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TWELVE TROTSKYISTS IN IRAN SENTENCED TO DEATH

—PAGE 806



FOURTH INTERNATIONAL LAUNCHES NICARAGUA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

Statement of the Fourth International

For a Worldwide Campaign to Defend Nicaraguan Revolution!

[The following statement was issued by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on August 15, based on reports from its observers in Nicaragua.]

* * *

On January 1, 1959, the Batista dictatorship was swept away by the military offensive of the Rebel Army and the mobilization of the Cuban masses led by the July 26 Movement. On July 19, 1979, the bloody Somoza regime in Nicaragua, installed and maintained by American imperialism for more than forty years, was overthrown by a massive nationwide popular insurrection that capped a coordinated offensive by the rebel armed forces of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

The popular insurrection led not only to the overthrow of the dictatorship but to the dismantlement of the old regime. The mobilization of the masses in popular committees as well as the revolutionary measures already taken in the short time since the overthrow of the hated regime, indicate the proletarian and plebeian dynamic of the process now unfolding.

The toilers of the entire world could not have hoped for a more magnificent celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Cuban revolution! The road has been opened that can lead to the victory of the second socialist revolution of the Americas.

But imperialism will be doing everything possible to try to prevent the toiling masses of Nicaragua from moving forward on this road.

With the same cold-blooded brutality with which they propped up Somoza to the bitter end, the imperialists are now bringing into play diplomatic, economic, and military resources to try to stop the revolutionary upsurge.

There is no more urgent task for the world workers movement than to mobilize in opposition to them.

The American people demonstrated during the Vietnam War that Washington no longer had a free hand to use its murderous military machine. Today the American working people can play a decisive role in staying the hand of the Pentagon in Central America. This would weaken the imperialists and strengthen the working class of the United States. It would be the greatest possible aid to the Nicaraguan people.

Devastation by Civil War

Nicaragua has been devastated by the civil war. In his ruthless attempt to main-

tain power, Somoza ordered the bombing of neighborhoods and factories. He plundered the monetary resources of the country.

More than 1 million people are in need of food. More than 300 tons of food are required per day. Tens of thousands of



Washington Post

refugees are seeking to return to the country, and will have to be cared for.

Agriculture has been totally disrupted by the months of civil war. Industrial investments were blocked. Hundreds of factories stopped production.

To defend the revolution and solve this crisis is an enormous task.

* * *

The American imperialists have been weakened by their defeat in Vietnam and by the blow they received by the downfall of the shah's regime in Iran. But they are attempting to take advantage of every weak spot in the Nicaraguan revolution to try to prevent a new Cuba. They will intensify threats against revolutionary

Cuba itself for its support to the Nicaraguan revolution.

Imperialism's goal is to try to restore the weight and decision-making capacity of the bourgeois elements in the "Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction" and other points of support for the bourgeoisie.

It is trying to utilize the European Social Democrats and some of the bourgeois democrats of Latin America as intermediaries for this policy. It seeks to pressure the FSLN leadership to renounce the economic inroads on capitalist property necessary to satisfy the elementary needs of the masses, and to stop the arming and mobilization of the masses, in return for economic aid.

The imperialist bourgeoisie, supposed defender of human rights, is using dribbles of the needed economic and food aid as blackmail. These imperialists—who have made famine into one of the most lucrative businesses for the agribusiness food trust—have refused to send the 300 tons of food a day necessary to feed a people that they have helped plunder.

But imperialism depends above all on its own military striking force and those that it closely controls. It demonstrated this by organizing the retreat of well-armed units of Somoza's National Guard into Honduras and El Salvador. It is currently preparing for a possible military intervention along the lines of Guatemala in 1954, the Bay of Pigs in Cuba in 1961, or Santo Domingo in 1965.

Fidel Castro's government raised a warning even before the victory against Somoza: "The intervention of the United States would create a Vietnam in the very heart of Latin America. The Nicaraguan people and those of Central America would undoubtedly rise up against such foreign intervention, and their other brothers in Latin America and the Caribbean could not remain indifferent to such genocide."

On July 26, in front of representatives of the FSLN and the Cuban people, Fidel Castro pointed to the road that must be taken by all the workers states, in the framework of a call for aid from all countries:

"We invite the United States, we invite all the countries of Latin America, we invite all the countries of Europe, the countries of the Third World, our sister socialist nations, everybody, to take part in an emulation campaign to help Nicaragua. This is our position, in order to make a really human, really constructive effort, based on a spirit of emulation."

This kind of massive aid—which has

already begun from Cuba—combined with the construction of a massive international solidarity movement with the Nicaraguan revolution, would be a powerful weapon against the criminal maneuvers of imperialism.

* * *

Following the Cuban road outlined by the Second Declaration of Havana, the road of permanent revolution, is the way for the Nicaraguan toilers to consolidate their victory.

In order to resist the pressures of Washington, to assert its complete independence of the imperialists, to press forward the agrarian reform, to expropriate all imperialist property and the big holdings of the national bourgeoisie, to assure control by the workers over industry and over domestic and foreign trade—to do these things the Cuban revolution had to break with the bourgeoisie, put an end to the coalition government installed in 1959, and set out on the course charted by the new workers and peasants government based on the armed and mobilized masses and organized by the July 26 Movement. In this way the Cubans were able to carry the revolution through to the end—the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a workers state.

Road to Revolution

The road to socialist revolution in Nicaragua is mined with obstacles. Imperialist pressures and attacks will oblige the FSLN leadership to maneuver. The difficulties created by the lack of food and goods of all kinds will compel this leadership to try to gain time.

But these obstacles can be overcome, as the example of Cuba has shown, if the tremendous power and energy of the masses is organized.

The example of the Cuban revolution showed the close relationship between the upsurge and mobilization of the exploited and oppressed classes, the development of their consciousness according to the rhythms imposed by the revolution, and the evolution of consciousness of the leadership of the mass movement itself.

This will also be the factor that determines the future of the Nicaraguan revolution.

The Fourth International calls on the mass parties and organizations of the workers movement to build the broadest possible international movement—united and nonexclusionary—in support of the struggle of the Nicaraguan people and the fighters of the FSLN, whose courage has become a most precious heritage of the world proletariat.

Immediate aid to Nicaragua!

Imperialist hands off!

No threats against Cuba!

Solidarity with the Nicaraguan Revolution!

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Editor: Mary-Alice Waters.

Contributing Editors: Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, Ernest Mandel, George Novack.

Managing Editor: Michael Baumann.

Editorial Staff: Dan Dickeson, Gerry Foley, Ernest Harsch, Fred Murphy, Will Reissner.

Business Manager: Harvey McArthur.

Copy Editor: David Martin.

Technical Staff: Paul Deveze, Larry Ingram, Arthur Lobman, Kevin McGuire, James M. Morgan, Sally Rhett.

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Imperialism Launches Propaganda Drive Against Sandinistas

By Barry Sheppard and Mary-Alice Waters

The imperialist enemies of the revolution in Nicaragua have opened a concerted international campaign to pressure the Sandinista leadership not to carry the revolution beyond bourgeois limits, and to undercut the development of international solidarity with this revolution by the world working-class movement.

A series of articles has appeared in major capitalist dailies in the United States, Europe, and Latin America, all of which put forward the same basic line: The Nicaraguan revolution is threatened by "extremists" on the left; the new government realizes that it can't go too far too fast with radical measures or they will not receive sufficient foreign aid to rebuild the country; and the Sandinistas realize that their true allies are the capitalist businessmen of Nicaragua, as represented in the civilian junta that makes up the Government of National Reconstruction.

An article by Marlise Simons carried on the front page of the August 21 *Washington Post*, entitled "Nicaragua Expels Trotskyist Group In Crackdown," begins as follows:

Despite the revolutionary euphoria of the past month, the first signs of organized opposition to Nicaragua's new government are coming from the extreme left and not, as widely anticipated, from conservative businessmen.

At the same time, the government's first act of political impatience has been to expel some 60 Latin American Trotskyists whom it charged with being "counterrevolutionaries" and "creating problems for the Sandinista revolution."

Although the government is anxious not to disappoint popular expectations of change, it seems determined to resist extremist pressure for sudden, radical measures that could frighten both the domestic and foreign private sectors and retard economic reconstruction.

Along a similar line, an article by Richard J. Meislin in the August 20 issue of the *New York Times* states:

In Managua, the perception that the Sandinista military leadership, and not the five high-ranking members of the civilian junta, was running the country, which was prevalent in diplomatic circles and among some junta members themselves only two weeks ago, has virtually disappeared.

The Simons article makes clear that this is the line Washington thinks is most effective right now in applying pressure against the Nicaraguan revolution. She explains that "some U.S. diplomats here agree that several reports in the U.S. media have been 'irresponsible,' or 'distorting the truth.' This applies, they say, to clichés about 'the new Cuba' and 'rising

anti-Americanism.'"

The "responsible" attitude the U.S. State Department wants to promote is to warn the Sandinista fighters who led the revolution that *they had better* leave the civilian junta in command of the government; that "conservative businessmen" are the mainstay of the revolution and left "extremists" are its enemy; that the revolution is a *bourgeois* revolution and must stay within *bourgeois* limits.

In warning of the "extremist" danger to the revolution, both Simons and Meislin are very precise. They point to any measures that "could frighten both the domestic and foreign private sectors." As an example, Meislin singles out the proposal that workers be paid back pay "for the two months the country was at war. It is money the government has promised the workers but that few of the hard-pressed employers have been able to pay."

To make sure that the Sandinistas understand the nature of these warnings, Washington is insisting on political concessions as a precondition for providing desperately needed food, medicine, and other aid. In reserve, they are holding the threat of military intervention, spearheaded by the Somozaist National Guard units that were withdrawn to Honduras and El Salvador.

This blackmail of the Sandinistas by Washington was spelled out in the article by Simons:

In recent days, leaders of the Sandinista command and junta members have said privately they fear they may be caught in a vicious circle: they require fast massive foreign assistance to ensure that moderation prevails, yet Western governments appear to be withholding funds until they can be sure they are not financing "a new Cuba."

On August 15, the *New York Times* ran an editorial warning the U.S. Congress not to place obstacles in the way of this blackmail plan. The editorial stated:

No one can say that Nicaragua will not go the Cuban route but it is significant that the junta is pressing for American economic help. The legislation needed to expand American aid programs must pass a Congress in which diehard Somoza supporters command key [congressional] committees. Doubtless they will fight every outburst about "Yankee Imperialism" as proof that Nicaragua is undeserving, in turn confirming the leftist view that America is an implacable antagonist. It will be a test of American maturity to keep extremists on all sides from fulfilling their own dire prophecies.

Confronted with this imperialist campaign and the tremendous devastation of

the country wrought by Somoza in the final weeks of the civil war, the Sandinista leadership faces complex, difficult problems in carrying the revolution forward.

The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) must make it as difficult as possible for the imperialists to be able to refuse to provide food and other aid.

In order to advance the interests of the working masses of Nicaragua, the Sandinistas have and must continue to take measures that cut into the profit-making prerogatives of native and foreign capitalists. At the same time they must make it as difficult as possible for the imperialists to respond through military intervention.

The FSLN leadership needs to maintain the masses in arms because of the continuing threat of counterrevolution. But the armed defenders of the revolution need to be a trained, disciplined force, with heavy arms and sophisticated military equipment.

These needs of the revolution present major tactical problems for the revolutionists in the Sandinista command.

The imperialist press, in its warnings to the Sandinista leadership, has utilized a convenient target—a group called the "Simón Bolívar Brigade" (the "Trotskyists" referred to in the headline of the Simons article).

The Simón Bolívar Brigade is an armed international contingent that was initiated by the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST—Socialist Workers Party) of Colombia in the closing weeks of the Nicaraguan civil war. Individuals associated with the brigade entered Nicaragua only in the final days of the fighting.

Since the fall of the Somoza dictatorship the brigade and a number of other left organizations, including the Maoists, have attempted to utilize the objective problems facing the revolution—the gap between the great hopes of the masses for immediate improvements in their living standards and the difficulties in achieving these goals quickly—to "outflank" the Sandinistas on the left. Their tactic was to try to expose the Sandinista leadership as not being revolutionary enough.

Moreover, even though they were not acting under the direction of the FSLN, they carried out their agitation and activities in the name of the FSLN. Working people who supported the brigade's activities were thus left with the false impression that they were following the FSLN.

The reaction of the FSLN was to initiate several meetings with the brigade leadership to try to convince them of the need to

place all armed units under the unified FSLN command and coordinate their activities with those of the FSLN.

The FSLN finally publicly summoned all brigade members to appear at its offices in Managua August 14. In response, the brigade organized a demonstration of some 1,000 persons in front of the FSLN headquarters. They brought people to the demonstration under the pretense that they were going to discuss problems of wages and trade-union organization with the FSLN leadership.

Following this provocation, the FSLN ordered non-Nicaraguan members of the brigade out of the country. Some were expelled, and others are reportedly still being sought inside Nicaragua.

Since the brigade was organized by the Colombian PST, a Trotskyist group that is a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International, the actions of this group gave the bourgeois press a convenient target to launch its campaign against "Trotskyism" in the hopes of sowing confusion among the supporters of the Nicaraguan revolution.

But the Simón Bolívar Brigade is not Trotskyist. No one had to agree with Trotskyism to join the brigade. It was composed of Latin American revolutionists who wanted to help bring down Somoza.

Furthermore, while the Colombian PST is a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International, it did not set up the Simón Bolívar Brigade in consultation with or under the control of the elected leadership bodies of the Fourth International, the world Trotskyist organization. The leaders of the brigade set their own policies without regard to the policies of the Fourth International, and in Nicaragua they have carried out a policy contrary to the position adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, as expressed in its statement of August 15 (reprinted on p. 802 of this issue). The position of the Fourth International is to build a campaign of solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution in collaboration with the FSLN, not in opposition to it.

Moreover, the Fourth International has always stood on the conviction that revolutions are led by forces that arise out of the living struggle in their own country. It is a grotesque idea that a group of non-Nicaraguans like the Simón Bolívar Brigade could jump into the revolutionary process from the outside and through a series of maneuvers build a counter leadership to the FSLN.

Although the imperialist press has utilized the activities of the Simón Bolívar Brigade for their attack on "extremism," the target is the Nicaraguan revolution itself. This is why papers like the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Le Monde*, and other imperialist mouthpieces, not noted for featuring news about Trotskyism, gave top-priority coverage to the expulsion of the brigade leaders from Nicaragua.

The message is clear.

First, the imperialists want to let the FSLN know that any measures the new leadership takes against the capitalists will be considered "extremism" by Washington, and that it will react accordingly.

Second, the goal is to falsely portray the FSLN as bourgeois liberals, or at least as the captives of the bourgeois liberals in the junta. This is designed to disorient inexperienced revolutionists and sow confusion among working-class forces around the world who are hoping to see the FSLN fighters carry their struggle through to the end as did the Cuban leadership.

Third, the campaign against Trotskyism in the bourgeois press is aimed at dividing and weakening the forces that could build an effective international movement in solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution and the FSLN leaders. By smearing Trotskyism the imperialists hope to place obstacles in the way of the international solidarity campaign that the Fourth International has called for and begun to organize.

In fact, the bourgeois press coverage is attempting to give the impression that

there is really no need for such a solidarity campaign: the imperialists are reasonable and will, in the end, provide the necessary aid. Similarly, their "friendly" advice to the FSLN contained in these articles is designed to lull the Nicaraguan people as well as the international workers movement into thinking there is no real danger of imperialist-backed military attack.

This imperialist propaganda drive against the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan revolution makes it all the more urgent to mount the broadest possible response from the workers movement internationally. Massive economic pressure is being brought to bear against the Nicaraguan people, backed by threats of renewed military operations. The trade unions and other organizations of the workers movement must reach out to students, churches, and all democratic forces, to organize solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution and demand aid from the imperialist governments with no strings attached.

The Nicaraguan people must be able to feed their hungry, heal their wounded, and rebuild their industry while taking the fate of their country into their own hands. □

Canadian Labor Movement Sends Aid

MONTREAL, Canada—Operation Solidarity, Canadian labor's response to the needs of the Nicaraguan people, is under way.

A plane left Toronto August 11 for Nicaragua loaded with 75,000 pounds of food and other desperately needed supplies.

Organized by the Canadian Labor Congress, Operation Solidarity is being financed by local union donations.

John Simonds, a Labor Congress spokesperson, said the unions have raised \$250,000 in the past month.

He also said that unions in the food and garment industries have negotiated agreements with various companies so that they will be able to send food and clothing worth \$500,000.

Included in the initial shipment was 6,000 pounds of clothing collected through public appeals by unions in the city of Ottawa.

Operation Solidarity got under way after the CLC sent a fact-finding delegation to Nicaragua following the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship.

Simonds said the initial shipment also included \$60,000 worth of medicines, including vaccines against polio, tuberculosis, tetanus, measles, and other diseases, along with necessary refrigeration equipment.

Here in Québec, the Confederation of National Trade Unions has participated in solidarity actions with Nicaragua. In July,

just before the fall of Somoza, the union body joined in a demonstration of a thousand people. And at a Québec City gathering of the union, the agenda included greetings from a representative of the Sandinista National Liberation Front. He received a standing ovation.

In Winnipeg, Manitoba, the defeat of Somoza was celebrated at a meeting whose keynote speaker was Neils Thibeau, representing the Manitoba Federation of Labor and the New Democratic Party, Canada's labor party.

In Vancouver, the NDP is participating in a medical aid committee for Nicaragua.

Meanwhile, socialists and other union activists have begun the process of deepening local union involvement in Operation Solidarity. □

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Twelve Trotskyists Sentenced to Death in Iran

By Michael Baumann

In secret trials conducted without the slightest pretense of legality, twelve imprisoned members of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS) were sentenced to death in Ahwaz August 26.

Two other members of the HKS were sentenced to life in prison in the same city August 25.

Execution of the twelve Trotskyists, which was scheduled to be carried out in the early morning hours of August 27, was stayed at the last minute following emergency protests that secured the intervention of authorities in Tehran.

Among those who have urged that the executions be stayed are the official Ahwaz State Prosecutor Hashemi; Admiral Medani, the governor of Khuzestan Province; and Hassan Nazih, the head of the National Iranian Oil Company. In addition, the Islamic prosecutor in Tehran has urged that new trials be held for the prisoners.

Nonetheless, the lives of the twelve condemned socialists remain in the gravest danger. Immediate protests from around the world are urgently needed.

The trials in Ahwaz were conducted by the local Imam's Committee, completely outside the framework of the official judicial process. Held without the sanction or even the presence of the official state prosecutor, they were a mockery of justice.

The accused were denied any right to representation by attorneys and even the right to speak in their own defense.

At the same time, tight censorship and the government's shutdown of most of Iran's press has made it extremely difficult to inform Iranian public opinion of the facts in the case.

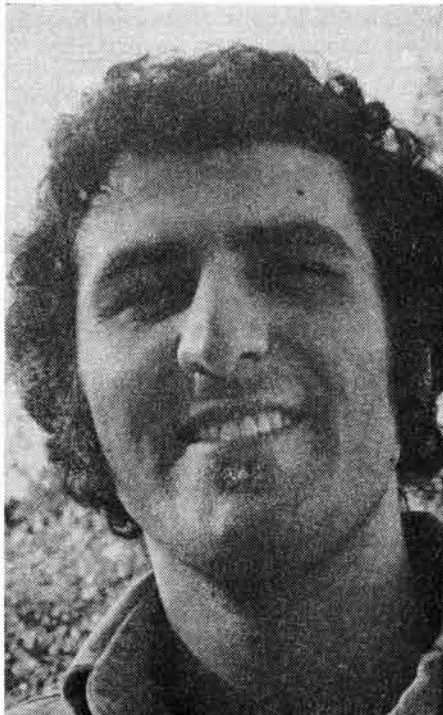
The limited possibility for mobilizing support for the defendants inside Iran under these conditions serves to underscore the importance of international action in behalf of the prisoners.

The twelve Trotskyists who were sentenced to death are: Hadi Adib, Hormoz Fallahi, Firooz Farzinpour, Morteza Gorgzadeh, Mustafa Gorgzadeh, Ali Hashemi, Kambiz Lajejardi, Mahmoud Kafaie, Kia Mahdevi, Mohammed Poorkahvaz, Mustafa Seifabadi, and Hamid Shahrabi.

The two who received life sentences are Fatima Fallahi and Mahsa Hashemi.

All have been in prison since June. They were arrested during the central government's brutal crackdown on oil workers, steelworkers, and activists among the oppressed Arab population in Khuzestan Province, the center of Iran's oil industry.

None of the fourteen socialists have been



HAMID SHAHRABI: One of twelve HKS members sentenced to death in Ahwaz.

accused of any crime. They were convicted solely on the basis of their political opinions.

This is abundantly clear from the charges against Fallahi and Hashemi.

According to a dispatch from the official Pars News Agency published in the August 26 issue of the Tehran daily *Bamdad*, the charges against Fallahi and Hashemi included the following:

Participation in anti-Islamic and anti-political activities.

Agitation against the central government.

Criticism of the central government for being undemocratic.

Instigation of riot.

Responsibility for the "tragedy in Naqadeh" (one of the earliest clashes in which the army of the central government was sent in against the Kurdish population).

Having praised the "antirevolutionary Kurdish people."

Encouraging the armed struggle of the Kurdish people against the central government.

Responsibility for the "explosive situation" in Khuzestan Province.

Dissemination of "poisonous ideas" and "sexy magazines."

Membership in the Executive Committee of the HKS in Khuzestan Province.

To be noted is the fact that this list of patently trumped-up charges does not contain a single concrete "illegal" or "criminal" act. All are based on Fallahi and Hashemi's *political* support to the just struggles of the oppressed working masses of Iran.

All of the HKS prisoners are veteran fighters against the shah's tyranny. Several were active in exile in the United States, where they helped build the internationally known Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (CAIFI).

Fatima Fallahi, a young woman in her twenties, campaigned among Iranian students in the United States to win support for the release of the shah's political prisoners.

She returned to Iran before the fall of the monarch and took part in the insurrection. In Ahwaz, she is known as a courageous fighter for the rights of the oppressed Arab national minority and for the rights of Arab oil workers.

Mahsa Hashemi, a long-time resident of Khuzestan Province, was active in the underground resistance to the shah there. Following the downfall of the tyrant, she participated actively in the fight of women and the Arabs for their rights. From prison, she ran as a candidate of the HKS in the recent election for the Assembly of Experts.

The sentencing of these two antishah fighters to life in prison, which became known before the news of the death sentences, provoked immediate protest in and of itself—including from prominent figures associated with the Khomeini-Bazargan government.

Abu al-Hassan Bani Sadr, a leading defender of Khomeini's Islamic Republic, agreed to send a telegram to the authorities in Ahwaz demanding information about their trial. So did several of the newly elected members of the Assembly of Experts.

To stop the impending execution of the twelve condemned HKS members, emergency protests from around the world are urgently needed.

Telegrams should be sent to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Qum, Iran, and to Iranian embassies around the world. Send copies of all protests to the Tehran daily newspaper, *Bamdad*, Hafez Avenue, 24 Zartoshtian Alley, Tehran, Iran, and to *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, P.O. Box 116, Village Station, New York, N.Y. 10014. □

Protests Around World Condemn Imprisonment of Trotskyists

By Janice Lynn

Ten members of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS) face immediate trial and possible execution in the city of Ahwaz. An emergency international campaign to save their lives has begun.

On August 20, ten of the fourteen HKS members imprisoned in Ahwaz were moved to cells in the Special Court building. This means they could be tried at any moment. The Special Prosecutor has denied them the right to lawyers. No official charges have been leveled against the HKS prisoners, who were arrested in late May and June during the massive roundup of Arab protesters, oil workers, steelworkers, and others in Khuzestan Province.

Four HKS members are still being held in Karoun prison. Two have been released: Omid Mirbaha and Hojabr Khosravi.

Continuing executions of Kurdish and Arab revolutionists point to the danger the Iranian socialists face. In addition, the government attempt to put the socialists on trial at a time when political parties and newspapers are banned means that international protests from outside Iran are even more vital to the defense of the HKS members.

Within two days of the news of the impending trial, telegrams demanding the release of the HKS members began pouring in to Ayatollah Khomeini in Qum and to Iranian embassies and consulates around the world.

In Britain, telegrams were sent by Amnesty International; Bernadette Devlin McAlisky, the well-known fighter for Irish independence; the International Marxist Group; the Communist Party; the Socialist Workers Party; the International Communist League; the Workers Socialist League; and the Socialist Labor Group.

Amnesty International opposed the threat of death hanging over the HKS members and protested any trial held in secret or without legal representation.

On August 23 an emergency news conference was held in London to protest this latest danger to the lives of the antishah fighters.

Speaking at the news conference were Fred Halliday, author of *Iran: Dictatorship and Development*, who had just returned from Tehran; Hojabr Khosravi of the Iranian HKS who was arrested along with the fourteen prisoners, but later released; a representative from the Kurdish Solidarity Campaign; and Tariq Ali, a leader of the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International.

The news conference was covered widely

in the British press, including by the *Guardian* newspaper, which carried an extensive article.

In addition, an interview with Khosravi by Independent Radio News was carried on local radio throughout the country. BBC-Radio Four broadcast the news as well.

The *Morning Star*, the newspaper which reflects the views of the British Communist Party, carried two articles in the August 23 and 24 issues in which they protested the reports of a secret trial of the Iranian socialists.

In an official statement, the Communist Party wrote, "The British labor and progressive movements which welcomed the overthrow of the Shah should now raise its voice against the new wave of repression in Iran. It should call for the release of the fourteen arrested members of the Socialist Workers Party, the lifting of the ban on the democratic newspapers, return of the premises to the democratic parties, an end to the persecution of the Kurdish Democratic Party, and an end to the repression."

Supporters of the imprisoned revolutionists and of the Kurdish Solidarity Campaign held a demonstration of 300 outside the Iranian embassy in London August 25 to protest the latest crackdown on democratic rights and to demand release of the political prisoners.

The same day a delegation from the Civil and Public Servants Association, the largest organization representing these workers, delivered a message to the em-

bassy demanding a halt to the repression of the Kurdish population and release of the fourteen HKS prisoners.

In France protest telegrams have already been sent by François Mitterrand, leader of the French Socialist Party; the leadership of the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), the second-largest union federation in France; and the National Education Federation (FEN), the largest teachers union.

A demonstration was slated for August 24 in front of the Iranian embassy in Paris, jointly sponsored by the three French Trotskyist organizations, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, Lutte Ouvrière, and the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste.

In Canada, three New Democratic Party (NDP) members of the Ontario provincial parliament from Hamilton, are among those who have already sent protest telegrams.

The Canadian director of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers International Union, Neil Reimer, also sent a protest telegram. Grant Notley, the leader of the Alberta NDP was among those who signed protest statements.

In the United States a news conference was held in Los Angeles and telegrams are being sent by well known individuals and civil libertarians.

Clyde Bellecourt, executive director of the American Indian Movement, responded immediately with a telegram:

"I demand the release of the fourteen



Cartoon from now banned satirical weekly "Ahangar" shows SAVAK torturer in judge's robes taunting five prisoners: an oil worker, Trotskyist, Fedayeen, Arab, and Mujahedeen.

members of the Socialist Workers Party. In the name of human rights, stop all oppressive acts against local tribal groups, including the Kurds."

U.S. supporters of the imprisoned revolutionists are also circulating petitions among trade unionists and others. One such petition reads:

"We strongly protest the secret trial of

members of the Socialist Workers Party (HKS) in Iran. These prisoners are anti-shah fighters who are innocent of any crime. We demand the immediate release of all fourteen HKS members as well as other revolutionary fighters imprisoned by your government, and the lifting of the ban on political parties and their newspapers."

Telegrams and telephone calls protesting the secret trials and demanding the immediate release of all the HKS members should be sent to: Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Qum, Iran.

Send copies of all messages to: *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, P.O. Box 116, Village Station, New York, N.Y. 10014.

New Stage in Revolution

Iranian Rulers Launch Major Crackdown

By Gerry Foley

Confronted with rapidly mounting struggles by the Iranian masses to defend and extend the gains of their revolution, the Khomeini-Bazargan government has launched a major crackdown aimed at smashing all opposition.

The crackdown occurs in the context of a sharpening of class battles and a polarization on all fronts in the country—from national and peasant struggles, to protests in factories and the armed forces, to deepening opposition to press censorship and curtailment of democratic rights.

Unable after six months to establish either a stable capitalist government or an army willing to crush these struggles, the Iranian ruling class, through the Ayatollah Khomeini, is now attempting to ruthlessly beat down the working masses and their revolutionary aspirations.

New Stage in Iranian Revolution

This opens a new stage in the Iranian revolution, creating the conditions for an explosive confrontation between the working masses and the capitalist class.

On August 18, Khomeini announced his intention to turn Iran into a one-party state with a ruling party "like the Rastakhiz," the single party established by the shah.

This attempt to liquidate the democratic rights won by the February revolution was accompanied by a furious campaign to whip up chauvinism against the Kurdish struggle for national rights. Khomeini called for a national "holy war" against them.

The Iranian authorities ordered the closing of twenty-six newspapers and periodicals. This included some bourgeois papers, left newspapers, and at least one publication in the previously proscribed Azerbaijani Turkish language.

Public meetings and demonstrations have been banned.

A warrant has been issued for the arrest of Matin Daftari, leader of the Democratic National Front. On August 20 government forces raided the offices of the Tudeh Party, the Iranian Communist Party.

At the same time, Khomeini appealed to his supporters to help hunt down members of the now outlawed Kurdish Democratic Party.

The ayatollah called specifically for the arrest of Abdul Rahman Qassemlou, leader of the DPK and an elected member of the Assembly of Experts chosen to rule on the draft constitution of the Islamic Republic.

According to reports from leaders of the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (HKS), no newspapers of the left are currently publishing. The central leaderships of left groups have all gone into hiding.

Campaign Against Kurds

To create a justification for this crackdown, Khomeini has tried to convince the masses that the nation faces a mortal threat from the Kurds.

Khomeini declared that Kurdish rebels were besieging Sanandaj, the capital of Kurdistan province, and were about to seize large amounts of weapons.

This claim was immediately denied by the provincial governor himself, Mohammad Rashid Shakiba, who told foreign correspondents in Tehran by telephone:

"I don't know who told Ayatollah Khomeini this. It is a total lie. There is no unrest here. Both the town and the barracks are peaceful and the local commander has not asked for any reinforcements."

The government then spread the story that Kurds had beheaded members of the Imam's Committee guards in their province. A funeral for the alleged victims was held in Tehran to incite Persian workers and recruit them to the Imam's Committee forces fighting in Kurdistan.

According to the August 21 *New York Times*, Iranian state radio broadcast shouts of a crowd at the funeral who demanded the execution of Qassemlou and Kurdish leader Sheikh Ezzedin Hosseini.

In reality, what has been going on in Kurdistan for the past two months is not a military uprising but an extension of the revolution that overthrew the shah.

The masses of peasants and toilers who mobilized to destroy the old repressive power began in the last two months to assert their right to the land, to take it, and to organize their own democratic councils.

In fact, these land seizures have not been confined to Kurdistan. They started earlier in Turkmenistan. And they spread to the province of Pars itself, the historic center of the dominant Persian nationality.

The Imam's Committees in Kurdistan acted to defend the property of the big landlords against the peasants. In battle after battle over the last two months, these reactionary gangs have been defeated, and the central government has had to send out army and police to help them. This has led to a widening conflict in which the Kurds have had to take over more and more of the police and military bases in the region.

The latest clash has centered around the town of Paveh near the Iraqi border. It was here that the central government won a "victory" in its "holy war." The locality was reoccupied August 18 by government troops. Eleven Kurds were executed for "waging war against God and his representatives."

Democratic Elections

However, according to most reports, all the Kurds had been doing in Paveh was asserting their right to run their town, organizing elections for a local council, one similar to those already elected in villages throughout Kurdistan.

The Khomeini-Bazargan government apparently decided to make a stand in some places in an attempt to prevent the process of democratic organization from spreading to the towns.

In mid-July, the government had already sent army and militia forces into the town of Marivan to try to stop the Kurds from electing a council there.

As the conflict spread, the role of the central government in Kurdistan became more and more clearly exposed.

When the Kurds occupied the headquarters of the Imam's Committee in Marivan, the August 1 issue of the Trotskyist paper *Kargar* reported, they found documents showing close collaboration between the Imam's Committee guards, the army and police, and the big landlords.

Drive Against Workers

Utilizing the banning of all political activity, Iran's industrialists have begun to move against the most militant sections of the working class. Since the repressive measures were instituted, the capitalists have begun firing strike leaders and worker militants throughout the country.

Previously, the ruling class had sought to pacify the workers in some cases with concessions. The powerful oil workers, for example, were given large wage increases. This did not work. In late July, the oil workers began to protest that the government was secretly selling oil to the racist regimes of South Africa and Israel. The government had promised after the revolution to cut all oil supplies to the two countries.

The response of the workers to the gov-

ernment crackdown will be decisive. Already the banning of newspapers and parties has produced giant political discussions in the factories. Unable to obtain newspapers, workers have begun bringing transistor radios to work to follow the latest developments.

The Iranian ruling class has made a giant gamble by its decision to crack down completely. It is relying heavily on Khomeini, the one figure in the government with authority. But by using his authority against the working masses, Khomeini is using his authority up—rapidly.

On August 7, when he confiscated the daily *Ayendegan*, 200,000 people marched in the streets of Tehran to protest. Organized gangs supporting Khomeini were sent to break up the demonstration. The marchers fought back.

The next day, rightist gangs were sent on a rampage through Tehran, attacking the offices of the opposition parties, ransacking leftist bookstores, and beating up unveiled women. The HKS headquarters in south Tehran was wrecked, along with that of the Fedayeen.

However, the rightist mobilizations re-

mained relatively small.

The weaker the government has become, the more Khomeini has escalated his repressive moves, his demagoguery, and his threats. Some sections of the bourgeois forces have felt pressure to verbally dissociate themselves from his antidemocratic moves. In mid-July, Ayatollah Shariatmadari, the central bourgeois figure in Azerbaijan, let it be known that he thought Khomeini could last no more than a few months. In the following weeks, the capitalist press voiced fears that Khomeini's moves were creating an explosive situation.

In its August 18 issue, one of the best-informed British business magazines, the *Economist*, wrote: "The question may no longer be whether the Khomeini regime will endure as successor to the Shah's. It is which force is likelier to replace ayatollah-dom."

The real fear of imperialist circles and the Iranian ruling class is that if the new crackdown fails, it will lead to a political break by the Iranian working masses with the capitalist government and open the road to big advances for the class struggle.

As Land Takeovers Multiply

Iran Government Tries to Crush Kurdish Peasant Revolution

By Gerry Foley

Using a combined force consisting of remnants of the old imperial army and chauvinist gangs recruited in the Persian centers, the Khomeini-Bazargan government launched massive punitive strikes August 22 against the Kurdish people.

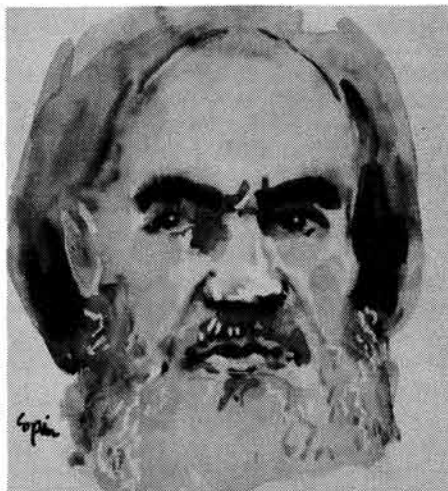
The government's objective was clearly to halt the advance of the peasant revolution in Iranian Kurdistan by inflicting maximum terror on the population. It was a killer operation.

According to the first reports, fighting centered around the town of Saqqez, which was described as a key strategic position seized by the "Kurdish rebels."

Actually, this is a large market town sitting on steeply rolling terrain in the Kurdish mountains. Its flimsy buildings provide no cover against attacks from the air.

The character of the central government's attack was indicated in an August 23 Reuters dispatch. In Saqqez, it said:

"Three government helicopters made repeated strafing runs over the town through the day, firing machine guns, and the shooting was too heavy for rescue teams to remove bodies from the streets. As night fell, the helicopters began dropping flares every three minutes to light up their targets." Two days later, the strafing was still going on.



KHOMEINI

The opening of the campaign against the Kurdish people was heralded in Tehran by the publication of pictures of a scene in the streets of Paveh, a town just occupied by central government troops. They showed Kurds tied by their necks to iron window gratings, facing the guns of a firing squad. A total of twenty-nine Kurdish militants had been executed by August 25.

It is notable that two of the three towns now listed in the government's reports as being held by the "Kurdish rebels"—Bowkan and Saqqez—were cited in an interview with a Kurdish revolutionary socialist in the August 8 issue of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party paper, *Kargar*, as centers of the agrarian revolution in Kurdistan.

The Kurdish revolutionist indicated that the various armed political organizations that have a mass following in Kurdistan joined together in the process of forming united-front bodies representing the peasantry. He described the development as follows:

In the region around Mahabad and Bowkan, we see that village councils have been formed . . . and that they have demanded the expulsion of the landlords from the villages and in many places they have sown the land of the landlords or harvested the crops already sown and divided them up. These councils are growing very quickly, especially around Bowkan, Mahabad, and Saqqez.

He went on to describe the character of these councils:

The peasants gather in one fairly central, large village and form a council representing fifteen or twenty villages. This council runs the internal

affairs of the villages and armed individuals in every village have to accept its authority. It is planned that these councils will come under a central council.

In July, these councils had already begun to develop armed self-defense forces:

The councils have called on those peasants that have arms to work in the armed wings of the councils and for all armed forces to unite under their authority.

In fact, the councils were forced to form armed forces to defend themselves from the attacks of the landlords:

Every time that one of these councils was being formed, without exception, the local landlords and reactionaries sent armed men to try to prevent this and to try to disperse the assembly called to discuss setting up the council. But armed groups came from cities and towns where councils had not yet been set up to defend the councils that were under attack.

The process of agrarian revolution is not limited to Kurdistan, but it is politically and organizationally more advanced there than it is in the Persian areas. One reason for this is that there were already a number of organizations in Kurdistan with mass support that rejected the authority of the central government.

Moreover, the main figure looked to for leadership by the Kurdish people, Sheikh Ezzedin Hosseini of Mahabad, was forced at an early stage to take an opposition stance toward the central government.

The government launched its attack on the Kurdish people at the same time as it moved to liquidate the democratic rights and freedoms won by the masses throughout Iran in their struggle against the shah. The two actions are inseparably intertwined.

Among other things, the government needed total press censorship in order to whip up a war hysteria against the Kurds. In fact, in the period before the attack, sympathy had been growing throughout the country with the aspirations of the oppressed nationalities.

This shift in public opinion was evidenced by the fact that liberal intellectuals who had previously avoided the national question began speaking out on behalf of the oppressed nationalities.

The only Kurdish leader quoted in wire service reports in the first days of the government's new offensive has been Abdul Rahman Qassemlou, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), which has been the most conciliatory of the Kurdish left groups toward the Khomeini-Bazargan government.

Qassemlou was quoted in an August 25 Reuters dispatch as saying:

We are not just fighting for autonomy in Kurdistan but for democracy in Iran. We will never accept a dictatorship of mullahs trying to impose themselves on the people of Iran.

The KDP is dominated by pro-Moscow Stalinists but it gets its support mainly on

the basis of its old reputation as a nationalist party. So, it is subject to the pressure of nationalist feeling.

For example, while the all-Iran CP, the Tudeh Party, called for a vote for the Islamic Republic in the March referendum, the KDP called for a boycott, although it did so only on the eve of the vote.

In the area where the fighting has so far centered, the KDP was weak to the point of being invisible in April. Other more militant radicalized nationalist forces predominated. The prominence given to the KDP in the news reports probably reflects a decision by the central government to focus its propaganda on the KDP as a means of whipping up anti-Communism.

The Khomeini-Bazargan government's escalating attacks on the Kurdish people are part and parcel of its attempt to reconsolidate a capitalist state capable of containing and driving back the Iranian revolution.

In addition, in order to be able to continue these attacks the new authorities in Iran will be forced to resume closer ties with the imperialists. The U.S. capitalist press has pointed up this aspect.

For example, side by side with its coverage of the fighting in Kurdistan, the *New York Times* has carried articles indicating American imperialism's support for the Khomeini-Bazargan government's military moves, which they hope will compel it to go to Washington hat in hand in order to get help to rebuild its army. On August 24, a front-page article in the *New York Times* pointed out:

[U.S.] officials said the Administration was interested in supplying the arms to improve relations with Iran. . . .

Pentagon officials believe Iran's interest in American arms stems primarily from the rapidly deteriorating state of the country's armed forces. Although earlier purchases by the Shah left the military with a huge arsenal, officials said fighting against the Kurds was exhausting supplies of spare parts and other critical equipment.

On August 25, *New York Times* Washington correspondent Richard Burt indicated that the U.S. government was also anxious to help shore up the Khomeini-Bazargan government:

. . . Mr. Reston [a State Department spokesman] left the impression with reporters that the Administration was more concerned about the survival of a strong central Government in Iran than about the Kurdish goal of political independence.

The Iranian Trotskyists made defense of the Kurdish people a central part of their campaign for the Assembly of Experts elections August 3. It was emphasized especially strongly in Azerbaijan, which borders on the Kurdish areas.

For example, in a July 31 press conference reported by all the Iranian dailies, one of the HKS candidates in the Azerbaijani capital of Tabriz, Dr. Mahmud Sayrafiezadeh, said:

The heroic people of Kurdistan have risen up in defense of freedom. They are resisting the repressive operations of the central government, which are part of the assault against all the toilers of this country, against all the oppressed peoples, and against all the workers organizations and militants in this country.

In launching an all-out attack on the Kurds, the Khomeini-Bazargan government has taken a great risk. Every time they have attacked the Kurds in the past months, they have been defeated, and found themselves still less able to hold back the advance of the Iranian revolution.

The government is now making a greater effort. But the position of the Kurds is also stronger.

The Arab masses in the vital oil producing areas have fought pitched battles with the government and remain armed and mobilized, defying the military forces of the regime. The Arab region is a powderkeg, and any weakening of the government's position could set it off.

Moreover, the largest of the oppressed nationalities in Iran, the Azerbaijanis, who make up a third of the population, have begun to move into open opposition to the government. This has been prompted largely by the increasingly dictatorial moves the regime has made in trying to beat back the advance of the revolutionary process.

Previously the regime had been able, to some extent, to pit Azerbaijanis against Kurds. Now the government is threatened with having to face opposition from all the oppressed nationalities, which constitute a majority of the population.

At the same time, while throwing its motley repressive forces into battle against the national minorities, the government confronts the revival of struggles by the decisive power in the country, the industrial working class.

Moreover, the fact that the government has chosen to use the war hysteria whipped against the Kurds as a cover for attacks on militant workers makes it easier for the Persian workers to see the relation between their fight and that of the oppressed nationalities.

So, if the government forces get bogged down in Kurdistan, the authorities face the danger of a chain reaction of explosions throughout the rest of the country.

But right now the Khomeini-Bazargan government has the firepower to carry out mass murder in Kurdistan, and to create a chaotic situation that could enable outside reactionary forces such as the Turkish and Iraqi armies and the imperialists to intervene. Therefore, it is extremely important to mobilize international public opinion in defense of the Kurdish people in Iran. This is also the best way to defend the gains of the revolution and the independence of all the Iranian peoples from imperialist domination. □

Vietnamese Stand Up to Imperialist Economic Blockade

By Fred Feldman

A tightening imperialist economic blockade and military conflicts on three fronts—accompanied by droughts, floods, and other natural disasters—are confronting the Vietnamese revolution with grave economic difficulties.

"The Vietnamese people do not have enough to eat," Dr. Ton That Tung told *New York Times* correspondent Henry Kamm in Hanoi. Kamm's interview with Dr. Tung, former surgeon general of the Vietminh during the war with France and later Ho Chi Minh's personal physician, appeared in the August 20 *New York Times*. "You see it on people's faces. They are pale, anemic, and skinny. Yes. They are emaciated."

"Dr. Tung said," according to Kamm, "that nutrition had always been a problem during the decades of war in Vietnam, but that it was worse since China cut off its aid, which included great quantities of food, last year." The imperialist powers began cutting off the dribble of aid they had permitted to flow into Vietnam after Vietnamese forces helped topple the Pol Pot tyranny in Kampuchea last January.

Kamm reported that malnutrition "had left the urban population in particular in a state of low resistance to all infectious diseases. . . . Any outbreak of such illnesses rapidly affects large numbers of people."

Kamm reported the monthly meat ration for most Vietnamese as only seven ounces. The monthly ration of basic foodstuffs amounts to "less than a pound a day."

The average birth weight of Vietnamese babies has dropped recently, Tung told Kamm. "A whole generation will bear the stigmata [of hunger] all their lives."

Kamm continued:

Everything, not only food, is in short supply, said Dr. Tung. His hospital, which is believed to be the best supplied in the country, lacks everything, from basic medicines to soap, from plastic tubing to corks for the infusion bottles into which the tubing is inserted.

Dr. Tung said he badly needed such simple supplies as needles for the extraction of blood samples and transfusions, and surgeon's gloves.

One result of the scarcity of all necessities has been continued inflation, despite the rationing of most goods. Increases of about 100 percent were reported in the price of some basic consumer goods over the last eighteen months. And added pressure has been placed on the economy by the need to share food and other goods with war-torn and famine-stricken Kampuchea.

Together with the impact on Vietnam's ethnic Chinese population of Peking's break with Hanoi and its subsequent invasion, these economic conditions are major driving forces in the continuing flow of emigrants from Vietnam. And the emigration is dealing added blows to Vietnam's economy.

Seymour M. Hersh reported in the August 9 *New York Times* after a visit to Vietnam:

There are precious few factories in underindustrialized Vietnam, but some of them had to be closed down recently because of a lack of skilled workers.

The missing workers were ethnic Chinese, and Vietnam's leaders acknowledged in interviews in Hanoi last week that their nation is facing a major "brain drain" in part because of the exodus of Chinese residents over the last year.

One official told Hersh that some parts of Vietnam have no doctors today because of emigration. "We don't like to let the skilled people go away," he said.

The devastation brought by the U.S.-inspired Chinese invasion of Vietnam last February is a further drain on Vietnam's economy. Cities like Lang Son and Cao Bang, destroyed during the brief war, have not been rebuilt. Bridges, hospitals, administration buildings, homes, and farms were systematically destroyed by retreating Peking forces.

"According to government officials," wrote Murray Hiebert from Hanoi in the June 15, 1979, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, "1.5 million people were displaced and 60,000 sq. metres of housing were destroyed. They said more than 85,000 hectares of rice fields were either burned or abandoned and 150,000 water buffalo and cows were killed."

Preparations to fend off another attack—which has been threatened by Chinese Vice-premier Deng Xiaoping—are also costly in time and resources, Hiebert reported:

In preparation, farmers, factory and office workers and students throughout the country spend two hours daily in marching drills and target practice in city parks, open fields and schoolyards. Hanoi's roadside bomb shelters, filled in following the collapse of the Thieu government, have been redug and stand ready for use. As during the war with the US, children and old people are being evacuated to the countryside.

In spite of the poverty which he saw everywhere, Hersh—like others who have visited Vietnam in the past year—was

impressed by the depth of support for the revolution which he found:

During a weeklong visit to Hanoi, a correspondent could only describe the attitude of the people as happy. . . .

In many interviews, Western and nonaligned diplomats in Hanoi confirmed that, despite the continuing hardships, individual loyalty to the Government was the cornerstone of Vietnam's viability.

Asked about the Government's seemingly strong support at home, Nguyen Co Thach, Vietnam's Acting Foreign Minister, raised the issue of foreign criticism over the refugee exodus.

"You see," Mr. Thach said in an interview, "there are some people from the West who say there is a lack of human rights and that lack is why people want to go from Vietnam. So I must tell you that if there are no human rights, Vietnam could not stand these 30 years through these unthinkable difficulties, these unthinkable tests, if we do not have the support of the people."

The success of Vietnamese forces in beating back imperialist-backed Pol Pot forces in Kampuchea, stalemating Peking's invasion, and helping the Pathet Lao regime fight CIA-organized mercenaries are a further indication of the masses' readiness to sacrifice to preserve the gains of the revolution.

As was the case during the U.S. war in Vietnam, imperialist officials are frustrated by the Vietnamese masses' refusal thus far to bow to military and economic punishment. Hersh reported:

"The Vietnamese certitude and self-assuredness is a source of constant annoyance to Western diplomats, who repeatedly used the term 'arrogant' to describe some Government views."

The reports by Kamm and Hersh from Vietnam expose the sinister purposes of those imperialist powers that cut off food and other aid to Vietnam in the name of helping the "boat people." Such moves are aimed at breaking the spirits of tens of millions of workers and farmers who have no intention of leaving and are defending themselves against imperialist attacks.

Working people around the world have a vital stake in helping the Vietnamese workers and peasants turn back these attacks today.

We must campaign for an end to the economic blockade of Vietnam, for diplomatic recognition of Hanoi by Washington, and of Pnompenh by all the imperialist powers. The imperialists must provide massive food and reconstruction aid for all the countries of Indochina. □

Workers and Peasants Fight for a New Nicaragua

By Pedro Camejo, Sergio Rodríguez, and Fred Murphy

MANAGUA, Nicaragua—The socialist revolution has begun in Nicaragua.

Under the leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, the workers and peasants have overthrown the imperialist-backed Somoza dictatorship and destroyed its army and police force.

Basing itself on the power of the armed and mobilized masses, the Sandinista leadership has begun taking a series of radical measures—a deepgoing land reform, nationalization of all the country's banks, seizure of all the property held by the Somoza family and its collaborators, the formation of popular militias and a revolutionary army, the organization of committees in the factories and neighborhoods, and other steps.

An active solidarity campaign among working people throughout the world is urgently needed. Supplies of food, medicine, and other basic necessities are critically low. Massive aid is needed to begin the process of reconstructing the country.

The imperialist powers, most notably the United States, are implacable enemies of this revolution. They are withholding material aid, seeking weak points in the revolution, and preparing their counter-moves.

An immediate military threat exists. Entire units of Somoza's National Guard left the country and are being maintained intact in neighboring Honduras and El Salvador. The slogan "Hands off Nicaragua!" should now become the international rallying cry for all those who support the right of the Nicaraguans to determine for themselves what kind of government and what kind of society they want to construct to replace the Somoza tyranny.

Land Reform

The Nicaraguan workers, peasants, and semi-proletarian masses are coming onto the center stage of history. They are led by

Pedro Camejo, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party, and Sergio Rodríguez, a leader of the Revolutionary Workers Party of Mexico, went to Nicaragua to gather first-hand information for the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and for Trotskyists around the world. Fred Murphy is a staff writer for *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* who has been in Nicaragua covering the revolutionary developments there.

a revolutionary current, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

A high percentage of the arable land in the country was owned by Somoza and his immediate circle. This land has been nationalized. Under the direction of Sandinista leader Jaime Wheelock, the Nicaraguan Institute of Agrarian Reform has been set up. INRA is supervising the distribution of these vast holdings to the thousands of Nicaraguan peasants who have historically eked out a subsistence on tiny plots.

Those sections of land best suited for large-scale farming are being used to set up state enterprises that will provide permanent employment for thousands of agricultural laborers.

The land reform is being enthusiastically welcomed by the peasants and farm workers, who have mobilized in large demonstrations. Peasant militias are being organized to defend the new property relations in the countryside.

For now, the Sandinistas say they are limiting the land reform to the Somocista (Somozaist) holdings. However, when reporters asked INRA director Wheelock what they will do if the lands run out and there are still needy peasants, he answered: "We'll take the rest of it."

The land reform is crucial for the Nicaraguan revolution, because sixty percent of the population lives in the countryside. Nicaragua's main export products are all agricultural—cotton, coffee, sugar, and beef.

In addition to all the Somocista property, the new government has also nationalized all of Nicaragua's banks. This gives it control over the vast bulk of the country's industrial wealth. This will be crucial for reactivating the economy, providing jobs, and meeting the needs of the workers and peasants.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, headed by Lea Guido de López, has announced decrees against all kinds of speculators and profiteers, decrees characterized by a deeply egalitarian spirit. The large number of buildings formerly owned by Somoza and the Somocistas will not be monopolized by private individuals or government administrators for personal use. Instead, they are to be transformed into schools, child-care centers, sports centers, museums, and cultural centers.

Government control has been established over all important exportable agricultural commodities, including cotton, coffee, sugar, and fish.

Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega has announced the refusal to pay the debts that the Somoza dictatorship accumulated in buying arms used against the people.

Army and Militia

The capitalist army and police force—Somoza's National Guard—was completely routed by the popular insurrection. There is nothing left of the Guard inside the country except for terrorist bands that continue to stage nighttime attacks on unarmed civilians and on Sandinista patrols. This is similar to the terrorist policy Washington carried out against Cuba, but it is far more intense. Firing can be heard nightly in the center of Managua.

But outside of these small bands, the capitalists have no armed forces within the borders of Nicaragua. The entire military apparatus has been dissolved. The masses are being armed.

The youth of Nicaragua are being integrated into a new revolutionary army. And the people in the workers districts and in the countryside who carried on the anti-Somoza struggle are being organized into militia units.

The Sandinista leaders are trying to move as rapidly as possible to build a strong, well-equipped, and well-trained army to meet the threat of foreign intervention and to put a stop to terrorist snipers.

In the cities—especially in the working-class and poor districts—Sandinista Defense Committees are being formed on a block-by-block basis to oversee the distribution of emergency food aid, organize the reconstruction of housing and other buildings destroyed by Somoza's bombings, and work with the Sandinista militias.

Workers in the factories, stores, banks, and other workplaces are also forming committees. These are usually elected by assemblies of all the workers. They are to form the basis of a new United Federation of Sandinista Workers, which will integrate the trade unions that existed under the dictatorship with the new workers committees. It is to include the agricultural proletariat as well.

The government has decreed that all wages lost by workers during the June-July insurrection must be paid in full. The workers committees are organizing to see that this is enforced.

The FSLN has called on Nicaraguan youth, who were in the front lines of the war against Somoza, to organize them-



FSLN troops arriving in Managua on July 19, 1979.

El Pueblo

selves in the "July 19 Sandinista Youth." There are also plans to form the "National Union of Nicaraguan Women," which is to be based on AMPRONAC, a group that mobilized women against the dictatorship.

Literacy Campaign

The revolution's leaders have also announced some longer-range plans to improve the living conditions of the Nicaraguan people. Chief among these is an ambitious campaign against illiteracy modeled on the example of what was done in Cuba after the 1959 revolution there.

Some 60 percent of Nicaraguans do not know how to read and write. To remedy this situation, 1980 had been declared the "Year of Education." Brigades of teachers—many of them high school and college students—will soon begin being trained to carry out the literacy drive. They will fan out to all the cities, towns, and villages of Nicaragua to teach basic skills.

Other steps being planned include the construction of clinics and childcare centers, and the introduction of family-planning programs to make safe methods of birth control available to all women.

The way for all these revolutionary

measures was opened by the mass upheaval that brought down the imperialist-backed Somoza dictatorship. In the course of the struggle, the Sandinista National Liberation Front came to the head of the insurgent masses.

Revolutionary Mobilizations

The upsurge that brought forty-five years of Somoza tyranny to an end began in January 1978. Outraged by the assassination of opposition newspaper editor Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, the urban masses of Managua and other major cities carried out street demonstrations and a two-week general strike against Somoza.

In March 1978, uprisings against the National Guard took place in the combative Indian communities of Monimbó in Masaya and Subtiava in León. Strikes by students and workers, protest marches, and clashes with the National Guard went on constantly during subsequent months.

In August 1978, the Sandinista Front staged a spectacular raid on the National Palace in Managua. They held dozens of Somocista politicians hostage for several days and secured the release of all Sandinista prisoners—including central leader

Tomás Borge—and the payment of a large sum of money.

The raid captured the imagination of the Nicaraguan people and greatly enhanced the FSLN's popularity. Thousands turned out to cheer as the victorious commando unit drove from the National Palace to the airport with its hostages.

The August raid was quickly followed by uprisings in several major cities. Civil war raged for three weeks, and only by brutally bombing the civilian population was Somoza's National Guard able to achieve a temporary victory.

As a result of the September experience, the masses became convinced that only an all-out military drive could dislodge the dictatorship.

Under the leadership of the Sandinista Front and the United People's Movement (a coalition of trade unions, working-class parties, student groups, and other organizations), committees and militia units were set up, arms were gathered, emergency food supplies were stashed away, and courses were taught in street fighting, barricade-building, and the use of weapons.

At the same time, hundreds of youth who had fled the cities after September

were given military training and organized into fighting units of the FSLN.

The Final Offensive

The final offensive against the dictatorship began May 29 when Sandinista columns launched attacks on National Guard positions near the Costa Rican border.

On June 4, a general strike called by the FSLN shut down nearly all industry, transportation, and commerce in Nicaragua.

City after city fell to the rebels in subsequent weeks. The noose tightened around Somoza, who was holed up in his "bunker" in Managua, the capital.

An eyewitness to the struggles in Managua, journalist Melvin Wallace, described the events there in an interview with the *Militant*:

"The insurrection in Managua really began on June 10. As always, the eastern districts of the city—the working-class districts, the areas where the poor population lives—were the ones most active in the insurrection.

"Barricades were built with whatever materials available. The streets of Managua are made of paving stones, which are easily removed and used for barricades. As a matter of fact, these stones were all produced in Somoza's cement factory. They were indispensable for the building of barricades throughout the city.

"The National Guard followed the same tactics it had used in September, regrouping in its central barracks, abandoning the smaller posts and entrenching itself in others. Many smaller barracks were attacked and destroyed by the insurrectionary forces in struggles that lasted one or two days.

"What took place here was a popular insurrection, in the fullest political and military sense of the term. The masses participated actively; they found ways to make arms—contact bombs and molotov cocktails; they recovered small arms, .22 caliber pistols, and so on.

"As the insurrection unfolded, the Guard began to concentrate its attacks, preceding them with 'aerial softening' with bombs weighing 150 to 500 pounds. Some fell on inhabited areas and caused severe damage."

On June 28, the organized Sandinista forces were obliged by the Guard counter-attack to retreat from Managua.

Wallace continued:

"The situation partially returned to 'normal.' But the general strike [of shopkeepers, artisans, and workers] continued. The Somocista forces were impotent; they couldn't even restore basic public services."

Elsewhere in the country, the Sandinista offensive gained momentum. After failing to gain any support from Latin American regimes for a military intervention, Washington decided to force Somoza to resign in

hopes of preventing the revolutionary overthrow of the dictatorship. Somoza and many of his top generals fled to Miami on July 17. Francisco Urcuyo was named president and a new general staff was designated for the National Guard.

The Fall of Managua

It was widely believed that Urcuyo would simply hand power over to the provisional government already named by the Sandinistas. But instead, Somoza's successor declared over nationwide television that he intended to stay until 1981. Wallace explained what happened next in Managua:

"After Urcuyo's speech, skepticism turned to popular anger. That same night you could hear the clanging of pots and pans, the sound of small demonstrations.

"As word spread the next day that rebel forces were on the march toward Managua, people came into the streets without fear. I saw many demonstrations, thousands and thousands of people in the middle-class and working-class districts, even while the National Guard was still confronting the people in the streets.

"Throughout the night there were bonfires, demonstrations, the clanging of pots and pans. People went right into the Guardsmen's houses and took their arms. The Guardsmen were desperate.

"Desertions from the Guard numbered in the thousands, while the masses marched forward. And if the people didn't collect all the arms from the Guard in their homes, they took away the rest of them in their barracks."

Urcuyo and the remaining generals fled early in the morning on July 19, while their army was collapsing underneath them. Thousands of Managuans gathered at the "bunker" a short time later, along with an FSLN column that had just arrived from León. Wallace continued:

"At first, the people stopped about 200 meters from the bunker, still cautious. There were rumors that the bunker had been mined, that there were still snipers posted there, that some Guardsmen would still put up resistance. But this did not happen.

"The Sandinista troops from León marched into the bunker behind a small tank. They asked the people to wait, but the people paid no attention. They went in, broke down doors, poured through the offices, the arsenals, everywhere. Some were curious, others sought arms, others came simply to be able to say 'I was there.' There must have been more than 10,000 persons who went into the bunker that morning.

"The bunker was not just Somoza's residence; all the major military installations were located there. The people went in, the militia went in; there was euphoria, happiness. Many weapons were confiscated by the people; they found high-caliber arms, and uniforms. Their joy is

difficult to put into words.

"Little by little, order was restored. By two in the afternoon, other guerrilla columns were entering the city—from Masaya, from Estelí and Matagalpa, from Rivas. All hurried to be the first to enter Managua; all were cheered and applauded by the people. They began to take up positions, to take charge of the military installations, and to organize themselves."

The Sandinista Front

In the course of the nineteen-month upsurge that finally brought down the Somoza dynasty, the Sandinista National Liberation Front came to be the undisputed leadership of the revolution. Its bold actions against the dictator's armed forces and its determination to destroy Somozism root and branch led the masses to view it in this way.

The FSLN is rooted in Nicaragua's long tradition of anti-imperialist struggle and plebeian radicalism. It takes its name from Augusto César Sandino, a former oilfield mechanic and mine worker who led a seven-year guerrilla war against the U.S. Marines from 1927 to 1934. When all the bourgeois-nationalist forces capitulated to the imperialists and their puppets, Sandino and his worker and peasant forces continued to fight.

Sandino was assassinated on the orders of General Anastasio Somoza García in 1934, but the memory of his struggle lived on in Nicaragua. In 1962, Sandino's tradition fused with the fresh wave of radicalism that swept Nicaraguan youth after the victory of the Cuban revolution.

Founded by Carlos Fonseca Amador and other young rebels who broke with the reformism of the Stalinist Nicaraguan Socialist Party, the FSLN regrouped those who wanted to learn from the Cuban experience and end the imperialist domination of Nicaragua.

The Sandinistas experienced many setbacks in their repeated efforts to defeat Somoza's National Guard through guerrilla warfare. Most of the original cadres lost their lives—Carlos Fonseca himself was murdered by the Guard in 1976. But when the masses began to move against Somoza in 1978, the Sandinistas were there to provide the revolutionary leadership necessary to oust the dictator.

Throughout their history, the FSLN fighters have enjoyed the active solidarity of the Cuban revolution. Cuba provided military training and material aid to the guerrilla struggle from the beginning. Now, with the revolutionary victory, Cuba is sending medical teams, teachers, and other aid to help in the reconstruction of Nicaragua.

Throughout Cuba, the workers and peasants have celebrated the victory in Nicaragua as if it were their own. As Fidel Castro put it, Cubans "see ourselves mirrored in [the Nicaraguans], because nothing reminds us more of our own strug-

gles, our sacrifices and our own image in those early days of the revolution."

Since coming to power, the Sandinistas have continued to mobilize the workers and peasants. On August 3, for example, the FSLN called for a march and rally to dedicate a highway in Managua to the martyrs of the struggle. The march was built through the Civil Defense Committees

Fifty thousand people turned out, from Managua's total population of about 300,000. The vast bulk of the marchers came in organized contingents from the poor and working-class neighborhoods, with handwritten signs in support of the revolution. They chanted slogans like "Workers and peasants to power" and "Somoza and the Yankees—they're the same thing." There was a high consciousness that this revolution belongs to the poor, to the workers and peasants.

Such consciousness is being encouraged by the FSLN. Radio Sandino and the Sandinista National (television) Network broadcast revolutionary songs and speeches and carry news of anti-imperialist struggles in other countries. The FSLN's daily paper, *Barricada*, serves a similar purpose. It places special emphasis on the importance of organizing the popular committees, the trade unions, the militias, and a strong army to defend the gains of the revolution.

Fidel Castro's July 26 speech hailing the revolution was broadcast on television in Nicaragua for three days in a row and became a favorite topic of discussion.

'A Country Destroyed'

The immediate tasks now facing the FSLN and the entire Nicaraguan people—feeding the population, getting production under way, rebuilding the country—are enormous.

The effects of the civil war were qualitatively more devastating than what the Cubans faced in 1959 after the overthrow of Batista. Many of Nicaragua's factories were destroyed. Cities were left in ruins. Many crops were not planted because of the fighting. Some estimates run as high as 40,000-50,000 people killed—2 percent of the country's population.

There is hunger inside Nicaragua today. There just isn't enough food and the international aid isn't sufficient.

Alfonso Robelo, a member of the five-person Government of National Reconstruction, told the July 26 rally in Holguín, Cuba: "We have found a country destroyed. Destroyed by the bombs dropped by Somoza's air force, which bombed our cities indiscriminately. Destroyed as a result of 45 years of plunder by a corrupt regime. In fact, what we have now is a completely bankrupt country: our reserves were plundered; the people's money, down to the last cent, was spent on weapons to use against the people. . . ."

Robelo also outlined the goals the gov-

ernment has set for itself: "We must rebuild our economy; we must provide food for our population that is presently suffering terrible shortages; we must carry out a gigantic literacy campaign so that the more than 60 percent of our people who are now illiterate will learn how to read and write; we must see to it that every Nicaraguan child has a school, no matter how humble, to begin the next school year; we need doctors to go into our countryside for the first time and provide medical care for our peasants. And for all these tasks we need the assistance of all the sister peoples of the Americas, and the people of Cuba have a special place in this process."

The masses of Nicaragua want a society of equality. They want an end to the plunder of their resources and the exploitation of their people by U.S. corporations. They want to build a new Nicaragua in which—as in revolutionary Cuba—the needs of the workers and peasants come first, not capitalist profits. And they have shown that they are ready to do whatever is necessary to achieve these goals.

What Washington Fears

That is why Washington hates and fears the revolutionary process under way in Nicaragua. Those who have profited from the misery of the Nicaraguan people for decades know that full employment, higher living standards, land for the peasants, democratic rights for the masses, and freedom from foreign domination are all incompatible with continued capitalist rule in Nicaragua.

What the U.S. capitalists fear most is that the FSLN and the Nicaraguan workers and peasants—organized, armed, and determined—will follow the example of Cuba.

Nicaragua under Somoza was a bastion of U.S. domination over the entire region—the launching pad for the CIA-sponsored invasions of Guatemala in 1954 and Cuba in 1961. Nicaragua under the FSLN has already become an inspiration to the workers and peasants throughout Latin America, especially in neighboring Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, all suffering under U.S.-backed dictatorships.

Thus, while the governments of the United States and the European capitalist countries pretend to be sympathetic to the needs and aspirations of the Nicaraguan people, they are scheming to block the revolutionary process and to roll back the gains it has made.

One side of their counterrevolutionary plan is military: maintaining Somoza's forces in Honduras, El Salvador, and Miami. It takes a lot of money to keep these troops armed and organized for any length of time, and that money can have only one source: Washington.

But overt military action by Washington against Nicaragua faces big obstacles. Working people in the United States are adamantly opposed to any new Vietnams.

They don't want to be sent to fight and die to impose dictatorships subservient to Washington.

Moreover, even a camouflaged U.S. military operation would provoke a massive protest in the United States and throughout Latin America. What is even worse, from Washington's point of view, is that such a limited military move might not succeed. It is likely that a Bay of Pigs style invasion of Nicaragua would confront not only the armed people of Nicaragua, but the battle-hardened combat forces of revolutionary Cuba as well.

As Fidel warned on July 26, U.S. military intervention would mean "a gigantic Vietnam . . . throughout Central America and in the rest of Latin America, a gigantic Vietnam."

Before playing that last desperate card, the U.S. imperialists are first trying economic blackmail and maneuvers. The aid coming from the U.S. government—a tiny amount, grudgingly given—is intended to make it easier for Washington to demand political concessions from the Nicaraguan government.

Instead of the 300 tons a day of food desperately needed in Nicaragua, as little as 40 to 80 tons a day are reportedly arriving. FSLN leader Tomás Borge charges that Washington has already gone back on what was promised. After all the devastation the U.S. government has brought on Nicaragua in the past decades, Washington's aid for reconstruction so far amounts to a mere \$5.4 million, of which \$1.2 million was spent to get the aid there.

The U.S. aid has still another purpose: to drive a wedge into the Sandinistas, to split them, to try to find some sectors that would, under economic pressure, begin to bend to Washington's demands and help strengthen and consolidate the capitalist forces that still exist in Nicaragua and that are part of the formal government, the Government of National Reconstruction.

Here too, judging from the actions of the FSLN leadership, the imperialists are not meeting with success. Far from drawing back, the FSLN leaders are moving forward in mobilizing and arming the masses to fight for their interests.

Countering Imperialists

The FSLN leaders are fighting to gain time to counter the imperialist maneuvers and to win broad international support. They are fighting to get as much material aid as they possibly can for the Nicaraguan people. And they are trying to make it as difficult as possible for the imperialists to find pretexts to intervene.

This means making concessions. For example, the Sandinistas have announced that they do not plan to execute any of the captured National Guard, not even the worst murderers and torturers. This concession has made it harder for the imperialists to mount a lying propaganda offen-

sive claiming that the revolution has resulted in a bloodbath, the way they did when the Cubans executed a few hundred of Batista's police torturers.

As Fidel noted in his July 26 speech, the "magnanimity and generosity" of the Sandinistas will "deprive the reactionaries of arguments, it will deprive them of weapons, it will deprive them of fuel for slander and defamation."

Fidel added, "Of course, we are not going to deceive ourselves. We're not going to imagine that the reactionaries will leave the Nicaraguan Revolution in peace, despite its magnanimity, generous attitude and democratic aims."

The composition of the official Government of National Reconstruction represents a concession. Three of its five members are from the procapitalist forces that opposed Somoza. Only one is a leading Sandinista. So in form it is a coalition government with the Sandinistas in a minority.

The reality is different. The reality is that Nicaragua today is being run by the Joint National Directorate of the FSLN, made up of nine Sandinista commanders. All nine are Fidelistas. All have lived in exile in Cuba.

Real power is in the hands of the FSLN. With each capitalist minister in the government they have put a Sandinista commander. And the ministers do not act unless the Sandinistas approve their actions.

Even within this context the Sandinistas have taken certain further steps. For example, they removed the original minister in charge of agrarian reform, who was a landowner. In his place they put Jaime Wheelock, a central FSLN leader—one of the nine.

The officially designated minister of defense is a former officer of Somoza's National Guard who switched sides before the civil war. But he has no army or police. Those are run by the FSLN. Sandinista political leaders are in every battalion of the new army.

In the struggle against Somoza the Sandinistas consciously tried to create the broadest possible front, including bourgeois forces who were opponents of Somoza. That was obviously the correct, intelligent, and revolutionary policy.

But once they came to power, they did not want that same coalition running the government. They express this in their own way.

Right after Somoza fell, Henry Ruiz, one of the top nine FSLN leaders, tried to explain to the Costa Rican weekly *Pueblo* who should govern Nicaragua. He said:

"I believe that effectively we have to take the composition of the Provisional Government junta with caution. Because it appears to me that the initial mechanism is not complete. . . . Other mechanisms have to appear that are the real base of power. The government junta can repres-

ent those forces, but the decisions will be taken at another level.

"I'm inclined to think that we should have the representation of the workers, as well as representation of the peasants, who were those who have carried the weight of the war in these times."

Talking about what individuals should be put in government positions, Ruiz said:

"To say, how should I say it, that X person because he has written three or four books, or X person because they own a business, or that person because I like him, or I consider him an honest person, . . . It appears to me that would be to disconnect the question of class. Here we have to have our workers, our peasants, and also the revolutionaries represented."

And in conclusion he said: "We have to have representative figures that really will not betray the interests of the revolution."

The Sandinista leadership is trying to mobilize the workers and peasants to deepen this revolution, to defend and move forward the interests of the Nicaraguan masses.

A Revolutionary Power

The power that exists today in Nicaragua is a revolutionary power. The road is open to move toward the establishment of a workers and peasants government—that is, a government independent of the old ruling classes, which mobilizes the power of the workers and their allies to implement progressive social measures that more and more challenge the economic prerogatives of capital.

A workers and peasants government has not yet been established. While capitalism has been dealt a stunning blow, it still exists. The capitalists and those determined to defend their interests still remain a factor in the government. Nevertheless, the direction in which the Sandinista leadership is moving is toward deepening the revolutionary mobilization of the masses to defend their interests.

The Sandinistas have proven themselves to be a revolutionary leadership in overthrowing the Somoza dictatorship and destroying the old armed forces of the capitalists. And they are proving themselves in action after taking power, by mobilizing and arming the masses to defend their own interests.

There is no way of knowing in advance how far the Sandinista leadership will go in changing the character of the state, or at what pace. There are no guarantees. But the only way for revolutionary socialists around the world to help advance the Nicaraguan revolution is to recognize the revolutionary capacities of this leadership, to identify with it, and to join forces with it in the struggle to defend and extend the revolution.

The working class of the entire world will see the Nicaraguan revolution as its own. Nicaragua will gain enormous solidarity from the workers of other countries, including the United States.

Revolutionary Cuba has set the example by its self-sacrificing support and by calling on all countries to compete in sending reconstruction aid to Nicaragua. The Cubans have been waiting and working for this victory for twenty years. For the first time, they are not alone in this hemisphere. Their dedication to the Nicaraguan cause should inspire a wave of solidarity throughout the Americas.

The Choice in Nicaragua

The choice in Nicaragua is either to move forward to the victory of a socialist revolution, as in Cuba—or to suffer a bloody defeat, as in Chile. Either the Sandinistas will consolidate the power of the workers and peasants and deepen the revolution into a socialist transformation, or they will be beaten back by imperialism in a counterrevolutionary blow that will drown in blood the entire generation that has made this revolution. There is no third road.

In this historic battle the Sandinista leadership will be tested many times over—their ability to mobilize the masses, maneuver and fight intelligently, move the revolutionary process forward, and be decisive when it is necessary.

Nicaragua is also a test for the Cuban leadership, the Fidelistas—a test of their ability to give revolutionary leadership in Latin America.

Finally, Nicaragua is a test for the Fourth International—whether the world Trotskyist movement can mobilize an international campaign of solidarity and defense, and thus help the Nicaraguan revolution advance. No sectarianism or factionalism can be allowed to stand in the way of our identification with and defense of the Nicaraguan revolution.

The Sandinistas have a slogan, a quote from Sandino, whose meaning they feel very deeply. They say that "the sons of Sandino neither sell out nor give up. They will be free or dead."

That is the commitment they are making here inside Nicaragua. They are organizing and educating the workers and peasants, the entire young generation, to prepare to give their lives to free Nicaragua and through that to help the Latin American and world revolution.

They must know that they will have the Fourth International at their side, that Trotskyist parties around the world will organize to help them and stand with them along the road to the second workers state in Latin America. □

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U.S. Hands Off Nicaragua!

[The following statement was issued August 15 by the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party. We have taken the text from the August 24 issue of the *Militant*.]

* * *

After forty-five years of bloody tyranny under the U.S.-imposed Somoza family dictatorship, the Nicaraguan people are beginning to take their destiny into their own hands.

Led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front, the workers and poor peasants are building unions, militias, a rebel army, peasant committees, and neighborhood committees to carry out the reconstruction of their war-torn country.

Working people in the United States readily identify with the Nicaraguans' fight for food, medical care, education, jobs, basic civil liberties, and other human rights for all.

But not the U.S. rulers. They have never wavered in their determination to crush this heroic people. They armed the Somoza regime to the teeth, providing the bombs and planes with which the dictator's National Guard pulverized the country in the months before Somoza fled to Miami. Washington bears full responsibility for the devastation and suffering in Nicaragua today.

The Carter administration remains determined to strangle the Nicaraguan revolution—just as Carter's predecessors Eisenhower and Kennedy tried to smash

the Cuban revolution as it unfolded. If Carter thought he could get away with it, he would send thousands of troops to occupy Nicaragua today, just as Lyndon Johnson sent 25,000 U.S. troops to the Dominican Republic in 1965 when its people rose up against a despotic regime.

But there is widespread support among working people here and around the world for the Nicaraguan freedom fighters, who are seen as heroic opponents of a brutal dictatorship. And workers in the United States are deeply opposed to any new Vietnams, any use of U.S. military forces against such struggles.

For this reason Carter is trying to conceal his hostile moves against the Nicaraguan revolution behind promises of aid and a pose of open-handed generosity.

Carter wants to persuade U.S. public opinion that Washington is doing all it can for Nicaragua, and that the difficulties faced by the masses there are caused by the unreasonable actions and demands of the Sandinistas. Then, by labeling the Sandinistas as "extremists," Carter hopes to gull American workers into accepting more direct U.S. intervention against the Nicaraguan revolution.

Already the U.S. rulers are intensifying economic and military pressure on Nicaragua.

More than a million of Nicaragua's 2.4 million people are living in the shadow of hunger as a result of Somoza's scorched-earth policy. The new government has

asked for at least 300 tons of food a day to block starvation.

The response of revolutionary Cuba—itsself a small and poor country—has set an example for the world. The Castro government is not only providing food but offering thousands of doctors and teachers to help build a new Nicaragua.

But the Carter administration, which governs the world's leading food-producing nation, has offered only a tiny fraction of what is needed. And even this pittance is being withheld.

Red Cross officials report that "the amount of foreign food entering the country had been dropping, from 150 tons a day a few weeks ago to only 40 to 80 tons a day now," according to the August 6 *New York Times*.

Alfonso Robelo, a member of the new government, exposed Carter's duplicity and the reasons behind it: "In Washington they claim they are sending 120 tons of food a day for the Nicaraguan people but that is not exact, since the shipments by sea have not arrived and could be delayed just when we need them most. . . .

"There seems to be an attempt to hold up the aid with the idea of altering the nature of the process that seeks to establish a more equalitarian society. But anyone who intends to do that is mistaken since we are fighting for liberty and dignity for Nicaragua and in no way are we going to accept conditions on our sovereignty."

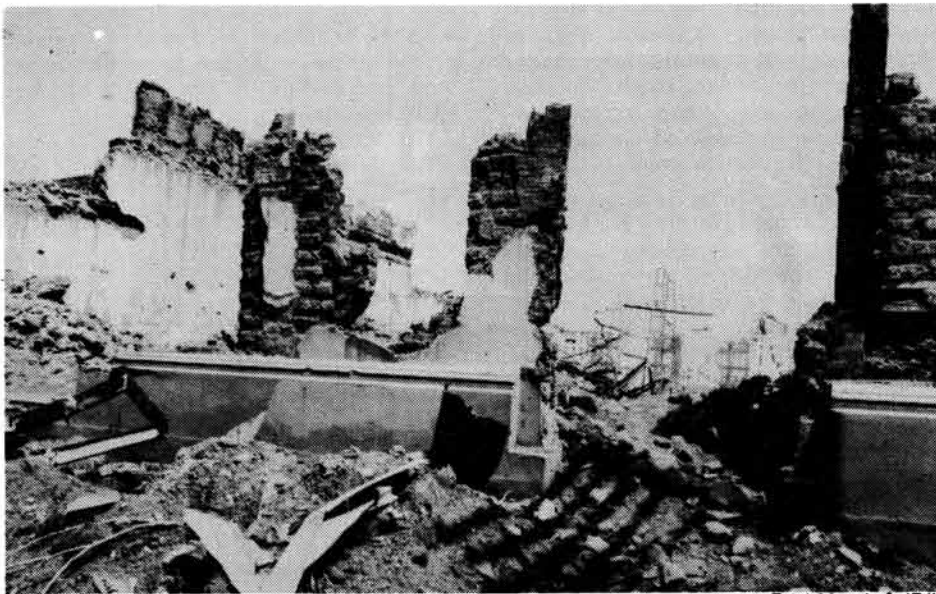
The response from Washington has been to threaten a cutoff of all aid: "If the criticism of the U.S. aid efforts continues, one official said, they're going to put us out of business," reported Charles A. Krause in the August 7 *Washington Post*.

Tightening Military Noose

Washington is also working behind the scenes to tighten a military noose around the Nicaraguan workers and poor peasants, forcing them to devote massive resources to self-defense.

After nightfall in Managua and other cities, bands of pro-Somoza terrorists strike from ambush against working people and Sandinista fighters. In Honduras and El Salvador, thousands of U.S.- and Israeli-armed troops from Somoza's National Guard, including entire organized units, are being readied for new assaults on Nicaragua. What holds these mercenary forces together is Washington's support.

The military dictatorships in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala share Washington's determination to drive back the revolution in Nicaragua. They know that



Fred Murphy—IP/1

Devastated Nicaragua needs massive international solidarity to rebuild.

SWP Candidates Demand Massive U.S. Aid to Nicaragua

At a news conference in Washington, D.C., August 22 announcing the Socialist Workers Party 1980 presidential campaign, Andrew Pulley and Matilde Zimmermann, SWP candidates for president and vice-president, denounced the threat of U.S. military intervention against the Nicaraguan revolution.

The news conference was attended by reporters and photographers from United Press International and Associated Press, the country's two major wire services; *Newsweek* magazine; and ABC news, among others. Reports of it appeared in the August 23 *New York Times* and *Washington Post*.

The Associated Press dispatch, carried in the *Washington Post*, reported:

"The Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate, Andrew Pulley, opened his campaign yesterday, demanding that the U.S. government 'keep its military hands off' the revolutionary government of Nicaragua.

"Pulley, a Chicago steelworker, told a news conference the U.S. government should 'send food and medicine, not Marines' to Nicaragua. The overthrow of Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza has 'inspired the exploited masses the world over,' he declared.

"Pulley and his vice presidential run-



Arnold Weissberg/Militant

Andrew Pulley and Matilde Zimmermann, Socialist Workers Party candidates for president and vice-president in 1980, demand U.S. government "send food and medicine, not Marines" to Nicaragua.

ning mate, Matilde Zimmermann, said U.S. aid to Nicaragua would be one of the major campaign issues. . . .

"Pulley said the leaders of the Sandinista revolution that overthrew Somoza remain concerned that the United States would find a pretext for interven-

ing militarily against them. The Somoza family was installed in power by the United States in the 1930s and received strong U.S. support.

"The Nicaraguan revolution, Pulley said, is threatened by 'right-wing groups in neighboring countries being financed by U.S. client states.'"

every advance by the Nicaraguan masses inspires workers and peasants throughout Central America to take on their exploiters.

"Defense Department and intelligence officials are urging that the U.S. resume arms shipments to the three nations," reported the August 13 *Time* magazine. Meanwhile, the Carter administration has turned a cold shoulder to Nicaragua's requests for arms for self-defense. Washington's moves to beef up reactionary regimes in the region pose a direct threat to the Nicaraguan revolution.

Any move against Nicaragua will also mean a threat against Cuba, which has clearly placed itself in the forefront of helping to defend the revolutionary victory of the Nicaraguan masses.

American working people have every reason to come to the aid of our Nicaraguan brothers and sisters. Our aspirations for a better life are the same. We share a common enemy. The billionaires' government that is withholding food from the Nicaraguan people today in order to starve them into submission is the same government that controls our wages, breaks our strikes, and helps the oil barons hold us hostage.

American working people have a life-and-death stake in blocking any moves by

the Carter administration that could turn Nicaragua into another Vietnam. We should sound the alarm against any invasion, blockade, or other aggression against Nicaragua.

Working people in this country should demand that Carter stop stalling and provide the 300 tons of food a day that the Nicaraguan people desperately need. In addition, we can organize through our unions, groups in the Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, and Cuban communities, and on campus to raise food, clothing, and medical supplies for Nicaragua.

Our top priority must be to get out the truth about Nicaragua. The big-business news media are suppressing the facts about what the Nicaraguan workers and peasants are fighting for, how they are organizing, and what progressive changes they are already making.

Through special issues of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, the Socialist Workers Party pledges to help break through the news blackout. The first-hand reports in the *Militant* and *PM* will be an important contribution to the educational effort that is needed.

In addition, we are moving up the starting date of our fall campaign to sell 150,000 copies of the *Militant* and *Perspec-*

tiva Mundial—the circulation drive starts now!

Forums, meetings in union halls and communities, and teach-ins on campuses can all help spread the truth about the Nicaraguan revolution.

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Nicaraguans Vow to Rebuild Devastated Country

By Mirta Vidal

[The following article appeared in the August 31 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

* * *

LEÓN, Nicaragua, August 19—Today, people throughout Nicaragua celebrated the thirtieth day since the fall of the hated Somoza dictatorship.

Here in León, the second largest city, peasants, workers, and students poured out in spite of the rain for a rally in the city's main plaza.

Chants like, "Long live free Nicaragua," "A free country or death," and "Long live the FSLN [Sandinist National Liberation Front]" punctuated the speeches.

Periodically, the audience would be asked from the platform, "Are we tired?" "No!" they would roar in reply.

"Are we united?"

"Yes!" the roar growing even louder, illustrating a sense of optimism and confidence that prevails today in Nicaragua.

While preparations for the celebration were under way, I walked around what is now the skeleton of a once thriving city.

"León has a tradition of combativity," a stationery store owner told me.

"The entire population was mobilized against Somoza's National Guard," explained a taxi driver. "We pushed them into a corner, and when they saw no way out, they began the bombing raids."

The bombings destroyed the center of the city, killing thousands of innocent victims.

On a side street in a section of the city where most buildings are still standing, fifteen-year-old youth in green uniforms, rifles in hand, guard the central supply depot, housed in what was once the light and power building.

Inside, in a small patio, Vladimir Cordero, a young man in charge of the FSLN supplies commission made time to discuss with me the problems they face.

Cordero emphasized the inadequacy of the international aid they have received so far.

Given the shortage of goods, priority is being given to the rural areas, hospitals, and the troops. The peasants, organized into the Agricultural Production Units, are working in exchange for food alone.

The rest of the civilian population is thus in great need of supplies.

The basic foodstuffs urgently needed include rice, beans, wheat, flour, sugar, soap, and oil.

But while the Nicaraguan people have



Fred Murphy/IP-1

One of few portraits of Somoza left intact hangs on fence at Managua military installation. "Perro" means "dog."

inherited devastated cities, and a shattered economy, spirits are high. There is a universal understanding that the destiny of the country is now in the hands of the masses.

This was the theme of the speeches at the rally in León, including in the signs and slogans.

One placard a young boy displayed summed up the mood. It read: "The insurrection is over, but the revolution has just begun."

Women have played a prominent role in the revolutionary process. One keynote speaker at the León celebration, a middle-aged peasant woman, urged women to take their place in the process by joining the neighborhood committees—the Sandinista Defense Committees—and to take part in the political discussions in order to learn.

"And let us not differentiate between those who are coordinators and representatives, and the rest. Let us all be united," she appealed.

In León the Sandinista Defense Committees are organized on a block-by-block basis, including every person on the block. Representatives are then elected to a cen-

tral committee which meets with the local governing junta to discuss the neighborhood's problems and present their demands.

The five members of the local junta were elected at a mass rally several weeks ago, with the approval of the FSLN.

A junta spokesperson at the rally picked up on the central theme: "The revolution has not ended," he said. "All we have done so far is throw out Somozaism and the National Guard. The revolution is only beginning."

He explained that hundreds of volunteers are needed now to pave the streets of León. He pointed out that when the junta took office the city had inherited a debt of 3 million cordobas [\$300,000] and that workers had not been paid back wages for two months.

When they opened the books, they discovered that 38,000 cordobas were "phantom salaries which paid for people to persecute all of you."

After several revolutionary songs performed by local groups, the rally heard two FSLN representatives.

The first addressed himself to the role of U.S. imperialism in maintaining the Somoza dictatorship for forty-five years. Like the other speakers, he emphasized that it was the combativity of the masses that overthrew the dictatorship.

"This revolution is a revolution of all the Nicaraguan people," he said. "But it is not for those who are opposed to the revolutionary process."

Clearly referring to Washington, he warned, "Those who think they can organize a counterrevolution may know how it will begin, but they do not know how it will end."

The final speaker was a young woman of the FSLN known by the name Commandante Dos [Commander Two].

Commandante Dos explained that the revolution is a process of economic, political and social transformation. "Our people," she explained, "can choose their own representatives, can say whether or not they agree with what we are doing."

Commandante Dos stressed the need to understand the tasks facing a nation which has been left in ruins. She said the people need to "organize ourselves. We need everyone's participation in this process."

She urged everyone to join the Sandinista Trade Union Federation and the Sandinista Defense Committees.

"This revolution," she declared, "has to be an active revolution." □

Nicaragua's Plans for Agriculture

[This interview with Nicaragua's new minister of agrarian reform, Jaime Wheelock, was conducted by Fred Murphy in Managua on August 6. Wheelock, a member of the Joint National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, explains the steps the new regime is taking to meet the needs of Nicaragua's peasants and farm workers and to reorganize agricultural production. The interview is reprinted from the August 24 *Militant*.]

* * *

Question. Could you begin by describing the situation in agriculture in recent years under the dictatorship?

Answer. We have two basic types of production. One is cereals for the domestic market; the other is production for export.

Most production for export was carried out under conditions that left agricultural workers idle a large part of the year. Export production was mainly aimed at fulfilling the needs of a very small layer of owners who held large tracts of land.

Two families—the Somozas and the Pellas—controlled more than 500,000 acres of cotton, about 250,000 acres of coffee, 200,000 head of cattle, somewhat more than 35,000 acres of sugar cane. Large holdings in tobacco and rice were basically controlled by the Somocistas.

Along with the division between production for export and production for internal consumption, there is also a division between a highly capitalist sector of agriculture and a sector we could call poor and medium peasants.

In fact, between 40 and 60 percent of the arable land was controlled by the Somoza family. And the figure rises to about 70 percent if we add the holdings of the Somocistas.

The remaining land is controlled by about 60,000 peasants who have very small holdings, and some 100,000 peasants who do a combination of paid labor and labor on their own small plots. Many workers, even middle peasants with family farms, had to work during the planting or harvesting seasons on the large farms.

In the case of the cotton-growing industry alone, more than 250,000 agricultural workers are employed at the height of the picking. The coffee industry needs 150,000 workers during the height of the season.

In the case of sugar, some 15,000 workers are employed at the high point.

All this means that there is a proletarian mass in agriculture, but it is a seasonal proletariat, a fluid proletariat—sometimes working in cotton, then in coffee, then in sugar.

In short, the capitalist export sector, as well as the wasteful agricultural oligarchy, combined to displace the small producers, the small peasants.

In Chinandega, for example, almost all the land is covered by sugar, cotton, and banana plantations; the peasant masses have been driven from their land.

The peasants lead miserable lives in the countryside; the phenomenon of marginal neighborhoods that have arisen in the cities, is also taking place in the countryside. It is incredible. You find people living miserable lives in the countryside, suffocating on the land.

Q. What measures are being taken to resolve this problem?

A. In the northern part of the country, where there are no roads, no infrastructure, and land that is not very productive, we want to carry out a program of enlarging the landholdings of the peasants, combined with technical and development assistance.

On the other hand, in the center of the country—in the Managua valley, in Masaya and Carazo—where we have strong one-crop production, we want to solve the land problem by giving the land to the peasants.

But in other parts of the country, for example in León, in Chinandega, and in Rivas, we do not plan to turn the land over to the peasants. There we are going to set up big state farms, which will at the same time be the basis for the economic and social development of the area.

So, in some cases we will solve the problem of the landless peasants by giving them land. In other cases we are going to solve the problem of the landless agricultural laborers by incorporating them into production and giving them stable year-round work while providing big social and economic benefits.

And in the case of the Indian communities based on traditional systems of production, the land will be given not to the individual producer but to the whole In-

U.S. Workers Can Help Nicaragua

[In the interview, Murphy asked Wheelock what workers in the United States could do to help defend the Nicaraguan revolution. The Sandinista's answer follows.]

First I want to use the *Militant* to salute the people in the United States who have understood and been in solidarity with our struggle. Moreover, we have received medical, financial, and material aid from the American people.

At the same time that they were aiding us, they were protesting the aid given to Somoza.

This has given us a great deal of optimism about the consciousness that exists among the American people regarding the right of other peoples to their self-determination.

It has also given us confidence that the American people will actively participate in defending those rights and in giving solidarity and aid to those who are struggling for just causes.

We are optimistic regarding the future of the struggle in the United States, and in the heightening of the consciousness of the American people and the American workers.

Today there is one big job, one im-

mediate task, and that is to prevent and actively oppose the plans for political aggression that are being cooked up by recalcitrant, reactionary sectors in the United States.

It is important to maintain this consciousness of the American people in order to oppose any aggressive plans.

In addition, we need economic aid to rebuild the country. The United States told us that it was going to send 300, 400 tons of aid daily. So far only one plane has arrived. That's all.

They are playing around with the aid, perhaps to put pressure on us. But the fact is that the aid has not gotten here, although the American people are in favor of giving it to the people of Nicaragua.

You have seen what it is like here. There is no food, there are no seeds to plant, there is no money. The Somocistas left us a state in ruins, and now they are trying to paralyze international solidarity.

So in the first place we need immediate aid—food, clothing, medicine, help in reconstruction.

And in addition, we need pressure to grant loans to Nicaragua, long-term low-interest loans so that we can rebuild our country.

dian community. They will get sufficient land to increase their production and raise their standard of living.

Q. What type of administration is planned for the big state farms?

A. The workers on these farms will participate in the management and help make the major decisions.

But a large portion of the production of each farm will also go toward social development—health, education, housing, and so forth—for these workers and for the whole region as well.

Take, for example, the case of Rivas, where we have a large sugar mill called Dolores. Part of the production from this mill will probably be used to help solve the problem of the lack of hospitals in the entire province.

This is the consciousness that we hope to instill in the workers. They will know that their production helped to build hospitals for the whole department, as well as to provide homes, educational programs, and literacy programs. The aim is to incorporate the workers socially, as producers, in decision-making both in the plant and in the entire society.

Q. Several days ago there was an article in 'Barricada' that reported that some peasants, I believe in León, were demanding arms to defend their gains. Will you be encouraging the development of peasant militias?

A. Yes. In fact, there already are peasant militias. They were built during the war, and within our army there is a high percentage of peasants. So this is not something we still have to develop.

Q. Could you explain what role the peasants played in the struggle against Somoza and in the insurrection?

A. For many years the peasants have participated directly in the struggle for democracy and freedom, for progress in Nicaragua.

This has been going on since the days of General Sandino. The peasants were the most important numerical force in that struggle for national liberation. But in this new stage as well, the first nuclei of the Sandinista Front grew in the mountains with the support of the peasants. The peasants here have been the social layer that has been hit hardest by the blows of the repression.

The Somocista gangs killed thousands of peasants. But despite all that, the peasants have always been involved in combative and patriotic activity. For that reason we have a great debt of honor to the peasants. Moreover, the peasantry is the motor force of this revolution, and it is the first beneficiary of this revolution. □

In Aftermath of Sandinista Victory

Struggles Erupt in Central America

By Fernando Torres

[The following article appeared in the September 3 issue of *Perspectiva Mundial*, a Spanish-language news magazine published fortnightly in New York.]

* * *

The effects of the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua are already being felt elsewhere in Central America. Inspired by the Nicaraguan revolution, fresh popular mobilizations are shaking the region's military dictatorships, especially in Guatemala and El Salvador.

News of church occupations in El Salvador at the beginning of August, together with a student strike in Guatemala, confirm the fears of many bourgeois observers that the fall of Somoza will have important repercussions in neighboring countries.

On August 3, more than 50,000 students in Guatemala City began a strike against the government to demand democratic rights, according to a report in the August 4 *Barricada*, official organ of the Sandinista National Liberation Front. Student leaders said the strike was the beginning of a broad protest movement against the military regime of Gen. Romeo Lucas Garcia.

Since the end of last year, Guatemalan students, peasants, Indians, and workers have mobilized against repression, the high cost of living, and to demand democratic rights.

There have been strikes among telephone, post office, and public service workers, as well as in various industries. Important victories have been registered against the government in these struggles.

The regime's response has been to step up repression with the aim of totally smashing these popular struggles. It is estimated that since the beginning of this year at least fifteen persons a day have died at the hands of the police or ultraright paramilitary groups linked to the government.

Meanwhile in Costa Rica, government troops engaged in pitched battles with some 5,000 striking dock workers in the port city of Limón. Hundreds of people, including women and children, were injured August 19, flooding the local hospital emergency room.

The strike resulted in a cutoff of oil and gas supplies. President Carazo Odio declared the strike was "incited" by foreign governments and expelled three Soviet

diplomats from the country.

In El Salvador, *Barricada* reported, members of the July 28 People's League were maintaining their occupation of two churches in the capital as of August 4. The sit-ins are demanding freedom for political prisoners and the dismissal of the military officers that have carried out the repression.

The Associated Press reported August 20 that in response to a fast by about 150 priests and nuns and strikes in several factories, Gen. Carlos Romero promised that all political exiles would be permitted to return. He also promised that the Red Cross would be permitted to check if any political prisoners were being held and that free congressional elections would be held in March.

The priests and nuns held their fast in a second church so that nineteen striking metal workers could continue their hunger strike in the metropolitan cathedral.

In May of this year similar occupations—taking place in the midst of strikes and demonstrations involving thousands of persons—confronted the regime.

One of the groups at the forefront of these struggles is the Revolutionary People's Bloc (BPR), which has the support of trade unions and peasant and student organizations.

The BPR, along with many other organizations, has hailed the Sandinista victory. In a press statement a BPR representative condemned the complicity of General Romero's government with the Somozaist refugees, above all with the 3,000 Nicaraguan National Guard soldiers that are now based in El Salvador.

The nations of Central America suffer the brutality of dictatorships that have close ties to the U.S. government and to U.S. companies. As a refuge for the remaining elements of the Somozaist National Guard, they present a real danger to the Nicaraguan revolution. At the same time, the resurgence of popular struggles raises the possibility of new victories. The downfall of these dictatorships would be an invaluable aid in the defense of all that the Nicaraguan masses have obtained through their enormous sacrifices.

An essential component of the international campaign in defense of the revolution in Nicaragua is solidarity with the struggles of the masses of Central America. □



Leaders of workers committee at San Antonio sugar mill. From left: Silvio Ruis, Juan Martínez, a young friend, José Ramírez.

At Nicaragua's Biggest Mill

How Sugar Workers Have Begun to Organize

By Fred Murphy

CHICHIGALPA—The huge Ingenio San Antonio just east of here is the largest sugar mill in Central America and one of the biggest industrial sites in Nicaragua. The mill employs 4,000 permanent workers and up to 8,000 during the sugar harvest.

I visited the Ingenio San Antonio on August 5. Besides the mill itself, the site includes the workers' barracks-like housing, a hospital, a bank, a company store or commissary, and a National Guard post now under the control of the Sandinista army.

At the building that once housed the company-controlled "trade union," I found three leaders of the sugar workers—Silvio Ruiz, Juan Martínez and José Ramírez. They took me on a tour of the mill and explained how the Ingenio San Antonio became a key bastion in the Nicaraguan people's uprising against the Somoza dictatorship. They also told me how the sugar workers have begun to organize to defend their newly won gains.

The sugar workers, headed by a column of guerrillas from the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) laid siege to the National Guard barracks at the mill on June 2. Somoza quickly sent in troop reinforcements and tanks. The air force began bombing the mill.

Much of the workers' housing was destroyed by the indiscriminate bombing, along with part of the hospital and some of

the mill's valuable machinery. Some ninety civilians lost their lives, and about \$6 million worth of damage was done to the mill itself.

After three days of heavy fighting, the Sandinista column was forced to withdraw. The Guard then imposed a reign of terror. They searched the workers' homes, robbed the bank, and sacked the commissary of food, liquor, and appliances.

Many workers and their families fled to Chichigalpa or to the surrounding countryside.

A stronger Sandinista force attacked the mill again on June 27. By July 1, the National Guard detachment was defeated and driven out.

The workers and the Sandinistas then turned the mill into a munitions factory.

"There is great potential here for making war matériel," Silvio Ruiz said. "We have laboratories, mechanical shops, and so on. So we were able to manufacture about 500 grenades and bombs, five cannons, two bazookas, and fifty fragmentation mines."

The Sandinistas organized the sugar workers into guerrilla units and dispatched them to the main Western Front battle zones in León and Chinandega.

A mechanics brigade was organized to repair Sandinista vehicles, and a unit of electricians helped keep power flowing in the areas that were under rebel control.

After Somoza fled and the dictatorship collapsed, the workers at the Ingenio San Antonio began holding meetings to decide what to do next.

On July 29, 2,000 workers gathered to discuss and approve a list of demands that would be presented to the mill's owner, Alfredo Pellas (a big landowner who belonged to the capitalist opposition to Somoza).

Representatives of the FSLN leadership visited the mill and spoke at the July 29 meeting. At their suggestion, the workers elected a Provisional Committee of forty-nine members—one delegate from each of the mill's departments.

The demands presented to Pellas called for repayment in full of all wages lost during June and July and the immediate resumption of production at the mill. The workers declared that if Pellas did not start up the mill, they would do so themselves.

The workers also demanded abolition of the "blacklist" they found in one of the mill's offices. Photographs of workers with X's drawn through them were accompanied by such labels as "dangerous" and "subversive." Some fifty of these worker militants had been fired shortly before the insurrection, and another demand was that they be immediately reinstated.

Management personnel, who had all fled

the mill when the insurrection began, returned at the beginning of August. They were confronted by a militant, well-organized, revolutionary-minded work force, one steered in the battle against the dictatorship.

Pellas had no choice but to grant all the workers' demands—especially since the

new government decreed August 2 that wages due to all Nicaraguan workers for the period of the general strike and insurrection would have to be paid and that the government would make sure this was done.

"Things are not like they were before, under Somoza," Juan Martínez says. He is confident that the Ingenio San Antonio

workers now have the power to back up their demands, and, if necessary, to take over the mill and run it themselves. "We are going to have a revolutionary union, and not a company union like before."

The workers also feel that the new, Sandinista-led government is on their side. They expect it to back them up in any new disputes with Pellas. □

'Who Says You Need a Title to Administer a Bank?'

Workers at Nationalized Banks Meet to Form Union

The following article appeared in the August 6 issue of the Managua daily *Barricada*, official organ of the Sandinista National Liberation Front. The translation is by Harvey McArthur.

* * *

In response to a call by the Union of Workers in Banking and Finance, more than 600 of the thousands of bank workers throughout the country met Saturday afternoon [August 4] in the Casa del Obrero. Their aim was to get the banking system in operation again and to form Sandinista Defense Committees.

The workers from the various banking and financial institutions named representatives to form an internal committee that will be responsible for organizing the banking and finance workers into one federation—a workers front that would subsequently affiliate with the United Federation of Sandinista Workers.

The organization of the banking and financial employees is of great importance, since it will be one of the unions with the largest number of workers. Moreover, workers at each banking or financial institution will name a representative to the board of directors of the institution where they work. This means that the workers will play an active and decisive role in the decisions that our country's banking system will take.

From Clandestinity to Legality

The Union of Banking and Financial Workers (SITRABANIF), which emerged a little more than two years ago under the leadership of the United People's Movement (MPU), is one of those union movements in the history of our country that was forced to work underground in order to survive.

While other unions, some federations, and some political parties had access to the means of communication to report on their activities and the attacks they suffered at the hands of the dictatorship, this door was closed to SITRABANIF. It was gagged and persecuted not only by the dictatorial regime but also by the groups in power, including the financial oligarchy

whose tentacles of control and exploitation reached into all the country's productive activities.

Statements by the union were frequently presented to the communications media—both radio and the press—to inform the people of the demands being raised. But despite the good will of innumerable journalists, the union was never able to express itself freely through the mass media.

Today, thanks to the nationalization of the banking system, carried out by our revolutionary government, the banking and financial employees can not only express their concerns and aspirations freely but can also participate in the administration of the institutions in which they work.

CGT Representative Speaks

Sebastián Castro of the General Workers Federation (CGT) spoke at the meeting of the bank workers. He stressed the importance of the triumph of the Nicaraguan people led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front, and how that victory affects everything that happens in the country.

He spoke of the different definitions of a union, pointing out that the simplest of these is the continual and ongoing organization of the workers to defend their interests. "One of the tasks that the union organizations have in this country is to defend the revolution no matter what the cost," he said.

The compañero from the CGT also spoke of the Civil Defense Committees and the Sandinista Defense Committees. He said that these forms of organization were developing block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, house by house. He added that the more Defense Committees we have, the more secure the revolution will be.

Strike Like a Sledgehammer

A representative of the Sandinista Front also spoke at the meeting, urging the workers to unionize all banking institutions, to form committees in each bank and in each section of each bank. "We must strike like a sledgehammer so that

when we strike, we smash the enemy," he declared. "This union will raise the people's demands. All those who have held back this process must be thrown out."

The Sandinista compañero recommended the formation of a Provisional Committee, leading to the holding of an assembly of all banking and financial workers that in turn could organize a strong union, responsive to the needs of the workers.

Workers from different banks and financial institutions spoke, bringing up their concerns and praising the victory of the Sandinista people's revolution.

Near the end of the session, Antonio Jaenz M., secretary of grievances of SITRABANIF, spoke. He pointed out that the projects that they would carry out from today on are social ones. "The technocratic mentality has come to an end. If investments are made, it will be to aid the workers. Who says that to administer a bank you have to have a title?"

He pointed to three aspects of the bank nationalizations. First, he showed that this was an obligation of the revolutionary government, because it is here that the power groups, the capitalist structures of exploitation, found their highest expression.

Second, he presented the step as necessary to save the banking and financial system, so as to prevent the loss of small savings accounts.

Third, he said, nationalization was the only way to guide the economic plan of the Junta of National Reconstruction, because—as no one should forget—the banking system still has Somoza supporters within it.

He stressed that nationalization simply meant giving to the workers that which really belongs to them—not only the banking workers but all the workers of Nicaragua.

"The formation of the banking and financial institutions is the product of the labor of the people," he said, "especially of the workers in the countryside and the cities who produce the economic surplus, which until recently was taken by the oligarchy for their own enrichment." □

How Cubans Won Their Freedom

By Larry Seigle

[The following article appeared in the August 24 issue of the *Militant*.]

* * *

Will the revolution in Nicaragua follow the path taken twenty years earlier by the Cuban workers and peasants? Will capitalism be overthrown? This question is on everyone's mind.

To understand what is going on in Nicaragua today, it is helpful to know what happened in Cuba after the July 26 Movement overthrew the Batista dictatorship.

The July 26 Movement in Cuba had begun as a petty-bourgeois formation with a radical democratic, anti-imperialist, and nationalist program. But what distinguished the Fidelistas from every previous radical petty-bourgeois formation in Cuba was that the Fidelistas meant what they said. Once in power, as they faced more and more intense pressure from Yankee imperialists and resistance from the Cuban capitalist class, they relied increasingly on mass mobilizations of the Cuban workers and peasants.

As Fidel put it in his speech on the twentieth anniversary of the revolution, "Before January [1959], a vanguard was the main protagonist in events; since that January, the main protagonist has been the people."

The Cuban workers and peasants were the only force in Cuba that could defeat the imperialists. And it was only by overthrowing capitalism and establishing a workers state that they could bring their full power to bear in the struggle against imperialism and for the economic and social advances the masses were demanding.

How did this come about?

Having learned the lessons of the 1954 CIA-organized coup against the Arbenz regime in Guatemala, the rebel leaders moved immediately after coming to power to disband the Batista army and police. They put some of the most notorious police torturers on trial, and executed some 600 of them with swift justice—although most of these butchers had escaped to Miami. The public trials were used to educate and mobilize the masses.

It was this mass determination to establish revolutionary justice that provoked the initial howls of pain and hypocritical outrage from Washington about the "reign of terror" taking place in Cuba.

A coalition government was set up. While it included leaders of the July 26 Movement, the most important posts went to bourgeois figures. Castro took no post at

first. Manuel Urrutia was named president. He had voted, as a judge, against the convictions of some of the rebel fighters who had been captured by Batista's police. José Miro Cardona, who was the president of the Havana Bar Association, was named prime minister.

This coalition government then proceeded to implement some of the measures that had been promised and fought for by the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army. Fissures within the government and within the July 26 Movement itself immediately began to appear.

The cutting edge of the revolution was the radical agrarian reform law adopted May 17, 1959. Prior to the revolution, 75 percent of the land had been owned by 8 percent of the population. Seven of the ten largest *latifundios* were American-owned, as was 40 percent of Cuban sugar production.

The agrarian reform law invoked the provisions of the 1940 constitution forbidding the holding of more than a thousand acres in a single property. Holdings beyond that were expropriated and distributed among the 700,000 landless peasants and agricultural workers, with priority to any tenants, sharecroppers, or squatters living on the land in question. Each family was guaranteed a minimum of sixty-six acres, free, with the right to buy another hundred acres, which could be passed on through inheritance, but not sold. All cane land belonging to the giant sugar mills was expropriated, along with all land owned by non-Cubans. All land was to be compensated for by long-term government bonds.

Institute of Agrarian Reform

The National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) was established to oversee the implementation of the program, which provoked growing dismay and hostility in Washington and among the wealthy Cuban landowners. This in turn deepened the split within the government.

INRA and the Rebel Army, backed by the workers and poor peasants, acted more and more as a "dual power" to the moderate elements in the government.

Other measures were implemented. Government corruption was wiped out. Home and apartment rents were reduced by 30 to 50 percent. Mortgage rates for small homeowners were lowered. Havana, which for decades had been used as a gambling den and brothel by the Yankees, was transformed.

The private homes and clubs of the wealthy who had fled were confiscated and

turned into schools and dormitories. Taxes were reduced by two-thirds for most citizens, while those who had previously evaded all taxes found themselves pursued by zealous collectors correcting years of fraudulent tax evasion.

Gas, electricity, and telephone rates were reduced after committees of workers opened the books of the giant American-owned utilities and documented the criminal price gouging. Currency and import controls were introduced.

As fissures within the July 26 Movement and the coalition government deepened, the Fidelistas moved further and further to the left, relying more and more on massive revolutionary mobilizations in the cities as well as the countryside. In turn, the Castro leadership itself was further transformed as it more and more reflected and responded to the deepening radicalization of the toiling masses of Cuba. The masses entered directly into the political process, initiating factory "interventions," putting their stamp of approval on, and consolidating, the revolutionary measures taken.

One by one the bourgeois ministers resigned from their posts. Huge mass mobilizations played a decisive role in driving key bourgeois forces out of top posts, and in strengthening the Fidelista forces. In February, Miro Cardona stepped down and Castro became Prime Minister. In July, Urrutia was replaced by Osvaldo Dorticos as President. By November 1959, when Che Guevara became head of the national bank, almost all of the remaining bourgeois figures had been removed from the government.

Workers & Farmers Government

It was clear by then that a point of qualitative change in the nature of the government had occurred, and a workers and farmers government was in the saddle.

Among the most significant steps taken by this government was the organization of a workers and peasants militia.

But the dominant property relations remained bourgeois. The capitalist class had not yet been expropriated. It still hung on to positions of power in the economy, from which it could work to regain the initiative and use its power to roll back the gains of the revolutionary upsurge. In other words, Cuba was not yet a workers state.

In July of 1960 Joseph Hansen, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party, wrote: "What has been established is a highly contradictory and highly unstable regime,

subject to pressures and impulses that can move it forward or backward." There remained the contradiction between the workers and farmers government and the economic power of the native capitalists and their imperialist senior partners. What was needed was "to carry the revolution forward to its culmination by toppling bourgeois economic and social relations . . ." (*Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution*, p. 67., Pathfinder Press, Inc.)

This was the key challenge. And it was met decisively by the Castro leadership. Facing the escalating threats and offensive moves by Washington, the Castro government itself initiated the next steps and mobilized the Cuban workers to carry them through. They used the governmental power to organize and lead the masses in expropriating the bourgeoisie and opening the door to a planned economy, thus bringing about a revolutionary transformation of the class character of the state.

The nature of this revolutionary government can be seen from the way it responded to the major moves of the imperialists.

Imperialist Campaign

Following the promulgation of the first agrarian reform law, the imperialists escalated their preparation for a counterrevolutionary offensive. They charged that there had been a "Red" takeover in Havana. They began to complain that there were no free elections, although they had never complained about the lack of free elections under Batista.

They waxed indignant over the provisions for compensation in the agrarian reform law, which, they whined, weren't fair because the value of the land was assessed at the value listed for tax purposes by the landowners under the Batista regime!

The White House grumbled that nothing was working the way it ought to; the new officials in the government wouldn't even take bribes. The imperialists denounced Fidel as a demagogue because he talked on television for so long. Of course, they never reported on the content of what he said.

A campaign was launched in Congress and in the capitalist press to cut Cuba's sugar quota. In January 1960, President Eisenhower announced that he would seek authority to reduce the sugar quota. Havana responded by denouncing this as blackmail and announcing that Cuba would sell sugar elsewhere on the world market.

The next month, Soviet First Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan visited Havana and signed an agreement for the Soviet Union to buy Cuban sugar. The government began to prepare a law to expropriate the sugar mills. Fidel announced: "As they cut our sugar quota pound by pound, we will seize their mills one by one."

Hand-painted posters went up in the windows of houses throughout the island:



Castro addressing January 24, 1960, meeting of members of a new agricultural cooperative in Pinar del Rio.

"Sin cuota, pero sin bota." (Without the quota, but without the boot.)

The government passed a law authorizing the expropriation of American-owned property, stipulating that full compensation would be paid out of future income from sugar sold to the United States. No sugar sale, no compensation.

For some reason, that equitable arrangement made the American businessmen very angry.

Next came the refusal of the U.S.-and British-owned oil refineries to process Soviet crude oil. The response of the Castro government was to "intervene." If the foreign-owned monopolies wouldn't produce according to the needs of the Cuban people, the workers themselves should open the books, expose the lies concealed beneath the fraud of "business secrets," and establish workers control over production. "Intervention" in oil refineries was a first step toward their expropriation.

Washington stepped up the financing and arming of counterrevolutionaries. Planes from Florida began bombing cane fields and setting them afire. On August 6, 1960, taking the occasion of the first Latin American Youth Congress meeting in Havana, Fidel announced the nationalization of all the American-owned sugar mills, oil refineries, and the power and telephone companies. Again, compensation would be paid out of future revenues from sugar sold to the United States.

And this was followed by further expro-

priations, including the holdings of the Cuban national bourgeoisie. Fidel put it: "We will nationalize them down to the nails in their shoes." By the end of October 1960, virtually every major capitalist holding had become public property. With the expropriations came state control over foreign trade and the expansion of economic planning.

These expropriations were not merely administrative acts, easily reversed at a future date. Each step was explained to the Cuban workers, and they were mobilized in actions that consolidated and carried through the expropriation of an entire ruling class. The trade unions, the local militia units, and other proletarian organizations acted directly to drive through these expropriations. The transformation of property relations was correctly seen as a conquest by the masses and for the masses.

This represented a qualitative change in the class character of the state. The workers and farmers government had used its power to advance the mobilization of the workers to expropriate the bourgeoisie. Capitalist property relations were thus overturned and the hold of the bourgeoisie on the economic levers of power was definitely broken. By the fall of 1960, a workers state had been born in the first "free territory of the Americas."

This was the opening of the socialist revolution in Latin America, right under the nose of Yankee imperialism, the despised colossus to the north. □

Castro Urges World Solidarity, Aid to Nicaragua

Following is the text of Fidel Castro's address to the Cuba-Nicaragua solidarity rally held July 26 in Holguín, Cuba. The English text is from the August 5, 1979, issue of *Granma Weekly Review*.

* * *

Heroic Sandinista Fighters; (Applause)
Comrades of the Party and Government
Leadership; (Applause)
People of Holguín; (Applause)
Compatriots: (Applause)

Two weeks ago we thought that in this rally various topics would be discussed, among them the successes and the merits of this province; the enormous transformation to be seen throughout the province and the city; its tremendous march forward and its progress, its new buildings, its new factories, its work spirit, its production successes.

The great merit of having produced 764,000 tons of sugar in this year's harvest: (Applause) 150,000 tons more than last year, bringing this year's national sugar production to 7,992,000 tons, 96 base (Applause) only 8,000 tons short of the eight million mark (Applause) and surpassing last year's production figure by more than half a million tons. (Applause) And all this under adverse weather conditions and working the sugar mills right up until yesterday, which was when the last one stopped.

This is what we were thinking. But when we learned less than 48 hours ago that our people were to receive an extraordinary honor, that a large contingent of fighters, of heroic and self-sacrificing leaders, leaders of the sister people of Nicaragua, wished to be with us on this July 26, (Applause) I realized that today's rally would inevitably turn into a Sandinista rally. (Applause and shouts of "Cuba, Nicaragua, United Will Win!")

What should we talk about, what else could we talk about, what more extraordinary event of our times, what act of greater historical importance, of greater significance and implications has taken place in recent times than the victory of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua? What has touched us more deeply, what has captured our attention more during these weeks, what could have excited or inspired us more than this popular and heroic victory?

What Greater Honor?

And what greater honor could we have received, what greater splendor for this revolutionary day of ours, what greater honor for this city and this province than

the warm, fraternal visit of solidarity from this contingent of heroic, valiant, intelligent and capable commanders and fighters of the Sandinista National Liberation Front of Nicaragua? (Applause)

I say solidarity, because we too need solidarity; I say stimulating, because we also need that stimulation. Solidarity, stimulation, because for a long time it was almost a crime to visit Cuba; for a long time imperialism tried to cut the ties with our sister peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, and for a long time blockaded us, prohibited and thwarted the coming together and development of the natural, historical and logical ties between the Nicaraguan and the Cuban peoples.

For so many years we have remembered and mourned those brothers of ours who died fighting at Playa Girón, because of the invasion that left precisely from Nicaraguan territory, in one of the most infamous services which the tyrant offered imperialism, given that this same Somoza—now but a shadow of his former self—was the head of the General Staff of the Nicaraguan army at the time of Girón, when the B-26 bombers left from there to bomb our homes, to kill peasant families, women and children, to drop tons of bombs on our militia and soldiers.

How can we fail to see in this gesture of the Sandinistas, in this spontaneous gesture. . . . Because it was not our initiative, since we know the tremendous amount of work they have at this moment, the enormous job they have to do, the great need for their presence in the country, especially in these early days. We would not have been able to ask them for this honor, this immense, infinite honor that came entirely from them. (Prolonged applause)

This is proof of the political valor of Sandinism, proof of revolutionary valor, because we know this world of ours and we know that political and revolutionary valor do not always abound.

They were not prejudiced, they were not afraid. They didn't have to ask anyone for permission to come to Cuba. They did not have to explain themselves to anyone, nor worry about what anyone would think. (Applause)

Political honesty

This is proof of political honesty, because they don't go about pretending; they don't go about denying that they are friends of Cuba, that they feel respect for Cuba, that they are in solidarity with Cuba. They are open, they don't harbor fears.

For this reason, I believe that they inspire confidence not only in our people

but in all peoples and in world political opinion. They are not prejudiced, in spite of the gossip, the intrigues, the fact that now the campaigns will begin, that now the accusations will begin, once the victory honeymoon has ended.

They do not harbor prejudices, because they are not afraid of the Nicaraguan and Cuban revolutions being confused, because they are way beyond those prejudices.

Yet they themselves will by no means say that the two revolutions are exactly alike. (Applause) They are both profound revolutions, alike in many ways and in many ways different, as all true revolutions must be. (Applause)

'Every Country Has Own Road'

This is important for our people, important also for world opinion. Every country has its own road, its own problems, its own style, methods, objectives. We have our own; they have theirs. We did things one way, our way; they will do things their way. Similarities; they achieved victory by means similar to ours; we both achieved victory by the only means by which we could free ourselves from imperialist tyranny and domination: gun in hand, (Applause) fighting fiercely, heroically.

And we should say, we should stress, that the Nicaraguan Revolution was noted for its heroism, for its perseverance, for the tenacity of its fighters, because it is not the victory of one day; it is the victory of 20 years of struggle, 20 years of struggle! (Applause)

Because in the same year that our Revolution triumphed, there were already groups of fighters led by that extraordinary and marvelous fighter Carlos Fonseca Amador, follower of Sandino (Applause) and founder of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, the people's guide in those terrible days when victory was so far away, leader fallen in the struggle, as so many fell in our own land; like Martí, Maceo, Agramonte; like Abel and Frank País from our generation, who fell without being able to see the victory but certain that victory would be achieved!

Young Fighters

The young fighters took up Fonseca's struggle. Yes, it was said that the average age of the fighters was 20 years; but the leaders, what's their average age? Some of the oldest are in their thirties—those who began to fight when they were only 15, 16, 17 years old, and who faced the difficulties and obstacles for 20 years. Twenty years to gather the fruits of the seed sown, culti-

vated and irrigated with blood for such a long time, to achieve victory in the midst of a truly popular epic.

Who among us has not seen at the movies, on television, in books and magazines pictures of the incredibly brutal repression, the ruthless, genocidal, unscrupulous war unleashed against the people of Nicaragua by the Somoza dictatorship?

Who has not seen pictures of mothers weeping for their children, for their loved ones; pictures of children crying for their parents, of homes that have been destroyed, of piles of corpses, of torture, murders, bombings of the cities?

Where else has such barbarism been seen? Where else has there been an air force dedicated to dropping tons and tons of bombs on the cities of its own country? On Managua, Masaya, León, Estelí, on this group of martyred cities.

They did not hesitate to give orders to drop 500-pound bombs on populated and even overpopulated areas, acts that really filled the world with anger and amazement and that, in their own way, contributed to creating the huge campaign and the unshakable feeling of solidarity with the Nicaraguan people and the Sandinista fighters.

These are the fruits of imperialist intervention in Nicaragua. These were the fruits of intervention, the bitter fruits of imperialist policy in our hemisphere. Because they were the ones who shaped, aided and abetted those sanguinary, repressive, reactionary, tyrannical, fascist regimes in this hemisphere.

And it is said, it has been said—and I think even Somoza himself said it—that in the United Nations the government of Somoza never once failed to vote with the Government of the United States.

Throughout the world, U.S. policy was to create this type of political regime, throughout the entire world! Not only in our America, but in each and every continent!

As for the bombings, we see similar cases: the bombings of the Namibian camps by the racist South Africans, the Rhodesian racists' bombings of the refugee camps of the people of Zimbabwe, using the most modern planes, the most deadly weapons, sophisticated bombs that spread thousands of pellets that are often not even made of steel, but of rubber, so that surgeons can't spot them in X-rays.

Examples of this kind are the genocidal acts perpetrated against the Palestinian people in the Middle East, the constant bombings against the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, against Lebanese communities in Lebanon, bombed practically every day by Israeli planes, symbols of crime.

But it was not only the Israeli bombs falling on the Palestinians, the Lebanese, the imperialist bombs falling on the Namibians and the Zimbabweans; it was also the imperialist bombs, Israeli bombs fal-

Jubilant Cubans Hail Sandinistas

HOLGUIN, Cuba—The overthrow of the hated Somoza dictatorship electrified all of Cuba. For days before his downfall, the Cuban press had been filled with reports of the fighting. The situation in Nicaragua was the number one topic of discussion everywhere on the island.

When news came of the crushing of the last pockets of Somocista resistance, jubilation spread throughout the island. As one former commander of the Cuban Rebel Army told me, "You have to understand, we have been waiting twenty years for this."

Nowhere was this jubilation expressed as enthusiastically as at the July 26 rally held here in commemoration of the 1953 attack on the Moncada Barracks. The rally was attended by twenty-six commanders of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) as well as by representatives of the Government of National Reconstruction of Nicaragua.

I attended the rally as part of the Second Contingent "Carlos Muñiz Varela" of the Antonio Maceo Brigade. The brigade is a group of young Cubans living in the United States and other countries who oppose the U.S. government's hostile policy toward the Cuban revolution.

It was shortly before 6 p.m., after virtually all of the dignitaries and rally participants had arrived, that the first Sandinista commanders made their way onto the platform. A huge roar went up from the crowd of 20,000 as the Sandinistas raised their weapons in greetings to the rally.

The uproar still had not died down several minutes later when Fidel Castro emerged on the platform. Pandemonium broke out as Fidel embraced the Nicaraguan heroes, and started to rearrange the seating of the more than one hundred dignitaries on the platform.

He took a large section of the front row and seated there the several women

Sandinista commanders present, surrounding them with the rest of the Nicaraguan delegation.

Meanwhile the crowd repeatedly shouted, "Nicaragua, Nicaragua, Nicaragua!" and "Cuba and Nicaragua united will win!"

The chants were started on the speakers platform and were led by Raúl Castro, minister of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces.

No sooner had the shouting died down than it again broke out as the announcer introduced the different members of the Sandinista delegation. The strongest cheers were for the women commanders.

The first three speakers all were Nicaraguans: Alfonso Robelo, a member of the Government of National Reconstruction, and FSLN commanders Humberto Ortega and Bayardo Arce.

In his talk, Robelo described the ruins in which the Somocista tyranny had left the country, appealing to all countries of the Americas to aid Nicaragua in rebuilding the country, especially in the fields of health and education.

Ortega described the FSLN's twenty-year struggle to overthrow Somoza and appealed for solidarity against any imperialist attack against the Sandinista revolution. Arce presented Fidel Castro with an Israeli-made machine gun captured from Somoza's forces "to show our admiration and appreciation for the Cuban people's solidarity."

Castro was the final speaker. His speech, like those of the Nicaraguans, was repeatedly interrupted with cheering, applause, and chanting. But the high point came toward the end of his speech, when Fidel proposed Cuba send Nicaragua all the doctors and teachers it asked for, as well as help "in any other field," to which the rally participants responded with repeated, thunderous ovations.

—José G. Pérez

ling on the Nicaraguans.

Israeli-U.S. Conspiracy

When the imperialists wanted to pretend that they were not furnishing arms, they furnished them through their allies. And who is going to believe that the Israeli state would have sent Somoza those arms, those Galil guns, those bombs, those planes without the consent of and approval of the Government of the United States? And with those bombs and guns tens of thousands of people in that country were murdered; we were told that 40,000

people died, that is to say, twice the number of people attending the rally this afternoon.

These are the fruits of the conspiracy that led to the cowardly murder of Sandino, to the implantation of that disgraceful regime that governed the country for almost 50 years and has disappeared thanks to the heroic struggle of the Nicaraguan people and the Sandinista fighters.

From now on, the people of Nicaragua will also be able to meet together as we have done since our Revolution; I also think that one day, in squares such as this

one, the portraits and images of the heroes mentioned here by Commander Humberto Ortega will appear alongside the people, ennobling and dignifying revolutionary rallies, and depicted there will undoubtedly be Sandino, Fonseca and all the patriots that over 150 years—as has been said here—fought for the independence of Nicaragua. (Applause)

150 Years of Domination

The Sandinista victory is not only a victory over 45 years of Somoza-ism; it is a victory over 150 years of foreign domination in the country, (Applause) it is a victory over many centuries of conquest, exploitation and foreign domination. If anything is certain it is that for the first time, for the first time in all their history, the Nicaraguan people became completely free and independent on July 19th, when the columns of hardened Sandinista forces entered Managua, (Applause) because our peoples—and especially Central America, which became a hunting ground for pirates, filibusters and interventionists—passed from Spanish to Yankee domination.

So that day not only marks the day of the victory of the Revolution, but also of the triumph of Nicaraguan independence, (Applause) two great and important historical objectives achieved in one battle. It is in this that we see the importance and the significance of the victorious conclusion of the struggle led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front.

International Solidarity

But this Sandinista victory, this struggle, means even more. A great degree of international solidarity developed around this struggle, and a great degree of unity in all the Central American and Latin American left; around the Sandinista struggle what we could call a great democratic, pro-independence and anti-interventionist front developed tacitly in Latin America, something of historic significance and enormous importance.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, in this hemisphere, the Sandinista movement encouraged the pro-independence and anti-interventionist feelings of Latin American peoples. This reached its high point, its moment of culmination, at the last meeting of the Organization of American States. Let's refer to this Organization for the first time without adding any epithets, because for the first time, for the first time, there was outright insubordination on the part of the Latin American states.

This is very symptomatic, since the most reactionary and aggressive sectors in the United States advised the present U.S. administration to pursue a policy of intervention in Nicaragua, and at this meeting the United States advocated an Inter-American Peace-Keeping Force, supposedly to bring peace to Nicaragua, when peace in Nicaragua, the peace imposed by

imperialism since it began its many interventions and set up that reactionary regime was the peace of the grave. In reality this was the kind of peace they wanted to continue upholding in order to prevent revolutionary peace, to prevent the Sandinista victory, to deprive the people of their victory.

We know what these Inter-American Peace-Keeping Forces amount to, who supplies the weapons, who leads them, who supplies them and who makes up their forces. We have seen these so-called Inter-American forces more than once before.

The imperialist aim was really a sinister one: it was to intervene in Nicaragua. The imperialists were used to having all the Latin American governments say, "Yes!" but this time a sufficient number of Latin American governments said, "No!" (Applause)

And, as always, the pretexts were very noble: "to bring peace to the suffering people of Nicaragua." They did not want this moment to come, they did not want the 19th of July to come. A month later the Sandinistas brought real peace, the peace of a happy and victorious people; a people that had suffered to the full, true, but a people that was also full of hope and optimism in the future.

We, our people, cannot help but note the full magnitude and significance of this historic event: the defeat of the U.S. interventionist scheme in the heart of the Latin American states. There was a majority which resolutely opposed intervention and defended the principle of non-intervention, of sovereignty, of absolute respect for the sovereignty of our peoples, as something sacred.

It must be said that the U.S. proposal was isolated. In the end they adopted an intelligent position. If they had voted in favor of their own proposal, that is, in favor of the proposal for intervention, they would have ended up in the company of Paraguay and Somoza, because the only one who advocated intervention, who openly voted for intervention, was Somoza, and I think Paraguay as well.

Of course, intervention was in Somoza's interest, for the time being at least. Such a course would have preserved the National Guard and would have preserved his interests, along with those of the monopolies. If the United States had abstained, it would have found itself together with Chile, Uruguay, El Salvador and Guatemala, and they did not think it was very honorable to be seen in that kind of company. And so they too voted with the majority. An interesting phenomenon.

A Great Victory

In our opinion the decision, the result of the meeting constituted a great victory for the people of our America and it helped develop the spirit of solidarity with Nicaragua. And in the position maintained at the

OAS, we must stress the role of Panama, Costa Rica, Venezuela and the other Andean Pact countries, (Applause) and that of Mexico, Jamaica, Grenada and others. (Applause) In the creation of this democratic, anti-interventionist front which has formed, we must mention the names of people as well as countries: the names of Torrijos, (Applause) Carazo, (Applause) López Portillo, (Applause) Manley (Applause) and Bishop. (Applause) And it is also only fair to recall the name of a person who, though he is no longer president of his country, contributed a great deal to the development of this solidarity with the Sandinista struggle: the former president of Venezuela, Carlos Andrés Pérez. (Applause)

And let me stress that there was not a single party or organization of the left in Latin America that did not express its willingness to struggle; not a single one failed to express its solidarity with the struggle of the Sandinista people. (Applause)

It is very important for all the peoples still suffering from fascism and the bloodiest tyrannies that this climate, this front and this spirit should be maintained. This is a duty—in our opinion—of the Sandinistas as well; it will be their contribution, the contribution of the victorious people of Nicaragua, toward maintaining that spirit and that broad front.

Many questions are now being raised, and there are many people wanting to establish similarities between what happened in Cuba and what has happened in Nicaragua.

Pretexts for Aggression

Some of these questions are not being posed in good faith, inspired by the wish to start creating justifications and seeking pretexts to apply aggressive measures against the people of Nicaragua as well, blockades against the people of Nicaragua, aggression against the people of Nicaragua—all those filthy measures and all those crimes they committed against us—and we must be careful about this.

The Nicaraguans have given a magnificent answer for those people with this sort of aim in mind who have made assertions or expressed fears to the effect that Nicaragua would become a new Cuba. The Nicaraguans have replied: No, Nicaragua will become a new Nicaragua! (Applause) And this is something quite different.

They do not see themselves in us, as if they were looking in a mirror. Rather, it is we who today see ourselves mirrored in them, because nothing reminds us more of our own struggles, our sacrifices and our own image in those early days of the Revolution.

'No Two Revolutions The Same'

There are no two revolutions the same. There can't be. There are many similarities—as I said—as to spirit, hero-



Thousands of Cubans joyfully greeted the Sandinista delegation at the July 26 meeting in Holguín.

Granma

ism, combat. But our problems are not exactly the same as their problems; the conditions under which our Revolution took place are not exactly the same as the conditions under which their Revolution is taking place, including the fact that in our case this front I mentioned did not exist and that the imperialists launched their campaigns and their aggressions immediately.

The imperialists knew less then, and now even the imperialists have managed to learn something. Not much, but something.

The conditions under which their struggle was fought, its characteristics, were different. For instance, the unity of the entire people, which was an essential condition for victory, the participation of all social strata, the organization of various popular movements, which joined ranks, reaching certain compromises, creating certain circumstances that differed from ours. In other words, in Nicaragua and Cuba things are not going to be exactly the same, quite the contrary.

Some of the characteristics we have noted in our Nicaraguan revolutionary comrades are worthy of mention. Firstly, the people's militant spirit, their heroism,

their bravery. They have distinguished themselves as great fighters, but they have also distinguished themselves as great political tacticians and strategists. They have displayed great wisdom, great ability to unite, great ability to act in difficult, complex circumstances.

Military and Political Strategy

They fought heroically, but they have also been able to be flexible and when they needed to negotiate in a certain way to avoid the risks of intervention, they were not afraid to negotiate. And they showed great ability, great talent both in military and political strategy. Needless to say, had it been otherwise their victory would have been inexplicable.

Even during the final stage, when the Somoza regime was in its death throes, they discussed how the end would be, the graveside protocol, as it were, Somoza's funeral. Several countries took part in these talks, the Government of National Reconstruction took part, the Sandinista leadership took part and even the United States took part.

And as *Granma* briefly explained, Somoza's demise was supposed to occur at four in the morning; then somebody called

Urcuyo—at first I found it hard to remember the name, even now I do not remember it very well, and I daresay in a couple of weeks I will have forgotten it again (Laughter and applause)—then somebody called Urcuyo was supposed to take over at eight in the morning and finally hand over to the Board of National Reconstruction at one in the afternoon. In the interim period I believe that someone was to be appointed head of the National Guard, something like that.

The Sandinistas made some concessions. And it was wise of them to make these concessions, those they thought they should make. At the same time they were firm and did not make concessions they should not have made.

It was assumed, of course, that there would be a new army. The country could not remain in the hands of those genocidal maniacs. Basically, the new army would be made up of the Sandinista fighters and, it is said, also some National Guard members who were not guilty of corruption, repression and crimes.

Now, this may be all right in principle, in theory, but it is hard to imagine there could be even one of them who was not guilty of corruption, repression and crimes.

However the Sandinista attitude was a generous one.

We were too, in our own struggle. We repeatedly appealed to the army. At the end we even held talks with them, and they said to us: "We've lost the war, how do we bring it to an end?"

We gave them our opinion on how to proceed. We told them that the forces in Santiago should surrender and that they should neither discuss things with the U.S. embassy, nor stage a coup d'etat in the capital, nor help Batista escape. And so we came to an agreement. We waited for the 31st (of December, 1958) and we did not attack the Santiago garrison, waiting for the agreement to be honored.

But they did the exact opposite; they staged a coup in Havana, they came to an agreement with the U.S. embassy, and they saw Batista off at the airport. So that was the end of the agreement and we had no choice but to disarm the army, which we did in 48 hours, as you all know perfectly well, so there is no need to repeat it here.

Well, something similar happened in Nicaragua; when this Urcuyo character had been appointed president, he said no, he intended to stay there until 1981. (Laughter) So the Sandinistas gave the order to attack, and in less than 72 hours they disarmed the National Guard, and now there is no National Guard. (Applause) It turned out that the U.S. Government could not even honor its own part in the agreements.

Nonetheless, the Government of National Reconstruction and the Sandinista leadership have done a very correct thing, in our opinion, in maintaining the generous attitude they displayed in these talks. Of course, the U.S. Government was not concerned about the tens of thousands of

people killed by the bombings; but they were very concerned about the lives of Somoza's thugs, his poor little thugs. But the magnanimity and generosity displayed by the Sandinistas has been extraordinary, exemplary, exemplary!

Needless to say all this was just to pave the way for launching a campaign against the Sandinista movement, which has won so much solidarity and sympathy all over the world.

And so the Sandinistas have not only been heroic and efficient in war and flexible in politics; they have also been extraordinarily magnanimous in victory! I am sure that this will earn the broadest sympathy and will strengthen feelings of solidarity throughout the world. It will deprive the reactionaries of arguments, it will deprive them of weapons, it will deprive them of fuel for slander and defamation.

It also shows the enormous influence the Sandinista commanders and the Government of National Reconstruction have over the masses, because the masses have not forgotten—nor will they ever forget—the crimes, torture and bombings. They will not forget. But they have also given proof of their great trust in the leadership by holding back when it was necessary for them to hold back.

Imperialist Intervention

We hope that in Nicaragua's case the imperialists will not repeat their interventionist ventures or try fostering counter-revolution. Of course, we are not going to deceive ourselves. We're not going to imagine that the reactionaries will leave the Nicaraguan Revolution in peace, despite its magnanimity, generous attitude and democratic aims.

They have said that if an election is needed it's fine with them to have an

election. In any election held in Nicaragua, no matter how many resources are supplied to the reactionary bands, the Sandinistas will win with an enormous majority. (Applause)

In any kind of election, under any kind of Constitution that allows a citizen the right to vote and the citizen does vote, the Sandinistas would win. (Applause)

This is why—and this is what I'm explaining to our people—it's the circumstances in which the Nicaraguan victory was won that determine that the ways they adopt be different from ours. Furthermore, the fact that right now Nicaragua is in ruins, completely destroyed, calls for a national reconstruction program with the participation of every sector of Nicaraguan society.

'Realists Make Best Revolutions'

The Sandinistas are revolutionaries. We don't deny it, nobody denies it, they don't deny it. But they are not extremists, they are realists. And it is realists who make the best revolutions, (Applause) the best and most profound revolutions.

I predict that they will go far because they are taking their time, because they're not extremists, because they're taking things slowly. They know what to aim for at each stage of a political and revolutionary process and the means that correspond to these aims. I'm sure of that.

They used their heads, too, the Sandinistas, because they closed ranks at just the right moment and the result was victory, fruit of the wisdom with which they acted. And our greatest hope is that this unity becomes ever more solid and closer as an essential requisite for the future. The people, weapons, unity. That's all they need to go as far as they want for as long as they want.

They are now faced with a tremendous job, tremendous, much worse than the one that faced us when we won; because our war, and the development of the columns and the guerrilla fronts, was different. They combined the development of the columns and the guerrilla fronts with insurrection in the cities, an infallible system that neither Somoza nor the National Guard could beat.

Destruction of Cities

The enemy had no qualms at all in shelling and bombing the rebellious cities with every available weapon, mercilessly destroying entire cities and facilities of all kinds and leaving behind an enormous wake of destruction, the country's finances bankrupt with not a single reserve left.

Engineer Alfonso Robello was telling me that there were some three million left in the treasury, with an immediate debt of 250 million and an overall foreign debt of 1,200 million dollars. There wasn't a single cent left. Such that one of the first things they had to do was nationalize the banks, among other things, as a measure to



Sandinista Commander Bayardo Arce presents Castro with an Israeli Galil automatic rifle captured from Somoza's troops.

Granma

protect depositors from ruin, because the banks were bankrupt and nobody could guarantee the savings held in them.

So that's one of the first measures they've had to take. There's much hunger in Nicaragua. I believe that Nicaragua needs help from everybody. In the past few weeks, a large number of leaders have expressed their readiness to help Nicaragua.

I think that's very good.

Governments of different hues, of different ideologies, of different political systems have expressed their readiness to assist the people of Nicaragua on a large scale. And Nicaragua certainly needs this help.

Even the United States has stated that it's ready to send food and organize other kinds of help. We're glad to hear it. They said they were going to start an airlift and send 300 tons of food a day. We think that's a very good idea.

Martí said that heaven wanted tyrants to be wise only once. Needless to say, Somoza wasn't wise even once; the Government of the United States, however, has been wise at least on this one occasion, because it's much better in every sense, more productive, and makes for better relations among the peoples and for a climate of peace all over the world, to send food instead of sending bombs and Marines, like they did in Vietnam and so many other places.

'A Gigantic Vietnam'

Naturally—since I mentioned Vietnam—if the United States had intervened in Nicaragua it would have been an act of suicide for United States' policy in this hemisphere, because we haven't the slightest doubt that the Sandinistas would have continued fighting in spite of U.S. intervention. There's no question about that.

We're extremely happy that it didn't happen—who knows how many lives have been spared for that very reason—but we are also convinced that had there been an intervention it would have met with tremendous resistance on the part of Sandino's people. And not only that, but also that a gigantic Vietnam might have developed throughout Central America and in the rest of Latin America, a gigantic Vietnam. (Applause)

Intervention would have been an act of sheer stupidity, but also an act that would have meant a great deal of bloodshed for our peoples.

So an intervention in Nicaragua wouldn't have gone unpunished, of course—we must be quite clear about that—but we are glad that the firm struggle waged by the people of Nicaragua, international solidarity, the support given by the Latin American peoples and the realism and flexibility of the Sandinistas prevented the perpetration of one of the most mistaken acts imaginable, and which was a real possibility.

We are glad to know the United States is sending food to Nicaragua. We are glad to know that everybody is sending food and giving aid of all kinds to the people of Nicaragua.

We are not rich; we cannot compete with the United States in numbers of planes and tons of food. But we will send something, because even though we are poor we can always spare some of what we have. (Applause)

And something very important: we may not have great financial or material resources, but we do have human resources. (Applause)

Engineer Robelo said here that they need doctors, that they need campaigns to wipe out illiteracy. And we know our doctors and teachers. (Applause) They'll go wherever they're needed. If they have to go to the mountains, they go to the moun-

How would we be able to do it? By asking our hospitals and our doctors for their collaboration. We have done it on other occasions, for example, in the matter of time off following guard duty. We've said wait for the future, a splendid future because some 4,000 students are already entering medical school every year and we are building medical schools in practically every province. We would need the collaboration of the hospitals, People's Power, the public health sector and especially the doctors themselves, to cover the work of those who go.

We've already sent the first medical brigade of 60 people, 40 of them doctors. It was done quickly, in a matter of hours. (Applause)

We sent a large medical brigade when Nicaragua was hit by an earthquake, even though Somoza was still there. And I



Richard Ariza/Perspectiva Mundial

A home-made mural adorns a house in Santa Clara, Cuba, showing the solidarity Cubans feel with Nicaragua.

tains; if to the countryside, the countryside. In Cuba and in Ethiopia, in Vietnam, in Yemen, in Angola, anywhere.

Nicaragua is much nearer, right nearby. There's practically the same distance between Cape San Antonio and Managua as between Cape San Antonio and Maisi Point. So it's really close.

'All the Doctors They Need'

Therefore, I believe that we are expressing the feelings of our Party and of our people when we say to our Nicaraguan brothers and sisters that, if they plan to put into effect a broad health and medical care program and there aren't enough Nicaraguan doctors, we are ready to send all the doctors they need to support this health program. (Applause)

Of course, we do have more than 1,000 doctors working abroad, but we still have some to spare. We have our commitments and we can meet them.

remember that the colonel they mentioned today, who wasn't yet a colonel at the time, that son of Somoza's who they say was the head of the EBI (Basic Infantry Training School), was waiting at the airport to steal the shipments that came in. (Laughter)

So they stole the medicines we sent. They couldn't steal our doctors, however, (Laughter) and our doctors did a good job, offered their services to the people and the people were very friendly toward them. If we did it when Somoza was there, we can certainly do it now.

We have doctors now and we'll have more in the future. But we're not going to wait for those. The ones we send will come from those we have now.

If our doctors collaborate—and of course I'm sure they will—if our hospitals, the heads of hospitals, the health sectors, everybody collaborates, we can find all the doctors we need to tell the people of Nica-

ragua that we will send them all they need if they haven't enough themselves.

This means that if they need 100, we'll send them 100. If they need 200, we'll send them 200. And if they need as many as 500, we'll send them 500. No trouble at all. (Applause)

The need for a large-scale education campaign has also been mentioned here. And it looks as if there are some teachers here who are quite enthusiastic at the idea. A great educational campaign. (Applause)

Health and Education Campaign

Only a revolutionary government can carry out a great health and education campaign. Who knows how many lives they will save, especially how many children's lives they will save, with campaigns against polio, tetanus and tuberculosis.

Many lives will be being saved in just a few years. In fact, many lives will be being saved in but a few weeks. I know how much people appreciate a health campaign; I know how much people appreciate an educational campaign.

Even in the midst of destruction and ruins, a revolutionary government can wage a great campaign in these fields, and since our country has plenty of experience in these things we can offer some advice in both the health and the education campaigns. And, I repeat, if they don't have enough teachers in Nicaragua to put this education campaign into effect, we are ready to send them as many as they need. (Applause)

It's not for nothing that we have more than 30,000 students in our primary education teacher training schools, and tens of thousands—50,000 I think—training as teachers in the pedagogical institutions. We're doing all right. (Applause)

We also know that our teachers go wherever they are sent—to the most remote places, to the farthest mountains, to the most forgotten little town. (Applause)

They're not interested in being in the capital. We know our teachers and our doctors and we know how much they can do. This is why our country can make quite a valuable contribution in these two fields.

Needless to say, we are also ready to collaborate, within the scope of our modest resources, in any other field.

It is not a case of our going to engage in politics in Nicaragua—and there will certainly be some who will say that we are.

Who's going to engage in politics, who's going to influence the Sandinistas? On the contrary, our teachers and our doctors will be influenced by the Sandinista spirit, and we are very pleased and happy about this. (Applause) The revolutionary spirit of the Sandinistas will have a great effect on them. Everyone knows our technicians' dedication to their work.

Campaign to Aid Nicaragua

I repeat that we're glad that the United States and other countries are to help

Nicaragua. What's more, we're ready to enter an emulation campaign with the United States, an emulation campaign (Applause) to see who can do the most for Nicaragua. We invite the United States, we invite all the countries of Latin America, we invite all the countries of Europe, the countries of the Third World, our sister socialist nations, everybody, to take part in an emulation campaign to help Nicaragua. (Applause) This is our position, in order to make a really human, really constructive effort based on a spirit of emulation.

Of course, when I mentioned who could do the most you all stood up. What do you think? What do you think? (Shouts of "Yes!") And that we're willing and ready to do it? (Shouts of "Yes!") Then, we ask you to raise your hands, on behalf of all our people, as an expression of this feeling of solidarity with the people of Nicaragua. (All hands go up. Applause) Our feelings, our response couldn't be otherwise. (Applause and shouts of "For whatever and however it may be necessary, commander in chief, we await your orders!")

The Sandinistas have set a further example of how much a revolutionary spirit can accomplish. Weak men never achieve any goals; timid souls never get anywhere. But a revolutionary spirit can achieve even the most incredible goals.

We thank the Sandinistas not only for their beautiful gesture, their unforgettable gesture, for the great honor they have conferred on us with their presence and their affectionate and fraternal words. We also thank them for stimulating us in our own efforts, in our own struggle, because

they help us to improve, to overcome our own shortcomings.

They stimulate us in our task of perfecting our work, perfecting our Revolution, in the uncompromising struggle against weaknesses, against errors, against things badly done; this struggle is not a temporary campaign, a matter of one day, one week, one month, or one year but rather a struggle that we must go on waging for many years.

Now they are faced by the problem that all those who begin a process on the ruins of their country must face, while here, with 20 years of revolution behind us, the conditions are different, the circumstances are different.

What better way to celebrate this July 26, to pay tribute to our martyrs, what better way to honor our visitors than for everyone of us to promise and commit ourselves to make more effort, to struggle harder, to work harder, to become better!

Long live the revolutionary victory in Nicaragua! (Applause and shouts of "Long Live!")

Long live Sandino! (Applause and shouts of "Long Live!")

Long live the FSLN! (Applause and shouts of "Long Live!")

Long live the Government of National Reconstruction of Nicaragua! (Applause and shouts of "Long Live!")

Long live the friendship and solidarity between the peoples of Nicaragua and Cuba! (Applause and shouts of "Long Live!")

Patria o Muerte!
Venceremos!
(Ovation)

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