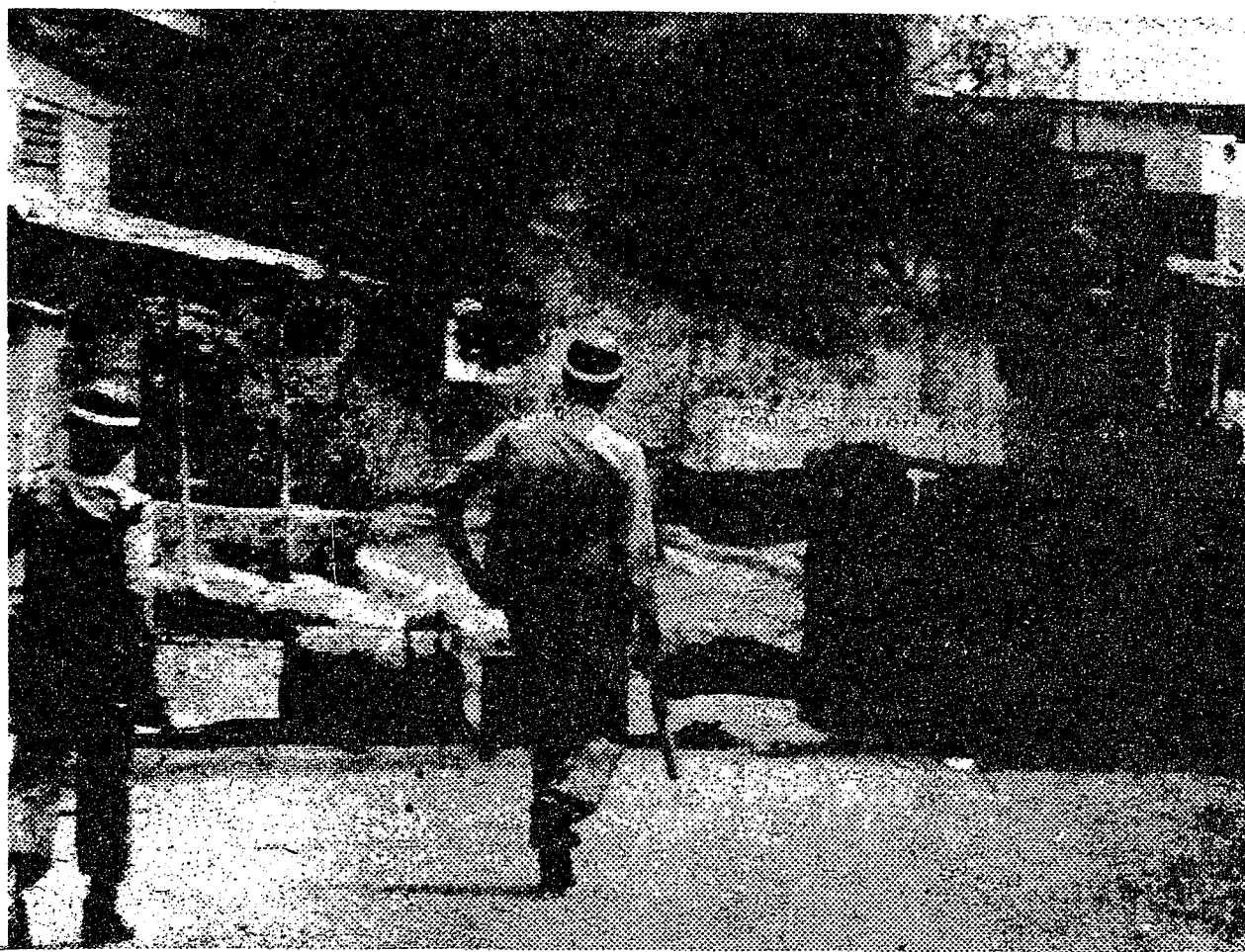




On April 23 and 24, a social earthquake shook the Dominican Republic.

Santo Domingo

Two Days of Popular Upsurge



By Wilberto Ventura*

"During a revolution, millions and tens of millions of people learn in a week more than they do in a year of ordinary, somnolent life. For at the time of every sharp turn in the life of an entire people it becomes particularly clear what aims the various classes of people are pursuing, what strength they possess, and what methods they use."

V.I. Lenin, "Lessons of the Revolution"

A social earthquake shook the Dominican Republic April 23 and 24, 1984. This social earthquake took place on a date of revolutionary remembrance for the Dominican people, the 14th anniversary of the civil war which began April 24, 1965 and the patriotic war we waged for three months against troops sent in by Yankee imperialism after the

overthrow of its government of that time, the fascist triumverate presided over by Donald Reid Cabral. Forty-two thousand marines invaded us to restore "order" and save "democracy"—that is, of course, to save the U.S.-style criminal and genocidal democracy through which these imperialists have grown fat massacring the peoples of the world and subjecting them to oppression, plunder and merciless exploitation.

But there is a big difference between the events of 1965 and those of 1984. In 1965 the mass insurrectionary movement was unleashed by a military insurrection which Yankee imperialism could not control in time. At that time the pro-Constitution elements among the armed forces found themselves outnumbered by those more tied to U.S. imperialism, so that the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), the party of the national bourgeoisie involved in the so-

called Constitutional movement, had to call upon the people to take to the streets of Santo Domingo in support of the constitutional troops locked in battle with the troops supporting the fascist Donald Reid government.

In 1965 the PRD had a certain anti-imperialist colouring. But after putting up a brief resistance to the imperialist forces, it sold out the revolution to the Yankees by signing the so-called "Institutional Agreement" which ended the anti-imperialist war. The signing of this agreement was carried out in the Yankee embassy in Santo Domingo in order to underline the fact that the national bourgeoisie had thrown itself into the arms of U.S. imperialism.

Things happened differently in

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April 1984: thousands and thousands of people took to the streets without warning, attacking banks, vehicles belonging to the government and giant imperialist enterprises, destroying supermarkets and the food outlets of the state capitalist Price Stabilization Institute; they burned offices of the governing party (the social-democratic PRD), drugstores and everything that seemed to belong to the imperialist and native bourgeoisie. At the same time, the masses of people built barricades and furiously took on the reactionary armed forces which the social-democratic government immediately called out with orders to wipe out everyone in their path. The rage unleashed by the masses of Dominican people was provoked by the implementation of measures secretly agreed to by the International Monetary Fund and the Dominican government which sent prices skyrocketing for basic necessities such as rice, bread, milk, etc., as well as for medicines. The country has been handed over even more nakedly to the voracious Yankee imperialists and to dependency, as Yankee imperialism has sought to tie us even more tightly into neocolonial bondage.

The mass uprising began in the neighborhood of Capotillo with the burning of tires and a public transport bus and immediately spread throughout the country. Though the armed forces brought out their whole arsenal of weapons, they found themselves in check by the masses, who sought arms in order to take on the military and even assaulted police barracks in the country's interior. There had never before been a mass outpouring like this throughout the country. The masses attacked the property of the big owners, burning plantations and building barricades on all the roads and highways to keep the reactionary forces out of the fields and the cities.

Despite the fact that the uprising of April 23 and 24 and the resistance of the 25th was smashed by the forces of the government and imperialism—Yankee military advisors personally led regular troops against the people, to kill without hesitation—the capitalist system was shaken to its foundation, demonstrating the potential of the people's struggle and its

determination to put an end to the Yankee imperialist plunder to which the broad masses of our country are subjected.

For the Revolutionary Communist Union (UCR) the events of April 1984 in the Dominican Republic have a historic significance without precedence in the class struggle in our society, because this coordinated expression of a whole people against the government and imperialism, although spontaneous, is an example of the great revolutionary potential of a people striving to liberate itself from the oppressive clutches of international capital, and at the same time these events have led the masses of people to clearly understand that the only escape from imperialist oppression and exploitation is through the violent action of the people.

Yankee Imperialism

Yankee imperialism is the source of all the evils we Dominicans suffer. Since the Yankees consolidated their domination of the Dominican Republic the great majority have suffered the most savage treatment at the hands of those in power. Yankee imperialism, together with its native flunkies who clean up the crumbs, has plundered our wealth, but at the same time it has had to contend with a people undaunted in its struggle against imperialist domination. Beginning in 1930 Yankee imperialism was able to shape a ruling class in our country based on the hated tyranny of Rafael Trujillo, a government the imperialists imposed by means of the infamous Civil Guard created by the Yankees to replace the U.S. Marines who had occupied the country from 1915 to 1924. Through the tyrannical Trujillo government the Yankees began to develop the sectors of the economy which would give rise to the present-day ruling class. Under the leadership of U.S. capital and linked to its development, there was a concentration of these economically powerful forces, the industrialists, the importers and exporters, the landlords and the state bureaucracy. These sectors became imperialist servants for the expansion of U.S. capital and shamelessly allowed the Yankees concessions to plunder our wealth with impunity while they became the lords and masters of

Dominican society.

But together with the development of imperialist domination in our country there has also been the development of the proletariat, truly the most revolutionary class in modern society, as well as other oppressed strata which ceaselessly struggle against the yoke of imperialist power. Furthermore, in the Dominican Republic the peasant class plays an extremely revolutionary role, traditionally suffering under the heel of the big landowners and the demagogery of the bourgeoisie's most infamous politicians.

These classes face each other in a constant bloody struggle. This struggle among them is the motive force of Dominican society. The bigshots who make up the ruling class resort to thousands of tricks to maintain their rule, while the oppressed struggle to overthrow this owning class whose exploitation of man by man has made them "all-powerful" lords of the noose and the knife massacring the masses whenever they rightly rebel against the oppressor's bloody rule and cruel exploitation.

This was exactly what occurred in April 1984: the masses of Dominican people rebelled against the rule of hunger, poverty, unemployment, repression, oppression and exploitation to which Yankee imperialism has subjected us, even though this insurrection lacked a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist leadership which could turn it into a revolution. All the forces of the oppressed converged in a mighty human volcano sweeping away everything in its path, everything that stank of private property. This is what the government labeled "looting" by "conspirators against the established order." In reality the masses of people took action against the owners, against those responsible for our suffering, angrily demanding arms to take on once and for all the bourgeois democratic government which today stands as the guardian of imperialist interests in the same way as any fascist government, that is, by mass murder against the Dominican people.

The importance of these events for the Dominican revolutionary movement is concentrated in the fact that this confrontation between the people and the reactionary forces spread

throughout the country, and that the repressive forces, unable to contain the revolutionary avalanche of the masses, were forced to resort to using the opportunists and revisionists grouped in the so-called Dominican Left Front (FID) to suffocate the fury unleashed by the people against the imperialist oppressors and their native flunkies.

The Failure of Bourgeois Democracy

Ever since the foundation of the Republic in 1844, the history of our country has been characterised by tyrannical regimes, fascist dictatorships which have strangled the struggles of the masses without hesitation, keeping themselves in power for decades. That's how it was with the tyranny of Trujillo—from 1930 to 1961—and more recently the Balaguer dictatorship which murdered revolutionaries under a permanent state of siege which permitted the stabilisation of imperialist rule and the drowning of the revolutionary movement in blood. The Balaguer regime lasted from 1966 to 1978, when a bourgeois-democratic government was installed under the leadership of the social-democratic Dominican Revolutionary Party.

Balaguer, Trujillo's disciple, carried out U.S. imperialism's counterinsurgency policy perfectly, extending Yankee power and stabilising a government which faithfully carried out imperialism's interests. In this way imperialism was able to develop its capital in combination with a period of terror and repression just as ferocious and bloody as that of Trujillo, closing any political opening which might have existed in the liberal sense, carrying out a policy of neo-Trujilloism.

In the face of this there arose groups which were anti-government but pro-imperialist. The PRD played an active part in the opposition to the autocratic Balaguer government. It maintained a demagogic but phoney revolutionary, anti-imperialist stance until 1974, when the national bourgeoisie and the PRD abandoned their policy of violent opposition to the Balaguer dictatorship and threw themselves into the arms of Yankee imperialism—the so-called liberals in Washington, the imperialist Demo-

crats—in preparation for coming to power by peaceful means, through the ballot box. From that point onward the PRD lost its nationalist colouring, distanced itself from the progressive and revolutionary forces and set out to get into the government by jumping into bed with U.S. imperialism, even while mouthing some timid criticisms of imperialism and promising "profound changes" if they were elected. Basically, the PRD was preaching the imperialist policy later baptised with the name "Carter Doctrine," which promised respect for human rights and the establishment of a pro-people, democratic rights regime. It was a hypocritical policy to trick the masses of people fed up with the Balaguer dictatorship whose days were numbered.

The Balaguer dictatorship, despised by the people because of its shameless crimes and rampant corruption; found the PRD to be a formidable electoral opponent. The PRD had arisen with a "revolutionary" halo and promised the people "change" and a way out of the enduring misery and domination which imperialism has imposed on us. The masses of people fell under the illusion that the solution to their problems lay in an electoral triumph for the PRD in 1978, and they voted for it with the idea of winning "freedom" and "democracy" and an end to oppressive imperialist neocolonialism.

Thus the PRD, a member of the social-democratic international, the Socialist International, took over the government in the Dominican Republic through "free" elections run by U.S. imperialism, having enjoyed the support of the vast majority of Dominicans in 1978, when opportunist and revisionist forces called on the masses of people to "give critical support to the PRD." With the establishment of bourgeois democracy in 1978 the political situation took a new turn. For the first time there was a bourgeois-democratic government ruling under imperialist auspices. The first attempt at a bourgeois-democratic government, led by Juan Bosch of the PRD, was overthrown by the U.S. after seven months in office, in September 1963, when it tried to implement reforms which came into conflict with Yankee imperialist

policy.

At the time of the Bosch government the national bourgeoisie had not broken with the anti-imperialist line, that is, it still had certain nationalist and revolutionary features. The imperialists decided to overthrow Juan Bosch and install a government which would be completely submissive to U.S. imperialism's orders. Thus Bosch was followed by the triumvirate and a new period of our people's struggle.

In 1965, during the patriotic April war, it was the national bourgeoisie that led the movement; in other words, the PRD put itself at the head of that revolutionary achievement and at the same time demonstrated its incapacity as a class to lead the people in the anti-imperialist struggle because it ended up betraying the war, selling out to Yankee imperialism. This lesson was not assimilated by the Dominican left, especially the Dominican Revolutionary Movement (MPD), at that time the Marxist-Leninist party and thus the vanguard of the Dominican proletariat.

After 1966, with the betrayal of the patriotic war by the PRD and Yankee imperialism in control of the situation through its military occupation of the country, the Joaquin Balaguer government was brought in. Balaguer was a well-known Trujilloite who had been the country's "president" when Trujillo was killed. Balaguer represented the neo-Trujillista oligarchy and was—and still is—a U.S. imperialist puppet whose mission was to carry out imperialism's counterinsurgency plan by assassinating the best-known revolutionaries and to reestablish "peace and tranquility" in Dominican society by whatever means necessary, so that Yankee imperialism's claws would be free to plunder the country's riches and develop capitalism according to its bloody and cruel pattern.

The Balaguer government lasted 12 years. They were 12 years of hunger, misery and repression through which imperialism increased its domination of the country. But the people resisted. This resistance increasingly threatened imperialist domination, so that it had to seek other imperialist options to maintain its control. Thus it was the PRD

which could best protect imperialist interests in the Dominican Republic, since this party had already abandoned itself to imperialism's embrace in an open way after 1974, which meant that the so-called national bourgeoisie would cease to be an ally of the proletariat in the struggle against imperialism.

Furthermore, for a certain period the PRD maintained the stance of radical opposition to the Balaguer dictatorship in alliance with the communists--with the MPD which was the party most attacked by the government and imperialism--and this brought widespread support from among the masses. This accounts for the huge quantity of votes the PRD won in 1978 when the Yankee government under Carter's direction forced the Balaguer dictatorship to admit defeat and turn over the government to the PRD. But the PRD has in no way kept the promises it made to the people during the electoral campaign. The "freedom" and "democracy" the social-democrats promised have turned into a living hell for the Dominican people, freedom and democracy for the imperialists and their flunkies to murder the masses of people when they protest and demand a better life.

It can be said categorically that bourgeois democracy has failed in the Dominican Republic, that Yankee imperialism cannot continue dominating the country in the old way, and that today it confronts an acute socio-economic and political crisis which grows deeper every day. There is a crisis at the very heights of society, among the ranks of the ruling class itself, and the masses are willing to fight against the foreign and native exploiters and are no longer willing to live under this hellish capitalist system.

Neither open fascism nor bourgeois democracy (disguised fascism), neither form of government, can appease the wrath of the masses of people or extinguish the yearning for revolution spreading throughout the country among ever wider sections and layers of people. The demagogery of this bourgeois democracy is as unlimited as its shamelessness to the masses. No Dominican government has ever done what this "democracy" has accomplished in two days,

shooting close to 200 people point-blank. This butchery of human beings showed what a democratic government in the service of the U.S. can do--a government which has perfectly carried out the defense of the interests of the whole ruling class.

But in the midst of this rotting bourgeois democracy which has created millionaires overnight and murdered the dispossessed without a second thought, the working class, the peasants and other exploited sections of the people have raised the banner of the people's combat and with their bare breasts and fists are defying all the capitalists' power. Fairy tales can't help because the imperialist social-democrat government has been a total failure and it hasn't kept even one of the many promises it made during the 1982 election campaign.

Where are the one hundred miraculous economic measures which were going to rev up the Dominican economy, measures that Salvador "the Savior" Jorge Blanco was going to carry out during his first one hundred days in office? Where is the economic democracy these imperialist charlatans and hypocrites promised? Where are the 10,000 new homes each year Jorge Blanco promised to give out to the immense number of homeless families? Where are the peasant cooperatives? Has the latifundia system in the countryside been eliminated? Where is the promised agrarian reform? All this has turned out to be lies by the imperialists and native reactionaries to fool the masses and shore up their criminal rule over the Dominican people.

The Dominican masses have tasted bourgeois democracy. Six years of bourgeois democracy are more than enough for the people to understand the necessity to prepare for the overthrow of imperialist domination and its expression in governments rotating in and out of power, one after another, whether they be bourgeois democracies or open fascism. The April events are the most eloquent proof that bourgeois democracy does not hesitate to bathe the Dominican people in blood if they dare to struggle against the exploiters and menace imperialist rule. In place of the economic democracy and the right to

exercise so-called political liberties that the government promised the people, what the government has given the people instead--and often--is a hail of machinegun bullets cutting down anything in its way.

With the failure of bourgeois democracy in the Dominican Republic U.S. imperialism finds itself in a very difficult situation to maintain its domination. Now that the social-democratic government has had to implement the reactionary IMF agreements through gunfire and bloodshed, the "democratic" card has been dropped--the government has had to kill hundreds of Dominicans and multiply the hunger and misery of the broad masses of people. We are living in an important time in the class struggle in the Dominican Republic, when there are objective factors rapidly leading towards the development of a revolutionary situation; a time when the prospects for making revolution are brighter than ever.

Strategic Importance for Global Plans

The Dominican Republic and Haiti, in other words, the island as a whole, plays a strategic role in U.S. imperialism's plans to unleash a war against their counterparts, the Soviet social-imperialists. The Soviets are accumulating strength in the region, and the U.S. imperialists are constantly manoeuvring to cut them off, since, as is well known, the Yankee imperialists consider Latin America their back yard which nobody can snatch from them. Not only do the Yankee imperialists believe that our countries are their exclusive property, but according to their imperialist point of view we can't even be allowed to seek an independent road to becoming free and sovereign nations. Thus our society is dependent on the interests of international capital, concretely the interests of U.S. imperialism, which suffocates us with its vile neo-colonial policies.

For a long time U.S. imperialism has manoeuvred to install a military base on our island, in Samana Bay, from which the sea lanes crossing the Caribbean can be well controlled. The Dominican Republic is also an excellent supply depot in every way, which obliges the U.S. to strive to

keep our territory under its control by whatever means necessary. Haiti, as well, plays an important role in Yankee imperialism's war plans, because while the Dominican Republic faces Puerto Rico where the Yankees have their well-known military base in Vieques, the other end of the island is only a hundred miles from Cuba, a political and military base for the Soviet social-imperialists which has really worried the Yankees.

Yankee imperialism has lately begun studies to decide where to put its military base, in the Dominican Republic or Haiti. The truth is that the U.S. needs to install another military base in its "back yard," because Soviet influence is advancing in the region and the Yankees will not peacefully tolerate social-imperialist expansion. Current examples of this are U.S. intervention in Nicaragua, to overthrow the pro-social-imperialist Sandinista junta, and in El Salvador, to prevent the triumph of guerrillas controlled by the social-imperialists as well as pro-U.S. elements who are fighting the genocidal government of Jose Napoleon Duarte.

In the wink of an eye the U.S. swallowed Grenada, a small island controlled by a pro-Soviet government since 1979, where the social-imperialists had planned to build a huge airport to facilitate military maneuvers. In other words, the social-imperialists have penetrated into the Yankee's "back yard" to a certain extent, and it is an objective reality that all of the Americas, as indeed the whole planet, will be shaken by the events of an imperialist third world war, if proletarian revolution does not cut off the imperialists' criminal plans.

It is within this global framework that the U.S. wants to build a military base on the island, especially in the Dominican Republic. Furthermore, U.S. imperialism knows very well that a revolution either in the Dominican Republic or in Haiti would echo through both sides of the island, which is why the Yankees prepare the ruling classes of both sides to pour chauvinism among the masses and prejudice the masses of each side against the other, so as to be able to use one people against the other if revolution triumphs in one of

the two sides. In fact, no matter on which side of the island a revolution were to take place the other side would also be set ablaze against the ruling class and imperialist domination because we of both sides suffer the same vicissitudes imposed by U.S. imperialism's neocolonialism.

Thus the U.S. will have to deal with the reality of a revolution against them in our country and not just with the social-imperialists; at present, the eruption of a mass movement against the Yankee imperialists is much more likely than a confrontation between two sets of imperialist forces over which of them will have hegemony in the Dominican Republic. With this perspective, the Dominican revolutionaries have to prepare ourselves and the masses of people for the great battles to come, so that we will no longer be stepped on by the U.S. imperialists nor allow ourselves to be used by them as cannon fodder in their sinister plans for an imperialist war against the Soviet social-imperialists.

Our Tasks in Light of the April Events

We revolutionary communists/proletarian internationalists in the Dominican Republic have immense tasks ahead of us, at a time when the social contradictions at the national level are intensifying rapidly and in the international arena the imperialists are preparing for a third world war. Without for a moment forgetting that we are proletarian internationalists, the Revolutionary Communist Union has to take up the task of solving the problems posed by the Dominican revolution. It is clear that the Dominican revolution, in its two stages, is a part of the world proletarian-socialist revolution.

It is with an internationalist outlook that we analyse the Dominican revolution. We have to resolve the cardinal question of every revolution: the question of political power. With this in mind, we must firmly uphold the teachings of Lenin and Mao regarding the party, the analysis of classes in Dominican society, allies (that is, sketch out a political line regarding allies), the question of the revolutionary front and the revolutionary army. Along with all these tasks it is also necessary to unmask

opportunism and revisionism before the masses, because these tendencies have taken over the movement and consistently betray the proletariat's revolutionary struggle against the government and imperialism.

The common denominator of current political experience throughout Latin America is the denial of the leading role of the communist party in the democratic and socialist revolution, replacing the party with the front and rejecting the revolutionary role of the proletariat. We are in the process of building the revolutionary communist party because without it the working class and all the oppressed cannot possibly truly free themselves from imperialism's clutches. This is an immediate task. We cannot allow the masses to continue to rise up without revolutionary political leadership, because the ruling class will just mercilessly smash the masses who so bravely defy imperialist rule.

The work of party building must be urgently speeded up. Our newspaper, *La Chispa Revolucionaria*, is playing an important role in this. But together with this there is the vital task of chalking out the programme and carrying out a concrete analysis of classes in Dominican society. For the moment, the UCR is deepening its work of revolutionary propaganda and political education.

It would be cowardice and a failure of revolutionary energy and spirit to leave the masses of Dominican people deprived of communist leadership now when it is more necessary and urgent than ever, when we find ourselves in a situation of mass upsurge and the masses themselves demand political leadership from the communists. During the April events, the masses asked for arms and demanded that the communists participate actively. It was common to hear many people say, "Where are the communists?" That is one of the great lessons we can draw from the spontaneous April insurrection. We have to set the stage for the construction of a powerful proletarian party, in order to seize upon the sentiments of the masses at times such as the present in the Dominican Republic and thus be able to destroy this suffocating imperialist domination. Only in this way can we storm the heavens. ■