People's Congress in Benghazi, Qaddafi stated, "We agree that the world has two poles headed by the Soviet Union and the United States of America. . . . But if another factor were to emerge, such as the establishment of Arab unity or if the developing countries become a striking economic, military, and political power, then this will create a third pole."

The Libyan government's idea of how such unity can be achieved has revolved around efforts to reach "merger" or "union" agreements with existing governments.

There has been a series of such agreements since 1971, when the Federation of Arab Republics brought together the Libyan, Egyptian, and Syrian governments. That federation was short-lived, as were most of those that followed, including a brief "merger" with Tunisia in 1974 and a second agreement with Syria in 1980.

Most of these agreements had little practical consequence for the actual functioning of the governments involved. Although presented as plans for direct state integration, they were in fact little more than proclamations of common political interests. As governments changed or alliances shifted, these agreements quickly collapsed.

In August 1984 the Libyan government and the Moroccan monarchy of King Hassan II proclaimed a "union" of their two states, which remains in effect today. This marked a shift in Qaddafi's policy. Previously, he had sought such agreements only with republican regimes.

"I do not care whether one is a king or a president," Qaddafi declared immediately after the conclusion of the Libya-Morocco agreement, known as the Oujda accord.

"I respect any Arab regime that would enter into unity with me," Qaddafi said a few months later. "I am now respecting and sup-

porting King Hassan II's regime and will certainly not do anything against it, because we belong to an Arab federation. In this federation every region maintains its distinctive character and system of government. A republic remains a republic, a sultanate a sultanate, and a monarchy a monarchy."

Qaddafi went further. He also claimed that this "union" marked a major setback for imperialism. "No Arab can deal a blow to America as did King Hassan II," Qaddafi maintained. In doing so, he conveniently overlooked Hassan's close military and political ties with Washington, as well as the greater contacts he has had in recent years with the Israeli regime.

At the time of the Oujda accord, relations between the Libyan government and Algeria were rather tense, in part over a territorial dispute along their common border. But in early 1986 discussions proceeded on the possible proclamation of yet another "union" between the Libyan and Algerian governments.

Besides such unity agreements, Tripoli has also entered into a series of political alliances with different Arab regimes. These have often involved common stands on key political issues in the region, such as rejection of any negotiations with the Israeli regime and opposition to the U.S.-sponsored 1978 Camp David accords. Recently, Qaddafi has been stressing in particular the close political ties between the Libyan, Algerian, and Iranian governments.

The Libyan government is one of the few in the Arab world to support Iran in its war with the Iraqi regime, which enjoys considerable support from the imperialist powers. This has brought it criticism from other Arab governments for siding with a non-Arab state against an Arab one.

Responding to such accusations, Qaddafi stated in 1984, "I opposed Iran when it was ruled by the shah. He was an ally of the Americans and in their sphere of influence. He used to give oil to Israel and South Africa. . . . Eventually the revolution took place. This revolution was against the United States and Is-

rael. The revolutionaries were our natural allies. During this period, [Iraqi President] Saddam [Hussein] launched a war against Iran. . . . We could not have betrayed our principles. Naturally we are against this war. We tried at the beginning to stop it. But as the war continues, we are on the side of the revolution."

#### Erratic support

One of the aspects of Libyan foreign policy that has particularly troubled the imperialists and their regional allies has been the Qaddafi government's support for various revolutionary movements and opposition currents in the region. This has involved both political backing and material aid.

Tripoli has been outspoken in its support of the Palestinians' struggle to recover their homeland and has given military and financial assistance to different Palestinian guerrilla groups belonging to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). It broke relations with Jordan and called for the overthrow of Jordan's King Hussein following the massive 1970 crackdown on Palestinian forces in that country.

In 1975 the Libyan government expressed support for the guerrillas fighting to overthrow the proimperialist sultanate in Oman (after initially opposing them).

When relations with the Moroccan regime were hostile in the early 1970s, Qaddafi backed several coup attempts against King Hassan.

Tripoli was an early supporter of the struggle in the Western Sahara, providing arms to the Polisario Front and publicly demanding that colony's independence from Spain. After the Spanish authorities withdrew from the territory in 1976 and it was occupied by Moroccan troops, Libya continued to aid Polisario's struggle, this time against the Hassan regime.

But Libyan support for revolutionary and anti-imperialist movements has generally been subordinated to immediate state interests. It has therefore been inconsistent, often shifting

erratically depending on Tripoli's relations with a particular regime.

The Western Sahara is a case in point. After the conclusion of the Oujda accord with King Hassan, the Qaddafi government dropped all aid to the Polisario Front. While maintaining that it still recognized the "reality" of the Western Saharan struggle, it came out in support of Hassan's fraudulent calls for a referendum to determine the future of the occupied territory, a retreat from its earlier support for Saharan independence. Qaddafi went to the extent of chastising the Polisario fighters for not joining "the heroic Moroccan Army."<sup>1</sup>

Sudan provides another example. In the early 1970s relations between Tripoli and the Sudanese regime of Gaafar al-Nimeiry were close. When a section of the Sudanese military, with the support of the Sudanese Communist Party, attempted to overthrow Nimeiry in July 1971, Libyan jets forced down a plane carrying two top leaders of the coup. They were handed over to Nimeiry, who promptly executed them as part of a broad crackdown on the entire Sudanese left.

A few years later, after the Nimeiry regime had moved in a more openly proimperialist direction and began aiding Libyan counterrevolutionaries, Qaddafi expressed public "regret" at his help in crushing the 1971 coup attempt. The Libyan authorities then began aiding various Sudanese opposition groups, including the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), based primarily among the non-Arab peoples of the southern Sudan.

With Nimeiry's overthrow in April 1985, Libyan relations with the new Sudanese regime grew decidedly warmer. So all support for the SPLA was abruptly cut off.

Libyan support for the Palestinian struggle has also been inconsistent and conditional. Like other Arab regimes, Tripoli has sought to undermine the PLO's independence and to reduce it to an instrument of state policy.

Palestinian refugees and liberation fighters in Libya who opposed this perspective were expelled from the country in the early 1970s. Libyan financial support to the PLO was not channeled through the PLO's central bodies, but given to only certain guerrilla groups within the organization. Tripoli thus sought to manipulate the PLO's internal divisions to further its own ends.

Since the late 1970s, Libyan officials have openly tried to undermine PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat. In 1983 an armed rebellion erupted within Arafat's Fatah, the largest component of the PLO, involving military assaults on PLO guerrillas and camps in Lebanon. The Libyan government (along with the Syrian government) provided aid to these rebel forces. Qaddafi went so far as to publicly call for Arafat's assassination.<sup>2</sup>

But in 1985 Qaddafi shifted yet again, pro-



Qaddafi flanked by PLO leaders Yassir Arafat and Nayef Hawatmeh. Libyan relations with PLO have fluctuated over the years, depending on Tripoli's other foreign policy interests.

1. See "Behind the Libya-Morocco 'union'" in the Oct. 1, 1984, *Intercontinental Press*.

2. For excerpts from a speech by Qaddafi urging "violent acts" against PLO leaders, see the Nov. 12, 1984, *Intercontinental Press*.

claiming a new "working relationship" with Arafat and the PLO. This followed a major assault by Lebanon's Amal militia group on Arafat supporters in Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut, an attack that Tripoli condemned.

#### From Chad to South Africa

After the Middle East and North Africa, the Libyan government has paid the greatest attention to political developments in sub-Saharan Africa.

The longest and most extensive Libyan involvement has been in the former French colony of Chad, to Libya's immediate south.

In July 1970 some of King Idris' supporters plotted to overthrow the Qaddafi government, using the capital of Chad as a base of operations from which they sent arms to the conspirators within Libya. Although this plot was aborted, Tripoli responded by providing assistance to the Chad National Liberation Front (Frolinat), a guerrilla group based in northern Chad that was fighting to overthrow the Chadian regime, which was backed by French troops.

Besides seeking to counter the political and military pressures from the south, the Libyan authorities had another motivation for involvement in Chad as well. Citing an unratified 1935 treaty, they claimed a 110-mile-wide strip of Chadian territory along the Libyan border, called the Aozou Strip. Libyan troops occupied much of this strip in 1973. The Chadian government at the time acquiesced to the occupation, in exchange for a cutoff of Libyan aid to the Frolinat guerrillas. Frolinat itself rejected Libya's territorial claims.

As relations with the Chadian government deteriorated once again, Tripoli resumed its aid to Frolinat. But as with the PLO, Libyan officials intervened in the internal political disputes within Frolinat, which eventually broke apart into an array of competing factions.

In recent years, most Libyan assistance has gone to a coalition of Chadian groups headed by Goukouni Oueddei, the leader of one of the largest Frolinat factions. This included support from several thousand Libyan troops, particularly during the period from 1979 to 1982 when Goukouni was president of Chad, at the head of an unstable coalition government. After Goukouni's overthrow by the CIA-backed forces of Hissène Habré, Tripoli continued to aid Goukouni's coalition, enabling it to retain military control of the northern part of the country.

Over the years, the Libyan government has given political and material backing to many other liberation movements, revolutionary groups, and opposition currents throughout Africa. These have included guerrilla fighters from Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau when those countries were under Portuguese colonial rule; from Zimbabwe when it was still ruled by a white minority regime; and from South Africa.

Economic and political relations have also been established with a variety of African governments. Libyan assistance has usually gone

to governments that have taken anti-imperialist stands. But not always. During the 1970s Tripoli provided significant military assistance to the Idi Amin dictatorship in Uganda, as well as to the regime of "Emperor" Jean-Bédel Bokassa in the Central African Republic.

Libya has belonged to a tripartite defense pact with both the Ethiopian and South Yemeni governments since August 1981. It has aided the West African governments of Ghana and Burkina, which arose several years ago out of deep-going revolutionary struggles.

Libya's foreign policy has not been confined to its region and continent alone. Tripoli has extended support to struggles as far away as New Caledonia and Nicaragua.

According to Qaddafi, "We are working to build a wide front of the peoples who are against America, of the peoples who are struggling against imperialism . . . from Iran to revolutionary Afghanistan, to Nicaragua, to Cuba, Namibia, Palestine, South Africa, and Northern Ireland, we work for all these peoples, and we will be victorious, with God's help, in forming a wide international front which struggles against imperialism, to encircle imperialism, until we demolish its arrogance."

#### 'We are willing to fight with you'

Libyan relations with the Soviet Union and other workers' states have evolved since the Qaddafi government first came into power.

Initially, the Libyan government's anticommunist views were expressed quite openly and bluntly. For example, during the 1973 summit meeting of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries, held in Algeria, Qaddafi clashed sharply with Cuban President Fidel Castro, accusing him of being a "Soviet pawn."

But in the mid-1970s Tripoli's public stance shifted. As the pressures and threats from Washington mounted, and as domestic counterrevolutionary forces began rearing their heads, the Libyan authorities started to look more seriously to the workers' states for economic and military assistance.

Soviet Premier Aleksei Kosygin visited Tripoli in May 1975, paving the way for the provision of large amounts of Soviet military hardware, as well as Soviet technicians to maintain the equipment and train Libyans in its use. Qaddafi returned the visit in December 1976, going to Moscow for the first time.

"We deal with the Soviet Union on a commercial and not an ideological basis," Qaddafi explained. He dropped his earlier diatribes against the workers' states as well as against political currents in the Middle East that described themselves as Marxist.

The Libyan government invited Fidel Castro to attend the March 1977 session of the General People's Congress at which the country was renamed the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. Castro was greeted by mass demonstrations upon his arrival.

Welcoming the Cuban president to Libya, Qaddafi declared, "We are joined together in the struggle against imperialism, capitalism,

and foreign domination." He also expressed appreciation for the role of Cuban internationalist fighters in helping to defend Angola from South African attack.

Addressing a mass rally in Tripoli on March 9, Castro explained, "For a long time we have felt that the Libyan and Cuban revolutions should draw closer together. . . ."

Castro added, "I am a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary but I profoundly respect your ideas, your convictions and beliefs. We are revolutionaries and that unites us. Thus, we are willing to fight with you against imperialism, support the national liberation movement along with you and work with you for a more fraternal and just humankind."

#### Under the U.S. gun

It was around that time, in the mid-1970s, that the imperialist pressures on Libya began to step up noticeably.

The first U.S. economic embargoes were imposed, initially involving a ban on sales of aircraft and spare parts.

In 1977 the U.S.-backed regime in Egypt began sending sabotage teams into Libya and in July of that year provoked a brief border war, in which Egyptian planes bombed Libya's el-Adem air base.

With the coming into office of the Reagan administration in January 1981, Washington's anti-Libya campaign escalated sharply. Secretary of State Alexander Haig proclaimed Qaddafi a "cancer" that had to be cut out.

More than before, it became obvious that Washington's goal was to topple the Qaddafi government and install in its place a regime more compatible with U.S. interests in the region.

With that aim, the Reagan administration sought to step up the external pressures on Libya, probing for cracks and weak points within the Libyan government and society. A favored target of this campaign was the Libyan officer corps, which had already been the source of several coup attempts. In carrying out its anti-Libya drive, Washington was able to enlist the participation of other imperialist powers and of a number of regional governments.

During the first year of the Reagan administration, the actions against Libya were numerous:

- All Libyan diplomats were expelled from Washington.

- U.S. officials announced that they would support any government in the region that opposed Libya. U.S. military and economic assistance to Egypt, Sudan, and Tunisia were consequently increased. The Egyptian regime stepped up its provocations along the Libyan border.

- In early 1981 the CIA began funneling millions of dollars in military equipment to Habré's reactionary forces in Chad, enabling them to bring down the Libyan-supported Goukouni government a year later.

- The U.S. oil companies in Libya started cutting production in July 1981 because of a dispute with Tripoli over pricing policies. By

the next year daily oil production had fallen to a third of what it had been in 1980.

- U.S. reconnaissance flights over Libya were stepped up, and in August 1981 the U.S. Sixth Fleet staged provocative military maneuvers in the Gulf of Sidra, which Libya claims as territorial waters. When Libyan jets challenged the fleet, two were shot down by U.S. fighters.

- In October 1981 the National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL), one of the more significant counterrevolutionary exile groups, was founded. With radio broadcast facilities in neighboring Sudan and funding from exiled Libyan businessmen, the NFSL admitted that it had some U.S. "contacts." Other exile groups maintained that it was actually set up by Washington.

There was little let-up in this U.S.-orchestrated campaign over the following years.

In 1982 the Reagan administration banned the import of Libyan crude oil into the United States. Two attempts to hold a summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity in Tripoli were blocked when a number of proimperialist regimes organized a boycott.

The next year Washington rushed four AWACs surveillance planes to Egypt, as tensions along the Libyan-Egyptian border came close to another armed conflict.

In March 1984 a sabotage attack destroyed much of the el-Abyar military arsenal, near the Egyptian border. Two months later a group of saboteurs belonging to the NFSL infiltrated into Libya from neighboring Tunisia. In clashes with Libyan security forces, 15 NFSL members were killed, including the commander of the NFSL's military wing.

Meanwhile, an opposition group called Borakan (Volcano) claimed credit for the assassinations of several Libyan diplomats in Europe. Supporters of the Libyan government retaliated by attacking some exiled Libyan counterrevolutionaries.

In September 1985 Adm. James Watkins, U.S. chief of naval operations, visited Tunisia and assured the regime of "continued support from Washington." A few weeks later the Tunisian regime broke diplomatic relations with Tripoli. This was followed in October by a visit to Tunisia by Egypt's national security adviser, who proposed the establishment of a joint "confrontation front" against Libya. Then at the end of November Egyptian troops were massed along the Libyan border.

That same month, the U.S. press leaked a report that Reagan had formally approved a CIA plan of covert action to overthrow Qaddafi.

This year opened with an order by Reagan banning all U.S. trade, commercial contracts, and other transactions with Libya. He likewise demanded that all U.S. citizens living or working in Libya leave that country. Under U.S. urging, various West European governments also began to institute economic and diplomatic sanctions against Libya.

In February the French government again rushed hundreds of commandos into Chad, claiming that was necessary to counter "Lib-

yan aggression" — actually, advances by forces supporting ousted President Goukouni.

The following month, with a massive naval armada assembled off the Libyan coast, U.S. planes sank two Libyan ships and bombarded Libyan missile installations near the town of Sidra. Fifty-six Libyans were known to have been killed in those unprovoked attacks.

Then on April 15 came the U.S. bombings of Tripoli and Benghazi, the biggest U.S. air strike since the end of the Vietnam War. The bombs rained down on residential neighborhoods, schools, military installations, government buildings, foreign embassies, and airports. Among the dozens of Libyans killed was Qaddafi's year-old daughter. Some U.S. officials openly admitted that the bombs targeted at Qaddafi's family residence had been intended to kill Qaddafi himself.

One declared goal of the U.S. strikes against Libya has been to foment a coup or other forms of domestic opposition to the Qaddafi government. But so far this has not succeeded, despite the existence of some public discontent over Libya's recent economic difficulties.

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."

At the same time, the large crowds that poured into the streets of Tripoli April 18 to bury the victims of the U.S. air strike and to shout their defiance of Washington's military might indicate the kind of popular support that the revolution can still rely on.

The absence of any significant, organized internal opposition greatly complicates Washington's efforts, making direct military action to overthrow the Libyan government much more costly, both militarily and politically. The Pentagon, according to another *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."

#### Who are the terrorists?

As a cover for its aggression against Libya, the Reagan administration, aided by the big-business news media, has been conducting a relentless propaganda campaign aimed at portraying Tripoli as the center of a network of "international terrorism." Speech after speech and article after article have tried to accuse Libya of ordering bombings, hijackings, and guerrilla actions across the globe. One of the most famous U.S. accusations — the 1981 claim that Qaddafi had sent a "hit squad" to the United States to assassinate Reagan — was later revealed to have been a concoction of the Israeli intelligence agency.

From time to time, Libyan officials have made statements that could be seized on to further this "terrorist" smear campaign. But Libyan declarations opposing the use of terrorist methods have generally been ignored by the major U.S. news media.

Washington, in fact, has a completely dif-



Libyans protest U.S. air strike.

ferent definition of what constitutes terrorism than does Tripoli — or most of the rest of the world for that matter.

In an Oct. 25, 1985, speech, Qaddafi explained the Libyan view on this:

Who are the ones who accuse Libya of terrorism? They are the ones who are opposed to the cause of liberation and are against the revolution. They are the forces of oppression, exploitation, imperialism, racism, and of Zionism. . . . Those who accuse Libya of terrorism go even so far as to accuse the PLO of being a terrorist organization at a time when the whole world recognizes the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Thus, supporting the PLO is considered supporting terrorism. . . .

This is what we hear now: Support for peoples struggling for freedom means terrorism.

They consider Nicaragua to be a terrorist country. . . . Since Libya supports Nicaragua, they consider Libya to be a country supporting terrorism.

Recently in South Africa, the poet Benjamin [Molose] was executed. He was a revolutionary, patriotic person. But they considered him an outlaw and a rebel against authority. They considered him a terrorist. . . . Thus, when we support the African National Congress, or Benjamin, or the demonstrations in South Africa, we are considered a country supporting terrorism. . . .

The fact of the matter is that terrorism is the American terrorization of the peoples: Terrorization with fleets, nuclear bombs, nuclear detonations, and the militarization of space. This is terrorism.

As shown by the widespread international protests over the U.S. bombings of Libya, that is a view shared by many people worldwide.

Washington's attacks on Libya have nothing to do with combating terrorism. First and foremost, they are designed to bring down a government that refuses to bow to U.S. dictates and that has actively opposed U.S. policies in the region since 1969.

The U.S. rulers, along with their allies in Western Europe and the Middle East itself, never looked kindly on Libya's democratic revolution. For them, the example of defiance that Libya has set for the past 17 years is one that cannot go unchallenged.

But the Libyan revolution has proven to be a stubborn opponent. Despite the blows it has suffered, it still has significant resources and popular support to draw upon. And it can count on the solidarity of struggling peoples around the world. □

# Cuba abolishes free farmers' market

## Castro speech hits damaging practices of profiteers

[The following speech was given by Cuban President Fidel Castro to the Second National Meeting of Agriculture Production Cooperatives held in Havana on May 18.]

[This meeting reflected the weight producers' cooperatives have achieved in Cuban agriculture in the past decade. Until the mid-1970s virtually all privately cultivated land — about 30 percent of Cuba's total farmland in 1975 — was farmed by individual families. (The other 70 percent was cultivated by state farms employing wage workers. Today the proportion is 20 percent private and 80 percent state farms.)

[In 1975 the Cuban Communist Party proposed that a major effort be launched to encourage private farmers to voluntarily pool their land, labor, and resources — livestock, plows, and other implements — in order to produce cooperatively.

[The major incentive for individual producers to join cooperatives is better living conditions. Cooperative members enjoy priority for construction materials for housing and development of electrical service. Moreover, they have easier access to fertilizers, pesticides, seeds, and modern farm machinery. Participating farmers are reimbursed for their property out of cooperative income in the years after they join. Members do not receive wages like workers on the state farms, but a share of their co-op's income.

[The Fifth National Congress of the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) discussed this proposal in 1977 and launched a major campaign to implement it.

[At that time there were only 44 production cooperatives, which included less than 1 percent of the land cultivated by the private sector. By the end of 1985 there were nearly 1,400 cooperatives encompassing 61 percent of the land of private farmers.

[Castro reported to the Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party, in February 1986, that the average size of the cooperatives had increased to 792 hectares. (1 hectare = 2.47 acres.) Only five years earlier, the average was 200 hectares.

[The ANAP's sixth congress in May 1982 evaluated the progress made up to that time by the drive to form cooperatives. Castro, in a speech to that meeting, commented on the gains and reviewed some of the considerations that had led to launching the campaign. He also emphasized that, from the beginning, the government and ANAP had said "there should be no pressure or haste, that we should let the farmers convince themselves of the advantages offered by cooperatives." The full text of Castro's speech was reprinted in the July 5 and 12, 1982, issues of *Intercontinental Press*.

[The May 1986 meeting of production

cooperatives decided to eliminate the free farmers' markets, as Castro points out in the speech below. These markets were introduced in 1980 in order to provide individual producers and cooperatives with a place to sell their surplus produce.

[Most agricultural goods farmers produce are sold to government purchasing agencies. The individual farmers or cooperatives agree to fulfill specified production goals at prices guaranteed by the government. The purchasing agencies then retail the food to consumers through government-owned stores. In order to help equalize distribution, a rationing system is in effect for many products. Moreover, government subsidies help keep food prices relatively low.

[By allowing the farmers to sell their surplus production directly to consumers in the farmers' markets at unregulated prices, the government aimed to make some products more readily available than they are in the regulated marketing system. At the same time it hoped to undermine black-marketeering.

[The decree authorizing the markets specified that vendors were required to be producers; farmers had to provide their own transportation and were restricted to their local markets; beef, tobacco, sugar, coffee, and cocoa sales were prohibited; and the government was not to interfere with the prices.

[Scores of farmers' markets were soon set up across the country. Their attraction was that they offered foods difficult to find in the government stores. But abuses soon developed.

[Castro estimated in 1982 that 90 percent of those selling at the markets were not producers, but "middlemen" or "go-betweens." Many of them maximized their profits by buying from farmers at low prices and hoarding the produce until they could sell at higher prices when the market conditions were right. Often these go-betweens were truck owners, who took advantage of the fact that many farmers did not have any means to transport their produce to the markets.

[One of the effects of this profiteering was that prices remained exorbitantly high in the farmers' markets — higher than the government had expected. This led to mounting friction between consumers in the city and vendors (including many honest farmers who got blamed for the abuses of the profiteers.)

[These problems were discussed by the 1982 ANAP congress, and Castro dealt with them extensively in his report to that meeting.

[Following that discussion, the government took several initiatives to cope with the problems. To try to eliminate the go-betweens, only ANAP members were allowed to sell in the markets. Only individual producers or those belonging to co-ops can belong to

ANAP.

[The government also expanded its own role as a marketer of nonrationed foods by building a "parallel market" to compete with the farmers' markets.

[Like the farmers' markets, the parallel markets sell surplus produce of farmers. The government agreed to pay the farmers substantially higher prices for that part of their production that exceeded their government quotas.

[To give the parallel markets an edge over the farmers' markets, the government charged a 20 percent tax on all sales at private markets. Only a 5 percent tax was imposed on sales by private farmers and co-ops to the government's parallel markets.

[The government also encouraged the producers' cooperatives to stop selling their surpluses on the farmers' markets and to sell to the government instead. This reversed the earlier policy of urging the co-ops to sell at the farmers' markets in an effort to bring prices down.

[The result was that the parallel markets far outdistanced the free farmers' markets in sales, helping to lay the basis for eliminating the latter.

[The text of this speech is taken from the June 1 issue of *Granma Weekly Review*, published in Havana by the Cuban Communist Party. The footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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Well, comrades, I won't go to the podium because that's too formal; we've had an informal meeting, we could say. We've chatted and that's what I'm going to do, extend the chat we've had. I don't have that much to add because in truth I've been talking and expressing opinions throughout the whole meeting, and I won't repeat many of the ideas which have already been expressed here.

We must say — and I'm speaking on behalf of all the comrades who have been on the presiding body and who have participated — that we've been very favorably impressed by this meeting, and that's a unanimous view. We feel that it's been very good, substantive, really fruitful.

Not only has it helped you to clarify your ideas, it's helped us improve our knowledge, our information about the small farmer movement, which can now more accurately be referred to as the cooperative movement, because within the small farmer movement the higher forms of production are dominant.

I believe we can safely say this has been a historic meeting.

I believe the decision we made yesterday to put an end to an institution which has had very



negative and damaging results, the free peasant market, is a considerable step forward, because I think, I'm convinced, that the free peasant market became a major obstacle to the development of the cooperative movement, and, as people said here, it led to the development of middlemen, either in groups or on their own, who have grown rich and have made profits, but above all, this phenomenon hampered the development of the cooperative movement itself.

I had discussed this with Pepe [José Ramírez Cruz, president of the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP)] several times and had told him that we couldn't have the cooperatives involved in the free peasant market, for it's a matter of ethics, of principle, dignity, and morality not to get involved in that commercialism and speculation.

The Revolution had tried to create ideal conditions for the cooperatives and a number of measures were taken which really benefited them in every respect, including the question of taxes; a lot has been done to help the cooperative movement. We had also set up an enterprise to buy surplus produce or things that were supposed to go to the free peasant market, an enterprise that would pay well for the produce from the cooperatives.

There was no need for the cooperatives to go to the free peasant market, nor was there any need for cooperatives to be discredited, because I want to tell you that, although the people bought certain produce out of need and had to pay high prices, they had a very, very bad opinion of the free peasant market, of the prices they were asked to pay, of that system whereby individuals got rich. The people would buy, but they felt they had been robbed.

I was really upset at the idea that the cooperative movement, with the prestige it had acquired, could become the target of the population's rejection, repudiation, and hostility when the cooperatives had no need to get into the free peasant market given the resources and facilities they were receiving.

I reasoned, how can we ask cooperative members, who are working honestly, who are making an effort, who are earning their bread with the sweat of their brow, not to go to the free peasant market and still have that market functioning, so that all those antisocial, lumpen elements could go on getting rich from it and even those ambitious individual farmers with a lot of money could continue enjoying the advantages of getting all the money they wanted on that market.

I realized we could no longer allow that market to function, but it was really encouraging to all of us to see how the cooperative members unanimously spoke out here about something we already knew they'd said in their grassroots meetings and that had been said in Party provincial assemblies: the idea of abolishing the free peasant market.

But the forcefulness, determination, and clarity with which you called for an end to that market were concrete, tangible evidence of the development of the cooperative farmers' awareness and of not only the economic and

material advantages of the cooperatives but also of the political advantages, because we can see there is a different way of thinking among cooperative members; you have awareness, a different way of thinking from that of the individual producer, and you have been able to undertake an objective and detailed analysis of the negative consequences of the market and then here unanimously call for its immediate end.

Although I was convinced that the free peasant market had to be done away with soon, I thought it would last a few months more. However, the ideas you have outlined, your proposals, the cooperative movement's unanimous view that it should be abolished immediately, is what led to the decision to do away with it without delay, and measures are being taken so that by Monday, or at the latest by the end of the week, the free peasant market will disappear. [Applause]

We have had this experience, which I think

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### **The free peasant market became an obstacle to the development of the cooperative movement . . .**

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has increased our knowledge about what can or can't be done to advance our revolutionary process. I feel the decision which has been made will give a big boost to the cooperative movement in political and economic terms and in terms of morale.

Of course, those who profited from that market were like the advocates of free trade. They encouraged collaterally another series of free trade activities in our country and put a real brake on the cooperative movement. This was not just a brake on that movement but also a demoralizing, negative element in every way. These people won't resign themselves quietly; they will continue to try to traffic and sell on the black market, but they won't have the same facilities and it won't be legal.

If together with this we move to improve the work of the state collection enterprises and make good use right away of the Select Fruits Enterprise, which already exists, I think that farmers who often gave their produce to the middlemen will give it to the state collection enterprises of the Select Fruits Enterprise.

For the moment, the Select Fruits Enterprise will have to make a bigger effort to supply the parallel market and help fill the small gap, and I say small gap because sales on the free peasant market were about 70 million pesos a year, while the parallel market was selling some 900 million pesos' worth of agricultural and industrial products — sales have increased a lot.

As I was saying yesterday, nearly 50,000 tons of rice alone were sold during 1985, which amount to 100 million pesos or more than 100 million in sales — and the parallel market also sells a lot of other agricultural produce, both domestically grown and foreign — but what I wanted to say is that this market can

easily fill the gap left by the free peasant market.

For example, last year the drought affected root vegetables and bananas, and so many people bought more rice on the parallel market. Since rice stocks were somewhat depleted, this meant we had to import some. Then came the hurricane, and we were very worried in December, January, and February, but fortunately we received a donation of rice from the Soviet Union.

At the time of the hurricane and largely as a result of the drought, in many provinces rice was no longer being sold on the parallel market. After the hurricane and when the Soviets had promised their donation of 30,000 tons, domestic trade agencies all over the country were told to sell rice, and this rice on the parallel market cushioned the loss of root and other vegetables caused by the hurricane. Now with the potato crop and other produce, the demand for rice on the parallel market has dropped.

We're thinking of selling better quality rice; it's being sold now for 1.50, but in very small amounts: precooked brown rice. It's a new product which is much more nourishing than polished rice.

Actually, what rice mills do is shell and polish the rice, taking away the best part. The same happens in flour mills: they take out the best part of the wheat.

Out of a ton of wheat, they take 30 percent, which is the bran. Bran, which someone mentioned, contains the best nutrients of wheat, it contains the fiber and mineral salts, proteins and vitamins, all of which flour doesn't have. They take away the best part, it is a product of civilization and yet they take away the fiber particularly.

Now, doctors are stressing fiber consumption as a need of the body, and many intestinal diseases, including cancer, are caused by non-consumption of fiber. It is a disease of civilized man, since the fiber is taken out of wheat, for example, and you get flour; white bread has some protein, but the whole grain has more.

We're manufacturing whole wheat bread, which many people eat on their doctor's advice. We also have precooked whole wheat cereal, but we aren't in the habit of eating it. The Arabs are in the habit of eating it, and we have some supplies.

The same plant that makes precooked whole wheat cereal also makes some precooked brown rice. It tastes very good and you get the whole grain. We have purchased four plants that will be set up in different parts of the country to make this rice to sell on the parallel market. It is tastier, much more nourishing, and healthier than polished rice.

What other advantages do these plants have? The rice in the mills now has a yield of about 60 percent while the precooked type has a yield of nearly 70 percent, because it doesn't break or give off chaff, it is whole and so no nutrients are left behind in the shell. This means a greater yield for a ton of rice.

With these and other foodstuffs, the parallel market will continue to develop as a need of

the economy and the means to purchase certain products at higher prices which can't be freely distributed at lower prices.

There are families with several members who work and have relatively high incomes because they are technicians, specialists, or skilled workers who in this way can purchase products that aren't rationed or they can buy at higher prices larger quantities of products that are rationed and sold to the population at low prices. Many people have large incomes which are not the result of speculation or shady business. The profits from these sales don't end up in private hands but go into the state budget and benefit all the people.

There are other advantages, for there are many products which the food industry can't make for 10 million people. Before they weren't made at all. Why? Because there wasn't enough for 10 million people. Now a product can be made for 100,000, 500,000, 1 or 2 million people. Some of these products can't be sold on the ration. People often ask why they can't be sold on the ration.

I remember when we were turning out 30,000 yogurts a day in Havana and some people would ask why they weren't sold on the ration. We said, how can they be sold on the ration? There were only 30,000, and who knows how often each person would be entitled to a yogurt.

The problem was solved because in the end we were able to produce 300,000 a day — at least, I think it's 300,000 a day in the city of Havana alone — but then there was such a big increase in demand that some people still ask why yogurt isn't sold on the ration. It was possible to establish the free sale of yogurt and other products through pricing, not just by increasing production.

Butter, like ice cream, is also being sold at a higher price. We sell a whole series of articles which are not rationed either because there's not enough for 10 million people or because rationing them would be very bothersome.

Thus, the parallel market system helps the food industry produce more items although not in large enough quantities to satisfy everybody and to be sold at very low prices. Therefore the only alternative is to distribute them by selling them at higher, flexible prices.

For these reasons I think that if this so-called parallel market is looked after carefully and efficiently, it can easily fill the gap left by the free peasant market, which was a source of private income and a source of irritation and harm.

Only 12 or 13 persons were paying taxes on those 70 million pesos, and the rest, including middlemen and others, must have been making a net income of between 40 and 50 million. Those are the ones who buy cars regardless of the price, create all these problems, and corrupt others, although this is not by a long shot the only source of illegal, easy money-making that exists in the country.

Apart from the economic, political, and moral damage that the free peasant market was causing, it was also obstructing the development of the cooperatives and creating a feeling

of antipathy toward the small farmers. As I said yesterday, any man who could draw an income of 50,000 pesos a year from one hectare of garlic would hardly be inclined to join the cooperative movement, no matter what.

This has been the source of money for purchasing houses in the cities, in Havana, everywhere. Maybe even the Housing Law will have to be studied and reformed, since it has become a new mechanism for getting rich. Because they sell a house and then start buying materials, purchasing lots here and there and building houses and selling them. In fact, a profitable business of building, buying, and

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### **We hope the day will come when 100 percent of the lands owned by small farmers will form part of the cooperatives . . .**

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selling houses could be set up, and that's something incredible within a revolution.<sup>1</sup>

I'm convinced that what you've agreed on constitutes a great step forward. And, as I pointed out yesterday, we must see to it that some of these products, including some of those herbs, be supplied by the cooperatives and state farms, that these products that normally are not purchased by state collection enterprises make an appearance on the market. I believe that if we make up our minds to do it we'll succeed and there are formulas to solve these problems.

I remember that years ago an effort was made to improve conditions in the workers' dining rooms in Havana, and we gave several of the state-owned farms a number of trucks so that they would be able to supply 500 workers' dining rooms with root and other vegetables directly, without resorting to middlemen. And in case they were short of products they could obtain them from other state enterprises at the price charged by state collection centers, when they sold to the retail stores network.

As a result, for the past several years some 500 workers' dining rooms in Havana have been supplied with root and other vegetables they were never supplied with in the past. There you have an easy way to solve a problem.

I'm convinced that if the Select Fruits Enterprise wants to and does a good job, it can guarantee the supply of all those herbs that the

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1. Cuba's National Assembly adopted a General Housing Law in December 1984. The new law granted private ownership rights to all Cubans who did not own their apartment or home and to all occupants of new housing that is built. Among other provisions, homeowners are now able to rent out rooms at a price agreed upon with the tenant. Apartments or houses can also be sold or exchanged by homeowners, with the approval of provincial housing offices.

See "New housing law goes into effect," by Doug Jenness, *Intercontinental Press*, May 12, 1985.

free peasant market is offering and that are the only things that are lacking on the parallel market. I'm certain these problems can also be solved. Anyway, this will be a great step forward, even though some of these irregularities still exist.

Within a few weeks the state collection enterprises will be forming part of the Ministry of Agriculture. We're not criticizing People's Power. They did their very best to have the collection enterprises functioning correctly, but the real problem was not collection but the concept itself, as I explained yesterday.

Agricultural collection should have always had a national character. What we'll probably do is set up a National Union of Collection Centers, under a single leadership. And the leadership of that Union should also be the leadership of the Select Fruits Enterprise.

In other words, both institutions should be under the same leadership. As I said yesterday, we'll give them additional resources so that they can go all the way to the grass-roots level.

The problem should be solved by these two institutions under a single leadership. As it was clearly stated here, some of these products require a specific institution for their harvesting, so that five tons of yams, for example, won't get mixed up with a crate of custard apples. But we must also harvest custard apples and take them to wherever they are most useful, say a hotel or a tourist resort.

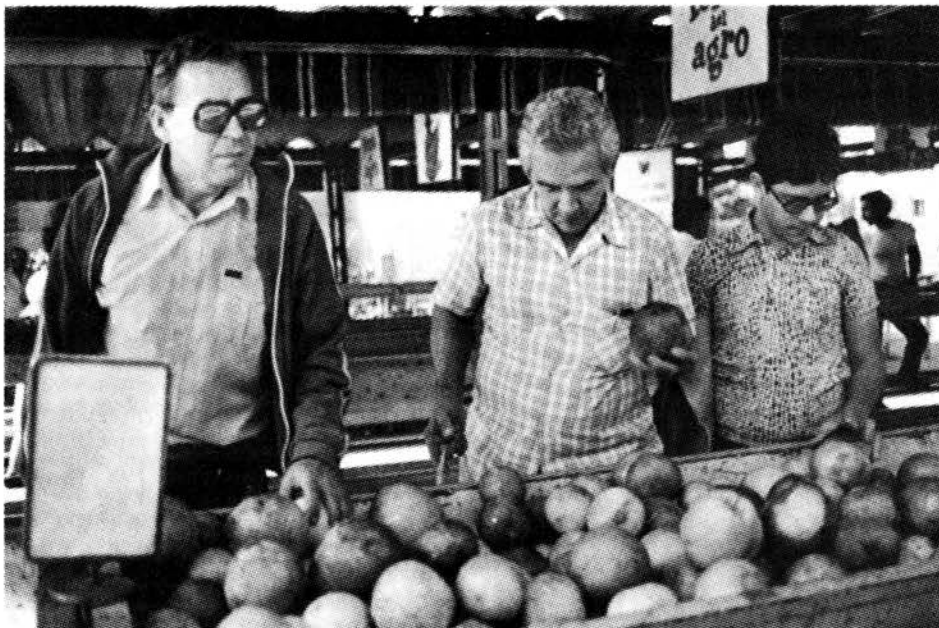
We must develop tourism, because it's an important source of foreign exchange. It isn't that we're crazy about tourism. We don't like it. But the exploitation of such natural resources as the sea, the sun, and the climate is one of our country's economic necessities.

Therefore, we can draw great benefit from these scarce products, which cannot be mass-produced like sugar, for use in restaurants, some hotels, higher priced establishments, and even for affairs of protocol, in the case of a reception in honor of a foreign visitor. And Select Fruits is the institution most suitable for supplying these products.

I believe the free peasant market will become a thing of the past, leaving behind a great lesson, along with much damage and who knows how many millionaires. We're rectifying what was unquestionably a wrong decision. It's wise to rectify errors and the sooner the better. [*Applause*]

Our struggle against these newly emerged neocapitalist elements is not limited to this meeting or the elimination of the free peasant market. We're going to fight against these trends and manifestations on every front. I'd say that the decision made in this meeting alone makes it a historic event.

But it isn't only for that reason, but rather because this is the first time that all the presidents of our country's cooperatives, the secretaries of the Party and the Young Communist League sections in the cooperatives, and People's Power and government representatives meet, in the Karl Marx Theater, a huge theater, along with representatives of the National Association of Small Farmers and of the Party branches in the municipalities and prov-



Shoppers in a state-run "parallel market."

inces.

As you have seen, practically every member of the Political Bureau and the Council of Ministers, barring those who are now abroad, is here, and this can give you an idea of the interest and the attention this meeting aroused.

The moment this theater is packed with the presidents of all of our country's cooperatives is a historic moment. This is a much easier way to meet. I've always said that anytime that we had to speak to the farming sector it would be marvelous not to have to meet with 200,000 farmers, because that's simply impossible. But it's perfectly possible to meet with the representatives of 1,000, 1,500, or 2,000 cooperatives to discuss anything.

It's quite likely that in the future we'll have to hold some special meetings to analyze situations such as those that now exist in the mountain areas, but it's much easier for the socialist state to discuss, speak, exchange views, and seek formulas in a meeting with 1,500 or 2,000 representatives of the farming sector who conduct and control all the production in the countryside.

That will happen one day, because we hope that the day will come when 100 percent of the lands owned by small farmers will form part of the cooperatives. This is why I say this was a historic moment. [Applause]

This meeting is also historic because it has made our government aware of the problems that exist in the countryside and in the cooperative movement.

Only yesterday we made a decision of the utmost importance that will benefit not only cooperative members but farm workers as well. Yesterday we analyzed how much cement and steel rods were given through the two Ministries, and we simply decided to double the amount for the construction of houses and other activities. This means the possibility of building an additional 4,000 houses every

year. In terms of housing, it means the possibility of building an additional 20,000 dwellings in the next five years.

Yesterday it became evident to us that the amount of construction materials used for social development in the rural areas was not sufficient. This will certainly mean — we will do our best — that next year, apart from maintaining the same level as this year with the farmers, we will double or even triple the amount of materials granted to the state-owned farms for agricultural workers. [Applause]

In other words, our brothers and sisters, the farm workers will benefit from this meeting we're holding here. We are not going to forget them.

And I think that in the same way that the cooperatives organize their construction minibrigades and the people build houses with the aid of the community, the state-owned farms, with their small construction teams in the agro-industrial complexes and the enterprises run by the Ministry of Agriculture, can also organize their groups and build with the support given by the community.

I believe it's time to start planning for next year, figuring out how much we allocated in 1986 and see if we can double or even triple the amount of cement and steel rods for the construction of dwellings for farm workers, using, of course, a variety of materials.

Comrade Rizo said they were building the roofs with a thin layer of cement. In other words, they utilize part of the cement they receive for that purpose and they are also given cement, stone, and sand in the form of prefabricated sections.

I believe that the decision we made yesterday will have great repercussions in the rural areas in regard to construction materials. What we have to do now is to see to it that these materials are distributed properly, so that they reach everywhere. We don't want a single

cooperative saying that it has never been given construction materials or that in all its existence it has only been given 70 bags of cement. We want these materials to reach every one of them.

I think that that should be the capability of both the Ministry of Agriculture and MINAZ [Ministry of the Sugar Industry]: getting those resources to everyone, not just those cooperatives with greater resources. In the case of those that don't get them, let the bank give them credit to buy those materials so they won't have to get into dirty business or shady deals to get the materials.

Just as I'm also hoping that there won't be any repetition of the situation whereby some cooperatives would get materials and resell them at higher prices, do business with them, because that's not right, it's not honest. In that case it's better to return the materials and say: take them and redistribute them, and have them redistributed to other cooperatives without gain.

That goes for anything else; redistribution without profiting from it, because in the same way that we don't sell a car to a good cane cutter for 4,000 pesos so that he can resell it for 20,000, we don't sell our cooperatives the construction materials they need at a certain price so that they can resell them to individual farmers or anyone else that needs them at a higher price. So that's going to be an important step.

I'm giving you this example because throughout this meeting we've paid close attention to all the questions raised here, and we've been thinking about how to find the most rational, the best solution to everything, from the problem raised here of certain supplies for workers' dining rooms, where we must search for the best formula lest we hit upon a formula leading to future complications. But I'm sure we'll find some way to meet the cooperatives' logical need to have in their dining rooms some products they don't grow themselves.

Now, how to do this is what we must discover as quickly as possible so that it works and doesn't cause us other kinds of problems.

We've listened to the problems existing in mountain cooperatives, all their problems, with the spirit of making every effort to solve them; and we've not just been informed here,

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### If there's one thing we can't do without, it's the land . . .

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but we've also felt the need and the desire to make an effort to solve, somehow, many of the problems raised here. As Pepe said, everything has been recorded, everything has been written down.

I think we can do more than that. Although MINAZ gave cooperatives more attention than the Ministry of Agriculture, I believe we can succeed in having MINAZ give even more attention and the Ministry of Agriculture give all the cooperation it didn't provide for a time,

and give still more cooperation. [Applause]

I like the way Comrade Adolfo spoke here today when he expressed himself very clearly and very frankly, without a shadow of demagoguery. When an official only wants to get into the cooperative farmers' good books and tells them only the good things, then I don't believe he's acting honestly.

I like the clear, frank way in which Adolfo and Casita spoke; the way they raised problems and other things, because the Revolution needs serious officials who won't make promises just for the sake of making them, people who do all they can, who do their very best, who know how to appeal to the people's sense of duty; just as I also liked how Comrade Risquet explained the Congress theses, urging you to follow up on that and recommending that those problems be studied.

The Revolution needs serious people, it has no use for demagogues; demagogues cause a lot of damage and are very expensive. [Applause]

If an unfair situation exists, it must be solved, we must overcome it, and anything that's not fair must be wiped out. Anything that's right but isn't understood has to be explained over and over and then some more to make the farmers understand why such and such a thing makes sense, to explain the reason for each and every measure, because the important thing is not giving orders but persuading people. Persuading people is much more important, and the main thing is that everyone be persuaded that those measures taken by the Political Bureau are sound and why the Political Bureau measures are sound.

I was saying yesterday that that document doesn't solve all the problems. There are things still to be defined, and they must be defined as quickly as possible so that all the cooperatives know what they can do and what they can't do, what they ought to do and what they mustn't do. And so what we need to do is to overcome all these difficulties.

There's no need for me to speak more about the difficulties or the problems raised here because I haven't the slightest doubt about the honesty with which all the presidents of cooperatives spoke here; I haven't the slightest doubt about the honesty, honor, dignity, self-respect, and decorum with which all of you have spoken here, [Applause] the way in

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## We must put an end to all forms of absentee ownership in the countryside . . .

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which you admitted your mistakes, your willingness and staunch determination to avoid them.

New mistakes may occur in the future, and we have to be on the alert for them, recognize them, remedy them, provide correct guidelines, and always do so explaining them with solid arguments.

We've discussed some things that are a bit



Dan Fein/IP

Members of a cooperative in Matanzas Province. "Already 61 percent of small farmers' land is in the hands of cooperative members."

tougher to solve — what to do with a farmer who joins and then retires, what rights should he have. Naturally, if we allow ourselves to be guided by the kindness inside each one of us and our feelings of solidarity with others, we'd say: well, let the person who worked share when he's 65, if he can work, in the advance money, the profits, plus his pension.

But we realize that even if we wanted to, doing that wouldn't be right because it would distort the cooperatives, give them a nature which they don't have, it would multiply the needs. If we did that, the time would come when we'd have a city in every cooperative, what with all the grandparents, the children, the grandchildren, the great-grandchildren, etc. So, anyone retiring ahead of time would imply bringing someone else in ahead of time to do his work and building ahead of time another home, and all this is very expensive and causes all kinds of inconveniences.

That's why we're trying to figure out which is the best formula, for obviously there's no clear-cut opinion on this.

One comrade here was wondering whether that'll compel some who have already retired to leave. I don't think that's the way to try to hold on to cooperative members. I believe that a cooperative member who's settled in, who's become attached to his cooperative, would find it very painful to leave it when he retired, because it is the place where his friends, the people he knows, live.

I was saying that the children, the grandchildren, and the great-grandchildren would choose to stay. I wish the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren would stay! What a study of the number of children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren who have

become professionals, university students, officers of the armed forces, doctors, teachers would show!

And here when Báguanos was mentioned, the comrade who was speaking — I think she was the comrade who spoke about the cooperative located in the Báguanos area — mentioned the farmer who ended up alone, who is over 70, has 54 hectares [one hectare = 2.47 acres] of land, and his son is a teacher and so is his daughter, and he ended up alone there.

What we have to do is run the cooperative system in such a way that the development of the Revolution and the opportunities we offer our youth don't spell the abandonment of the land, because if there's one thing we can't do without, one thing our country can't abandon, it's the land. This country can't do without agriculture. It's vital for the development of the country, our standard of living and exports.

It's true that we hope that our exports will depend less and less on agriculture and more and more on industry, but we can't do without agriculture. I believe that this is a challenge for the Party and the Revolution: to find the way to keep people in the countryside, so that we continue to get news like that brought by the comrade from the cooperative in Perico, that has so many members that are relatively young, and few retired workers.

Of course, the number of retired workers will grow, and if we do things right, if a man is 67, 68 years old and can work, I think he should keep working. We shouldn't do things to encourage people to retire, but rather to keep working, to stay there and be treated with all due consideration, affection, and respect. We should see that he is given all the respect that a man who worked there deserves.

We don't want that man to leave the cooperative, but to stay there, to live there, even though his staying would mean more houses for the town, because that retired farmer has to live somewhere. It's better that he live in the cooperative, and not go live in town, because surely he will feel better in the cooperative, living in that community than living in town or alone, isolated.

What would the future hold for the farmer whose children leave to study something else, who stays behind alone, isolated? It would be a truly sad future. It seems to me that the future of a cooperative member is much happier, much more humane, and much more promising if he lives there in the community, with his friends, his comrades, his family, everybody, because a cooperative should be, among other things, a family, a big family.

But we must find adequate solutions to the problems, correct solutions, not superficial solutions, easy solutions.

Here we've been able to see the difference between different types of cooperatives, and that's why the suggestion of the comrade from Matanzas was so good: to study a differentiation. True, we are looking for ways to keep people in the mountains, to improve the standard of living there so that it approaches equality, although it'll be impossible to even out completely the standard of living in all

cooperatives.

But, at any rate, I think measures have been taken: prices for the products of these cooperatives that have difficulties were improved. We must give them special attention.

We've done some things. I spoke yesterday about some. I mentioned the electrical power plants in the mountains. I mentioned the fam-

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## There must be absolute respect for voluntary participation . . .

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ily doctors, but we have to get materials to them to improve other conditions, and we have to look at every possible thing that can be done in the mountains to keep them there, like what can be done for those kinds of crops that fetch a lower price and require more investment. They take a lot more work.

There are some crops that can't be farmed by machine. In the case of rice, the soil preparation and harvesting can be mechanized, but the same is not true of tobacco. Its characteristics make mechanization much more difficult. So for that reason we find that productivity rises more for crops other than tobacco or coffee.

Individual productivity in sugarcane, root vegetable, and other vegetable cooperatives is rising, but not so much in the tobacco cooperatives or the coffee cooperatives in the mountains. We need to bear all these circumstances very much in mind.

I don't think that absolutely all the problems have been addressed here, but the work that was done by the Party, the group of comrades we sent to the cooperatives, the grass-roots meetings, and the Party's provincial committee meetings have brought together much information.

I remember that one of the things that received a great deal of attention was the need to train cooperative members in particular technical areas or to send technicians to the cooperatives, because the number of scientific and technical personnel for agricultural concerns is low. That problem was not mentioned here, but it's one of the problems that we have to keep in mind.

Everything that has been said here has been recorded, and things that weren't said here, too, so what we can do as this meeting comes to an end is promise to take the utmost interest in solving the problems we can, to solve problems dealing with the cooperatives and the cooperative movement, especially now that we're sure it's going to become that much stronger.

I believe that it has also become evident here that the Revolution has been too generous with certain people, and that it has been too tolerant of certain vices and deformations in the countryside. I already explained how it was possible for years for people to have their cane cut for them, everything done for them, and receive their checks at home.

Here we have clearly established the desire

of the cooperative members to see that all those people who use the land incorrectly and who engage in sharecropping and leasing in order to get rich by the work of others have their land expropriated or confiscated. [Applause]

We also believe, and that was made evident here, that we must not allow the land to be abandoned. Without committing an act of injustice — that goes without saying — and with coordinated action by MINAZ, the Ministry of Agriculture, and ANAP, we must put an end to all forms of absentee ownership in the countryside and incorrect utilization of land ownership. [Applause] Some measures will have to be taken in regard to those kulaks — to use a historical term — that still exist.

That gentleman, you know, the man involved in that business with the Fiat — and this is a very illustrative case in this meeting — they tell me he's not a tobacco grower, to the credit of the tobacco growers and perhaps to the discredit of the vegetable growers — I think the gentleman is a vegetable grower, that's what I have been told.

But vegetable growers need not feel ashamed, for they are not to blame — he has a farm, he has four agricultural workers and two trucks, and I imagine he can't drive the two trucks at the same time. If he decides to charge 300 pesos a day per truck, as mentioned here by Rizo, the head of the cooperative in Perico, then I imagine he would earn at least 400, 500, or 600 pesos daily.

How much would he earn a year? 150,000 pesos! Incredible! In addition to what he earns on all those shady deals, because in order to pay 27,000 pesos for a car, just like that, he must earn a lot of money.

Yesterday I was listening to one of you speaking with great irritation about all these problems, and he said he was pleased because of what had been said about these issues, because, naturally, an honest worker, a hardworking farmer must really get indignant over things like this. They're laughing in his face and saying: "Idiot! You're in the cooperative, you joined the cooperative and I'm a millionaire with two trucks, I have this, I have workers, I'm a sheik, a king, an emperor!" [Applause]

We have said there must be absolute respect for voluntary participation and we intend to maintain this. But respect for voluntary participation is one thing and tolerance of arbitrary conduct, abuse, undue wealth, incorrect behavior at the expense of others is another thing.

Of course, there are honest people in this country, people who get married and go to a hotel on their honeymoon, or they go somewhere else. In the periods when there is a decline in foreign tourism and more rooms are available we always try to have the workers enjoy them.

Certain measures have been taken: they must be workers, they must work in order to use those hotels in that period. There are workers there who provide a service. It's really sad to think that the lumpen elements, the "nouveau riche" will be the ones to benefit from those services and those facilities created

by the Revolution.

You can't make them too cheap, because if you do, it's disastrous. The hotels fill up and are then destroyed, they must have their price. But it's sad to see people like that with easy money benefiting from all this.

It's true that, as I said, these individual farmers can't buy motorcycles and if they buy them they do it illegally. If you see any, warn them and ask the municipal officials to look into where it was purchased. If it proves to be illegal it should be confiscated, because it is a violation of the law, or have him appear in court. [Applause] It's something obtained unduly by wrongdoing, and they are committing an economic crime.

So, it's true, they can't buy those things, because we have worked out a system. We didn't start out selling with a two-bit business mentality, because if earning money was all we were worried about we would have said, "Sell the 5,000 or 6,000 cars at any price!"

They are sold to honest and hardworking people, outstanding workers including members of the cooperatives — and, Pepe, we must keep them in mind when the lists are drawn up, some have already been given out, but we must keep in mind that members of the cooperatives are on the list of categories to which they should be sold. [Applause]

It's true that people in the countryside generally need other types of vehicles, but some cars have been allotted for members of cooperatives. I'm not saying we'll send one of the little Polish cars to the mountains, because I don't know how they would do it, they'd have to carry it up by mule, the little Polish car would have to go up muleback. But there are many parts of the countryside where those cars and motorcycles can move about — I don't know if motorcycles are sold to members of cooperatives; I do know they're sold to factory workers. They aren't sold to members of the cooperatives? Well, we will raise the issue of having you included in the distribution of motorcycles. [Applause]

We'll see if some are left this year — there are different kinds of motorcycles, they are sold to workers, and it's only fair because we want the workers to have these things, not speculators and traders, on the same basis as we have sold some cars, but we'll keep you in mind so that more and more cooperative members will have motorcycles.

We should keep in mind that already 61 percent of the small farmers' land, 222,000 hectares, is in the hands of cooperative members. There are still a few tens of thousands of individual farmers.

Work with individual farmers is much more difficult, it is terrible, virtually unsolvable because you must discuss and make plans with tens of thousands of them. The day when all these people join cooperatives it will be much easier to solve all the problems. Proof that they can be solved was provided by Elías when he spoke, Antonio when he spoke, Orlando when he spoke, Rizo when he spoke: they said, "No, we don't have problems. They are responsive

to our needs and problems.”

Of course, we must strive to have all cooperatives say they don't have problems and are well taken care of.

We must also keep in mind the cooperatives in the mountains or in drier areas, in places with more problems; we must keep them in mind. We can't limit ourselves. It would be wrong to concentrate only on the most productive cooperatives which have the most resources. I think we must work with them, we must give them resources but we can't forget the others.

It doesn't matter if it's 54,000 hectares or how many thousands of members, even if it produces 3 million. We must work with them because they have people who are working hard caring for the forests and mountains, harvesting coffee, cocoa, or whatever; they are there and we must work with them.

We can't guide ourselves by a business criterion and say that resources only go to the more successful cooperatives, the ones with better results, because that would be a virtually capitalist policy, and our policy must be based on solidarity. It must be a socialist policy keeping in mind all those farmers to whom we say, "Stay in the mountains." We must remember them, we must keep them in mind, we must give them the resources they need.

Generally speaking, I believe that this more rigorous policy against all deformations will gradually lay siege to the bourgeois enemy that still exists, to all those elements with a mercantilist mentality who want to profit off the revolutionary people's work. We'll close in on them.

I'd like to know if the day when all the land belongs to cooperatives and every cooperative is led by a man like those who have spoken here in this meeting one could find one of those characters who are always ready to engage in some shady business. I'd like to know if that will be possible. [Applause]

Nowadays they can still hide in one of the tens of thousands of plots scattered about, and it's much more difficult to control, to guess just what they are doing. Meanwhile, as Pepe said here, political, ideological, and organizational work must be done to establish the commitments and a balance between what is supplied and what is collected.

We must also solve this problem of what products, more or less, destined for the parallel market are to be paid differential prices and what relations will exist between the state collection enterprises, because the National Collection Center can do some good by turning over some of the highest quality products to the Select Fruits Enterprise to be distributed among the parallel markets.

The whole idea is still to be worked out, but I believe that we'll find practical solutions that will enable us to accomplish two things: to keep the population supplied and maintain the nonrationed products market.

Let's say that there's a scarcity of taro that makes it impossible to supply the population on a year-round basis. In that case, some of the crop, except that distributed to the day-care

centers and hospitals, can be sold in the parallel market when it's scarce.

When there's an abundance of plantains, for example, there's no need to sell it on the parallel market. Maybe a similar product, say bananas, can be sold there. With an abundance of certain products there's no reason why they should be sold except in the regular fashion.

Certain things, like garlic, will be sold to the population at a price of around two pesos a pound, more or less. If there's a scarcity at a certain time the price will go up, and if there's an abundance it will go down.

I hope that this year, at the price of two pesos per pound, which is one-third of what was being paid last year, there'll be enough garlic for all the people. And if we don't achieve it this year, we'll soon have garlic sold freely and within reach of people everywhere. In other words, 1,350 hectares of garlic will supply us with the garlic to be sold at one-third the price it was being sold for last year.

Actually, an abundance of products leads to the free sale of products for relatively low prices. Of course, it will be very difficult to sell turkey, goose, or rabbit cheaply on the free market. Beef has never been sold on the parallel market because it's a scarce product and is strictly rationed, but fowl and the meat of other animals are sold there.

As to the development of this cooperative movement, which is already a reality, it must be said — even though we are here to make a serious, sincere, courageous, critical, and self-critical analysis of all these problems — that we know that it's a major cooperative movement.

And at the conclusion of this meeting, all of us, Party and government leaders, will leave with the impression that we have a strong, a formidable cooperative movement. [Applause] We leave knowing that the errors that were made are being rectified, with the awareness that we need to avoid new mistakes and determined to grant this movement all the attention it deserves, given its political, ideological, and revolutionary significance.

We are gratified by the number of Party nuclei and the large number of Party and Young Communist members in the cooperative movement.

I believe that this contact, this meeting between the members of the cooperatives and the Party — because this is really a meeting of the Party with the cooperative movement — will bring very good results. And we also see that the cooperative movement is a great ally in the struggle against wrongdoing, against the tendency to make easy money, in a battle that must be waged everywhere with the support of the farmers and the workers.

The workers must also help us in this struggle, because distortions and practices may occur that will have a corruptive effect on our working class and cost our country a great deal. We're trying to rectify some of these mistakes — for example, the fact that at the end of the year the budget automatically assumed all the enterprises' debts incurred with the National Bank. This led to the establishment of

vicious practices and carelessness that made it possible to pay excessive salaries and pay for everything with the budget as collateral.

And what a farmer said here is true. He said that they don't have the problem of the budget backing them up.

But the workers aren't to blame for this. The guilty ones are the leadership personnel, the administrative personnel, the administrators who have fallen prey to all these demagogic practices. Because it's always easier to go along with things, to play the role of the "good guy" than to take an energetic, serious, responsible, revolutionary, communist attitude and say, "This is the way this must be done and no other way." There's been a lack of character, will, and sense of responsibility.

I believe that the state enterprises are to be blamed in large measure for some of the cooperatives' problems we have analyzed here, and they're also to blame for a process of corruption within our working class, consisting of paying salaries which are not proportionate to the work done.

There are several work centers — this was made evident in the Party's checkup meetings — where the workers are being paid according to six different work standards. It's really absurd for a worker or a workers' collective to be paid twice or even three times as much as they should be paid, and this shows the laxity, the lack of a demanding attitude on the part of the administration. We're fighting against all these problems and will continue this battle that we must eventually win!

Some of the experiences and formulas have given rise to the idea that we were returning to capitalism or to capitalist methods. This is why on April 19 I said that some people were behaving like second-rate capitalists because they didn't even have the efficiency of the capitalists but were plagued by the vices and the anarchy of capitalists.<sup>2</sup>

All these methods must be studied in depth. I see no reason why a man who owns a truck should make 300 pesos a day. Two hundred is too much, and 100 is still too much. As I said, very few of the capitalists in this country were able to make 300 pesos a day. Very few! All these things have to be looked at, all the practices that are new, that had never existed, and in the past few years were introduced into our country's economy.

In the search for economic efficiency, we've created the breeding ground for a heap of vices and deformities, and what's worse, corruption! That's what hurts. All that can dull the revolutionary feelings of our people, our workers, our farmers. And that's really bad, because it weakens the Revolution not only politically but also militarily; because if we have a working class that lets itself be influenced by money alone, that starts being debased by money, whose actions revolve only around money, then we're in bad shape, because that type of

2. On April 19 Castro gave a speech in Havana in which he criticized profiteering and inefficiency in the economy. The text of that portion of the speech was reprinted in the June 2 *Intercontinental Press*.

person can't be the ideal defender of the Revolution and the country. [Applause]

There are always new things to learn in the revolutionary process. The rectification of certain errors has created other errors and the elimination of certain vices has created other vices. But, as I said, we now have enough experience in the Revolution to know how to rectify those errors without falling into others, to eliminate those vices without falling into others.

And in this great crusade, in this great struggle to sweep away those vices and manifestations, we're very happy to know we have the firm and enthusiastic support of our cooperative farmers. [Applause]

You are the vanguard of the farmers' movement, the vanguard marching way ahead. Some have lagged far behind, but if we apply revolutionary principles correctly and diminish the ranks of the stragglers, of all the elements that hold things back, I think the rest of the farmers will join the cooperative movement.

And with the experience we've amassed over the years, with the lessons we've learned, even in this very meeting, I think we'll be in a position to give greater support, a greater push to this movement, respecting — as I've said — the principle of voluntary participation, but combating every vice, every form of corruption, every form of exploitation of the work of others.

The day is not too far off — although we shouldn't get ahead of ourselves — when we can say that 100 percent of the farmers in this country are in cooperatives, that 100 percent of the land that had belonged to farmers is incorporated into cooperatives. [Applause]

As you know, in our country a large part of the land, 80 percent of it, is controlled by state enterprises. We've struggled for many years to achieve efficiency in these state enterprises, and some have become notable examples of highly skilled work and high productivity.

For a number of reasons, the state enterprises are still victims of the consequences of erroneous concepts, as I said before: inflated payrolls, incorrect structures, offices full of people, all kinds of things. But we're studying all that, and we won't stop until we free the state agricultural enterprises from all those vices.

Then we also have to be sure that the structures function properly. The way we will work with the farmers is yet to be decided, how we'll do it, although we already have many advanced ideas. We've come to the conclusion that at least the nonsugar portion of agriculture will receive its supplies through the Ministry of Agriculture.

This is a problem: how to give the farming sector what it needs, as quickly and efficiently as possible. That's what I can tell you here: that we are very aware of the need to fill in all those gaps and solve those problems that still exist, and we're going to try to solve them as fast and efficiently as possible.

Comrades, in summary, I think we've had a very fruitful meeting, a historic meeting. I think it's also established a precedent. It would

be a good idea in the future, in addition to the congresses — soon, next year, we'll also have the ANAP congress — to have more of these meetings between the Party and the cooperative movement, between the Party and the enterprises and all that. This is a new experience, very interesting in our Revolution, very stimulating.

We're going to work now, and we'll see how we deal with all these problems, how we carry out everything we've agreed to do. And we'll think about a future meeting, a meeting of this kind, without the passage of too much time. We don't have to let three, four, or five years go by. Maybe within a year, or at most two years, we'll meet again to analyze everything that we proposed to improve here. [Applause]

We have the ANAP congress on May 17 of next year. Not only cooperative members will be at that meeting but also the members of the credit and service cooperatives with whom we must work.

We mustn't forget the credit and service cooperatives; we must work actively there, because that's where we're waging the battle against the enemy, against the reactionary enemy, against speculators. That's where the man with the two trucks and a car comes from. He's a farmer, but in general they're not farmers but people who drift around the countryside that we're worried about.

We're waging a battle among that portion of farmers who are not yet in cooperatives, over that portion of the land that is not yet part of cooperatives.

The Revolution is strong; the Revolution has immense power. Those who think they can rake in money indefinitely are mistaken, as are those who think their money is beyond our reach. The Revolution has many possibilities and resources to defend itself and struggle! [Applause] You can be sure that the Revolution will crush the neocapitalist, neobourgeois elements trying to raise their heads; they have no way out. [Applause]

We will struggle to create the conditions in which those who contribute, those who really work, can enjoy the goods of the people and what the people produce with the sweat of their brow. The struggle against all forms of exploitation and freeloading will be the Revolution's tireless struggle, ever stronger, ever richer in experience.

So you can go back to the land assured that we have had a great meeting, that it will be very productive, that you have made a strong impression and created an excellent spirit within the leadership of our Party.

I want to express all the confidence we have in you, all the admiration we feel toward you, all the recognition of moral qualities, dignity, and honor, traditional among our farmers, that you have shown here.

And in conclusion I want to thank you for the enthusiasm and the pleasant impression you have left with all of us present at this meeting. [Applause]

Patria o Muerte!

Venceremos! [Ovation]

## 10 AND 20 YEARS AGO

### Intercontinental Press

Africa Asia Europe Oceania the Americas

July 5, 1976

Washington vetoed Angola's entry into the United Nations June 23 despite the fact that 112 countries have granted diplomatic recognition to the newly independent country.

The Ford administration had campaigned to get the vote delayed until after the Republican party national convention in August. Angola has been an issue in the Republican primaries, with presidential hopeful Ronald Reagan accusing Ford of allowing the MPLA to take over Angola.

The official reason for Ford's opposition to Angolan entry into the UN, however, has been the presence of Cuban troops in the West African nation.

"The continuing presence and apparent influence of Cuban troops, massive in number in the Angolan context, is the basis of our view," explained U.S. delegate to the United Nations Albert W. Sherer, Jr.

## WORLD OUTLOOK

PERSPECTIVE MONDIALE

(Predecessor of Intercontinental Press)

July 1, 1966

The admission of all students to universities and secondary schools has been suspended for six months by decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the government of China, Radio-Peking announced June 18. This decision has been taken to permit revision of entrance requirements into the higher educational system. According to the authorities, the present setup is too bourgeois and discriminates against workers, peasants, soldiers and young revolutionists.

Such an arbitrary interruption of the educational process appears on its face to be injurious to the welfare of the nation. In the fast-moving twentieth century, the progress of technology, science, industry, communications and even agriculture vitally depend upon developing higher educational qualifications among the young generation. This upgrading is all the more imperative for the People's Republic of China which has to modernize itself under forced draft amidst extremely adverse circumstances.

A government guided by socialist standards and aims would strive, as the Chinese Communists have done so well over the past sixteen years, to keep on lifting the level of education and culture.

Granted that the children of the poor should be given equal and even preferential access to educational facilities. How is this aim promoted by closing entry into the upper grades for everyone for six months?

# U.S. aid to 'contras' approved

## Sandinistas mobilize against new war escalation

By Cindy Jaquith

MANAGUA — The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) has begun to mobilize workers and peasants to confront a major escalation of the U.S.-organized mercenary war.

After months of debate, the U.S. House of Representatives voted on June 25 to grant \$100 million to the counterrevolutionaries, as requested by President Reagan. In addition, \$300 million in aid was approved for the governments of El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Guatemala.

The vote was 221 to 209 in the Democratic Party-controlled legislative body. The proposal must still go before the Senate where the Republican majority is also expected to approve it.

An alternative proposal sponsored by Oklahoma Congressman David McCurdy was defeated. It would have granted \$30 million in "nonmilitary" aid immediately but release open military aid only after another vote by Congress on or after October 1.

On the day after the House vote, the FSLN National Directorate released a major message to the Nicaraguan people.

"The president of the United States has succeeded in flouting the sentiments of the U.S. people and of the whole international community," the statement said. The approval of the aid to the counterrevolutionary forces "means the commitment of the might of the United States in the aggression against Nicaragua" and implies "the direct and open commitment of all the Central American states in this war policy." The Contadora negotiations, it continued, have been dealt "what is intended to be a mortal blow."

The U.S. government's action "begins an aggressive escalation that changes the international and domestic perspectives in which our revolution has been developing," the National Directorate declared. "This requires the revision of some policies so that all the Nicaraguan people are in the best situation to confront the new threats."

As soon as the vote was known, the statement explained, "the National Directorate began meeting with the principal FSLN cadres with governmental, military, political, and mass organization responsibilities, in order to update and refine the plans previously discussed and approved in the event this new act of aggression took place."

### Five steps proposed

The message outlined five main steps to meet the new escalation:

1. Internationally, it explained that the revolution

ary government would go before every possible international forum "and to the peoples of the world" to condemn the U.S. move, "with the objective of holding back the aggressive escalation and searching for concrete solidarity."

2. Within Nicaragua, it called for working people to "strengthen revolutionary vigilance and civil defense" to block sabotage and military attack.

3. The statement called for "strict and severe application of the State of Emergency," the body of measures adopted last October 1985, which curbed democratic rights such as freedom of the press, political association, rights of people jailed on charges of counterrevolutionary activity, and strikes. The statement said that up to now, "in an effort to contribute to regional and internal détente," the state of emergency "had been applied at times with excessive flexibility."

Referring to Washington's main mouthpieces inside Nicaragua — the capitalist newspaper *La Prensa*, Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, and Bishop Pablo Antonio Vega — the message said, "We cannot keep allowing sell-outs to continue their insolent role as agents of the U.S. government, justifying the aggression, undermining the defense efforts of the people, and giving 'civic' cover to the counterrevolutionary plans aimed at destroying the revolution."

4. Stating that "only an accelerated development" of defense plans "can dissuade the direct invasion of U.S. troops or smash it if it occurs," the message called for meeting the quotas for conscription into the army and reserves "without any excuses."

5. "The demands, self-sacrifices, and challenges of a war economy must be faced with patriotic and revolutionary spirit," the statement said. "Work, productivity, efficiency, conservation, integrity, and responsibility in production, supply, and public services cannot be left to appeals to good will, which are mocked by certain indirect agents of the aggression: the speculators, the lazy, and the incompetent."

"This is a demand of the solid majority, which must be achieved by the State through its laws and by the power of the people through the organized and combative masses."

Simultaneously with the release of the FSLN message, the Ministry of the Interior's Directorate of Communications Media announced the indefinite suspension of *La Prensa*. In a communiqué, the directorate explained that the paper had "repeatedly violated and refused to respect ordinances" regulating the press. *La Prensa*, it said, "has been raising the level of its provocations and disinformation, trying to justify the U.S. aggression and deny-

ing the validity of the Contadora Group as the only possible way to achieve peace in Central America."

### 'La Prensa' responds

*La Prensa* held a news conference the next day. One banner on the wall demanded: "Down with the totalitarian government!" Violeta Chamorro, speaking for the paper, refused to denounce the new U.S. aid for the mercenaries. She said the reason a war existed in Nicaragua was "because the Marxist-Leninist government has betrayed the people of Nicaragua, because there are still Cuban and Russian advisers here."

No reaction to the FSLN's measures has been reported here from Cardinal Obando or Bishop Vega. But as the congressional vote neared, both made virtual endorsements of the terrorist aggression.

On May 12 Obando had published a half-page article in the *Washington Post*. In it, he rejected the idea that there is a U.S.-organized war against Nicaragua. He argued instead that it is a "civil war" in which "an enormous number of Nicaraguans oppose with all their might the turn taken by a revolution that has betrayed the hopes of the Nicaraguan people." He said the mercenaries, whom he called "insurgent dissidents," have "the same right that the Sandinistas had [under Somoza] to seek aid from other nations."

Vega appeared in New York June 5 at a forum organized by Prodemca, a CIA-run outfit that funds reactionary opponents of the Nicaraguan revolution. He claimed reports of mercenaries murdering and kidnapping civilians were Sandinista "disinformation" and said, "Armed struggle is a human right. What other means is left to a people who are repressed not only politically but militarily?"

The first demonstration of the reaction of Nicaraguan working people to Washington's escalation and the Sandinistas' new measures was on June 27. More than 65,000 people turned out here for the traditional yearly march to the city of Masaya, commemorating the 1979 tactical retreat of FSLN guerrilla forces shortly before they took power.

Demonstrations also took place in other regions, including in Northern Zelaya Province on the Atlantic Coast, where protesters condemned the aid vote as an assault on the autonomy process under way there.

In his speech to the rally in Managua, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega stressed the change registered by the congressional vote. "The revolution has taken a blow," he said. "The U.S. government has for all practical purposes declared war against Nicaragua."

"Terrorist actions are going to increase," he warned, "and the danger of the intervention of U.S. troops is greater today than it was before they approved the \$100 million."

Given this new situation, Ortega asked the crowd, "Is it possible that political pluralism, mixed economy, and freedom of the press — which we have defended and continue to defend — can function normally?"

"No!" the crowd roared back. □