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INTERVIEW WITH
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HUMAN RIGHTS FIGHTER
CAMPAIGNS FOR POLAND

DEMOCRACY:

POLAND and the COLONIAL REVOLUTION

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POLAND, DEMOCRACY, AND THE WORKING PEOPLE OF THE THIRD WORLD

The worldwide response to the Polish bureaucrats' attempt to crush the democratic workers movement included the first major protests against Stalinist repression in third world countries.

This new fact reveals how widely discredited the Stalinist regimes have become. But it also indicates some important things about the way anti-imperialist struggles are developing today.

Such sympathy for the Polish democratic workers movement in countries oppressed by imperialism stands in contradiction to the echoing of the Stalinist line by the Cuban and Nicaraguan leaderships, who justly enjoy the greatest prestige in the eyes of anti-imperialist fighters.

It is hardly likely that the Cubans and Nicaraguans have any liking for the bureaucratic terror in Poland. They have never practiced anything of the sort in their own countries and have quite a different sort of relationship with their own working people.

Still, the Cuban and Nicaraguan responses cannot be explained away as mere placation of the USSR. They

reflect a clear lack of understanding of the political importance of Solidarity's struggle.

For example, the Cubans have not endorsed the Argentine Communist Party's cosying up to the dictatorship in its country, although Moscow approves of it.

The Cubans' determination to aid the fighting people of El Salvador also is in contradiction to accepting the perspectives and methods of Stalinism, which are expressed in the crackdown in Poland. Furthermore, Cuban leaders have explicitly commended the democratic and undogmatic attitudes of the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran leaderships.

This issue includes a series of interviews with revolutionists from countries oppressed by imperialism. What they all point up is the importance of democracy, and therefore of Solidarnosc for the working people fighting imperialism.

Ireland is not always thought of as a third-world country but many of the same political problems are posed for revolutionists there. And

in Ireland the Cuban revolution enjoys particular prestige and Irish revolutionists pay considerable attention to the statements of the Castro leadership. It is notable how much the interview with Bernadette Devlin parallels those with other revolutionary leaders in countries oppressed by imperialism, although there has been no direct ongoing contact.

The next issue of International Viewpoint will begin our regular fortnightly schedule. And we will devote special attention to the state of the West European workers movement after the crackdown in Poland.

There will also be an analysis of the situation in Ireland in the wake of the hunger strike and following the recent elections.

The issue will focus on the reaction of the West European Communist Parties and the unions they influence to the events in Poland. But it will also deal with the positions of a number of revolutionary nationalist movements in Europe

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The next issue will be dated March 14.

By Jacqueline Allio

THE SOLIDARITY THAT THE POLISH WORKERS NEED

"The Winter is Yours, but the Spring Will Be Ours."

This slogan has been appearing on walls throughout Poland for more than two weeks now. It expresses quite well the fact that while Solidarnosc has suffered a severe defeat, it has not been crushed.

A resistance movement has begun to organize clandestinely and it is preparing to build a campaign by every means necessary to "lead Solidarnosc to victory over evil and violence," as Seweryn Jaworski expressed it in a message to the workers from Bialoleka prison.

In this situation, the solidarity campaign that is developing in the

West has to be seen as a long-term task of continuing and growing importance. It poses some difficult tactical and political problems. That is especially true now when the movement in Poland has been forced underground and can no longer show so clearly by example and direct contacts what its objectives and nature are.

Thus, the bourgeois forces and the right have a greater opportunity to distort what Solidarnosc is about and to use the issue of the bureaucratic crackdown demagogically to whip up an anticommunist campaign that is aimed, among other things, at demoralizing the workers move-

ment in their own countries.

The capitalists want to discredit the very idea of socialism and sow confusion and fear among the workers in their countries who are being driven toward socialist conclusions by the general economic crisis and who were inspired by the example of Solidarnosc.

What help to the Polish workers was the hypocritical show put on by Reagan? In the name of defending the Polish workers, he appeared side by side with a representative of the military dictatorship in Ankara, which has jailed tens of thousands in the attempt to crush the Turkish trade unions. The very

day that Reagan made his statement about Poland, he called on the Common Market to lift its sanctions against the Turkish junta. Reagan was so cynically contemptuous of the Polish workers and workers in general that he included on his show Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau who openly said he understood the need for suppressing Solidarity since it was a union and unions always demand too much.

What help to the Polish workers are declarations of indignation about the violation of trade-union rights in Poland coming from the likes of the Thatcher government, which is dedicated to attacking the very same rights of workers in its own country.

The intent of these hypocritical capitalist gestures is only to divide the radicalizing workers in the West from their Polish fellow workers. They give the impression that Solidarity must be fighting for something different from what the workers in the capitalist countries want, something that suits the interests of the bosses rather than theirs.

The capitalists' maneuvers fit in perfectly with the campaign of the Polish bureaucracy and the pro-Stalinists in the Western CPs, who are trying to present Jaruzelski's crackdown as a defense, however costly, of the fundamental interests of the workers and oppressed peoples that are fighting capitalism and imperialism. These operations are an attack on what Solidarity has been trying to achieve both before and after the crackdown.

What Solidarity has instinctively sought is unity of workers East and West. Its representatives who were abroad at the time of the crackdown have raised a call precisely for that as an answer to the Stalinist counter-revolution of the bureaucracy.

"We want a campaign by the workers movement," said Piotr Kozlowski, a Solidarity activist and worker at the URSUS factory at numerous meetings during a tour of Great Britain. "Because the experience of this tour shows us that it is the workers who instinctively understand and support the struggle of Solidarnosc."

At a rally organized in Amiens by the oppositionists fighting against the CP leadership of the biggest French union federation, the CGT, Zbigniew Kowalewski, leader of the Lodz region of Solidarnosc, said:

"They (Western workers) must understand that a military dictatorship can never represent the interests of the working class, whether this is in Turkey, El Salvador, or Poland.

"In Poland, it is not General Jaruzelski, or the military officers, or the ruling party apparatus that represents the interests of the workers but the independent self-managed union Solidarnosc.

"Solidarnosc should become the symbol of the aspiration of the workers in the workers movement throughout the world to take their fate into their own hands."

In order to achieve this unity, it is necessary to clarify what the real aims of Solidarity have been and are. Solidarnosc never proposed restoring capitalist property relations, but rather that the workers should collectively take control of their own affairs.

We have to familiarize people with the program of this social movement of ten million people who were fighting to establish genuinely democratic and egalitarian social relationships. Their struggle showed the way forward for the Western workers who are fighting unemployment, layoffs, and cuts in their standard of living.

What has to be stressed in order to win to the cause of Solidarity those workers who have been confused by the bourgeois propaganda is the gains made by the movement for self-management, of the movement toward the workers assuming control of the economy by means of "active strikes;" that is, factory takeovers, and toward control of the media by the masses.

It is also important to clear away misunderstandings caused by the special features of Poland's history.

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Some 90% of the Polish people identify themselves as believers. And Catholic church symbols such as the cross and the Black Madonna have in fact appeared quite prominently as tokens of the union movement's opposition to the bureaucracy, as has the holding of masses before union assemblies.

However, Solidarity activists have always asserted the independence of their union from the Church. "The Pope? He is the symbol of the Catholic ethic, and we are in agreement with that ethic. That's all." This is what was said by members of a Solidarity delegation that came to Switzerland on the eve of the crackdown.

On the other hand, these Solidarity activists maintained that they had the moral support of the Church. "The Church has played an important role in Polish history."

It is true in fact that the Church is something more than the scandalous statements made recently by Monsignor Glemp, the Polish primate:

"For more than a year and a half anger has prevailed here, and now we have succeeded in overcoming it.

"The unfortunate events at the Wujek mine have remained an isolated incident. We are confident that, with the help of God, we will be able to clear up the causes of our anger through dialogue and not by means of violence." Dialogue between the workers and those who unleashed the bureaucratic terror!

The Church in Poland is, to be sure, the same reactionary institution that can be seen everywhere else, dispensing retrograde "moral" principles about education and holding back the consciousness of the working class, especially as regards the role of women in the family and in society.

But the Church is also all the parish priests in the towns and countryside who helped the movement to organize before the August strikes by opening the church halls to the initial groups of activists. It is all the priests who are aiding the resistance movement today by taking charge of the distribution of the food that comes in from abroad and who are taking risks that have resulted in many of them being imprisoned.

The Church also provided the platform from which the Wroclaw student chaplain could deliver a sermon on January 13 denouncing the dictatorship: "A suffering and weeping Poland has had to bow under the club of a military council that claims to represent national salvation."

Therefore, the interests of working-class unity are not served by engaging in the sort of primitive anticlericalism that the Stalinist leaders do in Spain, Italy, Belgium, or France. This shows both a lack of internationalist understanding and a lack of respect for workers' right to learn through their own experience.

By concretely aiding the Polish workers, we can build the sort of links the Solidarity leaders quoted above were talking about. Then we will be better able to help the Polish working class along to an understanding that in the final analysis, the interests of the Polish hierarchy have nothing in common with those of Solidarity, as a movement that is fighting for total emancipation of the workers.

At the same time, by helping the Polish workers keep up the pressure on the Church, we can help assure that they can continue to get the sort of practical aid from it that they have, and that they still need.

If the mass pressure weakens, the Polish bishops will quickly fall back to their historic objective, maintaining the status quo. "Poles are capable of coming to an agreement among themselves," Monsignor Glemp said.

Can Economic Sanctions Help?

Economic sanctions or boycotts will not help either in achieving the unity of workers East and West that the Solidarity activists want.

It is the Polish workers who would have to pay the cost of these sanctions if they were applied. Such boycott measures would be different from the boycott on arms deliveries as was proposed for Chile or Argentina or a propaganda campaign such as the boycott of South African oranges.

An economic boycott against Poland would apply to all forms of economic exchanges and to credits that are mainly needed for food-stuffs, chemical products, manufactured items, machines, and maintenance of transportation. It would mean nothing more nor less than economic strangulation of a country. It could only bring further deterioration of the standard of living of the working class in the context of an already unprecedented economic crisis.

Moreover, unlike the Western bosses, who are directly affected by economic sanctions in that these endanger their profits and therefore their very existence as exploiters, the bureaucracy derives all its sustenance from its control of the state apparatus.

If the economic situation worsens as a result of Western sanctions, the bureaucracy will move to maintain its privileges by reducing the share of the national income allotted to meet the needs of the population.

As Jerzy Urban, the government's spokesman for the Western press, said cynically: "We can always find the means to feed and clothe ourselves. It is the society as a whole that will have to bear the consequences."

Does anyone think that if the workers have to stand in still longer lines every day and have still less to eat that will help the resistance movement? Does anyone think they need that to encourage them to rebel?

The calls for economic sanctions and boycotts are a diversion from the needs of building a mass mobilization in support of the Polish workers. They create illusions both about the effectiveness that such measures could have and about the nature of the banks and the bourgeois governments that are being called upon to apply them.

For example, the Reagan government has made the most noise about economic sanctions, loudly denouncing the Europeans for signing a contract with the USSR for the delivery of natural gas. But it has not said a thing about stopping U. S. grain exports to the USSR. These sales represent two-thirds to three-fourths of U. S. grain exports; and in the first eight months of 1981, they brought in 1.3 billion dollars.

The difference between Reagan's noisy advocacy of economic sanctions and West German chancellor Helmut Schmidt's demurrals comes down to straight capitalist national interest.

In 1980, West German exports to Poland and the USSR (respectively 1.20 billion dollars and 4.3 billion dollars) were three times those of the U. S. Furthermore, the U. S. banks had a mere 2.1 billion dollars in outstanding loans to Poland, representing 2 to 3% of the capital of the banks involved. On the other hand, West German banks were owed 4.5 billion dollars.

In the case of the Bank für Gemeinwirtschaft, its Polish loans represented 45% of its total capital, and three-fourths of these loans were guaranteed by the state.

So, it becomes understandable why Schmidt could not go along with Reagan's boycott proposals, and why he expressed so much concern about the unfortunate effects such measures could have on the welfare of the Polish people.

The attitude of the West German Social Democracy also expressed the interests of the capitalists of their country. They pressured the Socialist International into adopting a scandalous resolution which "takes note of the Polish leadership's intention not to halt or reverse but rather to continue the process of reforms and renewal in the country."

In general, the Social Democrat and other procapitalist Western labor leaders have no interest in promoting mass mobilization in support of the Polish workers, and where the January 30 demonstrations for Poland were controlled by them, the results were poor. They are too much tied to the capitalist rulers of their respective countries.

The French SP has gone further than others in support of Poland, because of certain specific interests, including scoring points at the expense of a CP rival committed to support for Jaruzelski. But even in opposing the West-German-SP sponsored resolution in the Socialist International, Mitterand stayed within the logic of sort of division of the world established by the Yalta accords, while proposing a certain revision of the specifics.

Therefore, building an effective solidarity movement with Poland has to be based on fighting for independent working-class action in the framework of the workers movement.

The development of the campaign over the past two months has shown that it was possible to force the leaders of the established workers movement to back solidarity actions. This has been true even where, as in Great Britain, the bureaucrats have shown the most total indifference, once the first declarations of sentiment were done with, leaving the field open for the demagogic initiatives on the right. Nonetheless, the tour of Solidarity leaders mentioned before inspired strong support among workers.

In Spain, where there were also very negative attitudes on the part of substantial forces in the workers movement, the arrival of a Solidarity leader from the coordinating committee of committees for Solidarity in France forced the leaderships of the major union federations in Madrid, Asturias, and Guipuzcoa to organize rallies in support of Solidarity.

In Germany also, the initiatives taken by the coordinating committee of Solidarity Committees forced some leadership of the DGB, the national labor federation, to do something. This made it possible to establish contacts between the Volkswagen workers and representatives of Solidarity. The best way to help Solidarity is to make known its real objectives by organizing public meetings and rallies. It is to collect money to aid the families of the prisoners and the interned, as well as those who are obliged to live in clandestinity. It is to organize convoys carrying food and medicine, accompanied by teams of activists from the workers movement. It is to propose that workers in various factories or regions establish links with workers in specific Polish factories and regions and take charge of the defense of the prisoners. It is to set up committees of jurists ready to help the accused and to fight to get into the trials.

It is along these lines that we must continue our work, striving to get all workers, and in particular the most militant and the most class-conscious, to understand that the struggle of the resistance movement and the victory of Solidarity are of vital concern to them, something that has a great importance for their own struggle.

from the H-Block issue onto a broader platform of limited issues around which we could all agree and on which we could build the same kind of mass movement on a higher plane, the government fell. In fact, I was asked to sign the leaflet on one night, and the government fell the next.

So, then elections became a concrete question. People's Democracy asked me if I would fight this seat.

Q. It became more and more obvious during the hunger strike campaign that the H-Block activists were looking toward the development of an anti-imperialist front to fight the elections. The movement's greatest successes came in elections. You probably remember the huge applause you got at an H-Block rally in the Mansion House in Dublin before the last Irish general elections when you called for contesting every seat against the pro-imperialist and capitulationist bourgeois parties. Why was this momentum halted?

A. The first problem was that after we fought these elections there was no agreement within the movement how to carry these successes forward. There was no agreement on what you may call a strategy of elections, as opposed to the tactic. We had Bobby Sands and Kieran Doherty elected. But despite the fact that they were elected, both were allowed to die. We elected Owen Carron in Fermanagh-South Tyrone.

After that, it seemed to me that differences over abstentionism or a lack of understanding of even how you could use abstentionist MPs, how they fitted into the overall work of building a mass movement, were demoralizing to people in our own area.

The media and the political machinery of parliamentarism had isolated Owen Carron. So, he was reduced to resorting to what looked like one stunt after the other.

Another problem was that in the absence of the hunger strike campaign people feared that it would be impossible to maintain the momentum of the H-Block vote. I think, frankly, that they were right about this. I think there are areas where we won't be able to hold the levels that we reached before.

On the other hand, this campaign has shown to people in the areas where they are fighting, whether it is here in Dublin-North Central or in Sligo-Leithrim, or in Cavan-Monaghan, or in Limerick, that the movement has not disappeared. The ease with which the militants were pulled back into this campaign



(DR)

and the enthusiasm with which they themselves came back to take on this fight is very positive. It puts a big responsibility on us not to lose our momentum again.

Q. Have the problems of disunity that you mentioned been overcome?

A. In the short time available, it was impossible to put together the sort of anti-imperialist united front that we wanted. It would have been necessary to have discussions with Sinn Fein, the IRSP, PD, and independents such as myself and arrive at a basic program on which we could fight a united-front campaign. Of course, the question of abstentionism hasn't been resolved at all.

So, at a very limited level, what we started off with was a nonaggression pact. That is, the different organizations or independents will fight the elections on fairly similar bases. They will not fight each other. Everybody recognized that fighting the elections was the thing to do. In fact, this time even the abstentionists are hoping that I will win.

Q. That is, they couldn't have anything to do with such a thing themselves, but they're still thinking it would be marvelous luck if you won.

A. That's right.

Q. In the Irish general elections, the H-Block movement broadened. Has there been any similar broadening in this campaign?

A. The difference between my campaign and those in other areas is that there it is essentially the H-Block activists that have been pulled back in. In this district we have put together a marriage of the H-Block activists with whole layers of dissident radicals, many of whom were never involved in the H-Block campaign in any real sense.

Q. People are looking for a fighting campaign on social issues, for independent working-class action on social issues?

A. That's right. This election campaign has successfully challenged the partition idea that separates the national question from what people down here on this side of the British-imposed border call "working-class politics."

In the H-Block campaign we realized that what we needed was support down here, and we had fifty years of partition education to try to overcome in the length of time it took ten men to die, and we couldn't do it.

I think that many people in the campaign realized that the absence of a strong anti-imperialist working-class tradition in the South was what really beat us. There is a strong feeling now that what we can do is start building it.

Q. Do you think that this campaign represents a step toward the formation of a mass revolutionary workers party?

A. I don't think that we are very clear yet about what it means in real terms. In principle that is what it means, in principle that is what people are looking for. In campaigning in the constituency, I find that that's what a lot of unorganized people are looking for.

We started off trying to halt a demoralization, and at this stage in the campaign we think we have a fighting chance of actually ending up after the election further along the road than we thought, that we have a fighting chance of getting a seat here.

It always happens in an election campaign that the people you most convince of the correctness of your argument are the people who work for you. So, the estimation of winning a seat might be overoptimistic. But certainly the impact of

the alternative we offered was bigger than we thought it would be, and we may have much bigger opportunities than we expected to get something going.

Q. It's certainly true that the sort of campaign workers that you have attracted to your campaign give some indication of what the nucleus of a mass revolutionary workers party could be. They seem well rooted in their communities and intelligent, militant working people with a considerable experience already of radical politics of one kind or another.

A. This is the first time that I have fought an urban seat. It is the first time that I have actually gone out to organize trade-unionized working people where they are.

What I find when I go up and knock on their doors is that they tell me what is needed in this country. They're the people who say, what we need to do is to build an independent voice, an independent organization for working-class people, what we need is to put together a political party that has no interest, that won't go to try to see what it can get out of Fianna Fail or Fine Gael (the bourgeois parties).

The H-Block movement has shown a way to overcome the sectarianism and division in the labor movement. On the doorsteps, many people who had nothing to do with the H-Block movement will tell you that we need something like the National H-Block Committee to fight on issues like unemployment and housing and the fact that we were being mugged by the multinational companies. If we could put the same numbers of people on the street on those issues and build that kind of a movement, we'd go somewhere.

The H-Block campaign is a practical example of something that works. It makes people look and say, well, we should apply that to our own problems.

You don't have to try to find some way of presenting the national struggle and the economic struggle in the same context. People can actually see them in the one context. What they want to know is what you're going to do about it.

Q. That is, the National H-Block Committee was able to organize people in practice to fight for something.

A. That's right, that's what people are looking for. At the same time, the illusion in parliamentary democracy is still deep here.

Q. But that's a two-sided question, isn't it? People may realize that the politicians lie and that

parliament doesn't do anything for them. But they want democratic representation, some way of imposing majority rule.

A. That's the gut feeling people have. At this stage they haven't thought it out.

It's also interesting the number of people who say when you get into a discussion with them that what we need here is a movement like Solidarnosc. These are ordinary people, not out of the Labour Party or any split from it, just ordinary people thinking out their problems.

I find a lot of trade-union people who are not in political parties, a lot of trade-union people coming out of the factories wear Solidarity badges. There are various kinds of badge wearers. Those who wear anti-apartheid movement badges, nuclear disarmament badges, are usually in the twenty-fiveish age group and from Labour Party backgrounds. But the politically unorganized rank-and-file trade-union member seems to be wearing a Solidarity badge.

Q. A right-wing candidate here tried to use the issue of Poland against you, saying that you were for socialism and that meant the sort of repression that is going on in Poland. What was the effect?

A. He fell flat on his face. We were able to show that it was people like us who actually organized public support for Solidarnosc. I also pointed to the fact that Lech Walesa supported the demands of the hunger strikers, and the right-winger in question, Sean "Dublin Bay" Loftus, did not. I said that what Solidarity was for was the kind of democracy for the working people that I am fighting for. So, they dropped the argument of Poland, because it worked against them.

Q. Although parliamentary politics are a rigged game, there is obviously a very important democratic aspect to the sort of campaign you are waging. You have to organize groups of people and you have to go out and convince people to work for you and to vote for you. That's part of the problem with the Republicans, isn't it? Their fundamental concept is that it is the daring, initiative, and dedication of small groups that matters. You show your strength, give an example, and the people will follow you. That's a fundamental difference from Marxists whose objective is to educate the working people to take their fate into their own hands.

A. Well, in reality the Republicans think the way you describe, but they don't know it. Now, they're

changing, but they don't know it either. The Republicans know that for all their weaknesses the hunger strike campaign, the National H-Block Committee, mass action and democratic organization worked. They have to take account of that so they are slowly shifting. This is largely imperceptible, but it creates crises when definite decisions have to be made. It probably produces a turnover in their membership.

Q. When members educated in the old line drop out?

A. That's right.

Q. But why then have the Republicans been seeming to go backward politically since the end of the hunger strike? Before that their paper, "An Phoblacht-Republican News" had a lot of political vitality and was developing. In the last months, it has been strikingly empty politically. They've hardly said anything about Poland, for example, although they claim to, and do, represent the Irish revolutionary nationalist tradition that has been historically closely linked to Poland.

A. In fairness to them, everybody fights their own corner first; it requires some kind of political perspective to be able to relate that to the struggles of other people. And since the end of the hunger strike, it has been the republicans who have been cracked down on, and for some time they have been finding their main energies concentrated on the defense of their own organization.

In particular, their most political leaders, like Jim Gibney, have been picked off. He was a key person in the development of the H-Block campaign. Now he is in prison in Belfast on charges and will probably remain there for a year to a year and a half before he is even tried.

At the height of the mass movement, people like Jim Gibney could not have been arrested. Now he's being charged with offenses committed in 1975-76. And this is on the basis of the testimony of someone described as a born-again Christian, whose mental stability will certainly be questioned. That is an indication of how far back we had fallen in terms of mass organization.

But now we are beginning to reorganize and recover our direction. And we can move forward on the basis of gains that have profoundly changed the terms of politics in Ireland. We are going into a harder and harder fight and we need more and more help from our friends internationally, from the workers, revolutionaries, and other fighting peoples.



(DR)

By Vincent Kermel

WASHINGTON ORGANIZES MASS MURDER IN CENTRAL AMERICA

After the failure of the offensive of the Faribundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in January 1981, the Salvadoran dictatorship counted heavily on the prospect that the guerrillas could be defeated or at least seriously weakened. Its plan for a "political solution" through elections was largely predicated on that.

The government's unsuccessful attempts in the spring of 1981 to establish control over the areas held by the guerrillas and the resumption of large-scale actions by the FMLN starting last summer showed that its hopes were in vain.

As a consequence of this, according to the FMLN, the Pentagon asked its strategists to work out a military plan, and this led to the operation recently carried out in the department of Morazan. The objective was no longer to wipe out the guerrillas but to deal a crushing blow to the regions that have traditionally remained outside the control of the government.

The government's failure to destroy Radio Venceremos shows how limited were the results of this new tactic. Nonetheless, these operations offered the occasion for massacres, which were designed to increase the numbers of civilian refugees.

With the collaboration of Honduran troops the dictatorship and the imperialists hoped to catch the liberated areas between two fires.

One of the finer points of the counter-insurgency tactics developed by the U.S. advisors in El Salvador was the kidnapping of close relatives of FMLN leaders, such as the father of Comandante Villalabos. Then these disappearances were explained as the result of clashes between "rival groups of extremists."

The number of deaths in the last two years, according to an account in the January 20 *Le Monde* was 30,000, and the number of people driven from their homes, 500,000. Some 42% of the Salvadoran population is illiterate, and 93% of school-age children suffer from malnutrition. Since December 1981, the gross national product has declined by 13%, exports by 35% and imports by 23.3%.

As if they have not inflicted enough suffering on the Salvadorian people, the American imperialists have now begun to train the local army in "scientific" methods of torture.

A deserter from a paratroop unit based at Ilopango, near San Salvador recently confirmed that American instructors were present during training in torture techniques. The January 12, 1982, *International Herald Tribune* reported: "According to Mr. Gomez eight U.S. military advisors, some in dark green uniforms and others in camouflage uniforms stood in the background with the commander of the Salvadoran air forces and other high Salvadoran officers during the torture sessions."

Pursuant to their strategy of building up an elite batallion, U.S. authorities announced in mid-December that 1,000 Salvadoran soldiers and 500 officers would be trained in Fort Bragg and Fort Benning in American Green Beret units.

Despite all their efforts, however, the U.S. authorities admit that the Salvadoran junta is in trouble. The U.S. ambassador in San Salvador confided in a correspondent from the Italian daily *La Repubblica* that the guerrillas were making progress. The FMLN's actions are becoming more and more daring.

On January 27, 1982, the FMLN succeeded in destroying about 70% of the junta's air power in a raid on the Ilopango base, dealing the junta its most serious military setback in the whole past period.

Comandante "Sebastian," who led this operation, says that his men penetrated into the military perimeter at 10.00 p.m. on the south side of the base and reached their target at midnight:

"We used a total of 42 charges of TNT, which we managed to place in 10 minutes time." He continued: "Then we withdrew. After the charges went off, a military helicopter flew over the location looking for us and indiscriminately machine-gunning the whole area." (*Barricada*, January 30, 1982.)

It is probable that in order to mount such an operation, the FMLN had to renew its

contacts with opposition elements inside the armed forces.

In the capital city itself, on February 10 the guerrillas staged a bazooka attack on the main telecommunications center. An Agence France Presse dispatch noted: "This spectacular operation aroused a certain uneasiness in leading circles, since the rebels seem to have a good infrastructure in the capital itself."

These military setbacks for the dictatorship have undermined the credibility of the elections scheduled for the 28th of March and even put in question whether they will be held.

The February 17 *International Herald Tribune* notes: "U.S. and Salvadoran officials now say that far from putting an end to political violence, next month's elections are likely to be the prelude to stepped-up fighting."

The junta's military reverses and the approach of the elections have provoked numerous alarmist statements from U.S. officials. For example, Undersecretary of State Thomas Enders has said that "a decisive battle is underway in El Salvador." And General Alexander Haig refuses to preclude the possibility of direct military intervention in defense of the "strategic interests" of the United States.

Parallel to this, Washington has stepped up its military aid, granting 55 million dollars in emergency assistance to the junta. Congress has been asked to increase the aid appropriation by 100 million dollars for fiscal year 1982 and raise it to 300 million dollars in 1983.

This vast financial and military aid program--Washington has just sent several ultramodern aircraft to Salvador-- is part of a vast counterrevolutionary plan for all of Central America, which is also directed against the Nicaraguan revolution.

These aggressive moves by U.S. imperialism make it clear that a major battle in the world revolution is now developing in Central America. It is vital that all socialists, democrats, and all defenders of basic human rights mobilise in defence of the Salvadoran people, who are facing a machine for mass murder and terror being set up by the world's greatest power. ■

A REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK OF THE SALVADORAN WAR

This article has been translated from the February issue of the Swedish magazine ETC. It has been somewhat abridged for reasons of space and some slight changes have also been made in order to retain continuity.

TEGUCIGALPA--Lieutenant Haverman was smiling. It was not a pleasant smile. But there was no doubt that the muscular movement visible across his square face as it appeared above his morning paper was indeed a smile.

Lieutenant John Haverman. I think I learned his name from the boxes that came for him. This was the first time in the weeks since I started seeing him that the expression on his face showed anything other than unrelieved sullenness.

"Damn them Poles," he burst out. "I said it, didn't I? That's the way they are, them Commies." (This was the time of the Jaruzelski coup.)

This outburst was followed by an almost satisfied sigh. Then, after a few minutes silence:

"Shit... shame it wasn't them Russians."

Lieutenant John Haverman lived together with nine other American officers in the Eden Boarding House. He had been through all the experiences of the Vietnam war and had gone through a special course in Panama. Now he was a U.S. military advisor in Honduras. I asked one of his companions if he was a tourist. The answer was "no, we're just teachin' a little shootin'."

After that communication was limited to a quick nod in the morning. However, it often happened that the ten American military advisors gathered around a bottle of *Flora del Cana rum* to drink away their troubles. Their loud talk slipped from comparisons between the whores in San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa to their life's work--beating 'them Commies.'

It was the evening of the day that the military took over in Poland. But it wasn't that they were talking about. It was El Salvador.

Lieutenant John Haverman's broad Western American accent spread through the night. It reached up to the terrace where I was sitting. He was interested in another news item.

A UPI dispatch from San Salvador reported that the Salvadoran minister

of defense, Colonel Jose Guillermo Garcia, said that his troops had taken the site of the FMLN radio station, Radio Venceremos. Garcia went on to say that the offensive against Morazan that his forces launched on December 1 had been a total success. A hundred, perhaps hundreds of guerrillas, had been killed. The rest had been driven from their positions and were now in headlong flight.

"I was talking with Pete yesterday. He says the heat's on in El Salvador. They've driven out all the 'Commies' and rubbed out a whole lot of them."

So, the American military advisors were celebrating. What was disturbing was that this time, Colonel Garcia might not be lying.

A week earlier, in the village of Castelar on the border with El Salvador, "Reina" looked up at the mountain tops on the other side of the river and said:

"When the dogs bark up on Pena Blanca, we know that they're coming down. So, they were, the Salvadoran soldiers were coming down from their mountain-top camps. The people of Castelar looked up at the shadows of the mountains that were already beginning to dissolve in the suddenly falling darkness.

"You can see their flashlights," someone said.

Most of the people in Castelar were refugees from the town of Acatan in Chalatenango, the Salvadoran province just across the mountains. They had chosen to live with Honduran families who opened their homes to them instead of the refugee camps a few kilometers away in La Virtud.

Some were standing around Reina and looking at the distant flashlights. The fear that haunts all their nights was obviously beginning to close in on them. These people lived in Victoria's house.

Victoria was more afraid this evening than even two weeks ago, when her husband, *Ciro Cruz*, was murdered. Yesterday, Victoria was summoned to Captain Moya, commander of the camp in La Virtud. "He told me that if I continued to look for information about *Ciro's* death, more blood would flow."

The indications were that *Ciro Cruz*, who worked for the Catholic agency *Caritas*, was murdered by Honduran soldiers acting on Captain Moya's orders.

But it was not just Captain Moya's threats that frightened Victoria this evening. In the morning a group of ten Salvadoran soldiers had come into La Virtud. Quite openly, under the eyes of the inhabitants, they went right to the military headquarters next to the church and talked with Captain Moya.

What had they talked about? That was the question that was bothering Victoria. "Were they coming over to kill us all?" There was an attempt to inject a reassuring note. "They have never come to Castelar," Reina said. It was squelched. "There has to be a first time."

There was another disturbing sign. Yesterday evening, Radio Venceremos had been on the air only a quarter of an hour. It reported that the military had launched their biggest offensive yet in Morazan and that the station would discontinue its broadcasting for a time for "technical reasons."

This morning, two Salvadoran Fighters swept in over Castelar, flying in a wide circle toward La Virtud. They came back and flew low over the mountains to the other side of the river. Then two muffled but powerful explosions were heard.

Had the military started a new offensive against Chalatenango? The questions increased. But in the evening, they all merged into one. "Are they coming to kill us all?" They didn't come.

They didn't come that night. But they were nearby. The night was an inferno of gunfire. By the sound of breathing, you could tell that no one slept. But no one talked either. "They" were near. Already before dawn, everyone was up. While we were eating by bonfires and waiting for the sun to come up, *Dona Angelica* said:

"If only those Americans hadn't gotten involved. If they had only left us in peace, everything would have been over by now. We could live in peace and work."

The people didn't want us to go. The moment we were ready to leave, a report came that Salvadoran soldiers had crossed the border at La Cuesta and were on their way here. In entering Honduras, they had immediately killed another *Caritas* worker. The fear in Castelar would be even greater this evening. The two American priests who replaced us as "night watchers" in Victoria's house could do nothing about that.

So, in one respect, Colonel Jose Guillermo Garcia and his Honduran cohorts had been successful. Fear had taken root among the Salvadoran refugees and among the Hondurans who sympathized with them.

Spreading fear was a conscious strategy. The aim was to "persuade" the refugees and, along with them, the international aid workers, journalists, the observers, the watching eyes, to move back to the new camps at Mesa Grande far from the border. Then, the frontier area would be left free for more extensive coordinated military actions beyond the view of any watching eyes.

This operation was started right after the arrival of Lieutenant John Haverman at the end of July. Had this success been followed up with gains in Morazan as well? The boisterous noises that emanated from the vicinity of Lieutenant John Haverman's bottle of rum suggested that. Had Colonel Garcia really spoken the truth when he said that the offensive was a "total success?"

No answer could be found in Tegucigalpa. There was no way to go to Morazan. The only thing left to do was go to San Salvador. As I left, Morazan in the distance seemed like a picture postcard--silent, unmoving across the almost empty savanna.

SHADOW PLAY IN THE SALVADORAN CAPITAL

San Salvador was decked out for Christmas. The military press office was closed for the holiday. No responsible officer could be found. But the ruling Christian Democracy Party had called a special conference. Over the entrance to the party's central headquarters was a banner saying: "The First Peaceful Revolution in Latin America." The party's own armed guards moved in the shadows behind the iron gates. After a half hour's checking of press credentials: "Sorry, you can't go in."

Official San Salvador seemed to want to shut its eyes to the war. No statement by officials, not even about the "victorious offensive in Morazan."

The papers more than before described the manifestations of the war as a matter of ordinary criminality.

About Morazan, they wrote that "the remaining subversives" had begun to fight among themselves. On the offensive, there was nothing. Only the English language journal News Gazette published a picture of a truck-column soldier "on his way home after the victorious offensive in Morazan." No, official San Salvador did not want to talk about the war. It wanted to talk about the elections on March 28 for the Constituent Assembly. Naturally, there is no question of the resistance fronts, the FDR and FMLN, taking part in them.

What the Americans want this election for is to legitimize the government so that they can send in more military and economic aid. It was not someone from the FDR or the FMLN who offered this analysis. It was the lawyer Rene Fortin Margana, leader of Accion Democratica, one of the five bourgeois opposition parties, who said this.

"They have framed an electoral law to guarantee a Christian Democratic victory," he explained. To telling criticism from him and other bourgeois figures, the Christian Democrats and the junta offered only the reply that these rival parties were corrupt, power hungry, and had a history of totalitarianism.



(DR)

They were all telling the truth, in what they said about each other. The electoral law was rigged. The other parties, like the Christian Democrats were corrupt and power hungry, and those that had any history at all had one marked by totalitarianism. The most striking thing, however, was that the debate, despite the publicity given to it, was like a shadow play.

No one understood it. No one paid any attention to it. No one was concerned about it. The debate had nothing to do with reality.

Even in San Salvador, where the junta's control is most effective, it was hard to find anyone outside of the party apparatuses and the corridors of power who treated the election and the discussion around it as anything other than a conundrum.

The reality was the war. If the war's existence was not denied entirely, the parties' spokespersons sidestepped the question by saying: "That's the military's affair." But the military was "closed for the holidays."

So, in San Salvador also I could find no answer to the question of whether there was any basis for Colonel Garcia's proclamations of victory.

It took thirty-five hours traveling, spread out over three nights, to get a definite answer. But then I found out the truth and it was resounding and ever more powerful. I found it as we were nearing the heart of the Eastern Front--The Frente Oriental-Francisco Sanchez-Morazan.

THE TRUTH

Colonel Garcia's claims were false.

Immediately after our arrival, Padre Rogelio Poncell, a Belgian priest who has lived a long time in El Salvador, began a New Year mass for the heroes and martyrs who fell in the struggle for freedom. It was broadcast by Radio Venceremos, which had resumed regular broadcasting some days before.

The reading from the Gospel According to Saint Luke was preceded by a reading of the poem "The party": "...if you do not come ready to give your heart and your life, don't bother to come..."

The need to be prepared to give your life in the struggle for the liberation of the poor and the oppressed was the theme of Padre Rogelio's New Year sermon.

"That is the great, unparalleled heart of our Christian faith..."

At the end of the service, the traditional "Peace be with you," was followed by the slogan: "We Swear That We Will Win!"

Through the singing of the crickets, we could hear the noise of the motors that supply electricity to Radio Venceremos.

THE GUERRILLA COMMANDER'S STORY

Just after midnight on New Year's morning seemed an impossible time for an interview. But Jorge Melendez, Comandante Jonas, commander of the Eastern Front, was ready to offer his time. He is perhaps thirty, bearded, dark brown eyes, broad shouldered, sturdy.

"The enemy needs a military and political victory to lend their electoral farce some credibility," he said. "So they threw more than ever before into this offensive. The plan was drawn up--that is officially acknowledged--by a group of American advisors specially sent here. Every day for a month, they prepared the way for the offensive with recon flights, as well as the placing of measuring devices and information gathering apparatuses."

The New Year's night was warm and damp. People stripped to their shorts were baking tortillas. The mood was peaceful. People were laughing and chatting.

Comandante Jonas was tired, but he spoke in a thoughtful well-organized way:

"We knew that they were preparing a major offensive, and we knew that their objective was to silence Radio Venceremos and disorganize our forces. They cannot crush us, they know that. What they wanted to do was disorganize us and neutralize our offensive capacity. So, they sent in their best troops... I don't mean the best in a good sense but the militarily most experienced and hardened--the Atlacatl Brigade (trained by the American advisors), the cavalry squadrons, the paratroopers, and certain battalions of the national and rural police forces. In all, about 4,000 men were involved, plus helicopters and Fighters."

Maravilla interrupted, saying that when the invasion began, the ten helicopters the junta has, flew in low in a group from one place to another to direct their forces: "It was like that scene in Apocalypse Now, you know."

"Yes," continued Comandante Jonas. "We knew what they were planning, and we prepared our defense outside the enemy's range of operations. In a way, the enemy's concentrating troops here was an advantage for us. We could go on the offensive in other places."

In fact, while the junta's offensive was underway, units of the FMLN carried out a successful attack on the military camps in three of the biggest towns in the area covered by the Francisco Sanchez Eastern Front--Usulután, San Miguel, and La Unión.

"The offensive tactic in these cities was complemented up here with a tactic that we call diversive resistance," Comandante Jonas continued. "The essential thing for us was to protect the radio station and the civilian population. With that objective, we followed a tactic based on getting the enemy to advance in the direction that we wanted. We built up positions that gave the impression of wanting to defend, then gave them up one by one. That gave the enemy, 'Los Cuilios,' the impression that they were gaining. While certain units diverted the enemy in this way, others were positioned to attack the enemy's rearguard in order to lend support to those that were encircled when they tried to break out."

"At the same time, we warned the civilian population to leave their homes. We grouped them, together with our armed personnel, the radio team, and other units in columns that spread out in various directions from the place to which we were luring the enemy."

"Our tactic worked perfectly. After we broke the encirclement, our troops spread out in various direc-

tions. Some of them escorted unarmed columns, while others were organized to attack the enemy from various points. This part of the operation was also successful.

"We kept 'Los Cuilios' on the move constantly. But we were also successful in extending the operation zone so widely that the enemy found it difficult to find any targets. In some cases, they spent a whole day attacking a hill where no position had been set up."

"We estimate that the enemy suffered sixty-two casualties, eighteen dead and the rest wounded. We took six casualties, including only one death. Moreover, we captured a lot of weapons and ammunition."

Carrying off such an operation was far from easy. It meant leading columns of up to 1,000 persons, including many women and children, through the darkness of night to secure places. It meant silent marches in absolute blackness and lying quiet in hiding places during the day. In one column, a woman gave birth to a child. It meant overcoming exhaustion and fear. It meant trusting those who gave the commands, and the commanders being able to trust themselves.

STRENGTH OF THE RESISTANCE

"It might seem that we functioned like a machine," Comandante Jonas said. "But it was far from like that. To achieve success required an enormous human exertion. You can see yourself how we operate, and everything that is going on now had to be kept up then too. Food production cannot be stopped. The medical brigades have to remain on the alert, the messengers have to be constantly moving around. This work goes on day and night. Without this enormous human effort, without the human support that it represents, none of this would have been possible."

Even now at 2:00 a. m. on New Year's morning activity continued. There was radio contact between the various "campamentos," silent groups moved about, and the military positions had to be maintained. Food production--this rarely involved anything more than tortillas and beans or rice--almost never ceased.

Constantly moving about were the messengers, food carriers, or replacements on their way out into the darkness. And others were coming back. There was the rattle of weapons. People presented themselves. There was a lot of washing of hands. Everyone has to wash their hands before eating their two tortillas and going to sleep where they can find room to lie down.

"After all," Comandante Jonas continued. "The enemy forces numbered 4,000. They had all the technical equipment. They had helicopters,

They had inexhaustible supplies of ammunition--cannon, grenade launchers, advanced radio equipment.

Our forces had achieved a considerable military capacity."

"But," he stressed, "the most important thing is that our combatientes have a higher morale than the enemy. They have the support of the people, while 'Los Cuilios' are despised by the people. We know what we are fighting for. 'Los Cuilios' don't."

You could see the truth of what he was saying just by looking around. Almost all the people there came from villages around Morazan. They were poor farmers and agricultural workers, or sons and daughters of the poor rural working people. Some were workers from the cities. A few were students. But it was a whole risen people.

The assurance they all showed was an illustration of what Comandante Jonas said. Their local roots gave them a knowledge of the terrain, the mountain stairways, all the thousand ways of avoiding the enemy.

In late December, when the enemy troops started to retreat, the FMLN units retook the areas that had been abandoned. At the same time, a serious attack was launched against the fixed positions that the enemy had established around these areas.

In these attacks, more casualties were inflicted on the enemy, more material was captured, and the FMLN took five prisoners. They were Manuel Antonio Rosales Chavez, a twenty-five year-old sergeant; Nelson Ernest Hernandez, eighteen, a private; Jorge Francisco Lemus Casillo, eighteen, a private; Jose Alberto Martinez Vallalta, fifteen, a private; and Adalbero Campos, eighteen, a private.

"They grabbed me on the way to school," Jorge Francisco Lemus said. "They only gave me time to return my books to my mother." I wanted to desert all the time," another said, who could barely write his name. "But they caught several deserters, and so I got too scared to try it."

"They're taking everybody over the age of fourteen," said Jose Martinez Vallalta, who is only fifteen.

The prisoners had seen some of the work of the Atlacatl elite units:

"They told us that they killed 700 guerrillas," Manuel said. "But later when we came to Mozote, we saw that it was women and children."

The hundreds of guerrillas that the minister of defense, Jose Guillermo Garcia claimed were killed in the offensive were not guerrillas. They were women, children, and old people--unarmed civilians.

Most of them were deeply religious, many of them members of var-

ious religious sects. They did not want to heed the FMLN's warning to evacuate the villages as the offensive neared.

"They won't do anything to us," these people said. "We aren't involved. We will stay where God wills, and if God wills that we die here, then so be it."

Now as witnesses were starting to stream in the villages were being retaken, the macabre statistics could be tallied up. About 900 persons, most of them women, children, and old people, were murdered by the junta's elite units.

SLAUGHTER

We approached Mozote at dawn. There "compas" (companeros) went with us. The countryside was dark. The path led through woods and groves. It reminded me a bit of Vastmanland in Sweden.

As soon as we came close to the village, I noticed the smell. The odor of death. Bodies left unburied.

On the right, there was a church. The plaza in front, with its grass and stepping stones, seemed more meadow than market place. Three streets extended in various directions from it.

Mozote must have been a pleasant village. Now there was hardly a house in it left whole. Most of the dead bodies lay under collapsed roofs. Others were hastily buried. In some houses, human skeletons lay over broken beams. Here there was a skull. There chest bones. A shoe with a severed leg. There was an audible flutter of wings. The trees were alive with vultures.

In one house on the outskirts, lay an old woman, naked, her body hunched over, her hands covering her face, as if she were shielding herself from a blow. Her body was almost whole... almost.

The first thing the government troops did when they entered on the evening of December 11 was to steal all the valuables.

Rofina Maya was one of the few villagers who survived. She talked so fast that it was hard to follow her. It was as if she was trying to get through the story so quickly that she would not have to think about it again.

"They put the men up in the church. The women were taken into Alfredo Marquez's house. At 12:00, they started killing the men. In the afternoon, they started on the women. The young ones were taken up on the hill and raped, then shot. They took me out with six others at night. I was lucky. It must have been a miracle of God.

"I hid behind a tree. They didn't see me, even though I was no further away from them than I am from you. I stood still and saw them shoot the others, and then burn their bodies.

I stood still, I don't know where I got the strength. The soldiers were only a few feet away. They started to talk.

"I have killed fourteen women and eight men," one of them said. "But now Captain Ortega wants me to kill kids too. But I won't do that." I had to listen to them a whole hour. Another soldier told him that Captain Ortega would kill him if he didn't do what he was told. "That doesn't matter," he said. "I can kill men and women all right, but I can't kill kids who never did anything."

"I don't know how I could have stood so still listening to them. It must have been God's will. Then all but two of them left. I heard them starting to kill the children. At the same time, some others shouted that there were good things to take from the houses, and one of the two went off in that direction. He must have found something to take. It was then that I ran away."

Rofina Maya lost her husband and five children that day in Mozote. She is thirty-eight.

"My oldest are all that I have left," she said. "They were with the muchachos (young people), so I still have them."

Arambala is a few hours away, near the big road between Gotera and Perquin, the "Calle Negra," as it is called, the "Black Road," because it is covered with asphalt. The soldiers killed only five of the local people there before the compas drove them away. Arambala is a bigger town. The streets are covered with big paving stones. It is a well ordered, clean, and pleasant village. There is even a telephone.

Eight compas accompanied us. All had FAL rifles, which have greater fire power than a G-3 or M-16. On the Calle Negra, the Cuילים might be lying in ambush, and it was already afternoon. We felt better.

Arambala's streets were full of people as we entered. The compas greeted acquaintances here and there. No one stopped them to discuss with them. Here everyone knows who they are. They have known many of them from childhood.

Despite the crowds on the streets, Arambala had a desolate look. When we came out on the road going to the Calle Negra, we saw why. The people were leaving the village. A dozen of them were wandering up the white gravel road, bundles on their shoulders, bags and children in their hands. Some had their barnyard fowl hanging from their necks.

"What's going on?" I asked. "Why are you going away?"

An old man looked at me, troubled and astonished.

"Don't you know? Don't you know what they did in Mozote, They said that they would come back." He hurried on.

We turned away from the gravel path down a stairway. Soon we would reach the Calle Negra. A week earlier, when we came from another direction, we had been forced to turn back. The Cuילים controlled the road, and it could not be crossed. We could have crossed it before, but at the risk of a clash. However, the FMLN's military tactics call for not "getting involved" in clashes except when you want to and on your own conditions.

Then it had been night. Now it was broad daylight, and we had to go a few kilometers on the road itself. The Calle Negra cuts through several densely wooded hills where it is easy to hide. Were there any Cuילים up there?

We went two by two on each side of the road. Suddenly a group of people ran from under the big tree right before a long downhill curve.

"Hey, what's that?" I shouted.

"It's compas," my companion said reassuringly.

And there stood the whole group of them. Tonio with his reserved smile and confident look. Pepe, the comedian. Chico with the radio transmitter. Aflredo who was almost toothless... Thirteen people from one of the many campamentos that are strung out across Morazan. They had Chinese bazookas and a couple of captured cannon.

"We hold the Calle Negra now," said Tonio. "We are waiting for the Cuילים. They will come, but they have not yet dared set foot outside Gotera."

Then the air was filled with the roaring of motors.

"Only commercial traffic," said Tonio, as three cargo trucks swung around the bend and stopped in front of the compas. Nods of recognition. Exchange of information. The drivers bummed cigarettes from the compas.

Finally, another three nights travel. Back through the other campamentos. By a sugar factory in full production, past the livestock farms, by the new clinic, where the wounded that had followed us on mules and stretchers during the first night's travel had begun to be treated, back through the forests, across the savannas, up the terrifying mountain stairways and the steep slopes, back over the rivers. "Home safe," Mabel had said, an irresistibly lovable person, who had lost her left hand in a bomb explosion.

And so, I went back to the Eden Boarding House in Tegucigalpa, where Lieutenant John Haverman and his buddies were still staying. ■

MEXICAN TROTSKYISTS CAMPAIGN FOR DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM, SALVADOR AND POLAND

This interview was given to Gerry Foley in Paris in mid-January by Manuel Aguilar Mora, a leader of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT), Revolutionary Workers Party, Mexican section of the Fourth International. The transcript was translated and edited.

Question. The campaign that the PRT is running for the Mexican presidential elections that will be held on July 4 is the first major national election campaign that the Mexican Trotskyists have undertaken.

What is the social and political context of this election campaign?

Answer. The relative stability that has existed in the country is beginning to break down.

On the economic level, Mexico is starting to be drawn into the world recession, which up till now, thanks to the oil boom, it has been able to avoid. The economic crisis here will certainly be very deep.

The oil boom started in 1977. Mexican petroleum exports went from almost nothing to nearly two million barrels a day. The boom lasted until 1980. But in 1981 it started to wane. In May of that year, the U.S. succeeded in the first phase of its operation to break the back of OPEC. It forced down the price of oil by four dollars a barrel.

It is estimated that the cut in the oil price cost the Mexican government ten billion dollars last year. That is about one fourth of its total foreign debt. Mexico is now deeper in debt than Brazil, which had had the most massive debt of any country in the world.

What this loss of income means for Mexico can be seen if you consider that the other industries have been stagnating for some time and despite heavy investments in agriculture, the country is still obliged to import substantial quantities of grain and other foodstuffs. In particular, the oil income had been subsidizing the development of agriculture and food imports.

Q. What is the inflation rate?

A. It is running at about 30%, that is, three times that of the U. S. A devaluation of the peso is almost inevitable.

Q. How is the government responding to these difficulties?

A. For the first time, the government finds itself caught in a tight corner from which it can find no way out. It has to reduce its social spending, all the benefits that it has traditionally parcelled out as a means of social control. The vast bureaucracy of the government, the official party, the unions, official peasant associations, and so forth is based on this system of social benefits. So, the horizon is dark for the government.

Q. What sort of impact has the revolutionary upsurge in Central America had on Mexico?

A. The main impact of the Salvadoran revolution is among workers and among the peasants. This is much more true than in the case of the Nicaraguan revolution. It is a thousand times more true than in the case of the Cuban revolution.

The Cuban revolution never had an important influence in Mexico outside of some student circles.

In the case of the Nicaraguan revolution, sections of the democratic and progressive bourgeoisie had considerable weight in the solidarity movement.

But the base of the movement of solidarity with El Salvador is essentially the worker and peasant masses.

The impact of the Salvador revolution is particularly strong among the poor masses in the Mexican states that border on Central American countries.

Take Chiapas, for example. This is the most important of the border states. It is very backward. The conditions there are quite similar to those in the Central American countries.

There is a large Native American population, many of whom do not speak Spanish. They are to a large extent part of one Mayan nation that extends throughout the area. And so they identify very closely with the struggle of the Native Americans in Guatemala in particular, who are their people.

The Mexican government is promoting the slogan, "Chiapas Is Mexico, too." Our slogan is "Central America Starts in Chiapas."

Q. Are there concrete links between the peoples of Central America and the people of Chiapas?

A. There are a lot of Guatemalan refugees in Chiapas, and organiza-

tions are developing to aid them. The Mexican government is obviously getting worried about the area. They have pumped in a lot of money. They started public works programs.

The government is also starting to move against the Central American refugees. Last year, it carried out a scandalous action. It deported hundreds of Guatemalan refugees back to certain death. The entire left has gone on a campaign to denounce this.

Q. How much repression is there in the rest of the country?

A. The government has been developing a system of kidnapping people, starting with former guerrillas, and holding them in secret prisons, and often assassinating them. This system was tested on a grand scale by the rightists in Argentina. We have been building a mass campaign against this. Our candidate, Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, had a son kidnapped years ago. She has not heard anything about him since. She heads one of the organizations that represents the families of the "disappeared ones."

The general location of some of the secret prisons is known. We have held election rallies in some of those towns and there have also been protest meetings against the existence of secret prisons in the area.

Q. When did you start your campaign?

A. Formally our campaign started in the middle of November. We had a kickoff rally that was attended by four thousand persons. It also inaugurated our electoral coalition, the Frente Obrero, Campesino, Popular (The Workers, Peasants, and People's Front).

Q. What is the background to your presidential campaign? How was it prepared politically?

A. Last March, our party decided that the best presidential candidate for the left would be Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, since she had distinguished herself as one of the main leaders of the fight for democratic rights, which would have to be one of the main axes of a campaign by the left.

In our country, because of the traditions of the Mexican revolution and the government's methods of social control, the issue of democratic

rights is very closely tied to the problem of building effective mass organizations that can really represent the people.

Besides the right of free speech and assembly, the right of free association and the right to belong to organizations and parties of your own choice is central. The government tries to force all workers and peasants to belong only to organizations it controls and to force them to affiliate to the government party, the PRI. Attempts by the workers and peasants to form their own organizations or fight for control of the established ones have often been suppressed by armed force.

Q. Does that mean that you proposed Rosario as a united-front candidate?

A. Yes. This election will be something quite new in Mexico. For the first time, two left parties that oppose the government will be on the ballot, the United Socialist Party of Mexico (PSUM), which includes the old Communist Party; and the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), Mexican section of the Fourth International. For the first time, there is the possibility of putting forward a credible alternative to the government party. We believed that the two registered parties had a responsibility to the workers movement and to the masses to present a united candidate around which the entire movement could rally.

Q. What was the response of the PSUM?

A. They were not interested. In November, they named Arnaldo Martinez Verdugo, former general secretary of the Communist Party as their candidate. They did not bother even to discuss this with us or anyone else. They did it unilaterally.

Q. So, what did you gain by offering to collaborate with the PSUM in a united-front campaign?

A. We thought that it was important for the left to know who was responsible for the fact that the two left parties did not run a united campaign against the government in the elections.

In any case, Rosario's candidacy was the first proposed, and so from March until November the discussion of a campaign by the left centered around her. She is clearly a much more popular candidate than Martinez Verdugo. And since her candidacy was proposed earlier she had had more time to become known.

Q. Have you been able to get the support of other forces for your campaign?

A. Yes. We got the support of two other parties, which did not have ballot status. They joined our electoral coalition. They were the Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo, which comes out of a Maoist tradition; and the Union de Lucha Revolucionaria, which comes out of a split in the Socialist Current.

Besides this, other groups support us without being formally in the electoral coalition. One is the Organizacion Comunista Proletaria. This group is based primarily among electrical workers and includes nuclear-industry workers and steel-workers. It is a purely workers organization. The origin of it is the struggle waged by the Democratic Tendency in the Electrical Workers Union.

Q. What are the central issues in your campaign?

A. Our campaign has the following focus. It is a campaign for working-class independence from the government and from its official party. That means that its main objective is to expose the way the government and its party have coopted the workers movement and made it serve their pro-imperialist policy.

Our campaign centers on pushing the demand for the working class to break with the official party and found its own mass party independent of the bourgeoisie.

In this framework, we are putting forward a program calling for basic democratic rights. Because here one of the main obstacles to the workers forming their own party and even their own unions is the government's imposing its own organizations by force.

We support the new peasant organizations that have arisen in recent years and are united in the Coordinadora Campesina Revolucionaria Independiente and the Coordinadora Nacional "Plan de Ayala." And we support their demands of land to the tiller and cheap and easily available credit. The right of association is an important demand for the peasants, too, because the government tries to control them through its peasant organizations.

The demands of the shantytown dwellers are also very important, because the Mexican cities are mushrooming.

In Mexico City, for example, it is estimated that roughly half the population live in subhuman conditions. They are fighting for the right to organize, for minimal municipal services--lighting, drainage, etc.--and for recognition of their right to the land on which their homes are built and for recognition of their elected bodies.



Q. Do any of the shantytown dwellers organizations support your campaign?

A. Yes. Some of them do so through the Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo, which is in the electoral coalition. There are also others that are supporting us and have been represented at rallies.

Q. What about trade unions?

A. No unions are supporting us as such, although we have the backing of a number of influential activists.

We have been the first political organizations to hold rallies for trade unionists. For example, at the start of the campaign to get the PRT on the ballot, we held a rally for the Electrical Workers Union, to show that our campaign was going to be based primarily on unionists.

A central theme of the campaign is the need for a mass democratic workers party based on the unions. Everywhere we have the strength, we hold meetings in the unions, among the electrical workers, the oil workers, and the steelworkers.

We also expect that our campaign will enable us to link up with the large number of democratic and class-struggle tendencies in the unions that oppose the PRI union bosses, the infamous charros.

Q. What kind of results have you gotten so far from your campaign?

A. We started the campaign in Guerrero. This is a very important state because the repression there has been intense. So, we thought that it would be good for Rosario, an outstanding fighter against repression, to begin her campaign there.

In fact, the first stage of the campaign had to be a bit impromptu. The posters that we had were for the previous period, before Rosario was officially our candidate.

We visited the cities of Chipancingo, Tasco, Acapulco, Atoyac, and held very good rallies in all those places.

Despite the fact that we were not properly prepared, our campaign was every bit as effective as that of the PSUM.

The second stage of the campaign

started in January. A hundred thousand posters have already been printed.

Q. What sort of media coverage have you gotten?

A. We have been putting on one TV program a month since September. Also Rosario has been very widely interviewed on TV, radio, and in the press. The one that is to be put on this month will be largely devoted to Poland. We estimate that it will be viewed by two million people.

Q. What sort of international issues have been important in the campaign?

A. The main ones are El Salvador and Poland. We dedicated our second program to the Salvadoran revolution. The Communist Party companeros told us that they thought this was not very good electoral politics. That was because it gave the image of a party supporting an insurrection, supporting a revolution.

Beginning last January, coinciding with the FMLN offensive, we started a major campaign in support of the Salvadoran revolution. We are completely immersed in this work. Right now we are involved in building a world forum on solidarity with El Salvador that will be held in Mexico City at the end of March and will be attended by representatives of organizations from a very wide range of countries.

From the beginning, we linked defense of the revolution in El Salvador with defense of the revolutionary process in Poland.

Q. Did this cause you any problems in your El Salvador work with representatives of the Cuban and Nicaraguan government or forces that follow them?

A. No. The Cubans and Nicaraguans play no apparent role. They do not have any political influence here, and are in fact quite isolated in Mexican society. What was important was that linking El Salvador and Poland was popular with Mexican workers, who feel the issue of democracy very keenly.

Q. What was the response in Mexico to the crackdown in Poland?

A. We organized a small demonstration outside the Polish embassy on December 15 and issued a press statement. We were the first party in Mexico that came to the defense of Solidarity.

On December 17, we called a demonstration in the center of Mexico City. Two other Trotskyist groups joined with us, the Marxist Workers League and the Socialist Party.

About four thousand people participated. There was also one Communist Party deputy who played a pro-

minent role. There was a small group from the CP, about ten companeros.

I think that this was the first large political demonstration against Stalinist dictatorship in Latin America. The only other large protest against a Stalinist crime I know of was the turnout for Trotsky's funeral. But that was largely a personal tribute and an expression of moral outrage.

Q. The Mexican CP is sometimes called "Euro-Communist." Could you describe its reaction in more detail?

A. The PSUM did not take a position on Jaruzelski's action until quite late, almost a week afterward. Basically they came out for Jaruzelski, although they tried to cover this up to some extent by saying that they were concerned but that it was a Polish internal matter. Their position was about like that of the French CP.

We learned later that there was a very sharp fight in the PSUM Central Committee between a majority that supported Jaruzelski and a minority that was more favorable to Solidarity. The more pro-Stalinist won.

The result was the appearance of signs of resentment, lack of confidence, and demoralization among the ranks.

One expression of this came at the festival held yearly for the publication Oposicion, which represents all the groups that united with the CP in the PSUM. A small group of young party members demonstrated in support of Solidarity. The group was quickly broken up by the party defense guard.

Q. Is there much confusion about the character of Solidarity on the left?

A. The government and the right-wing union bureaucrats are trying to create as much as possible. For example, Felipe Velasquez, the top union bureaucrat said that the suppression of Solidarity showed the definitive failure of Communism, but that it had no importance for us because the Mexican labor movement is anti-Communist already.

Q. But you think the example of Solidarity is a positive one for the Mexican workers?

A. That's right. Building a movement in solidarity with Solidarity can clarify the nature of socialism itself, of workers democracy, of the democratic socialism we want in Mexico.

There are many lessons the Mexican workers movement can learn from Solidarity, about workers democracy, about self-management of industry, about independence of the labor movement from the state and from political parties.

Q. The Mexican workers have been through a similar experience haven't they, of state control of all mass organizations?

A. Yes, they know what that means.

Q. What effect do you think the repetition of the Kremlin slanders against Solidarity by the Cuban and Nicaraguan official press will have in Mexico?

A. A very bad reaction from the Mexican masses. It will deepen the isolation of the Nicaraguans and Cubans in Mexico.

Q. Is it true that even before the events in Poland one of the major Mexican polls showed that PRT as likely to get at least as large a vote as the PSUM?

A. Yes. But we are not taking anything for granted. We think that we will get a good vote and that this will be important. But we do not expect to get the half million votes that would be necessary to stay on the ballot. There is no such thing as permanent ballot status in Mexico anyway. You have to get a high vote in every election.

For us the important thing is to build a stronger party that will be more able to take on the tasks we have ahead of us.

We expect to triple our membership during the campaign. We have already taken steps to transform our publishing operations.

We have bought and installed a word-processing system in our print shop. We intend to publish many more pamphlets also and to begin a theoretical journal. We are also planning to set up a regular publishing house.

Q. What indications do you have of the way that the party is growing through the election campaign?

A. Well, you know the problem of communications in Mexico. We have no statistics. That will take quite a while. But we do have indications.

In cities such as Atoyac in Guerrero, cities of twenty or thirty thousand inhabitants, we had rallies of five and six hundred people.

In Ahatlan, which was the first stop in the second phase of the campaign, in the northeast, we had no organization before, and now we have a cell there. We are seeing this in a number of cities on the tours.

In Chiapas, for example, we have had cells in various towns such as San Cristobal and Tuxla Gutierrez, the most important ones. Now we are developing a relationship with a group of peasants living right on the border. They will certainly participate in the campaign. ■

By Daniel Jebrac

Brazilian Workers Party Prepares For Mass Election Campaign

In Brazil elections are still scheduled for next November. No less than four elections are due to take place: municipal, legislative, senatorial--and the first direct elections of the state governors since the establishment of the dictatorship.

When the question is raised whether these elections will really be held, members of the government reply that no doubt is possible since... President Figueredo himself has given his word.

On the other hand, just eight months before the event, it is still impossible to know definitively what the electoral regulations will be. The government modifies them as it likes from week to week, from 'pacote' (literally the bundle of dossiers setting out the decrees governing the elections) to 'pacotons' (smaller bundles of decrees) in order to ensure its victory.

The November 'pacote' was an example of the dictatorship's absolute cynicism. On the one hand, it established the 'tied vote', that is to say, the voters are obliged to vote for the same slate in the four elections. Since only legally recognised parties have the right to put up candidates, this means each voter is forced to choose one party and one alone for all the elections. This is practically affiliation by constraint!

On the other hand, coalitions are forbidden, which means that local agreements or common lists between two parties will be invalid.

These two decrees aim to split up the opposition in order to boost the chances of the ruling party, which opinion polls suggest is trailing in all the main states.

To respond to the November 'pacote', the two big bourgeois opposition parties, the Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PBDM) and the Popular Party (PP) have just

held a fusion congress on the 14th of February. This fusion demonstrates still further the bourgeois character of this opposition.

The PP is in fact today considered in Brazil to be the 'bankers party'. It is led by a number of old politicians who were among the 'brains' behind the 1964 coup d'etat. It figured in the initial project of the 'democratic opening' as a lifebelt for the regime, offering the possibility of forming a majority coalition between itself and the ruling party.

The dictatorship is not letting this pass. It threatens to ban this fusion de facto by appealing to the electoral tribunal. Only candidates who have belonged to a party for more than one year will be validated--which eliminates candidates of a party formed from a fusion eight months before the elections. One just has to think these things out....

The idea of a workers party, 'a party without bosses,' arose in 1979 among the militant trade unionists in the working-class suburbs of Sao Paulo. They had run up against the limits of working-class action in the framework of an official union subordinated to the state apparatus. The idea got a broad response in the young working class born out of the industrialization and the Brazilian miracle, which was free from the tradition of class collaboration.

Upsetting the dictatorship's expectations, the PT managed to obtain ballot status in 1981. To do this, it had to set up officially recognized party structures in a third of the election districts in at least nine states. The PT did this in fifteen out of the twenty-two states of the Brazilian union. It has organizations today in seventeen states and has between 300,000 and 350,000 persons affiliated to it.

It is still uncertain whether militant trade unionists like Lula at Sao

Paulo or Olivio Dutra at Porto Alegre will be able to stand. Trade union leaders suspended from their posts due to strikes are supposed to be able to stand. The only people who will be invalidated will be militants definitively sentenced under the National Security Law--i.e. after all the appeal procedures have been exhausted.

For example, Lula, the chairman of the Workers Party has been sentenced, but he has filed an appeal. He will only be invalidated after this appeal procedure has been exhausted. This will depend on the speed or slowness of judicial processes--in other words on the good will of the dictatorship. It will wait till the last moment to know if an extra opposition candidate will help or damage its electoral showing.

Within the Workers Party, these maneuvers have provoked an opposite reaction to the one that pushed the PP and the PBDM into a fusion. It confirmed that the 'democratic opening' remained firmly in the dictatorship's hands and the electoral dice were already very much loaded. The powerful rank-and-file current in favour of the party having its own candidates at all levels and opposed to political coalitions with bourgeois parties was therefore reinforced.

Thus, the Sao Paulo state PT congress designated, on the 23rd of January, Luis Inacio da Silva, Lula, as the party's candidate for governor of the state. We met Lula just after this nomination and interviewed him about the objections which his candidature has provoked as well as his reaction to the Polish bureaucracy's crackdown against Solidarnosc.

This interview is published below, following a round table discussion of PT leaders held before the Congress.

(DR)



WHAT SORT OF SOCIALISM FOR THE BRAZILIAN WORKERS?

Luis Inacio Da Silva: "Lula," chairman of the PT, steelworkers leader:

When we reject the Social Democratic perspective, this is because we think that Social Democracy is nothing more than the most developed answer to socialism that capitalism has been able to come up with.

Social Democracy was possible in the form it has taken in Germany, in Sweden, or in Great Britain, only insofar as there were other peoples who were exploited, as in Brazil, Latin America, Asia, and Africa....

I have also criticized bureaucratic socialism, the sort of socialism in which the state apparatus accepts no criticism and sets the rules of the game without the participation of society...

Em Tempo

During a television broadcast, some bosses wanted to know your position (or to provoke you) on the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat. What's the story?

Da Silva. I have no trouble in answering that question. It doesn't matter whether they were trying to provoke me or not. The fact is that we were discussing the question of power and what the workers would do when they take power. I said that we would do this and we would do that. I talked about the demands of the workers that the government and the bosses are refusing to meet today. At that moment, one of the bosses said: "But that would be a dictatorship of the proletariat!" Then, I answered that it would be the will of the majority made a reality, it would be a government of the majority answering to the needs of the majority. Now, if the workers are the majority -- since we are for democracy -- the government and the state power should go to them. And their interests should be served. Isn't democracy the will of the majority?

If the minority -- the bosses -- want to call that the dictatorship of the proletariat, that's their problem. Maybe that's the way they see democracy for the majority.

Em Tempo.

In defining itself as socialist, the PT is also defining its international relations. On what criteria will they be based?

Luis Eduardo Greenlalg: secretary for foreign relations: The PT is trying to establish relations with all Socialist and Communist parties in the world. At the same time, it is maintaining its independence. It is most interested in the revolutionary liberation movements in the so-

called third world countries.

We have relations with the Sandino National Liberation Front in Nicaragua (FSLN), with the Liberation Front of Mozambique, with the Palestinian Liberation Organization. In Europe, naturally we have contacts with the CPs and the SPs. But the PT is maintaining absolute independence from any international party or current.

Em Tempo.

Does the PT have relations with the Polish union Solidarity?

Greenlalg. That question has not arisen yet. Solidarity is a union, and the PT is a party. Thus, the room for relations is quite limited. But the PT trade unionists are trying to develop fraternal relations with Solidarity, although the meeting between Lula and Lech Walesa raised some problems.

Lech Walesa drew Lula's attention to the fact that it was difficult for a trade unionist such as himself to get involved in building a party. Lula didn't like that very much. You know the kind of people here in Brazil who use this kind of argument. Lula talked to him about the situation in our country, pointing out that here trade-union struggle is insufficient to impell a process of transformation in the interests of the workers. He explained to Walesa that we had exhausted the possibilities of purely trade-union action before making the leap to the PT. At the same time, he explained that while it was a party the PT had not yet succeeded in ousting a single minister, while Solidarity, which is only a union, had already toppled several ministers and was openly defying the government....

Em Tempo.

What sort of activity is the PT carrying out in line with its international policy?

Greenlalg. It supports all the forces that are fighting against the dictatorships in Latin America. It defends at all costs the right of peoples to self-determination. And it condemns any political or military intervention by a great power in another country, such as, for example, Ronald Reagan's threats in Central America. The PT has publicly condemned the preparations for invasions of Cuba, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. We would do the same, for example, if Russia moved to invade Poland.

Em Tempo.

What does the socialism of the PT mean to you?

Apolonio De Carvalho, vice president of the PT. The PT is a new party. It has tactics and the elements of a strategy, which are laid down in its basic documents. But it has no fully worked out strategy. It has a vision of a new society, without exploited or exploiters....

The PT has clearly defined its present objectives. The first is to unite and organize the workers in the towns and in the countryside, both manual and intellectual workers. Our objective is to force out the dictatorship and lay the foundations for a democratic government that will serve the interests of the workers monitored by the popular forces and with a growing participation by them in it.

Franciso Weffort, secretary of the National Executive of the PT.

You ask me to what extent the PT could accept the general reformist principle that the end is nothing but the movement is everything. I think that the PT does not accept it. It wants to transform society in accordance with the perspective of socialism....

There is nothing to say that a party with a revolutionary conception cannot make alliances even on the governmental level. Its main activities have to be in social organizations, trade unions, social and cultural movements.

I would avoid the expression "destruction of the state apparatus." It doesn't correspond to political reality in the modern world. What you can do is transform the state apparatus, put it under the supervision of the social organizations and the people. Everywhere that an attempt to destroy the state apparatus has taken place, it has ended in an enormous bureaucratization. What has happened in reality is the reconstitution of a state apparatus as powerful as the one that existed before.

In my opinion, it is difficult to say what the PT's experience is similar to, but it is easy to say what it is not like. The PT was born in Brazil in the context of the historic failure of labourism in conditions in which the working class was not attracted to Stalinism.

The Social Democratic experience has nothing in common with the experience of the PT. What you find among a great many PT activists is an affinity with the thought of Antonio Gramsci, which looks to the struggle for hegemony, the cultural struggle, the idea that power is diffused in bourgeois society and not concentrated solely in the state apparatus. This affinity is most of all theoretical, and you know it is a very long step between theory and practice.

The current given impetus by Solidarity in Poland is pointed in the same direction. The resemblance is owing to the fact that both movements arose from the workers and seek political independence. The differences are also great. Solidarity doesn't yet define itself as a party and is fighting against a state with a very different social and economic basis from the one we live under.

Olívio Dutra: vice chairman of the PT, leader of the bank workers union in Porto Alegre, suspended by the government authorities:

The experience of the USSR in its first phase of building a new society, the mobilization and participation of the masses, remains unforgettable. Now, for the most diverse historical reasons, this experiment has led to the development of extreme centralism, of bureaucratization, and therefore the usurpation of the administrative tasks by the state to the detriment of society.

This second phase is an experience that we must not repeat. Maintaining the freedom and autonomy of the mass movements is a precondition for assuring that socialism will be a stage on the road to building a genuinely egalitarian society.

The Chinese experience, since the historical and socio-economic features of that country have led it to try to jump over stages more rapidly even than the USSR, offers us a great many lessons....

A rich experience has been left. But a whole system of social control has diverted the course of development and blocked the growth of the popular forces, preventing a leap forward toward an egalitarian society. The social and political forces that hold the privileges of leadership, that is the bureaucracy, succeeded finally in making China what it is today. There is a terrible political confusion that is reflected in the country's foreign policy and which leads it to support the worst kind of dictatorship in Latin America, in Africa, and in Asia....

In the USSR, we have to consider the question of Stalinism and the experience of the creation of the first socialist state under siege from all directions. We are not yet in a situation where we can build socialism without having to contend with external pressures, but we still have to avoid falling into bureaucratism.

The experience of Poland today is a very important one for the PT. There, socialism came from above, in the special circumstances of the second world war, where the Communist Party came to power as a result of the weight of the Red Army, as the CPs did in Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

Today a living workers movement

is something intolerable for the bureaucrats holed up in their fortresses. They are trying to prevent the emergence of a genuine socialism resting on the masses.

You see, the position of trade unions in Brazil and in the USSR is very similar. However, over there there was a socialist revolution that ended private property. Nonetheless, the unions are a mere transmission belt for the government, organizers of ceremonial occasions such as May 1.

Here in Brazil, the unions are also a mere tool in the hands of the government and the military regime. All of a sudden, we who are fighting for a new society find similar realities for the trade unions in totally different conditions. That is why Poland is a source of such acute interest for us in the PT, since it seems to represent the workers movement resuming its role in building socialism...

Helena Grecco, member of the PT's National Executive Commission, former chairperson of the Women's Movement for Amnesty:

We cannot judge the problem of human rights in the so-called socialist countries only on the basis of the big press, which publishes only what it finds interesting from the bourgeois standpoint.

For example, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn is a great writer, but his analysis is wrong. As a dissident, he opposes Stalinism and has succeeded in showing the situation as it is. He has written pages and pages about the Red terror, but he has not said a word about the White terror. That is why what he says could be used in the cynical "human rights" policy of ex-president Jimmy Carter.

In reality, the dissident workers movement has put the question back in its correct context, the necessity of democracy in socialism. As an activist in the amnesty campaign, I have always defended personal dignity and rights and individual freedoms. I cannot accept socialism without liberty. This may be utopian, but the socialism of the USSR is not the one we want.

Lisaneas Maciel, member of the World Council of Churches and probable candidate of the PT for governor of Rio de Janeiro:

I see Nicaragua as an illustration of what I believe in. There, they are building socialism on different levels, firmly and without pretentious proclamations or any imitation of existing models. They are doing this on the basis of tested principles and with great realism, taking account of the possibilities. The Sandinista leadership is moving ahead slowly, sticking close to reality. It is carrying out a revolutionary experiment to which

we should pay the greatest attention. Especially because of the great similarity between the conditions in our two countries.

Some in the PT want a socialism grafted directly from other models. My answer to them is that flexibility is very important in order for us to get where we want to. The Cubans that I have met in Nicaragua told me themselves that they had come there to learn from the Sandinista process. They have felt the need for modesty. Shouldn't we all the more?

Plinio Sampaio, well-known Catholic leader and member of the Sao Paulo Executive Committee of the PT:

The concept of socialism is already quite clear and doesn't need to be reinvented. On the economic level, socialism differs from capitalism on three fundamental points. Under capitalism, the capital and the means of production belong to one class, the bourgeoisie. Under the socialist system, the means of production belong to the collectivity. The capitalist system produces commodities that bring profits to the holders of capital. Under socialism, the economy is organized to produce use values corresponding to the needs of the population.

Under capitalism, the holder of capital is free to invest or not to invest. He is the judge of the quality and quantity that is to be produced at every moment in the process. In the socialist system that we will build in Brazil, there were be no free enterprise by individuals but collective decisions expressed through planning. How we are going to plan is a question for the future...

Em Tempo.

As a Catholic, how do you see the problem of violence?

In history, there has never been any deepgoing social and political transformation without disruption including certain forms of violence. So, we must understand that in the transition from one system to another social upset accompanied by some violence can be expected. That doesn't mean that it is inevitable....

On the other hand, it would be wrong to think that Christian thought does not accept violence or that it is absolutely pacifist. Saint Thomas Aquinas, for example, accepts the right of revolution or rebellion. He argues that citizens have the right to rebel and to use the necessary means to overthrow tyranny when it leaves no other way open to end slavery.

However, what is most important to stress is that socialism is not violent. It is capitalism that is violent, and it is the bourgeoisie that inevitably responds by using force

against those who want to end its privileges. In the last analysis, violence depends on the bourgeoisie, not on those who aspire to socialism.

Raul Pont, vice chairman of the Rio Grande do Sul PT, member of the National Directorate, and a writer for the journal "Em Tempo":

The PT is not formally in the world communist movement. It exhibits a lot of ambiguities and gaps. It is not a revolutionary party in the full sense of the term. Nonetheless, we can say that the perspective opened by the definition of socialism that we make is a great hope and represents a considerable contribution to resolving the crisis that the Communist movement has been going through since the failure of the Third International and the establishment of Stalinist domination over the workers movements. Since that time, the socialist perspective (which is neither Social Democrat nor Stalinist) has

been confined to small circles and revolutionary organizations without major links with the masses....

The socio-economic superiority of socialism is ever more irrefutable and the only point that the bourgeois ideologues can make against it is the one of democracy. In fact, making a reality of socialist democracy, of the dictatorship of the proletariat as Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky understood it, as it existed at the beginning of the Russian Revolution, is a central question.

Concretely understood, the dictatorship of the proletariat is the very essence of revolutionary socialism. It presupposes the nationalization of the means of production, a revolutionary break with the old society and the destruction of the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. It involves the economic and political control of society by the workers themselves in the form of the direct

democracy of workers councils exercising the real power.

Bruno Maranhao, member of the National Leadership of the PT and the Regional Executive Commission of the State of Pernambuco.

The PT is detaching itself more and more from the crisis of the Third International and from the Stalinist tradition. This crisis developed after two totally alien elements were introduced into Marxism--the policy of alliances and authoritarianism. It is important to study today the policy of Stalinism during the second world war, which sacrificed several possible revolutions for the sake of alliances with the bourgeoisie.

By taking its distance from these two errors at the start, the PT can make an important contribution to the search for an alternative aimed toward achieving a socialism that restores the meaning of workers democracy.

LULA: "I THINK THE POLISH WORKERS WERE ON THE RIGHT PATH..."

Question. Since the electoral "package" adopted by the government in November, talk has started about the possibility of a political crack-down in the near future. What do you think about that, and what do you think that the PT can do about this threat in its campaign?

Answer. We'll see. First, I don't think that the right kind of climate exists for a tightening up of the military regime. The country is in deeper and deeper economic problems. The government needs to present a facade of democracy to the world to distract attention from the poverty of our people. It would be naked if it locked up the country again.

In 1964, the coup d'etat was supposed to be necessary because of a 90% inflation rate and because of strikes. Now, after eighteen years of dictatorship, none of these problems have been solved, not even unemployment. So, it would be hard for the military to explain the need for a new coup d'etat and a new crackdown.

However, it should be clearly understood that for the working class, there has never really been a political liberalization. For us, the crackdown remains in force. We have no right to strike. There are no trade-union rights. The workers are not able to negotiate freely with their employers. Strikes lead to the union leaders being charged under the National Security Law. Union leaders

cannot oppose the government's economic policy without risking removal of their recognition as trade-union representatives.

The Brazilian political liberalization is elitist, in the sense that its aim is to show the world an appearance of democracy. For us, the majority of Brazilians, for the working class, it is only a deception.

Q. In your speech to the Sao Paulo state congress of the PT, you described your own candidacy for governor as a break from the populist political tradition, from machine politics, from coalition with the parties of the "broad opposition." Do you see the PT's 1982 campaign, therefore, as a class-struggle campaign?

A. The most important thing to stress is that the Workers Party would have no reason for existence if it were not an out growth of the organization of the mass movement in the country, if it did not represent the immediate and general aspiration of the entire society, and in particular, of its majority, the working class.

For all these reasons, the party would have no reason for being if it did not define itself on a class basis, in accordance with its origins. It represents a part of society, which is the working class. This has to be entirely clear, otherwise you end up making a front of various parties, which is not what the PT is inter-

ested in, because in that case it would not have been necessary even to form the party. We could have stayed in other parties.

Naturally, this class definition must not be extended to the point of absurdity, to the point of forming some exclusive society that you would need workers credentials to join. Here we place a great importance on people's ideas, what they commit themselves to do, to the stands that they're ready to make at the side of the working class, regardless of whether they are workers and regardless of their social origin.

A campaign by the Workers Party would not make any sense unless it avoided vanguardism as well as the electoralism, which tries to hustle votes by means of false promises. The campaign must take the candidates and the party as a whole into the neighborhoods and villages, and not just to hold rallies and spread the message of the party. I think that it is essential that everywhere we go we try to leave behind us an organized cell of the working class. That is the central thing in the party's campaign.

Q. What's your answer to the campaign that will certainly be pushed to try to convince people that "small parties" aren't serious, that you have to "make your vote count," you can't split the opposition, and so on?

A. These arguments are not heard just in Brazil. You hear them every-

where in the world, whenever the working class tries to organize for itself and threatens the pedestal that the bourgeoisie is used to sitting on. First of all, I think that the way for workers to make their votes count is to vote for the party that they work with. That is why the way for them to make their votes count is to vote for the PT, if you consider that the way you cast your vote is a choice in real life, the adoption of basic political positions.

As regards splitting the opposition, I think that in Brazil there are two kinds of opposition--real and formal. The real opposition is the PT and the working class, which has long suffered the evils of the sort of capitalist system that has been established in this country. The formal opposition is the bourgeoisie that is not in power but is fighting to get there. However, it has no intention of making even the slightest changes. It is not interested in changing the existing structures and the position of the working class in society.

On the other hand, the PT has the clear objective, a result of the very origins of the working class itself, of achieving transformations that would lead in the direction of the sort of social equality that may exist in few countries. When we advocate a just and egalitarian society, we mean by that there is no other type of society possible but a socialist one. Our concern is to define what kind of socialism, what sort of socialism suits the needs of the Brazilian people, our requirements, our special features.

So, the arguments that the conservative parties are going to use in the campaign, that we are splitters etc. are the same ones that are used every time the working class tries to gain its political independence. What we are going to say is that those who do not want to divide the working class should come with us. This is the first time in the history of this country that there has been a working-class candidate for governor of a state, and this is still more important for a state such as Sao Paulo. And this candidacy is threatened with invalidation under the National Security Law. What do you think of that?

This is the first time that a party has been set up in Brazil that is genuinely led by workers. Not even the Communist Party came out of the working class, it came out of the petty bourgeoisie. This is the first time in the history of this country, I think, that a worker has

run for governor and we are threatened with having our candidacy invalidated. In the party reconvention for the state of Sao Paulo, we thought that it was worth running that risk and seeing if the government has the nerve to keep me from being a candidate.

I think, and said so that the pre-convention, that my candidacy has no meaning unless at the same time there is a campaign to win votes, a campaign for consciousness in order to win this victory and keep it, if necessary. That means, if we win, the ranks of the party have to provide us with the means to hang on to the victory. We cannot make the same mistake that was made in Bolivia of thinking that throwing ballots



(DR)

in a box was enough to overthrow an authoritarian regime. So, I am starting this campaign aware that many obstacles will be put in our way. But I am firmly convinced that now is the time for the working class to denounce what has to be denounced, and to say why it exists.

Q. What chance do you think that the PT has against the other parties?

A. I think that the PT has excellent chances. No other party has such a potential audience for its political message. The PT stands for the interests of the majority of the population, the working class. We have to believe in that and throw everything we have into the work. You see, Montoro has been running for I don't know how many years, while our party is new born and I have never run for anything. The polls are already giving us a good percentage, even though we have not yet started the campaign, even though we have no apparatus, no big press, no finances.

Our strength is difficult to estimate, but we are going to surprise people. We'll just have to wait and see.

Q. Let's take up another subject. Despite the different context, there are certain similarities between the PT and Solidarity in Poland. In both cases, we have a renaissance of the workers movement, a search for democratic organizational forms. Both movements have advanced class demands. Both have proposed building new structures based directly on the masses, workers control over production and society. What conclusions have you drawn about the coup d'etat that has just taken place in Poland?

A. The coup in Poland and the attack on the working class seems worse than what we experienced in 1964.

I think that the Polish workers were on the right path in looking for an independent form of organization and trying to free themselves from the shackles of the official unions and the single party. If you look at the demands raised by the Polish workers and those of the Brazilian workers, you see that most of the demands were similar. They wanted freedom and the right to organize in the factories, they wanted a shorter workday, a freeze on the prices of necessities. The Brazilian workers have the same demands.

What deeply disturbs us is that a regime that calls itself socialist is using the same methods as a capitalist regime to crush the workers. But we don't think that the Polish government has managed to kill Solidarity. We think that the Polish working class

is stronger than that. It might be less prepared and less organized than a regime that today has the guns and the tanks, while it has no weapons.

I think that Solidarity should get more support from all over the world. The Polish government will not get the world to forget that a group of workers appeared in Poland who wanted to perfect socialism.

Q. In your meeting with Walesa in Rome, you had a discussion on the question of the party. Now, in the light of the events in Poland, what conclusions have you drawn from this argument?

A. What has happened in Poland should serve as an example to the entire world. Comrade Walesa had an aversion to parties, which is understandable given the special history of the country. Their forms of organization can't be the same as ours. But it has been demonstrated that if the working class has no political organization of its own, or if its organization does not have an alternative for running the country, you are always in the tow of the state and those who hold the economic power.

I think that Walesa put too much faith in the good will of the Polish regime. I think that they paid too high a price for the working class, as others have in other countries already for thinking that things could be settled simply by negotiation. We workers have learned from Poland that still more organization and preparation for the struggle is needed. You cannot have the illusions that those who hold the power will give up their privileges and let the working class run the country.

Q. Has the repression in Poland shaken your confidence in the prospects for building socialism?

A. In the first place, it has to be clear that what is under attack in Poland is not the socialist system. What is under attack is the bureaucratism of those who hold power. Socialism is important insofar as the people have to be the conscious guiding force in socialism. So, at no time have the workers attacked socialism. They have purely and simply attacked the government's way of doing things, its bureaucratism, its incapacity to end corruption, its way of manipulating the official unions. That is what is under attack in Poland and not socialism.

Bureaucratic socialism doesn't work anywhere in the world, because socialist society has no meaning without the involvement of the people. Solidarity was fighting to perfect socialism. What would this have meant? It would have meant that the workers would enjoy the fruit of their labor. It would have meant freedom of organization, expression, and freedom to demonstrate. All this was in the platform of Solidarity. You can't condemn a system on the basis of the practices of a government. I don't think that the Polish government was ever able to conduct itself as befits a socialist regime.

We look with great sadness on what has happened in Poland because Solidarity aroused the fighting spirit of all the workers of the world.

On the other hand, the conservatives and the right have no reason to laugh about what has happened to strikers in socialist countries. You just have to look at what is happening in the capitalist countries we are living in. You just have to look at what is happening in Salvador, in Guatemala, what happened in Brazil in 1964 and in Chile in 1973, and in Argentina, in Paraguay, Uruguay, and so on. In the capitalist countries we have seen much more violent attacks on the people.

GISELA SCHOLTZ DIES IN PARIS

Our comrade Gisela Scholtz died on the 14th of February in Paris. Her comrades and friends deeply regret her premature disappearance and the loss of a courageous and devoted activist.

Comrade Gisela was born in 1935 in Germany ; her youth was difficult due to the hardships of the war. She was involved in the struggle of the student movement in its heyday and was active in Rudi Dutschke's SDS. Thereafter she joined the Fourth International, fulfilling her tasks both in the Belgian section - of which she was a central leader for several years - and on the international level. In April 1969 she was a delegate for the Belgian section at the 9th World Congress.

Gisela Scholtz was active and appreciated in her professional field as a researcher and journalist. She worked on German television for a period and was involved in several films for them, including one remarkable one on the children of Belfast, the city of Northern Ireland which is ravaged by an endemic civil strife.

She will be cremated at the Père Lachaise Cemetery on Monday 22nd February at 10.30 am. Her comrades and friends mourn with her family and companion Ernest Mandel. They will not forget her. They will remember her contribution to the struggle for the renewal of the workers movement and the building of a revolutionary International.

HEAD-ON CONFRONTATION LOOMS IN HAITI

Recent news bulletins reporting an attempt on the life of "president-for-life" Jean-Claude Duvalier ("Baby Doc") and an emigre landing on the Ile de la Tortue have raised the question of what lies ahead in Haiti (1).

The interview with a Haitian Workers Party (PTH) leader published in this issue of International Viewpoint, provides some information on the 1977-80 period. It shows that Jean-Claude Duvalier ended his controlled "liberalization" and launched a new wave of repression in November 1980, precisely because social conflicts had become more and more explosive, and the mass movement was undergoing an important recomposition and upturn.

Duvalier's attack was all the more brutal since in the present international context, he could not count on any improvement of the economic situation in the short term that would have enabled him to alleviate even slightly the poverty of the overwhelming majority of the Haitian people.

The question, therefore, arises whether it is possible for the Haitian ruling classes and the imperialists -- at least certain sectors of these forces -- that would like to avert yet another major political crisis in a region of the world already racked by major upheavals to move in the direction of alternative solutions. Can they take steps to prepare the way for the replacement of the Duvalierist regime by a less discredited one that could resume and broaden the liberalization Jean-Claude Duvalier himself was forced to initiate in 1977? Unquestionably, such projects either already exist or are being elaborated. But can they become concrete realities?

To begin with, we can note that there is a conflict between two basic sectors of the ruling class, the industrial and comprador bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the landowners on the other. However, we shouldn't forget that the landowners were losing ground under Duvalierism (see the interview with the PTH leader below). How could any serious observer believe that these big landowners are capable of supporting an attempt to overthrow the regime, when they are the sector that most directly confronts the exploited peasantry, the overwhelming majority of the country's working people? What is more, they oppose Jean-Claude Duvalier on the basis of positions diametrically

counterposed to those of the broadest exploited masses. Who could believe that these big landowners would seriously consider the slightest meaningful "liberalization"?

REPLACEMENT PROJECTS

Schemes for a bourgeois alternative are under discussion in the emigre milieus of the United States and among Washington's "specialists." Toward the end of 1980, a document started circulating, written by Philip Abbott Luce, who is known to be quite close to U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig. It examined the possibility of a "native coup d'etat," to be organized by refugees who "support capitalism." According to Luce, they would subscribe at the same time to the ideals of "liberty, equality, fraternity" and of... Milton Friedman, the man who inspired the economic policy of General Augusto Pinochet and other dictators of the same ilk.

Such alternatives would include the old colonel Paul Magloire, 75 years old, who was overthrown in December 1956 by Jean-Claude Duvalier's father, Francois Duvalier ("Papa Doc"). Another possible presidential candidate is Clemard Joseph Charles, a former Duvalier minister, who founded the first Haitian private bank and was later jailed by the dictator and then exiled to the United States in 1977. It is not yet known whether these figures have actually agreed to be the candidates for "change." Nevertheless, their ability to muster any real support among the Haitian masses and implement any would-be reform is questionable.

During the "liberalization" period (1977-1980) two parties were able to carry out some legal or semilegal activities: the Christian-Democratic Party (PDC), led by Sylvie Claude; and the Social-Christian Party (PSC) led by Gregoire Eugene. They were later suppressed and their leaders were jailed, or forced into exile. Nonetheless, it is a fact that a strong Christian current still exists in the resistance. Its key activists come mainly from a sector of the clergy who, especially in the last few months, have taken a militant stance, using even their Sunday sermons to denounce the poverty of the people and the suppression of all democratic rights.

Such currents are far more likely to establish links with the opposition that looks to the workers movement

than with parties who take their cue from maneuvers inside the ruling classes. In this respect, groups like that of Colonel Paul Magloire, that of Daniel Figuele, who stood in the 1957 elections, or that of the Haitian National Democrats (DNI), do not seem to be in a good position.

At the Socialist International regional conference held in Santo Domingo in March 1980, two Haitian organizations were listed among the participants as "fraternal organizations" -- the MRTN represented by Jean-Claude Bajeux; and the Haitian Democratic Liberation Movement (MODELH) represented by its best known leader, Louis Eugene Athis, and by Salvador Pineyro Roque.

The MRTN is a shadow organization. MODELH has done some work among Haitians living in the Dominican Republic, which has been possible thanks to the protection of the "brother" government of the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) -- a member of the Socialist International. But it has never gone beyond small-pressure-group activities designed to earn its members and sympathizers a few small favors. It has no solid mass influence.

By contrast, the left opposition, much of which is influenced by organizations claiming to be Communist, has done and continues to do important work among the exploited masses, especially the peasantry. It has been active through different channels and under different names for several decades. Moreover, it can hark back to a long and glorious tradition of peasant struggles and revolts, as well as to the workers and student struggles of the 1977-80 period.

It should not be forgotten that in the early 1960s, the Cuban revolution had a great impact in Haiti too. This was reflected in several attempts to initiate armed struggle which were rapidly crushed. Since then, major debates have taken place, especially on the question of the relationship between armed struggle and mass struggles (later on, Maoist ideas

1. The French television network, Antenne 2, announced January 8, the attempted assassination of Jean-Claude Duvalier. On January 11, an armed commando of supporters of Bernard Sansaricq, a Haitian refugee living in the USA and the leader of the People's Party (PP), landed on the Ile de la Tortue, off Haiti.

gained a certain influence). All these experiences--as well as a series of experiences involving the international workers movement--have influenced the evolution of a wing of the Communist movement. This is especially true of the PTH which, after breaking with the pro-Soviet CPs, went on to adopt a critical position toward Peking and Tirana.

The issues debated in the Haitian workers movement are of crucial importance. They involve at once the nature of the revolution, the problem of alliances, and the relationship between armed struggle and mass struggles. These issues have by no means been clarified. For example, the program of the Union of Haitian Democratic and Patriotic Forces (IFODAPA), which includes the PTH, pledges to extend fiscal guarantees and privileges to Haitian capitalists and to "rationalize" the activities of foreign firms. But the debate is moving forward on the basis of more than two decades of rich experiences and in close connection with genuine work among the masses, even though because of repression this work has to be conducted through strictly clandestine channels.

The chances of a bourgeois alternative to the Duvalierist regime have to be looked at above all in the context of an analysis of the contending social forces and their dynamic in the Haitian situation. The so-called national bourgeoisie is notably weaker in Haiti than, for example, in the Dominican Republic, or even other Central American countries. It is tied very

directly, as a social class in its near-totality to the Duvalierist regime. Any mass movement against the regime will lead to an early clash, both on the political and social levels, with the bourgeoisie.

So, I do not see on what mediations and instruments a section of the ruling classes or imperialism could rely to set up a conservative bourgeois alternative to Duvalierism. i. e. a "democracy", even if it be extremely timid.

That does not mean that some section of the ruling class and the imperialists will not try to move toward some arrangement that seems more democratic. Such moves may take place both on the national and international levels (the Mitterrand-Mauroy government might have something to say about this)--but such attempts most likely will be doomed to failure.

Nor does this exclude the possibility that some bourgeois groups may oppose Jean-Claude Duvalier and agree to collaborate with the workers and peasant opposition. It would be absurd not to exploit such opportunities in the anti-dictatorial and anti-imperialist struggles.

But, in Haiti even more than elsewhere, the fundamental dynamic of the revolution will be one of permanent revolution. From the earliest stages the anticolonial and anti-imperialist struggle will inevitably be combined with a struggle against capitalism. Therefore, there is a need for a clear strategy for the workers

organizations. Under no conditions, can they renounce their leading role or subordinate the paramount necessity of mobilizing the masses to the needs of any tactical agreements that may be concluded with bourgeois groups.

For revolutionary Marxists, the question is not whether there will be mass struggles and explosive conflicts in Haiti, but whether these struggles and explosions, which are objectively on the agenda, will be utilized, in time and successfully, by a revolutionary leadership. Of course, the outcome of the struggle in Haiti depends to a very large extent on the development of the ongoing revolutionary struggles in Central America and other Caribbean countries.

The native ruling classes and the imperialists are perfectly conscious of this fundamental truth. That is why they have taken measures to bolster collaboration between Haiti, the U. S. A. and the Dominican Republic. This is also why they still hesitate to abandon Jean-Claude Duvalier, despite the weakness of his regime, just as the same forces hesitated until the very last minute to part with an Anastasio Somoza already at bay. It is not a question of how much these forces "understand." They have to choose between what exists--which assures their economic and strategic interests if only in the short term--and a "change" that nobody can guarantee can be "controlled."

HAITIAN WORKERS PARTY:

"WE ARE IN SOLIDARITY WITH SOLIDARITY"

This interview was obtained by Livio Maitan in early December.

* * *

Santo Domingo

Question. The international press noted on several occasions that around the end of the 1970s, the Haitian government started leaning in a new direction. What can you tell us about this?

Answer. To be exact, the period concerned is that from 1977 to 1980. There was talk at the time of promoting an economy on the Hong Kong model in Haiti, turning the country into a sort of showcase of the West in the Caribbean. In fact, what development has taken place involved setting up assembly plants, beginning in 1972. A sort of economic free

zone emerged, in which about 40,000 workers were employed (in the neighboring Dominican Republic, only half that figure work in the free zone).

The factories of that enclave are assigned only highly fragmented tasks in the process of commodity production. This is the case, for example, with the production of baseballs. Almost all the balls used in this game so popular in the United States (Haitians prefer soccer) come from Haiti.

Q- Hasn't this made for significant changes in the economy?

A- In fact, what development took place remained very limited and precarious. Even the free zone stopped developing and the overall situation remains literally dramatic. Between 40% and 50% of the active population

are unemployed or underemployed, and the figure is closer to 65% in Port au Prince, the capital, which has 800,000 inhabitants. The average per capita income is \$150 per year (which places Haiti among the countries with the lowest incomes in the world). But 61% of the population only earns \$60 and 17% of the peasant population barely makes \$17 (a yearly income below \$300 is considered the threshold of absolute poverty). Life expectancy is from 40 to 50 years and child mortality is 14%. Illiteracy has reached a record high of 95%, and it is estimated that 40% of the population of the capital are homeless.

Haiti has remained an essentially agrarian country. The peasantry represents 80% of the economically active population, one of the highest

percentages in the world. Agricultural production accounts for 43% of the gross national product (GNP). The big landowners hold almost two thirds of the land and work it with superexploited agricultural laborers and sharecroppers. The penetration of typically capitalist forms in the countryside is definitely more limited than in the neighboring Dominican Republic.

Q- Can you go over the 1977-1980 period from a political point of view?

A. Remember that this was the time of Jimmy Carter's demagoguery about human rights. The United States pressured Jean-Claude Duvalier to initiate a certain "liberalization." This did open some breaches. The press began to write more freely, and more importantly, some radio stations were able to attract an audience on the basis of an independent and critical attitude toward the rulers. The most significant case was that of Radio Haiti Inter.

At the same time, an important movement developed in the theater. Plays were put on in the village and town squares and met with great success when they expressed the feelings and aspirations of the people. The trade union movement also resumed some activity and major struggles occurred.

A similar process happened on campus. The National Union of Haitian Students (UNEH)--founded in 1959 and led by Communists--reorganized. A movement demanding the recognition of Creole as the official language emerged.

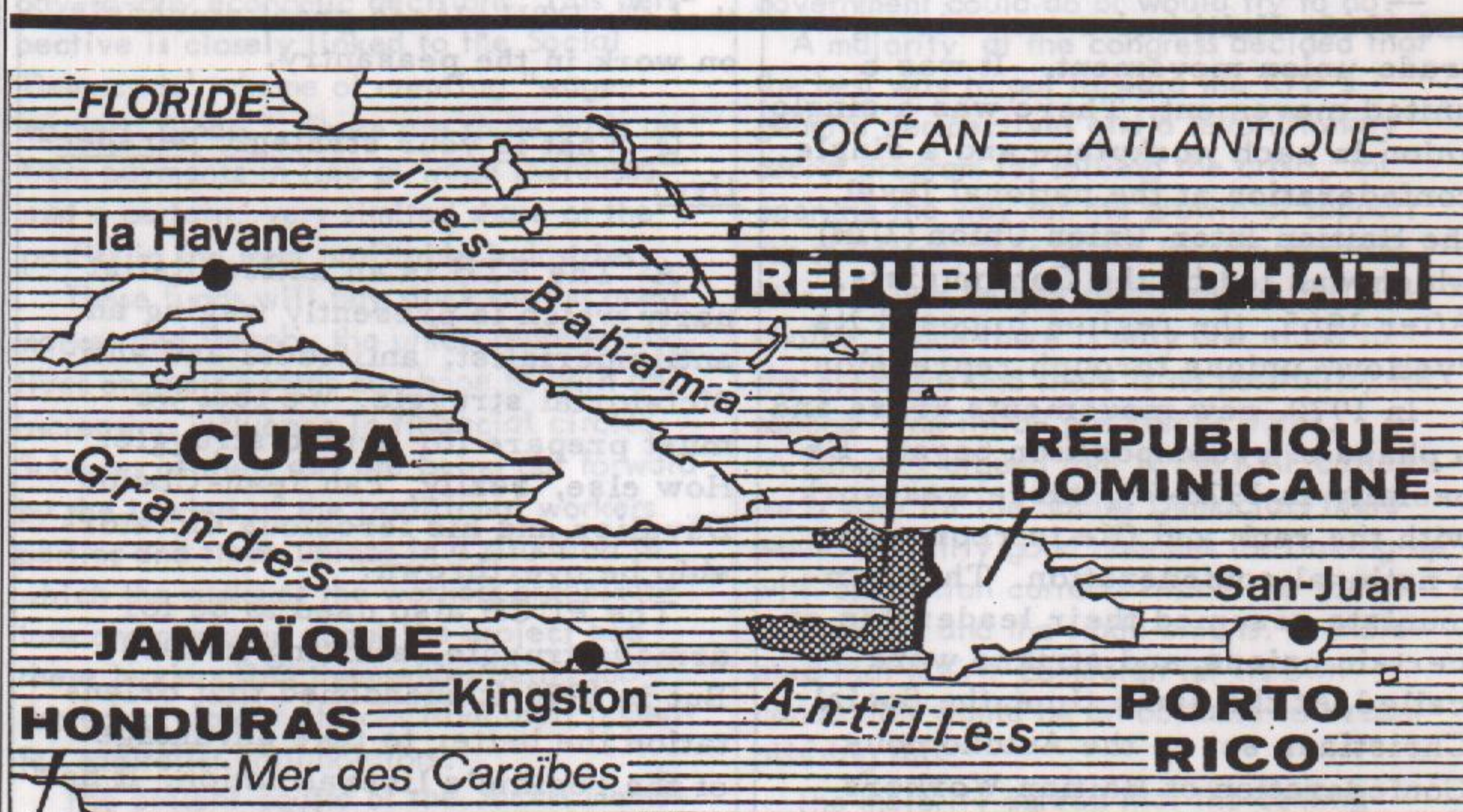
From the standpoint of Jean-Claude Duvalier and his accomplices, the whole situation was getting out of hand.

Q- How did they react?

A- Ronald Reagan's election to the presidency of the United States was the signal for them to move. They lost no time. As early as November 28, 1980, they targeted the entire opposition and deported or imprisoned its most representative elements. Radio Haiti Inter was closed down and the theater movement outlawed. All the political parties and groups were thrown back to the strictest clandestinity.

Q- What political forces exist in Haiti?

A- Before the November 28, 1980, coup, there were two legal Social Christian parties. Now they've almost completely disappeared. Only the parties that look to the workers movement and their affiliated organizations have survived in the underground. The most influential is the



Haitian Workers Party (PTH) which was founded in 1966; it originally had a Maoist position but now follows an independent course.

The PTH is an integral part of the Union of Haitian Patriotic and Democratic Forces (IFOPADA) which also includes a Catholic socialist tendency. The IFOPADA stands for an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, and anti-dictatorial orientation and seeks to unite all anti-Duvalierist forces.

Secondly there is the United Party of Haitian Communists (PUCH) which follows a pro-Soviet line; its main strength is among the emigres and its best-known leader is Gerard Pierre-Charles. The PUCH is an integral part of the UDEH (Haitian Democratic Union). Finally two new Communist groups have formed in exile--the "May 18" and "Forward" groups.

Q- Could you say a few words about the history of the Haitian Communist movement?

A- The Haitian Communist movement began in the early 1930s. Between 1932 and 1945, it was grouped in the Haitian Communist Party (PCH). After 1946, a split occurred and two parties emerged. One kept the same name; the other was the Popular Socialist Party (PSP). In 1948, the PSP dissolved, in accordance with the ideas put forward at the time by North American CP leader Earl Browder. Later, the party reconstituted itself and conducted some legal work. In 1950, both components of the Communist movement--which had been legal since 1945--were banned.

In 1954, the PPLN (Popular National Liberation Party) was set up, and in 1959 various intellectuals who had previously belonged to the PCH founded the PEP (Popular Alliance

Party). Both these parties stood for Marxism-Leninism. Both experienced deep internal divisions, which led to splits. Finally there was a recomposition, out of which emerged the PUCH and the PTH.

For a long time, the PTH shared the Chinese Communist Party's and the Albanian Labor Party's criticisms of the Soviet leadership. But in 1976, we changed our attitude toward these two parties because we felt the Chinese also had a revisionist line.

Q- What is the PTH attitude toward Cuba?

A- We feel that the emphasis now must be placed on solidarity against the imperialist threats, and not on criticisms. However, we believe that the Cubans are under Soviet influence and that their economic model is derived from the Soviet one.

Q- What do you think of the Polish events?

A- You know that in Haiti people have traditionally been interested in what happened in Poland. In the early 19th century, during the War of Independence, Polish soldiers in the French army came over to the Haitian patriotic forces. Furthermore, we began a criticism of the Polish revisionist leadership in 1966, when we established relations with Polish Marxist-Leninists. We believe Solidarnosc is a diversified movement in which some currents are under imperialist influence. But as a whole it is a mass movement against the bureaucracy and must be supported. Therefore we are in solidarity with Solidarnosc.

Q- Can you give us some idea of what the Haitian trade-union movement is like?

A- Remember that between 1958 and 1965, Haiti had a very strong trade-union movement. It was a united movement. There was a single union in each workplace and a single confederation at the national level, the Haitian Inter-Union Union (UIH) which was led by the Communists. After 1965, the regime imposed its "yellow" unions through repression.

In 1970, new movements arose and a phase of recomposition began. Especially in 1978-79, there was work with the rank and file to reorganize a national confederation. The Communists resumed their leadership of certain unions, and strikes were called. At the same time, the Social Christians set up the Autonomous Confederation of Haitian Workers (CATH) with the help of Venezuela. But this was an artificial maneuver which found little support among the masses.

The November 28, 1980, coup opened a new phase of repression which included the elimination of Communists from the trade unions.

Q- What is the current situation?

A- The situation is bad in that the mass movement is no longer mobilized. All activities must be carried out through strictly clandestine channels. We are trying to set up rank-and-file committees, especially

among the peasants. You should know that the PTH places great emphasis on work in the peasantry.

Q- What is your strategic perspective?

A- The PTH is an anticapitalist party which is presently waging an antiimperialist, antifeudal and antidictatorial struggle. We feel we must prepare for armed struggle. How else, really, can Jean-Claude Duvalier and his ferocious dictatorship be overthrown?

The PUCH also used to be for armed struggle, starting in 1959. But in 1978 it abandoned that orientation the better to take advantage of the regime's liberalization. It has not adopted a new position since the new wave of repression.

Q- Can one say that Jean-Claude Duvalier has managed to consolidate his regime?

A- Conflicts have existed for years inside the regime. They reflect the antagonism between the landowners and the comprador bourgeoisie which is combined with a racial rivalry. While the big landowners are Black, the compradors are most often White or Mulattoes. At this time, the latter have the upper hand. Jean-Claude Duvalier's wife

and her family--a powerful bourgeois family--belong to the comprador class, and they are taking advantage of this. They also control the police. Moreover, the regime went through several serious brushes with Washington. For instance, Jean-Claude Duvalier always avoided setting up a strong army for fear it might become a potential alternative to his own regime. He preferred to beef up his militia, the tontons macoutes. Washington thought he should have built up a regular army.

Q-Do you think a conservative bourgeois alternative to Jean-Claude Duvalier exists?

A. I think it is extremely difficult for such an alternative to be concretized. That is why, incidentally, Washington hesitates to abandon Jean-Claude Duvalier.

Q- Is there anything else you would like to mention?

A- The Haitian people and all the victims of Duvalier's regime need the solidarity of all peoples, and especially of all the workers organizations of the world. It is imperative that this solidarity become more organized and visible than it has been up to now. ■

Building a World Party of Socialists

By Mikael Ernwik

A NEW SOCIALIST PARTY FOR SWEDEN

GOTEBORG--The congress of the Swedish section of the Fourth International was held here at the beginning of February. It registered the results of a period of growing activity and numerical increase for the organisation.

The major areas of work since the last congress, which was held in October 1980, were the trade unions, notably in the fight against austerity and cutbacks; and international solidarity campaigns, in particular in defence of Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Poland. For example, the Swedish section, the Communist Workers League (Kommunistiska Arbetarforbundet, KAF) was one of the main initiators of the Polen-Solidaritets committees, the national organisation that leads the campaign for Solidarnosc.

The growing activity of the KAF is indicated by an increase in the number of public meetings held by the organisation since the last congress--117 public meetings attended by a total of 4,000 persons.

One of the debates with the biggest practical implications at this year's congress was over tactics to be followed in the elections to be held next September.

One third of the KAF's members are

industrial workers, most of them in heavy industry, where they have played a role in building the struggles against layoffs in steel and in the shipyards and in promoting struggles for trade-union and political rights. A good number of them hold positions of leadership in their unions and workplaces.

A number of positions were put forward in the pre-congress debate. The two main positions were (1) that the KAF should run a general campaign of its own and (2) that it should call for a vote for the Social Democrats or the Communist Party against the bourgeois parties and their government.

The debate reflected real political problems and real differences of assessment. One problem is that parties must get 4% of the vote to be represented in parliament. That puts strong pressure on progressive people to make their votes 'count' by casting their ballots for the traditional parties such as the Social Democrats and the CP, rather than for organisations such as the KAF that have no chance of topping the 4% hurdle.

Another problem is that the CP's representation in parliament begins to be threaten-

ed. The Polish events have increased distrust of the CP as well as the tensions within it. Furthermore, the rise of a Green, or environmentalist party, is cutting into the CP vote, although the opinion polls and analysts give the environmentalists no chance of surmounting the 4% barrier.

If the CP loses its parliamentary representation, which for the time being seems less probable, that would knock one of the props out from under the Social Democrat and CP majority and make it much more difficult to defeat the three bourgeois parties. This situation increases the pressure on left-minded workers who might have considered voting for revolutionary socialists to cast their ballots instead for the SP or the CP.

Thirdly, the workers are growing exasperated with the present Liberal-Centre coalition, which is being pressured to move even further to the right by a pseudo-oppositional rightist party. This inclines them more strongly to vote for the two established workers parties, and in particular the Social Democrats, who offer the only realistic governmental alternative to the bourgeois coalition.

However, while the Social Democrats want to take advantage of this growing feeling that the present bourgeois government must be replaced by a government of the workers parties, they are trying to restrain it. The reformists are well aware that a Social Democratic government would have to deal with a deepening crisis in the industries that have traditionally dominated the Swedish economy--the iron mines, steel, ship building, paper, and pulp. They know that in line with their class-collaborationist policy they would have to carry out a tough austerity program and to twist the arms of the trade unions to get them to go along.

The Social Democrats are giving clear signals of their intentions, while being careful not to provoke any reactions that could get out of hand. They talk about 'voluntary' wage restraint and redirecting industrial production into more profitable lines. But they have not been able to give any indication of how a major increase in Swedish exports could be achieved in the context of growing international competition.

Moreover, the Social Democrats are looking for a closer working relationship with big business, the decisive force in the Swedish economy. They hope to accomplish it through a sort of historic compromise between the labour misleaders and representatives of the more advanced circles of the bourgeoisie.

In exchange for accepting wage restraints and boosting capitalist profits, the labour

misleaders hope to get a bigger say in the day-to-day economic decisions. This perspective is closely linked to the Social Democrats' scheme of creating "wage-earners' funds." These are to be built up from payments in lieu of wage increases and a certain, very limited share of the profits in the most profitable industries.

These funds will buy stock on the open market and thereby the union representatives on their boards can hope to gain an increasing influence in financial circles. Schemes of this sort are being put forward by the leaders of the traditional workers parties and trade unions in a situation in which the ranks of the workers organisations are confused about the project and these leaders find themselves being subjected to violent attacks from their hoped-for capitalist collaborators.

The present course of the Social Democratic leadership is to the right and retreating from earlier promises and decisions. However, to most workers even the rightwing SP policy seems to offer a less constraining straitjacket than that of the bourgeois government.

Thus, the present situation imposes a difficult choice on the KAF. Different currents represented at the congress drew different conclusions from it.

What had to be found was an electoral tactic that would not run counter to the legitimate feeling in large sections of the working class that the only effective way to get rid of the bourgeois coalition is to vote the traditional workers parties into office but at the same time not promote

illusions about what a Social Democratic government could do or would try to do.

A majority at the congress decided that the best way to put forward the KAF's general perspectives and a revolutionary social program for solving the crisis, for opening the way for the growth of support for socialism, was to run its own candidates. It was necessary to make a definite choice, since there is only one round in the elections and there is no possibility for second- and third- preference votes.

A minority argued that if the KAF called for a vote for the Social Democrats there would be fairly good chances for linking up with opposition currents inside the Social Democracy and the trade unions. It indicated that a KAF campaign for its own candidates would be an obstacle to accomplishing this.

The majority agreed that the coming period would open up new possibilities for intervening in the deepening crisis of the traditional Swedish workers organisations. Its representatives said that they recognised that there was a need to train the KAF for this. But it argued that the minority overestimated the present level of radicalisation in the traditional organisations and the possibilities for linking up with what they described as very weak and scattered opposition currents inside the Social Democracy.

The majority maintained that it would be impossible to wage an effective campaign on the key issues in the elections without KAF candidates.

Two thirds of the delegates voted for running an independent KAF campaign. The political resolution and draft program presented by the outgoing leadership were accepted by similar majorities.

KAF CHANGES ITS NAME

A special point was put on the congress agenda calling for changing the name of the KAF. This move was originated by a motion from the KAF political unit at the Volvo automotive plant in Goteborg. The activists there argued that because of Sweden's traditions, "communism" has become identified with Stalinism.

On the other hand, "socialism" and "socialist" would stand for a positive alternative to the established Social Democracy. Therefore, changing the designation of the organisation to "socialist" could make it easier for revolutionary socialists to gain a hearing for their real political message instead of getting bogged down in defensive explanations of what the Communist Workers League is not.

By an overwhelming majority, the delegates voted to change the name of the KAF to the Socialistiska Partiet (Socialist Party), Swedish section of the Fourth International.

In deciding to call itself a party, the organisation demonstrated a leap in its political self-confidence resulting from its growing working-class composition and its practical achievements. This is a preparation for seizing the opportunities that all currents represented at the congress agree lie ahead for revolutionary socialists in Sweden.

There were 76 delegates, more than two-thirds of whom were members of LO (Landsorganisationen, the national trade-union federation for blue collar workers). Very close to half were metal workers.

The age of the delegates ranged between twenty and forty-one. Some 10% were also members of the youth organisation sponsored by the KAF, the Ungsocialister (Young Socialists).

The percentage of women delegates was low, even compared to their overall number in the organisation (roughly one third). But women delegates played a major role in the debates. Nonetheless, this bad aspect of the congress composition was also reflected in a low proportion of women on the incoming National Committee (four out of twenty-three full and alternate members). This situation is now becoming a challenge to the organisation.

The congress concluded four months of discussion in which written contributions were debated throughout the organisation. Three minority tendencies developed, representing respectively 6%, 6% and 9% of the membership. Compared to this, they were slightly overrepresented in terms of delegates. All three minorities dissolved during the latter part of the congress.

A number of greetings were delivered to the congress. They came from a representative of the Socialist Workers Party, the organisation in the United States that is in

political solidarity with the Fourth International; from a representative of the Socialistisk Arbejderpartei (Socialist Workers Party, Danish section of the Fourth International); from a representative of a Norwegian co-thinkers group around the magazine Internasjonalen; and from Alain Krivine, leader of the French section of the Fourth International, who also spoke representing the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

One of the greetings to the congress was unusual. It came from a Goteborg representative of Sveriges Kommunistiska Parti, marxist-leninisterna (Communist Party of Sweden, marxist-leninist), Hasse Haggqvist.

Haggqvist began by saying:

"To my knowledge this is a historic first. It seems to be the first time in Sweden that devoted Maoists have brought greetings to a gathering like this." He continued:

"We hope that your congress will result in a reinforcement of your work in all those areas where you have made positive contributions to the Swedish class struggle. We also look forward to working with you in the future as a valued ally and a serious organisation. You are not the best organisation, but you are all right."

The congress also received a written message from one of the local groups of the Swedish CP, (Vansterpartiet Kommunisterna, Left Party of Communists).

BUILDING SOLIDARITY WITH POLAND

AUSTRALIA

In the February 3 issue of the weekly that reflects the views of the Socialist Workers Party, Australian section of the Fourth International, Nita Keig writes:

"Here in Australia ALP (Australian Labor Party) and trade union leaders such as NSW (New South Wales) Labor Council secretary Barrie Unsworth, and Queensland ALP president Denis Murphy spoke on platforms with Liberal Party leaders, air commodores, and 'Captive Nations' spokespeople.

"This has nothing to do with labor solidarity and is a betrayal of the interests of the workers in both Australia and Poland.

"If these forces were genuinely concerned about the welfare of Polish workers they should be calling for the cancellation of the debts the giant capitalist banks of the West are holding over Poland's workers.

"In fact, these bankers pushed the Polish regime to crack down on the workers' movement to help ensure that their loans are repaid.

"Nothing exposes the cynical use of Poland by the capitalist politicians more than this.



"It confirms that the only real friends of the Polish workers, the only real supporters of their struggle, are the trade unionists and labor movement activists involved in a similar fight against their own governments in the capitalist world.

"It is by these forces that genuine solidarity, which is not tied to the aims of the capitalist politicians or their right-wing supporters in the labor movement can be built."

BELGIUM



La grève de 24 heures du 8 février était un premier coup de semonce pour le gouvernement Martens V

Continuons la lutte en front commun syndical jusqu'au retrait de la loi sur les pouvoirs spéciaux

The French-language weekly of the Revolutionary Workers League, Belgian section of the Fourth International, reports in its February 5 issue:

"The leadership of Solidarnosc in exile called for an international day of solidarity on January 30. Reagan tried to exploit this appeal, without much success. But it has to be said that the response of the workers movement was not a great success either. That was certainly true in Belgium. The two big union federations, the FGTB and the CSC, had taken charge of organizing the protest. But they limited themselves to running a picket outside the Polish embassy in Brussels.

"When it became clear that the trade-union movement was not planning a serious action for January 30, some organizations, including the Revolutionary Workers League, tried to organize a demonstration at the last minute. They managed to bring out a few hundred people on a Saturday afternoon.

"The day of solidarity with Solidarnosc remains to be held."

SWEDEN

Internationalen

In its February 4 issue, the weekly paper of the Communist Workers Party, Swedish section of the Fourth International, interviewed a participant in the conference of Polen-Solidaritet Committees held in Stockholm over the year-end holidays.

Irene Johansson-Wiik said: "For us, the central thing is to get the Swedish trade unions to support actively the Polish free trade union. The LO (the Swedish national union federation) is already carry-

ing on solidarity work. Polen-Solidaritet wants to help complement this work. The conference adopted an appeal that we hope many trade unions will take up."

Internationalen noted: "This appeal calls for breaking the news blackout from Poland, for the release of the imprisoned union activists, and that the state of siege be ended. The statement also says that it would be good for representatives of the Swedish unions to be present at all trials of imprisoned trade-union leaders.

"In various places in the committee, the LO District Committees, together with the Social Democrats, have formed what are called Workers Movement Committee for the Polish People." Irene Johansson-Wiik continued: "In a number of places, Polen-Solidaritet has worked with the LO District Committees."

"In Stockholm we jointly called a demonstration with the LO District Committee and a rally with the Workers Movement Committee. We hope for continued cooperation."

DENMARK



Klassekampen

In the January 28 issue of the weekly newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party, Danish section of the Fourth International, Jorgen Colding interviewed Gorm Klinken, a member of the organization active in the Copenhagen Polish Solidarity Committee.

Colding asked: "In *Land og Folk* (the Communist Party paper) and the *Jylland Post* (a bourgeois paper), you can read that it was not Solidarnosc but Ronald Reagan that was behind the January 30 International Day of Protest. How can it be assured that the Polish workers and not Reagan get the benefit of solidarity work with Poland?"

Klinken answered: "We can do this in two ways. We must take our distance from Reagan's attempt to exploit Solidarnosc."

He isn't interested in supporting Solidarity. Secondly, we can try to make sure that the support for Solidarity doesn't come from the bourgeois forces but from the workers movement."

Colding. "How can you do that? For example, representatives of the bourgeois parties in Denmark say that they support Solidarity, and they have signed statements supporting some of Solidarity's demands."

Klinken. "We obviously cannot stop them from doing that. But we can do much more to broaden the solidarity in the unions and among the workers parties."

"I think that the solidarity groups should set up trade-union groups that actively canvas the workplaces and explain what Solidarity stands for. We can try to draw the unions into demonstrations in support of Solidarity, as happened in some places up till January 30."

Colding. "Considering Reagan's attempt to exploit the Polish situation for his own political objectives, do you think that there is a need for changing the political basis of the Solidarity Committees? Should they say for example that they are for socialism in Poland?"

Klinken. "I can't imagine that it would do much good for the committees to say that they are for socialism in Poland. On the other hand, that could make it difficult to draw in many of those who want to do something against the military government in Poland."

"But I do think that it is right to take our distance from Reagan's boycott and his attempt to exploit Solidarity for his own political ends. And we should take our distance from the bourgeois forces who say that they want to support a union abroad, but that they are anxious to restrict the rights of trade unions here in Denmark."

U.S.A.

Intercontinental Press

In the January 18 issue of the weekly, published in New York, David Frankel wrote in the News Analysis column under the headline, "Imperialists Campaign on Poland:"

"There can be no genuine support for the Polish working class that does not put opposition to the crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy within the context of opposition to imperialist oppression and support for the struggle for socialism."

THE MILITANT

Ford contract talks
Texas oil workers on strike
Libya vs. imperialism

Big leap in arms budget proposed

BY WILLIAM GOTTLER
The Reagan administration announced massive new arms orders and increased military spending in the budget proposals released February 6 for fiscal 1982.

Reagan plunges deeper into El Salvador war U.S. tries to save junta as rebels gain



BY HARRY REING
FEBRUARY 12—In the face of growing opposition, the Reagan administration is deepening its involvement in El Salvador's civil war.

The Militant

In the January 29 issue of the Militant, a weekly that reflects the views of the Socialist Workers Party, one of the main founding parties of the Fourth International, SWP leader Larry Seigle writes:

"If the AFL-CIO wanted to provide some real aid to the Polish workers, it could start by joining with the labor forces in Europe who are opposing the introduction of new nuclear weapons into their countries...."

"But that is not what the Polish Workers Aid Fund is all about. Rather than aiding the Polish workers, the AFL-CIO misleaders are mainly interested in helping the Democrats and Republicans to carry out their bipartisan foreign policy, which is more and more heading toward the direct use of U.S. military forces overseas, under the banner of anticommunism."

"The reactionary character of the AFL-CIO campaign around Poland has repelled everyone motivated by genuine feelings of solidarity."

"At the same time, right-wing forces have flooded rallies on Poland called in the name of the AFL-CIO after the declaration of martial law in Poland...."

"Essentially the same thing happened when a few groups calling themselves socialist tried to organize demonstrations on Poland that would be more 'radical' than the AFL-CIO actions. Such actions were held in a number of cities."

"For example, in New York City, an ad hoc coalition held a demonstration on Poland.... The sponsors included organizations such as the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, the Revolutionary Socialist League, and Workers Power. The demonstration took place at the Polish consulate within hours after another, right-wing, rally was held there. As could be expected the news media lumped in the 'pro-socialist' action with the right-wing protest in reporting the events."

"What the sponsoring groups had in common is their refusal to politically defend the workers states against imperialism. Rather they place 'equal blame' on both imperialism and the workers states for the evils of the world, placing themselves in what they call the 'third camp.' But in the context of the imperialists' campaign around Poland, this 'third camp' position, under the guise of 'fighting Stalinism,' becomes nothing but another voice in the anticommunist and anti-Soviet choir, lending left cover to the Reagan propaganda effort."

"For these reasons, the Socialist Workers Party opposed demonstrations called by these forces in New York and other cities. Members of the party sold the Militant to people who were drawn to these actions because of their solidarity with the Polish workers, and got a good response."

Seigle wrote that the SWP branch in San Francisco had participated in a demonstration against the crackdown in Poland but the results had been bad. Seigle explained:

"Members of the right-wing Libertarian Party turned out, carrying virulently anti-communist placards. Among their slogans were 'Smash the Communist Tyrants,' and 'Hang Jaruzelski.' Some anarchists carried slogans advocating 'Anarchy for All of Poland.'"

"Members of 'third camp' groups turned out with signs such as 'CIA/KGB--Both Sound the Same to Me.'"

Seigle went on to report:

"Speaking at a Bay-Area-Wide Militant Forum held the following weekend, SWP National Cochairperson Barry Sheppard explained that the San Francisco demonstration and others like it were an obstacle to carrying out a genuine campaign of solidarity with Polish workers...."

"Sheppard pointed to the 'extremely provocative' slogans, such as 'Hang Jaruzelski.' These not only do not offer any solidarity to the Polish workers, but lend credence to the lies of the Kremlin bureaucrats--and of groups such as the Communist Party, the Workers World Party, and the Spartacist League--who support the crackdown on the Polish workers."

"Their strategy is to smear Solidarity as a right-wing movement. To the degree that workers who support Solidarity march side by side with right-wing and even semi-fascist groups, this appears to support these accusations, therefore undermining Solidarity itself."

"Sheppard added, 'Marching with signs such as 'Anarchy for all Poland' simply reinforces Moscow's false charge that Solidarity is responsible for 'anarchy' in Poland."

"'For these reasons,' he said, 'the demonstration was a blow to the Polish workers.'...."

"'We were burned once but we won't be burned again,' Sheppard stressed, referring to the San Francisco demonstration. 'The San Francisco SWP won't make the same mistake again, he added.'"

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WHERE IS THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT IN CHINA GOING?

In late 1978, an original dissident movement sprang up in the main cities of China under the slogan of democracy. For several months this movement had the protection of liberalizers like Deng Xiaoping in the Party top and the strong approval of leading intellectuals and cultural figures in the media, the universities and the academies, so that it was able to win ground and widen its support. But it is now clear that, for the leaders around Deng at least, this movement was from the very start a disposable tool, and that once it had done its job of helping to winkle out the Maoist old guard and get the modernisation programme underway, it could be tossed aside and scrapped like similar ones before it.

It is now three years since the streets of Beijing first rang to the shouts of youthful dissent and the first unofficial journals tumbled out of patched-up mimeographs. In those three years the movement has suffered repeated blows, first to the head and later to the body. In early 1979, a few of its best leaders and organizers vanished into the camps and prisons where most of them still remain--bloodied but unbowed. Throughout 1979 and 1980 new currents followed, until finally all the main leaders of the unofficial movement, and many of its active supporters, were rounded up in a nationwide swoop in April 1981.

But there are excellent reasons to think that this movement will sooner or later revive, and when it does so it will doubtless have learned from Deng's betrayal that it is far wiser to sink roots deep into the wider society than to depend on this or that faction in the Party top. One reason is that the men and women of the democratic movement have long experience of political repression ever since their days as Red Guards in Mao's Cultural Revolution, and are therefore not likely to go down under this new wave of it. Another is that the movement has quickly differentiated in the course of its development, sprouting liberal and Marxist wings each with a powerful and well-formed critique of present-day Chinese society. This differentiation has immeasurably strengthened the dissenters and overcome much of their earlier political and intellectual eclecticism, without--as Liu Qing's

prison testimony shows--destroying an ounce of their solidarity.

Finally, although the authorities have cast the net wide, reports smuggled out of China suggest that it caught mainly the big and medium fish, leaving most of the small fry still at large. So, it was therefore not wholly unexpected when news came out of China in the summer of 1981 that Zeren ('Duty'), the national organ of the Alliance of Unofficial Journals, is still appearing clandestinely even after the final crushing of the open movement in April.

The Chinese democratic movement has many varied points of intellectual reference, ranging from Christ, Dada and Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des Lois* to Trotsky, Tito and the humanist writings of the young Marx. Wei Jingsheng, the movement's first prominent martyr, has argued forcefully for 'free enterprise' as the only economic system compatible with political democracy. Wang Xizhe, a veteran dissenter whose 1974 wall-poster (co-authored with three others) was in some ways the start of the unofficial movement in China, has searched out the elements for a powerful and original critique of bureaucracy from the Marxist classics. Others are placed somewhere between these two poles.

THE ORIGINS OF THE MOVEMENT

The Cultural Revolution of 1966-68 was critical in two main ways for the emergence of the democratic current in Chinese politics in the late seventies. First, it plunged China into a terror that traumatised all social classes, not least the political elite--parts of which began to question their commitment to the methods of dictatorship. Second, it spawned the Red Guards, who swept China for a time and got an appetizing taste of political independence.

The disaffected elite included a large group of top political leaders, managers, intellectuals, Party cadres and others in the official world who had suffered persecution during the chaos of the Cultural Revolution, when the search for 'class enemies' grew ever more frenetic and the norms of political behaviour collapsed almost completely.

Throughout the mid- and late seventies these people trickled back into

offices as the smashed administration was slowly restored. Many of them were far from the hacks and stooges that their Maoist critics said they were. A good few had fought for the revolution in the thirties and forties, and even more had stubbornly--if surreptitiously--resisted Mao's excesses in the fifties and sixties, often at great personal cost to themselves and their families. Luckily for China, Mao was no Stalin, and while he had few scruples about purging his rivals, he normally stopped short of killing them, on the grounds that once dead they could never be reformed. And thus many of those who returned to power after his death in 1976 were not career bureaucrats, as in Russia after Stalin, but experienced and independent-minded people, including a thick sprinkling of indomitable old revolutionaries.

Naturally these 'returnees' were unlikely to question the ultimate foundations of their own power, but some of them were prepared to tolerate new thinking about the relationship between democracy and socialism, and for a while the fruits of this rethinking enlivened the pages even of China's main theoretical journals. It was from 'returnees' like Yu Guangyuan... that the strongest official pressure came for the democratization--within limits--of China's political life and the strengthening of legal rights and guarantees.

The few hundred activists in the unofficial movement, which is the second and more enduring strand in China's democratic fabric, might have been eliminated much sooner had they not been connected to the hundreds of thousands who in varying degrees represented the democratic movement in the official world, and who were deeply questioning and doubting Maoist methods and values. These unofficial activists first entered politics as Mao's instrument in the faction fight of 1966-67, but they soon exceeded the limits that Mao's group had set for them.

AFTER SHOCKS OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

In analysing the Cultural Revolution it is therefore necessary to make a sharp distinction between the anti-bureaucratic, egalitarian im-

pulses that motivated its activists, and the efforts of Party leaders to manipulate it from above. True, most Red Guards became bogged down under the influence of competing groups in the Party leadership in an increasingly violent power struggle in which factional ties quickly overwhelmed political principle, but still a minority successfully resisted the meddling of Party leaders and developed independent political positions.

After September 1967 the new ruling group around Mao, having managed to oust many of its rivals in the Party-state, finally set about suppressing these troublesome 'little generals' and consolidating its position in the country. But it lacked a broad stable base either in society or in the Party, and therefore had to resort more and more to dictatorial methods to keep itself in power. The betrayed Red Guards responded in various ways to this experience. Some retreated into cynicism, apathy or the assiduous cultivation of self-interest. Others gave themselves over to a melancholy romanticism of the sort best exemplified by the recently popular 'new wave literature' or 'literature of the wounded', with its recurrent themes of tragedy, betrayal and sacrifice. But a minority persisted with the political critique of bureaucracy that they had begun during the Cultural Revolution.

For them, as the essays of Wang Xizhe, Yi Ming and others show, the experience of the Cultural Revolution was by no means all bad, and given the chance they would doubtless distance themselves from some of the more extreme denunciations of it current in the West. The Cultural Revolution taught them the value of 'linking up to exchange revolutionary experience'--a lesson that they now put to excellent effect. It also taught them how to write, to edit and to mimeograph. But above all it taught them that 'to rebel is justified,' and although the Maoist leaders at first tried to manipulate this rebellion to their own ends and eventually suppressed it altogether when it began to depart too radically from their circus-script, the lesson was not the sort that you could easily forget.

THE SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF THE DISSIDENT MOVEMENT

China's democratic movement is made up overwhelmingly of state-employed manual workers and technicians who identify almost without exception with the workers and peasants' cause. True, some are the offspring of influential Party officials and army officers or of foreign-educated scientists and technologists, but even many of these people work

in factories or workshops. It is quite common in China for people with influence to seek 'backdoor entry' to jobs in industry for their children.

After all, factory work has high social status in China, and for a generation that went without formal education at a crucial time in their lives it is always better than the chief alternative: transfer to a village as part of the xiafang or 'Down to the countryside' programme. The result is that proportionately more young people, well informed through family connections about political struggles at the highest levels, work in urban industry in China than is the case in the Soviet Union or in Eastern Europe; and it is largely from among these people that the leaders of the democratic movement are drawn. This is extremely important for understanding the nature of dissent in China, and the differences between it and dissent in the Soviet Union, which is mainly practised by intellectuals, many of them highly placed. In China even dissidents from well-off backgrounds distance themselves from their origins by wearing patched clothes of coarse peasant-style cloth, and all vehemently eschew the elitism common among their Soviet counterparts.

China's democratic movement activists were under no illusions about their strength in the winter of 1978-79, and were well aware that they owed their freedom to publish and organise solely to the benign disposition of some Party leaders. True, a mass movement--the main factor behind the rapid collapse of the 'Gang of Four', and the democratic movement was directly descended from those events. But for the time being the broader social forces of April had withdrawn from active political roles and were ready to entrust the affairs of state to the new Deng government. Some saw the latter as a direct outcome and guarantee of the 1976 political ferment.

Although Deng had shown no enthusiasm for throwing the Party open to criticism in 1957 and Mao had had no difficulty in turning the Red Guards against him and Liu Shaoqi as symbols of bureaucratic corruption in 1966, Deng had been both a main opponent and a main victim of the Cultural Revolution, and--so one hoped--had emerged wiser from the trauma. Others supported Deng because they were tired of struggling, or because the alternatives looked worse, or because they feared to rock the boat while it was changing course and all sorts of perils--especially economic ones--lay ahead. So the democratic movement was temporarily beached, and would have to make the best of it

until a new rising of the tide.

But some of the movement's bolder supporters were not content to bide their time and hold their tongues in the hope that they would continue to be tolerated. Instead they strove to break out of their isolation, and relentlessly exposed the gap between Deng's promise and his practice.

DISSIDENTS TRY TO LINK UP WITH MASSES

In 1979 sections of the movement tried to forge links to broader social bases, especially the returned xiafang youth and the shangfang petitioners. The conditions of the millions of young people sent out to the villages (xiafang) before and after the Cultural Revolution were often extremely harsh, and many believed that the procedures by which they had been chosen for rustication were arbitrary or discriminative. After the fall of the 'Gang of Four' the government took steps to improve the conditions of xiafang youth and allowed many to return home. The effect was to set in motion a huge influx of other young people into the big cities, where they petitioned for relocation back to their homes.

These xiafang youth were joined by crowds of peasants who had come to the cities to demand redress of wrongs done them by officials under the Mao regime. Together these two groups were known as the shangfang or 'Up to petition' movement. In many cities they staged demonstrations and even riots. According to a Beijing wall-poster written by Zhang Xifeng, an agricultural worker from Shanxi, at one time there were 10,000 such shangfang 'refugees' sleeping out on the streets of the capital, where they lived by begging, theft and prostitution.

According to Zhang, these people were harassed, beaten and occasionally rounded up and interned by the city authorities. The authorities were in no position to put a quick end to the political and social grievances of the shangfang petitioners, even if they had had the will to do so. Not only were their grievances too many, but they originated mainly at the local level, to which the new 'liberal' norms had seldom sunk. The shangfang masses, largely unorganised and voiceless, were therefore an ideal target for the proselytising of the articulate but numerically weak democratic movement. When peasants wrote about their grievances on Democracy Wall, dissidents copied their statements and published them in their journals to give them a wider airing. Some activists organised and led demonstrations of poor peasants and other petitioners in front of the government buildings at Zhongnanhai.

In post-Mao China, wronged citizens are a class numbering millions, and had the democratic movement succeeded in giving shape and direction to even a small part of them they could have become a new and convulsive force in Chinese politics and might have destroyed the narrow framework within which the Party leaders were trying to hold the liberalisation. But the Party leaders were not unaware of the danger and came down heavily on oppositionists -- the best-known example was the woman activist Fu Yuehua -- who strove to make such links.

THE ROLE OF STUDENTS AND INTELLECTUALS

Two other groups that played an important role in China's recent protest and dissent were the students and the cultural non-conformists.

Students were the main force in the Red Guard movement of the Cultural Revolution, but they played practically no independent political role in the decade after 1968. Students in the early seventies were educated according to the norms and standards of the Mao group, and after 1976 were poorly suited to the goals of the new pragmatic leaders, which stressed science and technology. Not surprisingly they showed no great enthusiasm for the programme of the new government, although there is a little evidence that they opposed the changes after Mao's death.

As for the classes of students recruited after 1976, most could be expected to identify closely with the new leaders' goals, in which they were destined to play a star role. It was therefore only natural that students at first took no great part in the struggles and debates that marked the rise of the democratic movement. But in late 1979 this calm on the campuses was suddenly shattered by strikes and militant demonstrations to protest against various grievances, and the ferment sometimes took overtly political forms. Reports of the 1980 elections at Beijing University reveal a healthy scepticism towards formed authority and a widely held commitment to social reform.

Dissident poets, painters, writers and sculptors, like the Xingxing group that Julien Blaine met in Beijing are inseparable from the unofficial political movement, and unofficial journals regularly carried their poems and stories and advertised their exhibitions. When Wei Jingsheng was gaoled in October 1979, several hundred poets met in public to declare their support for him. This strong link between cultural and political dissidence is natural in a

system where art and literature are normally under tight political control. Despite the recent clampdown on unofficial art and the reimposition of a strong political censorship, many cultural leaders clearly approve of the experimentation in new literary and artistic forms, and have done their best to encourage and protect it.

Occasional calls for freer sexual relations were reported from Democracy Wall. In the past, PRC governments have advocated severe sexual repression, mainly on the grounds that sexual freedom in China would lead in practice to the greater exploitation of women. So it is not surprising that themes of sexual liberation should have been raised during the recent relaxation in China. Women too have taken the first small steps towards independent organisation, just as they have in the Soviet Union in recent years. During the Cultural Revolution women were told that they 'held up half the sky' and urged to better their position in society. But now repressive notions of traditional 'femininity' are being revived; and the rapid growth of urban unemployment will no doubt affect women first, in China as elsewhere in the world. In the meantime, Chinese women are scandalously under-represented at all levels of political life, especially the top ones. Now that Western trends are being eagerly followed by young people in China's big cities, it surely will not be long before some form of feminism catches on there.

REPRESSION

The strategic goal of the post-Mao leaders is to create the conditions -- political, cultural, social and economic -- for modernising China before the century is up. For Deng, this means streamlining the administration, releasing the energies of the managers and the technocrats, and throwing out the old class shibboleths, which are seen as an unnecessary source of social tension and an artificial constraint on talent. Since Deng's return to office hundreds of thousands of officials have gone back to their posts at all levels of the Party-state, and large numbers of purged thinkers, writers, teachers and artists have been rehabilitated (some posthumously).

The cases of millions of common citizens denounced or persecuted over the last thirty years have been put under review, and the 'class enemy' label has been removed from all but a handful of 'unreformed' landlords, capitalists, rich peasants and others. Many of these rehabilitated 'rightists' are scientists and

intellectuals whose skills and knowledge can now be mobilised for the good of China. As for the legal system, new procedures have been introduced to replace the old ad hoc methods that caused such widespread dissatisfaction under the 'Gang of Four'.

But the new government quickly made clear the limits beyond which this liberalisation would not go. If a measure of democracy was indispensable for 'emancipating the mind' and thus for promoting scientific progress, this democracy should not go so far as to challenge the Party's monopoly on political power. If legal guarantees were necessary to protect common citizens against the arbitrary exercise of official power, the judiciary should still bow where necessary to the political authorities. For the present leaders have hard-won positions and material interests to defend and little knowledge or experience of democratic organisation even during the revolution. When they saw the unofficial movement begin to go too far, they therefore took steps to curb it, and then to crush it.

But for a while, at least, the ferment around Democracy Wall was extremely useful to Deng Xiaoping and his supporters in the government, whose programme still faced opposition from Maoists who had survived the fall of the 'Gang of Four' and from the centrists around Hua Guofeng. Deng Xiaoping, having spent the Cultural Revolution 'in the cowshed', could hardly be blamed for its crises, and for the time being he enjoyed great prestige among ordinary citizens. He was perhaps the only remaining leader who, like Mao in his time, could risk whipping up mass movements on the streets in order to influence decisions in the Politburo.

By conjuring up the spectre of popular discontent Deng Xiaoping could frighten into submission his opponents in the leadership, who were too compromised with the Maoist past to feel comfortable about protest rallies and calls for human rights, democratic reform and the bringing to book of those responsible for the 'decade of catastrophe'. And so he finally won out in the policy debate. Meanwhile, the movement that he had earlier encouraged was threatening to get out of hand. Sections of it were taking their criticism of Mao to unacceptable lengths, and raising questions about the whole system of Party rule in China. At the same time disorder was breaking out on the streets of the capital, at a time when China's generals were fighting

a difficult war against the Vietnamese.

DENG TURNS ON THE MOVEMENT

On 16 March 1979 Deng Ziaoping made a speech setting narrower limits to the political ferment on the streets of China's cities. When Wei Jingsheng and others protested, they were seized by the police, and Wei was later gaoled for fifteen years. In November further arrests followed at Democracy Wall, and shortly afterwards the Wall was moved from Xidan to a less central place and was then closed down altogether. In February 1980 the Four Great Freedoms--including the freedom to put up wall-posters--were excised from the Constitution, and subsequently it was forbidden to sell unofficial journals in public.

These measures hit the democratic movement hard. Most unofficial journals stopped appearing, although a few continued to go out by post, thus getting round the ban on public sales. What ties there were between groups in different parts of China were loose, and it was not easy for them to mount a coordinated response to the crackdown. That is not to say that there were no local protests. Mu Changqing, a leader of the Nameless Association, committed suicide in protest against Deng's speech announcing the repression, thus giving the movement its first martyr; and in Guangzhou City, Wang Xizhe and his friends caused a stir by standing up at a public meeting of the Communist Youth League and criticising the suppression of the Four Greats. These were acts of individual heroism; they gave the movement moral stature.

What the movement needed next was the quieter heroism of the collective: hard organisation. And it almost came within their grasp. In January 1980 three unofficial journals in Guangzhou launched the first national appeal for freedom of the press, and others throughout China soon followed suit. In May representatives of various groups issued a joint protest against the arrest of Liu Qing; and on 29 August dissidents from Guangzhou, Wuhan, Changsha and Shaoguan got together to discuss setting up a committee to defend Liu Qing. Two days later He Qiu and three others implicated in this action were arrested and held by the police for several days. But despite this pressure from the authorities the moves towards greater cooperation went ahead, and a month later 21 unofficial groups finally joined together in a national Alliance, and appointed He Qiu to edit the all-China unofficial journal Zeren.

A NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

The birth of this new Alliance--it still lives underground in China, although its present strength is not known--was a major achievement which, given time, would have greatly strengthened the movement by providing a vehicle for the practical expression of solidarity across provinces, and by quickening the flow of information and ideas.

At the same time, the movement took steps to strengthen its external ties. In some areas--what bolder challenge to the 'Party of the Proletariat?'--its constituent groups began to win friends among disaffected factory workers. True, China's dissidents were themselves mostly workers, but few of the factory rank-and-file had up to then actively identified with their positions, although many may have passively sympathised with them. Now all this began to change. Here and there the movement began to break out of its isolation and to find new allies outside the fickle elite.

In Shanghai, Fu Shengi, editor of Voice of the People, stood for election in an engineering works after the government had announced--rashly, and not for long--that candidates need no longer have Party approval to be nominated. Fu headed the factory poll at the first count, despite strong Party pressure on the electors to vote for the two official candidates. In Changsha too a dissident student (married to an American woman) collected a large amount of money from local factory workers to finance his election campaign in the face of official harassment. In Wuhan oppositionists even managed to lead a strike. And in Beijing Xu Wenli, editor of April Fifth Forum, wrote an Open Letter to Lech Walesa praising him as a 'shining example for working classes in socialist countries the world over'. Even in the vast countryside pin-pricks of democratic agitation began to appear.

It would be foolish to exaggerate the victories that the democratic movement won among the workers. But the chance was certainly there that it might eventually make ties to large numbers of them, in which case its role in Chinese politics would have been immeasurably strengthened and the government would have found it far harder to suppress when the time arrived. China is a desperately poor country, and Deng's policies are aimed at greatly widening the range of inequalities in it. These are the ingredients for acute social tension. The democratic movement, which inherited from the Maoists a principled aversion to privilege and inequality, would have been strategically placed

to intervene in social conflicts in the factories and on the farms, and to win broader support for its political programme. But this possibility did not escape the notice of the Party top...

"GANG OF FOUR TRIAL"

In late 1980 the trial began in Beijing of the 'Gang of Four' (led by Mao's widow Jiang Qing) and the 'Lin Biao clique' crushed after allegedly trying to overthrow Mao in 1971. Jiang Qing, found guilty of persecuting Communist leaders and conspiring to subvert the nation, was given a suspended death sentence, as was her fellow-Maoist Zhang Chunqiao; the other defendants in the case were sent to prison for long periods. Although the link between this trial and the final crackdown on the democratic movement may not be immediately obvious, there was such a link and it is important not to overlook it.

First, this trial, repeatedly postponed, signalled a resolution of the power struggle and a temporary stabilisation of the leadership. This had important consequences for the protest movement. As long as cleavages continued in the Party top, the movement had some slight space in which to work. But as soon as the dominant faction had succeeded--for how long remains to be seen--in imposing its will on the refractory remnants of the Maoist old guard and overcoming the last obstacle to a (limited) criticism of Mao, the game was up.

Second, the trial signalled the definitive and unabashed return to 'class justice' and thus paved the way for extra-legal measures against political deviants. Officially, this trial was billed as a chief symbol of the return to 'socialist legality' under Deng; and compared with Stalin's show-trials and with the increasingly violent way in which faction-fights were resolved in Mao's old age, there can be little doubt that in principle it was a move for the better. But by any normal standards of justice it was a contemptible fraud. Whatever Jiang Qing's crimes, she did nothing that her accusers would not also have done in the fight for power, and in that sense her only real crime was to be defeated. In any case, the verdict against her was clearly reached before the trial, and the trial itself was heavily censored and attended by a raucous and squalid campaign of sexist smears and innuendos. The defence lawyers based their cases entirely on evidence compiled by the prosecution. They objected to none of the prosecutors' questions, cross-examined no prosecution

witnesses and called no witnesses of their own. (See the account of Ma Rongqie, Jiang Qing's defence lawyer, reported in the International Herald Tribune, 8 January 1982.)

Shortly after Jiang's sentencing, Amnesty International said that it was 'concerned that the standards applied at the trial of the ten former officials might have an adverse effect for the conduct of other political trials in the People's Republic'. Amnesty's concern found little echo in the political world, either on the right (which was busy ganging up with Deng against the Russians) or on the left, which seemed largely indifferent to Jiang's fate. Unfortunately Amnesty -- which has long experience of such things -- was right. It was widely said in China before Jiang's trial that through it Deng wanted to convince sceptical Chinese that the courts 'attack tigers as well as flies'. But if seditious tigers get only the semblance of a trial, should it surprise us when the flies are sent to gaol with no hearing at all?

And so, on and around 10 April 1981, 25 leading oppositionists and an unknown number of lesser ones were arrested in a nationwide crackdown on the democratic movement. As far as is known, these people were not put on public trial and were not formally charged with any crime. At the same time the police questioned many activists not yet arrested, searched their houses and confiscated books, paper and printing equipment.

Is this the end of the road for China's democracy movement? Will it now go the same way as the Hundred Flowers of 1957, which sank almost without trace under the waves of Party intolerance? A comparison with past unofficial movements sheds useful light on the strengths and weaknesses of China's present dissidents. The course of past criticism movements -- the main ones were in 1942, 1957 and 1966-68 -- was drearily, if tragically, predictable: first the Party leaders urge the people to speak out; sooner or later the critics overstep the limits; next the Party leaders reassert control by repressing the critics; and then the themes of criticism lie dormant until the next sponsored round of 'blossoming and contending'. Or so it was until the Cultural Revolution. But here the first big difference between present and earlier forms of dissent becomes apparent. For whereas the clampdown in 1942 and 1957 was more or less complete, so that the next generation of contenders was forced to start out with a blank

sheet, the effects of a political earthquake like the Cultural Revolution could not so easily be wiped clean just because some bureaucrat wanted it so. The Cultural Revolution was a mass movement of unprecedented proportions and it will be some time before its aftershocks die down completely. And the democratic movement started out not with a blank sheet but with a considerable body of theory and experience.

As for the Hundred Flowers campaign of 1957, there are many parallels between it and the recent movement, and these parallels are even officially recognised. The repressing of the Hundred Flowers has been widely described in China's press as the beginning of the 'left' tendency and China's troubles, and victims of the 1957 clampdown have not only been rehabilitated in their tens of thousands but are today saying many of the same things they said before their arrest nearly twenty-five years ago. But the differences are even more striking.

In 1957 all sections of the Party were united behind their historic leader, Mao. The Party had stabilised its rule and had radically restructured the Chinese economy. But Mao's Great Leap Forward of 1954, which plunged China's economy into deep crisis, destroyed much of his support in the Party top. Today the combined effects of time's tooth and repeated power struggles have led to the shedding of many old leaders, and China's economy and society are emerging only with the greatest difficulty from a period of debilitating chaos. In 1957 Mao launched the Hundred Flowers by deliberate choice, to curb bureaucratic conservatism in the Party and forestall 'a Hungarian-style incident'. The forces he mobilised were students and older intellectuals newly emerged from the furnace of thought reform. But the democratic movement developed largely independently, over a long period of intellectual ferment and experimentation. It is made up mainly of young workers hardened by years of personal privation and political struggle. It shares some notions with the students of 1957, but on the whole its programmes have greater theoretical depth and articulation than those of 1957.

A comparison with the Cultural Revolution is also instructive. In 1966 the Party leadership was badly split. The students and youth who formed the mass base of the Cultural Revolution were politically raw and easy prey for manipulation from above. The rival factions in the Party hierarchy vied with one another to recruit a following from among

the Red Guards, who lost sight of the substantive issues and became hopelessly embroiled in factionalism and violence. But although some of today's dissidents were at one time open to pressure from Deng Xiaoping, most were all along independent of him and followed their own lights, with no more than a token nod in Deng's direction every now and then. Today's dissidents succeeded in avoiding a gross personalisation of their politics despite the stridently personal official campaign against the 'Gang of Four', and argued that one should look not at the shortcomings of this or that individual leader, but at the social system that underlies them.

The two great planks on which the present leaders were hoisted into power are modernisation and democracy. It is unthinkable that they would risk alienating their support by backtracking entirely on their promises of reform. The 'anti-fascist' mood among the Chinese people, particularly the intellectuals and the workers, is too strong, the memory of the 'lawlessness' of the Cultural Revolution is too fresh in people's minds, and the new leaders' authority is incommensurably weaker than was Mao's in 1957, when he cracked down violently on the 'rightists' exposed during the Hundred Flowers. And so the prospect of a Chinese spring remains.

Yet, as the events of recent months show only too clearly, the Party leaders will not tolerate the bolder forms of independent politics advocated by the democratic movement, or open up the system to the fresh gusts of mass-based dissent. Their goal is the creation of a comparatively well-ordered society in which 'democracy' is carefully modulated to reinforce and stabilise the regime. The recent sponsored revival of the handful of docile 'democratic parties' that have supported the government uncritically since 1949 was entirely compatible with that project. The further growth of a non-conformist democratic movement was not. And so the movement was repressed. But by arresting its main leaders and driving its supporters underground, the authorities are running the risk that in the long run they will strengthen its coherence and force it to deepen its roots in the working class and peasantry. ■

*This article is from Wild Lilies, Poisoned Weeds; Dissident Voices from People's China, Gregor Benton, ed., London: Pluto Press, 1982.

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