

# Intercontinental Press

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## **Worldwide Outcry Against Threat of Execution**



Four of the imprisoned Socialist Workers Party (HKS) members in Iran. From left to right: Morteza Gorgzadeh, Hadi Adib, and Hormoz Fallahi, facing death penalty; and Fatima Fallahi, sentenced to life imprisonment.

# **SAVE THE LIVES OF IRANIAN SOCIALISTS!**

**Nicaragua:  
Sandinista Army  
Prepares to  
Defend Revolution**

**Full Text of  
Castro's Speech  
at Havana  
Conference**

## U.S. Threats Fail to Stem Cuban Gains at Conference

By Fred Feldman

The anti-Cuba propaganda blitz around the alleged presence of 2,000 to 3,000 Soviet combat troops in Cuba continued to escalate during the proceedings of the sixth summit conference of nonaligned countries in Havana.

On September 5 Secretary of State Cyrus Vance declared, "We regard this as a very serious matter, affecting our relations with the Soviet Union. The presence of this unit runs counter to long-held American policy."

The "long-held American policy" Vance refers to aims at pressuring Moscow to reduce its commitment to defend the Cuban revolution against U.S. military attacks. This was a prime purpose of the October 1962 "missile crisis" as well as of subsequent conflicts such as last year's U.S. protests against the presence of MIG-23 jets in Cuba.

This imperialist policy regards the Caribbean as Washington's private property. Countries such as Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Panama are required to tolerate U.S. military installations and combat troops on their soil, but they are barred from seeking military assistance elsewhere without U.S. approval.

This "long-held policy" not only tramples on the sovereignty of Cuba but of every other government in the area.

Evidently the governments attending the Havana conference—for whose benefit the "crisis" was staged—were not impressed by U.S. claims to exclusive rights to the Caribbean.

According to a Prensa Latina report from Havana the conference was taking a look at "the presence of close to 3,000 U.S. troops on Cuban soil" at the Guantanamo naval base—a piece of territory the U.S. imperialists have held since 1899. (In 1901 the Cuban government was forced to grant a ninety-nine year lease to the U.S. government as the price of ending direct U.S. military rule and occupation of the island.)

In addition to military personnel, about 1,800 "civil servants"—as the U.S. government delicately calls them—are stationed at Guantanamo.

President Carter added to the anti-Cuba campaign September 7 with a denunciation of the "stationing of Soviet combat troops here in the Western Hemisphere in a country which acts as a Soviet proxy in military adventures in other areas of the world like Africa."

But Carter felt obliged to pour a little cold water on senators who have pressed for quick military moves against Cuba or

diplomatic sanctions against Moscow (such as postponing approval of the SALT II agreement). His comments exposed the latest attacks on Cuba as a fraud:

"We have some evidence to indicate that such a unit has been in Cuba for some time, perhaps for quite a few years. . . . It is not an assault force. It does not have airlift or seagoing capabilities and does not have weapons capable of attacking the United States."

The latest U.S. blasts against Cuba, as shown by Carter's statement, seek to undermine Castro's leading role in the conference of nonaligned nations by slandering Cuba as a "Soviet puppet."

However the U.S. disruption has not succeeded. An editorial in the September 7 *New York Times* explained why the propaganda drive wasn't working:

"The answer is that the Cuban cause is seen very differently in much of the third world. Fidel Castro is regarded as his own man in Havana, a revolutionary who has successfully defied the Yankee colossus—to be sure, with Soviet help, but on Cuban terms."

Fidel Castro's address to the Havana conference summed up the characteristics of Cuba's government that inspire alarm in Washington and confidence in working people in Asia, Africa, and Latin America:

"What is the reason for the reactionary opposition to Cuba?"

"Cuba isn't exactly a country that is inconsistent toward the imperialists. . . ."

"We Cuban revolutionaries are not and

never will be opportunists. We are prepared to sacrifice our own national economic interests whenever necessary to defend a just principle or an honorable political position."

Castro noted Cuba's contributions to anti-imperialist struggles:

"In our international relations, we express solidarity with deeds, not fine words. Cuban technicians are now working in twenty-three countries that belong to our movement. In the vast majority of these countries, because of their economic limitations, this cooperation is provided without charge, in spite of our own difficulties. Right now, Cuba has twice as many doctors serving abroad as does the UN World Health Organization.

"Noble, self-sacrificing Cubans have died thousands of miles from home while supporting liberation movements, defending other people's just causes and fighting against the expansion of the North American racists and other forms of imperialist attacks on human dignity and the integrity and the independence of other nations. They express the purity, selflessness, solidarity and internationalist consciousness that the revolution has forged among our people." (For the full text of Castro's speech, see p. 882.)

The Cubans' humanitarian and other technical assistance to semicolonial countries is becoming particularly alarming to U.S. imperialism. This was the subject of a front-page report by John E. Cooney in the September 5 *Wall Street Journal*.

### U.S. Troops Out of Guantanamo!

"There *are* foreign troops on Cuban soil against the will of the government and people of that country. They are the 2,800 *United States* troops stationed at the Guantanamo Naval Base. They should be withdrawn immediately."

This was the response of Andrew Pulley, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president of the United States, to the Carter administration's escalating threats against the sovereignty of the Cuban government.

In a statement released to the press September 7 Pulley and his running mate, SWP vice-presidential candidate Matilde Zimmermann, scored Washington's hypocrisy, warning that the White House wants to use the allegation of

Soviet troops in Cuba as a pretext for renewed intervention in Latin America.

"Why is there suddenly a great hue and cry about Soviet troops that even the Pentagon says may have been in Cuba a decade or more?" Pulley asked. "It is because of what recently happened in Nicaragua, where a popular movement overthrew a dictator backed by the United States."

Fidel Castro has also angered Washington, Pulley said, "by the role he is playing at the Sixth Summit of Non-Aligned Nations in Havana. Castro insists on fixing the blame for any threats to world peace right where it 'elongs, on United States imperialism."

Of special concern to the U.S. rulers is the contrast between the generous aid given unconditionally by Cuba and the stingy assistance U.S. imperialism provides with stringent political conditions attached. They fear this will make the Cuban revolution even more attractive as a model to the peoples of these countries.

"The projects are varied," Cooney wrote. "In Jamaica, for example, some 500 Cubans are participating in dam, road, school and housing projects, aiding military programs and working as doctors and teachers in rural areas."

The *Journal* report expressed the greatest alarm about Grenada, an island of 110,000 people located 100 miles from the coast of Venezuela. A popularly supported uprising in Grenada threw out the repressive U.S.-supported regime of Sir Eric Gairy in March and installed Maurice Bishop as prime minister.

According to Cooney, "The fledgling government was fearful, almost to the point of paranoia, that Mr. Gairy would return with mercenaries and retake the island." That such fears might not be entirely paranoid is demonstrated by the persistent hostility Washington has shown to Bishop's independent course.

"The Cubans swiftly followed up by offering to train a Grenadian army," continued Cooney. "As a result, the barefoot, teen-aged 'revolutionaries,' who on the day of the coup were running around in T-shirts and shorts and carrying makeshift weapons, now jauntily sport cast-off Cuban army uniforms and brandish modern weapons at military camps and checkpoints."

According to Cooney, "Cuban economists are studying Grenada to draw up aid proposals, and a group of fishing experts is preparing to train Grenadian youths."

Cooney quoted a Grenadian official as saying: "We can be friends with many countries, but the Cubans are showing us they are our friends."

"Cuba also has dispatched medical and construction teams to aid victims of disasters, including earthquakes in Peru, Honduras and Guatemala. Their presence apparently is appreciated," reported the *Journal* correspondent.

One complaint about the Cubans favored by U.S. officials was passed on to Cooney by W. Marvin Will, described by Cooney as a Caribbean specialist at the University of Tulsa, (Oklahoma): "There is always a message with such work, and it is the 'glories of socialism.'" □

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## In This Issue

Closing News Date: September 8, 1979

	IRAN	860	Save the Lives of the Socialists! —by Cindy Jaquith
		861	Protests From Labor Mount Around the World —by Janice Lynn
		862	HKS Denounces Phony Charge of "Sabotage"
		862	Appeal Printed in "New York Times"
		863	Open Letter From Women HKS Members
		863	U.S. Oil Workers: Free Political Prisoners!
		864	Government Presses Offensive in Kurdistan —by Gerry Foley
	NICARAGUA	865	Sandinista Army Prepares to Defend Revolution —by Mirta Vidal and Fred Halstead
		867	Hugo Blanco in Nicaragua
		868	Interview With Five Young Sandinista Fighters—by Fred Halstead
		871	Cuban Medical Brigades at Work in Nicaragua
		885	Castro Urges International Aid
	EL SALVADOR	870	Pressure Mounts Against Dictatorship —by Aníbal Vargas
	COLOMBIA	872	Trotskyists Discuss Simón Bolívar Brigade
	ISRAEL	878	The Political and Economic Crisis —Interview With Trotskyist Leader
	CUBA	883	1,400 Delegates Attend Sixth Nonaligned Conference
	USA	888	Four Puerto Rican Nationalist Prisoners Released—by José G. Pérez
	NEWS ANALYSIS	858	U.S. Threats Fail to Stem Cuban Gains at Conference—by Fred Feldman
	DOCUMENTS	882	Full Text of Fidel Castro's Speech at Nonaligned Conference
	DRAWINGS	881	Menachem Begin—by Copain

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## Save the Lives of the Iranian Socialists!

By Cindy Jaquith

[The following article appeared in the September 14 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

\* \* \*

An avalanche of telegrams, phone calls, and delegations around the world and inside Iran has blocked moves by the Iranian government to execute twelve members of the Socialist Workers Party of Iran (Hezb-e Kargar-e Sosialist—HKS). But the danger is not over. This powerful international solidarity must now be stepped up, to permanently stay the executioner's hand and win the release of these anti-shah revolutionaries.

The thousands of protest messages from labor organizations and others around the world have broken through the press blackout on the case inside Iran, forcing the government to issue public statements on the case.

The Tehran daily *Baamdad* has been printing daily the text of telegrams sent to the government demanding a halt to the executions. Messages from Europe have been featured, as well as protests from trade unionists in the United States.

The protests have placed the Khomeini-Bazargan government under tremendous pressure. They have also alerted the Iranian population—cut off from most news by severe censorship—of the attempt to execute the socialists and the worldwide response in their defense.

The twelve HKS members were condemned to death in a secret tribunal in Ahwaz on August 26. Those facing death are: Hadi Adib, Hormoz Fallahi, Firooz Farzinpour, Morteza Gorgzadeh, Mustafa Gorgzadeh, Ali Hashemi, Mahmoud Kafaie, Kambiz Lajevardi, Kia Mahdevi, Mohammed Poorkahvaz, Mustafa Seifabadi, and Hamid Shahrabi.

News of the death sentences was kept secret by the government. The only information reported in the Iranian press was the trial of two other HKS members, Mahsa Hashemi and Fatima Fallahi. The two women received life imprisonment. According to *Baamdad*, the charges against them were based solely on their political ideas, especially their "praise" for the rights of Kurds and Arabs.

But when word leaked out that the other twelve socialists were to be shot, the response was immediate. Within Iran, some government officials made protests against the impending executions, highly



Internationalen

Demonstration and hunger strike in front of Iranian embassy in Stockholm.

aware of the popularity of the case. This blocked the immediate execution order.

A mammoth outpouring of international protests—from France, Italy, Spain, Great Britain, Greece, Germany, the United States, Australia and other countries—followed.

This forced high officials in the central government to issue several different, contradictory statements on the case.

- First, the Foreign Ministry made a statement printed in *Baamdad*. It said the central government had neither leveled charges against the socialists nor sentenced them to death.

- On September 2, the Foreign Ministry broadcast a statement on national Iranian television. It said that inquiries on the HKS prisoners' fate were being received at Iranian embassies around the world. The ministry declared the socialists' trials were not yet concluded, and that another statement would be made later.

- Meanwhile, the government-controlled radio charged that "outside" groups were spreading the "rumor" that the trials had taken place in an attempt to stir up "counterrevolutionary activity."

- On September 4, *Baamdad* published a statement on the case by Vice-premier Sadeq Tabatabai, answering protests received by the Iranian government from the Swedish foreign ministry and the editor and former editor of the powerful metal-

workers newspaper in West Germany, *Mettall*.

Tabatabai asserted that contrary to these protests that the HKS prisoners were being persecuted for their socialist views, there were in fact criminal charges against them. He claimed the HKS members were being charged with explosions at oil pipelines in Abadan, with "armed actions against the Islamic revolution," and with killing people.

These new charges reflect the desperate attempt of the Iranian authorities to justify their imprisonment of the socialists in the face of intensifying pressures to release them. The charges are shot through with holes, even by the government's own facts.

The explosions at oil pipelines going into the Abadan refinery, as reported by the Iranian government itself, took place the first two weeks of July. All the HKS members were imprisoned at the time in a different city—Ahwaz!

In addition, the published charges

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against the two women HKS members made no mention of sabotage.

Moreover, the government arrested and executed several Arabs it claimed were responsible for the bombings. In all, seventeen Arabs in Khuzestan Province were shot in July on charges of terrorism.

Some government officials at the time even questioned whether the oil explosions were acts of sabotage or the result of poor maintenance work.

The charges are not just a frame-up from the standpoint of facts. The HKS is well known in Iran as politically opposing individual terrorist acts. The party's position was clearly explained in a statement printed May 5 in the now-banned daily *Ayendegan*, in response to the assassination of Ayatollah Motahari, an associate of Ayatollah Khomeini.

"Terrorist actions give the counterrevolutionary forces an opportunity to mobilize their forces against the toilers and the workers organizations by helping to create an atmosphere of confusion and intimidation," the HKS statement said in part.

"Basing itself on the tradition of revolutionary Marxism, the Socialist Workers Party condemns all forms of individual terror as an obstacle to a conscious struggle by the workers and all the oppressed for socialism. Reaffirming this position, we deplore the assassination of Ayatollah Motahari and express our sorrow."

In response to Vice-premier Tabatabai's statement, the HKS has issued a statement reasserting the innocence of the fourteen prisoners, demanding that all charges against the fourteen be made public, and that they be given an open trial with the right to lawyers and the presence of international press.

The outcome of the case has yet to be decided. The role of international defense efforts are crucial. While some Iranian officials have opposed the execution of the socialists, and others are claiming there never was a death penalty order, the Imam's Committee authorities in Ahwaz are still pressing for execution. The danger was underscored August 31, when Khomeini publicly called for the execution of Kurdish rebel leaders.

To save the lives of the Iranian Fourteen, thousands more telegrams from trade unionists and other supporters of democratic rights are needed from all over the world. Delegations to Iranian embassies and consulates, news conferences, and petitions are also vital to keeping up the pressure.

Already, the international defense campaign has had a big impact in Iran, advancing the struggle of all anti-shah political prisoners and the fight for democratic rights. A victory in the HKS case will be a giant impetus to these battles and to the Iranian revolution as a whole. □

## Embassies Picketed in Stockholm, Brussels, and London

### Protests From Labor Mount Around World

By Janice Lynn

Union resolutions, demonstrations, hunger strikes, and international protest telegrams from labor leaders marked the continuing campaign to save the lives of the fourteen imprisoned members of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS).

In Italy, numerous factory councils sent messages of protest against the death sentences facing the HKS members. These include the factory councils from Alfa Romeo; Honeywell; Facestandard; Imperial Carlo Erba; Dalmine; and Mondadori, all in Milan.

Also, Fiat; Rivalta, Sirmite Savigliano; and Nebiolo in Turin and Italcantieri and Ansaldo in Trieste.

In Sweden, 350 people demonstrated September 1 at the Iranian embassy in Stockholm for the release of the HKS members. This followed a five-day hunger strike in Stockholm and a three-day hunger strike in Uppsala conducted by the Communist Workers League (KAF), Swedish section of the Fourth International; the Committee for Defense of the Rights of Women in Iran; and the Committee for Defense of Trade Union and Democratic Freedom in Iran.

The hunger strikers passed out leaflets with information on the imprisoned socialists, collected nearly 3,000 signatures on a petition urging their release, and collected several thousand Swedish kronas to aid in the defense efforts.

Also from Sweden, protest telegrams were sent by the Union of Harbor Workers in Göteborg; the Metalworkers Union at the Volvo factory in Göteborg; and the trade-union locals of the two largest hospitals in Uppsala and Göteborg.

In Belgium a picket line at the Iranian embassy in Brussels was called by the Revolutionary Workers League (LRT), Belgian section of the Fourth International, and the Trotskyist Group of Belgium.

Also participating in the picket were

representatives from Amnesty International; the Belgian League for Human Rights; and Kurdish organizations.

Committees to save the lives of the Iranian HKS members have been launched in a number of countries. In Denmark a meeting of 200 people August 31 formed a solidarity committee.

In London, 130 people attended the first meeting of an Ad Hoc Committee to Defend Democratic Rights in Iran. A series of meetings have also been organized in Scotland and Wales.

Two picket lines in front of the Iranian embassy in London on August 25 and September 1 were called by the Association of Kurdish Students Abroad. They each drew 300 participants. The picketers chanted, "Troops out of Kurdistan, Socialists out of jail."

Protest telegrams have been sent from the Liverpool Trades Council; the Liverpool Dock Shop Stewards Committee; and the Liverpool branch of the National Union of Seamen.

In Germany, telegrams were sent by the West Berlin teachers union; Heinrich Alberts, the former mayor of West Berlin who resigned in 1967 after the killing of Benno Ohnesorg, an antishah demonstrator; and by several well known radical professors.

From Australia, Bill Richardson, secretary of the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations and Bob Hawke, president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions and past president of the Australian Labor party, sent a joint telegram protesting the imprisonment of the HKS, Arab workers, and other worker militants in Iran. The major industrial unions in Australia that are affiliated to these councils have a membership of more than two million workers.

Telegrams from Canadian labor leaders demanding that the lives of the HKS members be spared were sent from: Jean-

### How You Can Help

Telegrams protesting the death sentences given the 12 HKS prisoners in Ahwaz and demanding the immediate release of all 14 socialists should be sent to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Qum, Iran; Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, Tehran, Iran; and Hassan Nazih, Director, National Iranian Oil Company, Takht Jamshid Avenue, Tehran, Iran.

Copies should be sent to the Tehran

daily *Baamdad*, Hafez Avenue, 24, Zartoshtian Alley, Tehran, Iran; to *Ettela'at*, Khayam Avenue, Tehran, Iran; *Kayhan*, Ferdowsi Avenue, Tehran, Iran; and to *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.

Petitions on behalf of the imprisoned socialists can be circulated in workplaces and sent to the above addresses.

Claude Parrot, president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers; Mike Davison, New Democratic Party (NDP) member of the Ontario Provincial Parliament from Hamilton Centre; William Thompson, secretary of the Hamilton and District Labour Council of the Canadian Labour Congress; Cec Taylor, president of Local 1005, United Steelworkers of America (USWA); William Lake, president, USWA Local 2868; and others.

Also, numerous NDP members and professors at McMaster University in Hamilton telegraphed their opposition.

In the United States, the emergency campaign was highlighted by resolutions passed at the Miami convention of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers convention (see p. 863), and by the 2,300-member United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 879 in St. Paul, Minnesota.

In New York City, three delegations have visited the Iranian consulate. On August 31, a delegation of autoworkers presented petitions signed by 395 UAW members from New York and New Jersey.

A September 7 delegation presented petitions containing the names of 78 railroad workers representing six different unions urging a permanent stay of execution and immediate release from prison for the Iranian revolutionaries.

Among the scores of U.S. labor leaders who have sent telegrams are: James Herman, international president of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union; Leon B. Schachter, international vice-president of the United Food and Commercial Workers; David Livingston, president of District 65, UAW; Alice Peurala, president of Local 65, USWA in Chicago; John Washlack, president of the United Mine Workers of America, (UMWA) Local 1190 in Ellsworth, Pennsylvania; and Ed Mayne, president of Utah state AFL-CIO.

Also, Michael Harrington, chairperson Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee; author Noam Chomsky; Nobel Prize laureates George Wald and Salvador Luria; José Angel Gutiérrez of the Raza Unida Party; Lee Lockwood, author of *Castro's Cuba*; Michael and Robert Meeropol, sons of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg; and journalist I.F. Stone. □

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## Iranian Socialists Denounce Phony Charge of 'Sabotage'

[The following article describes the Iranian Socialist Workers Party's response to charges of "sabotage" made by Vice-premier Sadeq Tabatabai. It appeared in the September 6 issue of *Ettela'at*, one of Tehran's main bourgeois dailies. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

\* \* \*

In a letter to Ayatollah Ghodosi, chief revolutionary prosecutor of Iran, the HKS has rejected the charges raised against its members imprisoned in Ahwaz. The HKS denies that its members had anything to do with gas pipeline explosions or armed attacks on anyone or armed action against the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The HKS reiterated that its main task has always been to patiently explain its program, which is set forth in its Bill of Rights for Workers and Toilers, a list of proposals for the new constitution.

The HKS is not an armed organization and never has been, nor are its members armed. Moreover, they are completely opposed to violence. The HKS opposes terrorism, sabotage, and conspiratorial activity.

In its letter to Ayatollah Ghodosi, the HKS points out that its members in Ahwaz did nothing more than sell the party's weekly newspaper, *Kargar*, and explain their political views, which had to do with suggestions for the Constitution. Moreover, the Imam's Committee officials were always informed of their activities.

The letter noted that the fourteen HKS members were tried behind closed doors. It concluded with an appeal to Ayatollah Ghodosi to protect the lives of the imprisoned socialists and to make arrangements for their being transferred to Tehran. It stressed that an investigation would show the innocence of the Ahwaz HKS members.

## Appeal Printed in 'New York Times'

[The following letter, appealing for protests in behalf of the twelve Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS) members sentenced to death, appeared in the September 7 *New York Times*. It was signed by George Novack, a leader of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party; Michael Harrington, chairperson of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee; poet Muriel Rukeyser; and writer I.F. Stone.]

\* \* \*

To the Editor:

According to the articles in *The Times* during the last week, a large number of Kurds were executed in Iran. The victims could not have lawyers to defend them or time to prepare their defense. Also in secret trials conducted without the slightest pretense of legality, 12 imprisoned members of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (H.K.S.) were sentenced to death in Ahwaz on Aug. 26. Two women members of the H.K.S. were sentenced to life imprisonment on Aug. 25.

The H.K.S. members are long-time fighters against the Shah's tyranny. They worked actively while in exile to win the release of political prisoners from the Shah's jails. Several helped to build the

Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (CAIFI) while in exile in the United States.

None of the 14 socialists have been accused of any crime. They were convicted solely on the basis of their political opinions. Among the 10 charges leveled against the H.K.S. members are: criticism of the central government for being undemocratic, having praised the "antirevolutionary Kurdish people" and membership in the executive committee of the H.K.S. in Khuzestan province.

Execution of the 12 socialists, scheduled to be carried out in the early hours of Aug. 27, was stayed at the last minute following emergency protests from around the world that secured the intervention of authorities in Teheran. These included an emergency appeal by Amnesty International.

Nonetheless, the lives of the 12 condemned H.K.S. members remain in the gravest danger. They cannot speak on their own behalf, so defenders of democratic and legal rights must speak for them. We must put an end to the secrecy, by making our voices heard in Qum, in Teheran and to Iranian representatives elsewhere. □



## Open Letter From Imprisoned Women Members of HKS

[The following is an open letter by Mahsa Hashemi and Fatima Fallahi, the two women members of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS) who were sentenced to life imprisonment in late August by authorities in Ahwaz, Iran. The letter is from Dezful Prison in northern Khuzestan Province. It is dated August 30.]

\* \* \*

Life sentences will not silence us.

After ninety days of illegal detention by Mr. Satarian, the prosecutor of the Islamic Revolutionary Court, we, two women members of the HKS, were tried in absentia by the successors of Mr. Satarian.

This court—whose very existence we question—did not even allow us to read the prosecutor's brief or allow us to defend ourselves. The elementary right to have a lawyer and consult with him was denied us. This court—the identity of whose members is unknown to us—ruled behind closed doors and decided our fate in our absence.

After all the struggles and the martyrs who died fighting against the criminal courts of the Pahlavi regime, this unjust ruling will forever remain in the history of the struggle between the rulers and the oppressed people of Iran.

The consistent, repressive and inhuman conduct of the prosecutor's office did not end with our "trial."

### Tortured by Guards

After the "trial," armed guards transferred us blindfolded to an unknown spot, which we later found out was the Dezful Prison. In response to our questions as to where they were taking us, we heard nothing but silence or "I don't know." In response to our protests that such unjust methods had been rejected by the great rebellion of the people, we heard the answer that "We will do much more than this."

Armed guards took us out of the car in the middle of the night and left us in the desert. Then they said, "Don't resist." We were blindfolded and told, "You only need two bullets. When you hear the guns go off you will die on the spot."

In this way they began our psychological torture.

In Dezful Prison they threw us into solitary confinement, into cells roughly four paces by three paces. Then they began to physically torture us, beating us up. We were told, "You were brought here to be killed by us."

We protested that we have no security here and that we want to see the prison officials. Their response was, "This prison

### U.S. Oil Workers: Free Iran Political Prisoners!

[The following resolution, introduced by outgoing Vice-president Anthony Mazzocchi, was approved by the delegates at the August 13-17 national convention of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union. OCAW represents 180,000 workers in the United States and Canada.]

\* \* \*

*Whereas:* As trade unionists in the United States and Canada we fully understand the fundamental importance to working people of the democratic rights of free speech and the right to organize, and

*Whereas:* a wave of political repression in Iran by the Khomeini government has led to the arrest and imprisonment of oil refinery and other workers in Khuzestan province in southern Iran, and

*Whereas:* leaders of the Iranian oil

workers union—which was key in the fight against the dictator shah—were earlier this year arrested along with militant workers in the oil and steel industries, and

*Whereas:* because of a worldwide protest, in which our international union played a part, against this repression, three of the leaders of the Iranian oilworkers union were released just a few days ago,

*Be it therefore resolved that:* we, the delegates to the fifteenth constitutional convention of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union, call upon the present Iranian government to release all the imprisoned workers in Khuzestan province and to create a climate in which free speech and the right to organize belongs to all.

I urge that this convention unanimously adopt this resolution.

has no officials." They even refused to give us a doctor to take care of our wounds.

### Answer to Charges

Interestingly enough, we were only informed of our sentences and the charges against us two days later—through the media.

The Ahwaz Islamic Revolutionary Court has announced that the charges against us are as follows:

1. "Anti-Islamic activities."

Socialists do not fight against religion. We don't think the fight in Iran is between the Marxists and the Muslims. We believe that the struggle is continuing between the great masses of the people and the capitalists and landowners.

As was written in the HKS "Bill of Rights for Workers and Toilers," the socialists are for freedom of religion. We believe that our toiling brothers and sisters—be they Muslims, Christians, Jews, etc.—have common interests. The ongoing struggles of the Iranian masses for a better life—and the conspiracies and provocations of the capitalists and landowners—is the best proof of this point.

The assault of world imperialism against the Iranian revolution is another example of this fact.

2. "Charging the government with repression and suppression of democracy."

What can stand out more than the fact that only six months after the victorious insurrection against the monarchy, impe-

rialism, SAVAK, and Pahlavi terror, attacks on freedom of the press, on various organizations, and the revival of political prisoners have been initiated by the government? What has happened to us so far is an indication of repression, not of freedom.

3. "Membership in the executive committee of the Ahwaz branch of the HKS."

We ask, by which law is membership in the executive committee of a legal party such as the HKS a crime?

4. "Encouraging armed struggle against the central government."

### 'Socialists Struggle Peacefully'

Socialists struggle peacefully through educational activities around a revolutionary program of action. The patient explanation of our proposal for the new constitution and our peaceful propaganda activities testify to this fact. Nowhere in Ahwaz or elsewhere in Iran have we acted otherwise.

The meaning of our conviction by the prosecutor is clear. After a year and a half of struggle, the millions of Iranian people in the victorious insurrection of February 9-10 opened the shah's jails and overthrew the tyrannical regime of Pahlavi. In this struggle women, who constitute half the population of Iran, played a major role.

This victory brought about the possibility of establishing a society of freedom, abundance, social justice and peace. Workers and toilers showed through their



heroic actions that they can run this society. We have been sentenced because we have not abandoned this realistic and realizable perspective.

We have also been convicted because we are women. The first attack by the central government after the insurrection was directed against women. Women are supposed to be driven back into their homes. They are only supposed to be means of production and to remain slaves as far as their mental abilities are concerned.

But women—through their great demonstrations—have shown thus far that they are not willing to be driven out of social and political life. The central government has implemented antiwoman policies in the family, society, employment, etc. Our conviction is another effort to sow the seeds of fear in the hearts of our sisters, the women of Iran who are fighting for freedom.

If the prosecutor and the government have arrested, jailed, and sentenced us to life imprisonment to prevent us from tell-

ing the truth or to drive us out of political and social life by means of terror, they should know that they will not succeed.

You cannot forever imprison the call of the heroic women and people of Iran for freedom. Neither unfounded charges, nor falsifications, nor slanders will be able to hide our true faces for long.

The record of our struggle against the Pahlavi regime exists and we're proud of it. We will not stop struggling for a society which replaces prisons with child-care centers. Freedom of opinion, of association, and of political parties is one of the basic gains of our revolution. A lot of blood has been shed for this.

We demand to be tried in public court—not behind closed doors. We demand the right to be present at our trial, in front of the eyes of the people, not behind their backs.

We ask all organizations, all people fighting for freedom, all defenders of the Iranian revolution throughout the world to help us win our freedom. □

who turned in their weapons. But according to the official Iranian news agency, a spokesman of the Imam's Committee Guards in the area admitted that in five days only six guns had been handed over, while most Kurdish males are armed, even young boys.

In the war that is now widening in the remote mountains of western Iran, the Kurdish people more and more need international support.

The government occupation of the towns will have the effect of politically isolating the Kurdish fighters, since these were centers of communication with the outside world, as well as of open political activity. The government has moved to tighten this isolation by expelling foreign correspondents.

At the same time, tens of thousands of Kurdish town dwellers are now refugees in an area where the villagers can barely feed themselves. These refugees will also be the first prey of any government "search and destroy" operations.

In the towns themselves, the government has set up a brutal occupation regime. Drumhead courts are being held by Ayatollah Khalkhali, the Iranian government's hanging judge. Executions of "Kurdish rebels" have been proceeding at a rapid pace. And the launching of a war against the Kurdish peasantry will inevitably mean atrocities by the government forces.

However, the Iranian regime is extremely vulnerable to pressure with regard to its repression in the Kurdish areas.

Sources in Iran report that the government's chauvinist campaign against the Kurds is falling flat, and that it is no longer having any success in recruiting men to go there to fight.

Reports are circulating that in the city of Rasht, one of the largest centers in northern Iran, whole units of the army have refused to go to fight in the Kurdish areas, and that there are celebrations in the barracks every time that another unit refuses to go.

Even the surviving press, which is under strong government pressure, has begun to raise questions about the executions. The government reportedly has stopped focusing publicity on these, and has even released some prisoners.

Ayatollah Shariatmadari, the representative of an important section of the ruling circles as well as the figure looked to for leadership by the Azerbaijani people, has called for a cease-fire.

Doctors in Tehran have demonstrated to protest the execution of a non-Kurd physician in Saqqez.

Although the crackdown has limited the flow of information and the expression of opposition to the war in the Persian centers, it is clear that war is increasingly unpopular. International publicity and support for the Kurds can aid the development of this antiwar sentiment throughout Iran and help stop the government's campaign against the Kurdish people. □

## Despite Growing Opposition

### Iran Government Presses Offensive in Kurdistan

By Gerry Foley

The forces of the Khomeini-Bazargan government completed their occupation of the towns in the Kurdish areas September 6. The last major town entered by the army was Sar Dasht on the border with Iraq.

On September 3, central government forces occupied Mahabad, a town of about 100,000 inhabitants and the main political center of the Kurdish area.

In every case, the Kurdish forces left the towns before the arrival of government troops. A large part of the population also abandoned their homes in the face of the army assault.

All the towns involved in the fighting are relatively small commercial centers. There are no factories or major facilities in them to defend. The fighting that did take place in these localities centered around the military bases.

There was apparently no attempt to defend the urban centers as such, although the Kurdish guerrillas harassed the government forces as they moved in.

The towns are generally located in valleys, and are defenseless against the air, artillery, and armored forces of the army built by the shah and the U.S. imperialists.

The Kurdish guerrillas reportedly made their withdrawal in good order and with their morale intact.

According to UPI, the Kurdish fighters left Mahabad chanting: "We shall be your

guests every night."

In the September 5 *Washington Post*, correspondent Nicholas Cumming-Bruce reported from Tehran.

"As the army massed its forces for the attack on Mahabad earlier this week, guerrilla sources said that they would give up the towns and take to mountain hideouts where they have been accumulating military and other stores in preparation for a guerrilla campaign."

The decisive factor in the fighting for the towns, the wire service reports indicated, was the government's air power. The guerrillas had some successes in blocking the movement of government forces over the roads and through the mountain passes.

The real battle for the Kurdish areas seems to be just beginning. It is the fight for control of the villages in which the overwhelming majority of the people live, and in which the basic economic activity of the area, agriculture, is centered.

The villages are also the focuses of the agrarian revolution, which the Khomeini-Bazargan government's offensive was designed to roll back. In order to accomplish this objective, the government forces must disarm the peasants and force them to give up the land they have taken.

The peasants seem determined to fight. For example, in the Saqqez area, the government offered an amnesty to all those

## Sandinista Army Prepares to Defend the Revolution

By Mirta Vidal and Fred Halstead

[The following article appeared in the September 14 issue of the *Militant*.]

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MANAGUA—We watched a parade here September 1 by part of the new Sandinista army that is rapidly being built up to guard against possible attack by counter-revolutionary forces.

The Sandinista military display took place in the large square now called the Plaza of the Revolution on the northern edge of downtown Managua, near the shore of Lake Xolotlan. A description of the physical setting is useful for explaining some of the factors involved in the Sandinista revolution.

In natural features the setting is quite beautiful, but the strongest impression is one of destruction.

Downtown Managua lies between the Plaza de la Revolución and a high, sloping hill—actually an extinct volcano—about a mile and a half to the south. Near the top of this hill, commanding a view of downtown and the lakeshore, sits the “bunker,” the fortified former National Guard headquarters, inside which Somoza’s residence was located.

The most striking physical feature of this capital city is that except for the “bunker,” and the plush Intercontinental Hotel near the top of the hill, the public buildings immediately around the Plaza de la Revolución and a single tall building—the Bank of America—about half way in between, the downtown section virtually doesn’t exist anymore.

It was destroyed by the terrible earthquake of 1972, and due to the policies of the Somoza dictatorship, never rebuilt.

The rubble has mostly been cleared, leaving an area of about two square miles—once the commercial and light-industrial heart of the capital—virtually empty and overgrown by weeds. Here and there a damaged building remains standing, but most of these are unsafe, gutted and abandoned.

The effect is of a vast, unkempt graveyard.

### 'Fault in Somoza's Head'

It is impossible to understand the depth of emotion involved in the Sandinista slogan “For national reconstruction” without seeing downtown Managua.

This morning, a few hours before the military parade, we strolled through the area taking photos. A passerby, a middle-aged man, commented: “Somoza said it couldn’t be rebuilt because of the earth-

quake fault. The only fault was in Somoza’s head.”

He proceeded to tell us the story of how Somoza and his associates appropriated the relief funds and materials sent to Managua from around the world after the earthquake and used them for their own private profit. Roads and other public services to accommodate new commercial areas were promised, but new facilities were built only where Somoza and his cohorts had cornered the real estate.

By such devices the Somocistas took advantage of a great national tragedy to consolidate under their personal ownership much of the wealth of the country, including that of other sectors of the business owners. This greatly deepened the divisions within the national capitalist class.

The “bunker” was the only major construction by the Somoza government in the central area of Managua after the earthquake. That fact itself was a sign of the growing political isolation of the dictatorship after the natural disaster—and of Somoza’s approach to the population.

The National Guard—which was built by the U.S. Marines during the occupation of Nicaragua in the 1920s and 1930s—acted as both the national army and the police force in every area of the country.

### Safe Streets

Now the two functions have been separated. In fact, there was no police force in Managua for the first month after the Sandinista victory, though a Sandinista police force is now being trained. There has been a certain confusion in traffic during this period, but very little common crime. Managua is safer to stroll around in at present than most major American cities, day or night.

As we walked along we came across a group of Sandinista soldiers guarding an intersection near one of the damaged buildings that was still in use. They appeared to be in their late teens, wearing an assortment of olive-green uniforms, bits of red and black—the Sandinista colors—on ribbons tied to their arms or on their caps. They noticed us looking at their weapons.

“This is a Belgian FAL,” said one, “and that is a Garand. We call this one a Falzada, and that one a garantizada. That’s Sandinista language.”

They laughed and waved us on, bubbling with good humor.

The building still in use was a printshop, formerly the press of *Diario Novedades*, Somoza’s daily. Now it prints *Barricada*,

the FSLN’s official paper, published every afternoon, seven days a week.

The day before we had visited this plant and talked to some of the workers as well as the director, Jorge Detrinidad Martínez. He gave us his business card. It contained a quotation from Marx: “Revolutions are the locomotives of history.”

Three-fourths of the workers were teen-aged youth, just hired since *Barricada* took over. They gathered around us, anxious to tell of their experiences with the FSLN. All said they were veterans of the guerrilla warfare in the mountains or of the insurrections in the cities.

Detrinidad explained that for the moment, with the shortage of printing facilities, *Barricada* serves not only as a daily newspaper and organ of the FSLN, but also as the main educational material for the cadres of the revolution: “To raise the level of consciousness,” he said.

The circulation of *Barricada* is about 45,000 and rising. It is distributed throughout the country (Nicaragua, with about 2.3 million inhabitants, is roughly equal in area and population to Mississippi) and sells for a dime.

### Shortage of Food

As we walked up the hill, approaching the “bunker,” now occupied by the Sandinista army, we could see dozens of FSLN soldiers resting or strolling in the street just outside the outer wall. Here were small refreshment stands selling food and drink—fruit like bananas and mangos, the large Nicaraguan tortillas, rice, beans, vegetables, and occasionally bits of meat roasted or stewed over charcoal and served in banana leaves. These little portable stands seem to appear throughout Managua wherever groups of people gather for any purpose—except in the wealthier neighborhoods. Even there, now, they appear outside of buildings occupied since the victory by the militia or the Sandinista defense committees or newly established clinics.

Many of the people active in such organizations cannot afford to eat at restaurants—there is a shortage of food in the country, but in Managua, at least, there appears to be little hunger, although there is a high rate of malnutrition in the poorer neighborhoods.

Shortly before he left, Somoza arranged to have many cattle slaughtered and sold in export. He had the National Guard air force bomb factories as they pulled out of areas. Along the northern highway to the airport one can see factory after factory



guted by bombs and rockets.

Somoza's sabotage of food production and industry is a major reason for the present high rate of unemployment, estimated at perhaps 40 percent.

In addition, during the hard fighting that took place around the country from June to July 19, certain crops were not planted. The peasants were forced to eat the seed and livestock because of the disruption in food supplies and markets. This is a deadly serious matter for the Sandinistas.

#### Need for Aid

The present government estimates the country will need 300-400 tons of foodstuffs a day between now and December in aid from abroad. So far they are not getting it.

The Sandinista soldiers resting outside the "bunker," and those guarding it and coming and going constantly at the main gate, were all well-armed with semi-automatic rifles, submachine guns, and occasionally pistols. Quite a few were women—not all of these were teenagers either.

Across the street at the Intercontinental Hotel—which is built like a pyramid and withstood the earthquake—reside many of the foreign newsmen (it's too expensive for us) as well as certain government offices.

Meetings are constantly taking place there. Young soldiers carrying their weapons occasionally stop in for coffee or lounge around the lobby having political discussions with people who have come from around the world to report on the revolution or to work with it in some way or another.

The *Militant*, incidentally, is a brisk seller at the newsstand in the lobby, as is *Perspectiva Mundial*.

A little down the hill from the hotel and just across the street from the "bunker" is a building housing a modern printshop and good high-speed presses. It was going full blast churning out training and educational materials for the new army, we were told. This reflected the fact that strengthening the FSLN army is a number-one priority for the revolutionary leadership at this time.

#### Invasion Threat

The threat of an invasion, including some sort of backing or direct participation by the U.S. government, is real.

It is known, for example, that heavily armed units of the Somoza National Guard escaped across the border to Honduras and El Salvador, countries ruled by reactionary military dictatorships that were friendly to Somoza. The weaker the revolutionists are militarily, the greater the chances of attack by the counterrevolution.

The organization of the working class and peasant masses is proceeding in additional ways as well: unionization, Sandinista defense committees in every neigh-

borhood, women's organizations, peasants' cooperatives, and so on.

But for the past several weeks the top priority has been to develop an efficient army so the revolution can defend itself.

To the older slogan: "The people united will never be defeated," the FSLN has added, "*El pueblo armado jamas será aplastado*" (the people armed will never be crushed). The priority in skilled cadre, political education, and material resources has gone to this task.

The FSLN forces defeated Somoza's National Guard more by sheer heroism and the fact that at key moments the virtually unarmed masses joined the fighting than by professional military power. But the process was costly in the extreme. So this afternoon the FSLN was going to show some of its new army and the results of the past few weeks of feverish preparation and training.

We left the area of the "bunker" and the Intercontinental Hotel and walked back down the hill to the Plaza de la Revolución. On the north side of the plaza overlooking Lake Xolotlan is the sumptuous Rubén Darío Theater, built by Somoza for the benefit of Nicaragua's elite.

Since the revolution it has been renamed the Rubén Darío People's Theater. The theater is now used to hold political meetings and popular cultural events such as the recent festival of Nicaraguan folklore.

#### National Guard Pogroms

A few yards away from the luxurious building, on the edge of the lake, lies a gruesome sight—the remains of bodies shot and burned by the National Guard under Somoza's orders.

As one enters the area a stone block covered with bullet holes comes into view. Here the Guard, which assumed any

young person was a Sandinista, executed neighborhood youths for the crime of being young. The Guard then covered the bodies with tires and set them on fire. They could not be identified by relatives or friends.

At least eighty skeletons are in full view. But the number of innocent victims of these National Guard pogroms is much higher.

The past six weeks have been emotion-filled as the Nicaraguan people commemorate the death of revolutionary fighters. In every city, in every barrio, day after day, local streets are named after the heroes and martyrs who gave their lives to the revolutionary cause.

The mourning of the dead has an almost ritualistic character that can only be understood if one considers that an estimated 45,000 were killed by the National Guard out of a population of 2.3 million. Proportionally, it would be as if 4.5 million Americans were killed.

A few days ago we were invited to lunch by a working-class family in a shantytown on the edges of Masaya. They, too, were making preparations for a ceremony to commemorate two fallen fighters from that neighborhood.

A young member of the family began the meal by saying grace. "Lord," he said, "we thank you for this meal which we never had under Somoza, and for this victory you helped us win against our oppressors. And we ask you now to help us rebuild our free Nicaragua."

Underlying these acts is a profound sense of identity with the liberation struggle. A universal understanding that these martyrs and heroes did not die in vain, and a conviction that more lives will be sacrificed if necessary to defend this revolution.

This was the theme of a week-long



Barricada

Sandinista fighters undergoing military training at a newly established school in Matagalpa.



schedule of activities in Managua and other major cities that culminated September 1 with the Pancasan commemoration at the Plaza de la Revolución, of which the military parade was a highlight.

Pancasan, in the northern mountains of Matagalpa, was a historic point for the FSLN. It was there in 1967 that the guerrillas launched a new offensive against the dictatorship.

On this occasion the National Guard, with its military superiority, surrounded a small guerrilla unit and offered to let them go in exchange for a promise that their antigovernment actions would cease. They rejected this proposal, choosing to die rather than surrender.

All but one of the guerrilla fighters were killed.

The rally began in a festive spirit, with a folk group performing several protest songs with a distinctly Nicaraguan flavor. A cheerful crowd, displaying handpainted signs and banners from different neighborhoods, many with the names of local fallen fighters, waited expectantly.

One sign read "Popular militias from the rural zone of Managua—present." Another, "No more freedom for the National Guard. The people demand they be condemned."

A large banner facing the National Palace steps that served as a speakers platform contained a phrase by Carlos Fonseca Amador, one of the central leaders of the FSLN, killed in the guerrilla fighting, which has become a rallying slogan. It said, "Carlos Fonseca: dawn has ceased to be a temptation."

This theme, expressed in different slogans, really means that it is better to die fighting than to see the morning and not be free.

As the rally got under way the Minister of Agriculture, Comandante Jaime Wheelock, read a decree designating the nine central leaders of the FSLN as commanders of the revolution. An additional list of twenty-two were designated guerrilla commanders of the new Sandinista Peoples Army.

The official governmental junta was not seated on the speakers platform for this event.

#### **'Example for Latin America'**

To loud applause and the shouting of slogans, Comandante Tomás Borge, Minister of the Interior, then arose to address the crowd.

Borge began by explaining, "Pancasan is a beautiful anecdote of heroism and sacrifice. But above all Pancasan is an example for the youth of today and for our brothers in Latin America. It was a military deed with a political response."

In that period, Borge explained, the Liberal and Conservative parties put forth an electoral strategy, but the Sandinistas rejected this course and went back to fight in the mountains. "While the political

## Hugo Blanco in Nicaragua

Hugo Blanco, the Peruvian Trotskyist and peasant leader, is in Nicaragua to witness the revolution in progress.

"I've come to Nicaragua to learn," said Blanco when

he arrived August 29 on a ten-day fact-finding mission. Blanco, who was an elected delegate to the Peruvian Constituent Assembly until its termination in July, has been speaking to peasants and workers during his travels to sev-



eral Nicaraguan cities including Matagalpa, Masaya, and Granada, as well as the capital city of Managua.

In the next few days he plans to visit other cities to study the agrarian reform now in progress and to gather information to help working people and peasants in Peru initiate actions in solidarity with Nicaragua.

Blanco's arrival in Nicaragua was covered on the Sandinista National Television Network. The morning daily *La Prensa* carried a lengthy interview with the Peruvian leader on September 1.

parties pointed to the comfortable but narrow road toward change, the revolutionary movement pointed to the broad but difficult avenue of revolutionary armed struggle."

Referring to the example set by the fallen martyrs, he added, "If we could ask them now how we should act, they would answer: 'We want you to be merely Sandinistas.'"

"And what is a Sandinista?" he asked the crowd. "Is a Sandinista someone who abuses the power the people have given us? Is a Sandinista someone who is flexible with the enemy?"

"No!" the crowd roared in reply.

"A Sandinista is not someone who, because of family or other pressures, gives away the riches we took from the Somocistas," he emphasized. "A Sandinista is someone with a high level of discipline and a personal moral debt. A Sandinista is someone who never thinks of himself but thinks only of the people's interest. And a Sandinista is someone who is just but also someone who is hard with the enemies of our people."

#### **Warning to Somoza**

"They say they are coming back to save our country from communism," Borge went on, alluding to Somoza and his followers. "We don't want them to come back to shed any more blood."

"Execute them!" shouted someone from the crowd.

"But if they do come back, we will turn our old slogan—'implacable in combat and generous in victory'—to 'implacable in combat and implacable in victory.'"

"They had better not come back," he warned. "Because if they come here to impose counterrevolutionary violence on us, we will without hesitation use revolutionary violence against them."

Turning to the threat of a military

intervention from abroad, Borge stated, "We appreciate the friendly diplomatic attitude of other nations. We can be great friends. But if we are attacked we can also be great enemies."

"This is an irreversible revolution," he added. "Only idiots are unable to see this truth. And let no one be fooled. The unity of the FSLN is totally monolithic. No one should have delusions about frictions within it, as the gang of corrupt Somocistas have claimed."

Then Borge turned to the subject of the trials to be held soon for the National Guardsmen now in prison. The revolutionary tribunals, he explained, will come from the bosom of the Nicaraguan people.

"We have to combine justice with hardness," he said. "Those who have no respect for justice are not revolutionaries. And those who have no respect for the application of justice are not revolutionaries. But those who abuse the application of justice are also counterrevolutionaries."

"Our hearts are made of stone before the enemies of our people. We can never be soft with them, because we only have soft hearts for our heroes and our martyrs."

#### **Building Professional Army**

The parade led off with several units of infantry, about 100 soldiers each. Significantly, the ranks of each unit had identical weapons, something the FSLN never achieved in the past. While these varied from unit to unit, all were military weapons, automatic or semi-automatic. The uniforms were just that—uniforms. And the troops marched smartly.

There followed other units, including an entire platoon of women, which got a special hand, started by the women among the spectators. Here and there were women soldiers in the other units as well. Also marching were units of the neighborhood militia, indicating the intention of the

FSLN to arm and train the broad masses as a popular backup to the professional army.

The parade also included tanks, anti-aircraft batteries, rocket launchers, artillery, and heavy mortars.

The most impressive feature in the entire display was the determination in the faces of the troops. They were dead serious, and they showed it.

The Sandinista army had come into existence. Clearly this is not the ragtag

mass of ill-armed irregulars and the thin line of experienced FSLN guerrillas that took over Managua on July 19—though it included the same people. This is now a professional army, growing larger and more efficient day by day. □

## Interview With Five Young Sandinista Fighters

### 'No One Will Ever Take Our Freedom Away'

By Fred Halstead

MANAGUA—During the Nicaraguan insurrections in September 1978 and June 1979 news photos were widely published around the world of lightly armed teenage youth, often only with .22 caliber sporting guns, fighting the National Guard of dictator Anastasio Somoza.

I recently interviewed a group of five such youths who had fought together as part of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) forces.

These young workers had been involved in clandestine work in Managua under FSLN command before the large-scale revolt broke out a year ago. They operated in the eastern neighborhood of the capital city, where some of the heaviest fighting took place in the final insurrection.

The interview was arranged by a fellow journalist from Pacifica Radio in San Francisco, who had met one of the five quite by chance in a taxi a few days before. He had already recorded one interview with some of them on their experiences up to the victory of the Sandinistas on July 19. In this interview I decided to find out what they were doing now—six weeks after the victory—and what they thought about the present situation.

\* \* \*

*Question. What are you doing now?*

*Alfredo Selva Tavilla (age fourteen). I am unemployed right now. But I'm looking for work and have the help of the Sandinista army, which is for the common people. During Somoza's time you needed a letter of recommendation to get a job, and if you didn't have years of experience, or if they thought you were a Sandinista, you couldn't get work. Now any person can go to a unit of the Sandinista army and ask for help.*

*Q. How long have you been active in the FSLN?*

*Rigoberto Ortega. I began in 1977 with the help of a compañero whose underground name was Freddie. I used to go to meetings but I wasn't a full member, just a sympathizer of the FSLN, distributing*

leaflets and making contact bombs.

Freddie would tell me when and where I had to throw them. But I didn't do very much because I was not politically conscious enough or committed to the struggle. When the insurrection came it was different.

I am unemployed right now, but looking.

*Victor. I work in an ice cream factory now. I'm seventeen. I was organized in 1976. Once I was arrested by the National Guard. Some of us had gone out of the neighborhood to the marketplace for supplies of food. They caught us, arrested us under suspicion, and held me for fifteen days. They would beat me on the chest and on the stomach to the rhythm of 100 strokes. We had a slogan, a chant, "The people united will never be defeated."*

*They would hit us and shout, "The National Guard united will never be defeated."*

*Now the FSLN has added to our slogan, "The people armed will never be crushed."*

*Carlos Zamora (age nineteen). Right after the victory I was fulltime in the militia. But I have many family responsibilities and the militia is not being paid now. I asked to resign so I could work. I explained the problem to my commander and asked him for a document that could help me get work. Now I have a job at the Victoria Brewery, in the bottling section.*

*I became active when I realized how the people were being repressed; how the workers were being exploited; how the peasants' land was being taken away. I began to understand things with the help of compañeros who were much more politically developed. Then I got active.*

*I began to carry out operations. They taught me how to make contact bombs that explode when they hit something. We would ambush individual National Guardsmen or a single jeep. But I finally got my first gun—a .22—when we took it from the house of a *Somocista*.*

*There were members of the National Guard who had some sympathy with us, a higher level of consciousness than the rest. They knew us from the neighborhood, and*

*when they learned we were organized, they would slip ammunition to us. They defected in the insurrection.*

*Q. When did this happen?*

*Carlos. During both insurrections; some defected in September, some in June.*

*Antonio Selva Taucera. I'm twenty years old. I have been active in the FSLN for five years. I have a job, but the factory is now in ruins, and they haven't reopened it yet. So for the time being, I drive a taxi. Now that victory is in our hands I'm no longer in the army. I've turned to politics to find ways to open the eyes of our people to make them more conscious and to organize them.*

*This is a job we can't do with guns. It's a job we have to do in the factories, barracks, cities, and mountains, so that the workers and peasants will kick out the bourgeoisie and take power one day. To take power is what we have been fighting for all along.*

*I'm working on national reconstruction on a political level. As our slogan says "The march toward victory doesn't stop."*

*We have won a great battle in overthrowing Somoza, *Somocismo*, and Yankee imperialism. But we still have a struggle ahead of us. All of us are not yet clear on our ideals, on goals for our children. We have to prevent the Nicaraguan revolution from being aborted, as the revolution of Pancho Villa in Mexico was aborted. Those of us who are more conscious, who have always fought for the workers and peasants, have to open their eyes.*

*I think the revolution is on the right track. I am organized, but I am not a full member of the army, because I have to work to help my mother. To be in the militia doesn't mean just to carry a gun. It also means organizing block by block and opening people's eyes.*

*Many people joined only at the very end. They took up arms at the last minute when they saw that their lives were about to be lost. They said to themselves, "If the *Somocista* guards are going to shoot me like a dog, I'd rather die fighting."*



So we have a responsibility to go to these *compañeros*, to talk to them and make them understand the cause, that they have to defend their people, the workers and peasants. Otherwise what could happen is that the bourgeoisie could train another force like the *Somocista* guards.

Many *compañeros* are walking around with guns, but do not as yet have a clear political perspective. As is the case with most Nicaraguans, they do not have much intellectual training. The majority of us who went to school only finished the sixth grade.

Those of us who know a little bit more have to go to the *compañeros* and teach them the little we were able to learn from reading and finding out facts about the dictatorship, so that the bourgeoisie won't be able to fool them by telling them they are going to give them houses and other things. People who don't have such things can be tempted.

We have to open the eyes of these *compañeros* so they won't abandon the Nicaraguan common people.

**Q. Are you still organized into militia units?**

**Antonio.** We are always in contact with the Sandinista army. If we see any abuses, our duty is to report them immediately, as is the duty of all Nicaraguans.

The militias have headquarters in every *barrio*, and we're ready to take up our arms and to give up our lives at any moment.

**Q. Do you work with the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS)?**

**Alfredo.** Yes, the CDSs are organizing the people block by block, so that the development of the country can happen faster. They clean the neighborhoods, trim the trees, organize the vaccination of children, improve hygiene. That's where the political discussions take place. That's where the political educators go to give talks.

**Antonio.** And there are now political education schools throughout Nicaragua for people who don't know anything about politics. The Somoza regime kept the people ignorant. Many people don't understand what the struggle is about because they are illiterate. That's why these schools are set up—to teach people why we fought. We need to learn about the rest of the world as well, to really be political.

**Q. How often do the CDSs meet for discussion?**

**Alfredo.** Every three days or so.

**Antonio.** What we are teaching right now is Nicaraguan politics, not international politics. But later on we're going to open people's eyes to what is going on in the world.

We have Torrijos, head of the Panamanian army, or that ex-president of Venezuela, or the president of Costa Rica come

here and we all applaud. Actually these gentlemen come here to associate themselves with throwing the Yankees out. But in their own countries there is a great deal of exploitation. What they have there is bourgeois democracy; we don't want that to happen in Nicaragua.

Some people think these gentlemen are angels, but they don't know what's going on inside their countries. We'll explain this later on. We can't do it right now. To talk to our people this way right now would be wrong, provocative, would be even counter-revolutionary because we are not prepared.

**Q. Where are the CDSs organized?**

**Antonio.** The CDSs are being organized in all the poorest neighborhoods and throughout Nicaragua. The purpose is to teach people about the Sandinista cause, to explain the revolution, and to explain how we are going to carry out national reconstruction so that we will all be united in case the bourgeoisie tries to impose on us *Somocismo* without Somoza. If later on they try to exploit us, we'll be adequately organized, we will be united, and we will have the strength and the power to force the bourgeoisie to step down.

**Q. If you had a chance to speak to American young people today, what would you say?**

**Alfredo.** I would tell young people in the U.S. to become aware of what the government of their country is doing. They should analyze what it's doing to its own people. Is it exploiting them? Is it charging too much in taxes? I would tell them to get organized, to follow our example, to go out on street demonstrations and protest the oppression they suffer. This is what I would say to a young *compañero*.

But not only to the youth. Here in Nicaragua, for example, old people got organized and fought. In my squad there were two old men.

**Rigoberto.** The people of the U.S. should realize that here in Nicaragua, the people as a whole are prepared for a counterrevolution and any international intervention. We have fought with blood and sweat and death, and we know what the revolutionary cause is and what our ideals are.

We look after the interests of the common people and defend our people. The sovereignty of a people is not something to discuss, but something to defend with arms in hand. We prefer to die with a gun in our hand than to live as slaves. We say to the people of the U.S. that they should understand what a revolutionary struggle is like.

The Sandinista front is carrying out its promises, unlike Somoza. He was never on the side of the people. He only looked after his own personal interests. He said the revolution was going to bring communism, but everyone can see this is a democratic country.

**Q. What is your idea of democracy?**

**Rigoberto.** For one thing the army is not to oppress the people. If workers go on strike, they can call on the army to help. So we say to the people of the U.S. that every Nicaraguan is a Sandinista fighter who is going to fight for our country and who is not going to allow any international intervention.

We will fight for our liberated nation and no one will ever take our freedom away from us. Free nation or death—we will win.

**Carlos.** We want to tell Yankee imperialism that if they come to Nicaragua, we'll run them out. And if they think the Nicaraguan people are afraid of them, they should know that the one thing we have is courage. Because everyone who picked up a gun did so with courage and with love. So we say to Yankee imperialism that if they come to Nicaragua they are making a big mistake.

**Alfredo.** That goes for any other interventionist army, from any other country.

**Antonio.** What I wanted to tell the American people is that they should be conscious and they should start to think about what their government is doing. It is looking for a way to bring about a counter-revolution in Nicaragua. Your government is an octopus; we have cut off a tentacle of this octopus that was sucking the blood of all Nicaraguan working people. The octopus is looking for a way to suck our blood again. But we are not willing to let it.

I know that even though the U.S. is an advanced country, the people there are also oppressed. To be oppressed doesn't mean one doesn't own a car or an apartment. To be oppressed also means to see your brothers being oppressed in their own nation, like the Blacks in the U.S. To be used by a government which has oppressed Latin America, torn up Vietnam, put Cuba under blockade—that too is oppression. □

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## Pressure Mounts Against Military Dictatorship in El Salvador

By Aníbal Vargas

[The following article is scheduled to appear in the September 24 issue of *Perspectiva Mundial*, a Spanish-language revolutionary socialist magazine published fortnightly in New York. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

\* \* \*

MEXICO CITY—Every day the reports in the newspapers here point up the sharpening class struggle in Central America. The major dailies publish news regularly about the struggles of the workers and peasants in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, and about the rightist terror that is being carried out in an attempt to contain these struggles.

There is always an implied question. Will the other Central American dictatorships suffer the same fate as the Somoza regime, once the example set by the Nicaraguan people makes its impact felt?

It is not surprising that a "minisummit" was held in mid-August in the Guatemalan capital, attended by the head of state of El Salvador, Carlos Humberto Romero; of Guatemala, Romero Lucas García; and of Honduras, Policarpo Paz García.

According to the August 30 issue of the Mexican daily *Uno más Uno*, "The official story was that the meeting discussed how best to aid in the reconstruction of Nicaragua. But it is being said in political circles that what was actually discussed was the formation of a political and military united front that would enable the military regimes to combine their forces against any rise in insurrectionary struggle in the region."

Today all reports seem to indicate that the people of El Salvador have the best chance to repeat in their own way the experience of the Nicaraguan people in carrying out a revolutionary overthrow of a neocolonial regime imposed by the United States.

On August 18, the Catholic hierarchy in El Salvador issued a manifesto drawn up during a special meeting called by the archbishop of San Salvador, Monsignor Oscar Arnulfo Romero. The statement described the conditions of violence existing in the country and denounced the outrages, threats, and persecution directed against priests and opponents of the regime.

The manifesto rejected the claims that the many members of the clergy attacked by rightist terrorist groups were "subversives, any more than were the great many



Washington Post

peasants, unionists, teachers, and students who have been murdered."

The church statement declared "many of us are on the brink of political desperation." It pointed out, moreover, that a desperate people "in the present geopolitical conditions in the area may mount a real civil war."

Since early 1979, the mass movement has been on the rise in El Salvador, and with the victory of the Sandinista Front in Nicaragua, this upsurge has gained more momentum.

On July 30, hundreds of supporters of the Revolutionary People's Bloc came out into the streets in several cities in El Salvador. They demonstrated to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the founding of the organization and to protest against the repression.

The military dictatorship headed by General Carlos Humberto Romero has stepped-up its repression in order to prevent the masses of the people from mobilizing. The result of this, the communiqué by the Revolutionary People's Bloc notes, is hundreds of persons dead, disappeared, and arrested.

On August 12, members of the February 28 People's Leagues occupied the cathedral in the city of Santa Ana, the second largest city in the country, as well as three other churches in San Miguel, Usulután,

and San Vicente. The organization demanded the release of one of its leaders, the firing of a National Guard sergeant, and satisfaction for the workers in the conflicts going on in several industries.

On August 14, striking women workers at the Yankee-owned Atex textile company plant on the outskirts of San Salvador occupied the factory and took as a hostage the general manager, William Boorstein, an American. On the same day, more than 300 workers at the Minerva-Molines factory occupied the management offices in the plant and took three Salvadorian company heads as hostages.

The unionists at Minerva-Molines, who are also members of the Revolutionary People's Bloc, demanded new contract negotiations, better wages and benefits, as well as the reinstatement of several fired workers.

On August 24, Boorstein escaped from the Atex factory. But as of September 3, the workers were continuing their occupation. On August 27, the Minerva-Molines workers released their hostages, since they had gotten an agreement with the company that all their demands would be met.

In the context of these demonstrations, occupations of factories and churches, strikes, and sitdowns in the main cities in El Salvador, on August 21 General Romero announced a series of measures to implement an "electoral reform."

As part of this operation, a few days before General Romero's statement, the government offered to let the exiles return and promised that in the coming months free elections for the city governments and the national legislature would be held.

These promises were hailed by the U.S. ambassador in El Salvador as "a positive step toward democracy."

But, as the archbishop of El Salvador noted on August 5, "it's ridiculous to unleash this wave of repression and murders and at the same time talk about freedom of political expression. How would a poor peasant dare to cast a free vote under the shadow of the gun?"

Likewise, on August 30, the Human Rights Commission of El Salvador declared that "while President Romero was announcing a broad opening for democracy, eight civilians were machine-gunned in the northern part of the city [of San Salvador], by supposedly unknown murderers."

Moreover, in a letter sent to twelve Western Hemisphere governments on August 29, two hundred Salvadorian nuns and priests declared that the status of

human rights in El Salvador "is constantly deteriorating."

According to the August 31 issue of *Uno más Uno*, the letter also said "in just the first six months of this year more than 400 persons have been murdered for political reasons, most of whom were peasants. Another 307 persons have been jailed. And in the last month, 24 persons have disappeared."

Estella Calloni was in San Salvador as the correspondent of *Uno más Uno*. In the August 21 issue of this newspaper, she described the situation in the country as follows:

The predominant feature in the situation is terror. "The terror is to prevent our organizing," the peasants say. "This is deliberate and selective terror designed to intimidate activists and to block a uniting of forces," the workers say. The opposition press is being destroyed. For this they use dynamite or fire, they stop at nothing. There are too many tragic and peculiar things happening. Every day, six more deaths are registered.

The president [Romero] is either weak or giving way to pressure. He is offering a democratic opening without any substance. The far right . . . is unwilling to accept elections, perhaps because it sees how high the level of consciousness of the population is. In recent days, the electoral parties have said that they will not take part in this so-called opening up of room for democracy "in the midst of crime and repression."

The mass organizations are being caught up in the movement toward an insurrectionary explosion, which seems inevitable. And they are preparing themselves to lead it.

The armed organizations are divided into three tendencies in accordance with the ways they characterize the situation. But they have the same objective—the destruction of "the dictatorship." They are preparing for a deeper cutting offensive "in order to respond to the terror."

Calloni quoted the lawyer Roberto Lara Velado, a representative of the Human Rights Commission. He said that the Salvadorian people are not violent but that they simply "are threatened by persecution and organized crime; this is an endangered people that is defending itself."

She also quoted an old peasant from the Cuzcatlán area, who told her "the insurrectionary feeling is spreading everywhere and is becoming part of our flesh and blood."

\* \* \*

In a bus terminal in San Salvador, Stella Calloni noticed a dispute among some street sellers, "market women," and a policeman who was trying to take away an eleven-year-old boy. The women jumped on the policeman, beating him with their fists in order to free the boy. They shouted: "You'll see what happens when the people get arms. . . . You are not going to beat us any more. . . . You are not going to kill our sons and husbands."

When it was all over, they told Calloni, "Look at Nicaragua, the people there put an end to this injustice. So, we are going to do the same thing they did in Nicaragua."

## 'Our Doctors Will Remain as Long as They Are Needed'

# Cuban Medical Brigades in Nicaragua

"There are few hospitals in the country and all of them are rundown and lacking in equipment and personnel. Most of them are old, dilapidated buildings unfit for this kind of service. Others, as in the case of Rivas, were destroyed in the war."

These were the findings of Dr. José A. Gutiérrez Muñiz, Cuba's minister of public health, who recently spent a week in Nicaragua to help coordinate Cuba's medical aid program to the devastated country.

In an interview with Prensa Latina correspondent Jorge Timossi, published in the August 26 issue of the weekly English-language edition of *Granma*, Dr. Gutiérrez Muñiz described the abysmal health-care facilities left by the Somoza dictatorship and outlined the assistance already being carried out by volunteer Cuban medical brigades.

The following is the text of the interview:

*Question. Did the Somoza family also monopolize public health?*

*Answer.* The dictatorship hardly paid any attention to public health, nor did it spend money or resources on it; this is to be expected in a country where a single family drew a large income from the nation's resources. The area in which this neglect is most noticeable is the countryside, where conditions are worse since there are no hospitals there and medical care is in the hands of private doctors. Preventive medicine does not exist.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Public Health as such was practically nonexistent. The hospitals depended on a health board run by Somoza's wife, who never missed a chance to rob the people. The Ministry paid attention only to those hospitals in the worst state of neglect which, of course, were the ones with the least resources.

*Q. Mr. Minister, could you give us facts and figures about the public health situation as you experienced it firsthand?*

*A.* To give a real idea of the situation, suffice it to cite a few figures: the infant mortality rate in Nicaragua is estimated at between 120 and 150 per 1000 live births. I said 'estimated' because there are no official figures. The death rate is estimated at around 16 per 1000. The hospital bed ratio is less than two per 1000 persons. Nicaragua ranks among the Latin American countries with the worst public health conditions.

*Q. Given this situation, how is medicine practiced?*

*A.* The practice of medicine is therapeutic only and is mostly in private hands. Doctors devoted most of their time to private practice and hardly spent any time at the hospitals. There is a great number of progressive and revolutionary doctors, but what prevailed in the past was private practice.

*Q. What can you tell us about Cuba's medical assistance to this country?*

*A.* Cuba is willing to provide large-scale aid in terms of doctors, nurses and health technicians. Our professionals and technicians are willing to work anywhere in the country, regardless of the existing conditions. Considering Cuba's experience in rural medicine, we can offer aid in that field, working along with Nicaraguan doctors, so as to enable the Nicaraguan Revolution to reach the people in the rural areas—the people who were always neglected by the previous regime—as quickly as possible.

We can also offer aid in the form of advice in drawing up programs for the eradication of diseases and all kinds of programs aimed at prevention, in addition to the exchange of experiences and the granting of scholarships in Cuba to Nicaraguan doctors and technicians.

There's another important aspect, and that is assistance in making and distributing medicine. No important changes in health can be achieved without medicine, and by increasing production it is possible to make all the drugs needed at a low cost.

*Q. What form has the Cuban medical aid program taken so far?*

*A.* Right now our medical brigades are working in Masaya, Matagalpa, Estelí and Managua. Here in Managua they're working in the section Open 3, in the obstetrics and children's hospital and in the military hospital. Two more brigades arrived yesterday, one for Rivas and the other for Bluefields. So far there are 133 comrades, 96 of whom are doctors, working in Nicaragua. Medicine, dressings, instruments, and food are also shipped along with every brigade.

The number of doctors can be increased so as to meet the needs in the rural areas and in order to send brigades to other cities and towns. Our doctors will remain here as long as they are needed, even in those places where the difficulties are the greatest, and we will continue to send more doctors whenever they are needed, in answer to the Nicaraguan authorities' request. □



## Discussion on the Simón Bolívar Brigade

[We are reprinting for the information of our readers two articles from the Colombian Trotskyist press discussing the activities of the Simón Bolívar Brigade, which was expelled from Nicaragua in mid-August.

[The first article, "Two Lines on Nicaragua Solidarity Work," was written before

the expulsion of the brigade. It appeared in the August 27 issue of *Combate Socialista*, newspaper of the Partido Socialista Revolucionario (PSR—Revolutionary Socialist Party).

[The second article, "What Happened With the Simón Bolívar Brigade?" appeared in the August 24 issue of *El Socia-*

*lista*, weekly newspaper of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST—Socialist Workers Party), the organizer of the brigade.

[Titles, subheadings, and emphasis have been retained from the originals. The translation and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

## Two Lines on Nicaragua Solidarity Work

By Eduardo Medrano, Libardo González, Gustavo Consuegra, and Arnulfo Bayona

Usually in our world movement polemics such as the following one are conducted internally. Unfortunately, however, the PST has launched a frenzied public campaign against the PSR and the Fourth International, making it necessary for the PSR to respond in the pages of *Combate Socialista*.

In future articles we will analyze in greater detail the political orientation of the PST, Moreno's concept of party building, the politics of Moreno's Bolshevik Faction,<sup>1</sup> and the direction of its political evolution.

\* \* \*

In recent issues of *El Socialista*, the weekly paper of the PST, the working-class left (especially the PSR) and the workers movement have been subjected to a series of diatribes by the PST. The gist is that anyone who does not pick up the gun is a "coward" and a "traitor" to the Nicaraguan revolution—unless, of course, they make a donation. . . .

Why? Let's take a look at the PST's justification for its "arms in hand" line in relation to solidarity with Nicaragua. The PST's schema is quite simple. They state in their press that "in practice everything in Nicaragua will be decided by force of arms," or that "the question (the Nicaraguan revolution) will be settled on the field of battle in Nicaragua." All very clear, right? But the logical consequence of such a position is this: "The most effective and concrete solidarity with the war going on in Nicaragua (is) the sending of volunteers and support to the Simón Bolívar Brigade." All else, as far as they are concerned, is just "lip service."

What underlies the rhetorical demagoguery by PST speakers, however, is obviously a bad case of verbal diarrhea, brought on by

their peculiar line about how to mobilize solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolutionists in their struggle to overthrow the Somoza regime.

What was the most effective way to organize forces against Somoza? Sending a few hundred untrained *brigadistas* to observe the struggle from San José [Costa Rica] (which is what happened with the majority of the Simón Bolívar Brigade)? Or mobilizing the working class in political actions against the maneuvers of imperialism and its puppets of the Andean Pact,<sup>2</sup> who sought and still seek to frustrate the Sandinista victory?

### Yankee Imperialism

Why didn't the United States or the OAS<sup>3</sup> send troops to Nicaragua, as Turbay and Vance<sup>4</sup> proposed doing shortly before the Sandinista victory? Was it perhaps the awesome specter of our self-promoted "commandante" Kemal George, dressed in fatigues, *waiting out* the battle in San José, Costa Rica? Was it perhaps the military capabilities of the Simón Bolívar Brigade? Was it even fear on the part of the U.S. or the OAS of the military capabilities of the FSLN? It would be difficult to answer in the affirmative.

It was more their fear of the working class of the United States and Latin America that held back their plan to invade, using Yankee marines under the cover of the OAS. It was Washington's fear of the anti-imperialist sentiment ready to be mobilized throughout Latin America and in the United States. It was the 2,000

people who mobilized in the streets of Lima, despite the military dictatorship in Peru, as well as the protests in other Andean Pact countries. It was the thousands of Dominicans who posted themselves in front of the OAS offices in Santo Domingo, and the thousands of Americans who mobilized in dozens of rallies and demonstrations in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, and Washington. Not to mention Caracas, San José, Bogotá, Barranquilla, and Medellín.

It was that potential, that possibility of mobilizing the working class on all five continents by the hundreds of thousands that stayed the hand of Carter and the Latin American *gorilas*.<sup>5</sup>

In other words it was the political factor, not the military factor, that provided decisive aid to the Sandinistas at the crucial moment.

Who forced the Pentagon to withdraw its troops and helicopters from San José? That "friend of Nicaragua," [Costa Rican President] Rodrigo Carazo? No. Carazo illegally gave permission for the imperialist troops to land July 8 a few kilometers from the Nicaraguan border. He knew that those helicopters were not going to "evacuate" Americans from Nicaragua.

The first thing those marines did was to set up sophisticated electric apparatus to intercept communications of the Sandinista Front. It was the students and workers who immediately poured into the streets of San José to protest that invasion and forced the Costa Rican Congress to order those troops out.

Thus we can say that the victory in Nicaragua belongs not only to the heroic fighters of the FSLN and the masses of Nicaraguan working people, but to the entire working class of Latin America and of the United States, who sympathized with the revolution, and who mobilized anti-interventionist sentiment and

1. Nahuel Moreno is the leader of the Bolshevik Faction, a public faction in the Fourth International.

2. A "common market" agreement signed in 1969 by the governments of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia.

3. The Organization of American States, consisting of the United States and all the independent countries of Latin America except Cuba, which was expelled in 1962.

4. Colombian President Julio César Turbay Ayala, and U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance.

5. Military dictators.



launched the initial mobilizations to stop a military intervention that could have snatched away the victory of the masses, as happened in Santo Domingo in 1965.

### The Decisive Test in Colombia

In Colombia, the decisive test for revolutionists was not the sectarian mobilization of a few hundred untrained and unsolicited volunteers, but rather the task of mobilizing the left and the masses of workers in united actions against U.S. imperialism and against the proimperialist moves by President Turbay and other leaders of the Andean Pact.

All that appeared in the pages of *El Socialista*, though, were a few routine denunciations of the Turbay government. Aside from a telegram requesting that the government cut off relations with Somoza, what did the PST do to mobilize the working class in the streets to confront the Turbay government on this key political question?

### Nicaraguan Solidarity Work and the Security Statute

All of a sudden the class struggle in Colombia, the Security Statute<sup>6</sup> and the violations of human rights, disappeared from the pages of *El Socialista* (although they were mentioned here and there in the humor columns). Meanwhile *El Socialista* went all out seeking allies in the Liberal Party.<sup>7</sup>

Was it proper to set aside the struggle against the Security Statute? Someone in the PST who was only interested in collecting money and sending volunteers to fight somewhere else would probably say that it was. But if you were trying as the PSR and the National Committee of Solidarity with Nicaragua were, to mobilize people to confront our capitalist government in order to stop its pro-imperialist maneuvers, then you would have to say that the struggle against the Security Statute could not be dropped.

On July 4, when the Committee of Solidarity with Nicaragua organized a protest in the streets demanding that Turbay cut off relations with Somoza, where was the PST? It was busy climbing into bed with Luis Guillermo Sorzano, Luis Villar Borda, and other Liberal Party leaders, begging them to join in forming a "Committee of Friends" of Nicaragua.

It was one of those "Friends of Nicaragua" who later declared the July 4 demonstration illegal under the provisions of the Security Statute and sent the police to brutally attack it. After all, demonstrations like that put President Turbay and

other "friends of Nicaragua" in a tight spot!

This is not to say that Liberal Party figures cannot be permitted to participate in solidarity activities. What should be clear, however, is that the decisive test was not whether you sent a telegram and rehashed some anti-Somoza rhetoric—something even the leader of the Liberal Party, Turbay Ayala, could do.

The decisive test was whether you tried to mobilize the working class here to confront the dangerous proimperialist maneuvers of this capitalist government—and not start toning down or eliminating your criticisms of the government in an attempt to form an alliance with the administrators of the Security Statute.

### The PST's Geographic Internationalism

Before taking a look at the Simón Bolívar Brigade, let's examine briefly the article by "R.R." in *El Socialista* on "internationalism."

Why does "R.R." think it is our duty to go and fight only in Nicaragua? Wasn't it our duty to go and fight in the trenches with the Angolan people against the imperialist South African invasion? Isn't it our duty to go fight in the trenches with the Kampuchean people against the counterrevolutionary guerrillas of imperialism and Pol Pot? Why doesn't the PST propose something along these lines?

"R.R." gives us the answer. We shouldn't go there, according to "R.R.," because it's a question of "faraway countries." For "R.R.," internationalism is practiced according to the geographic position of revolutionists. If we are near the battle, we go "into the trenches," but if the conflict is in a "faraway country" it's enough just to give "platonic support."

What platitudes! For "R.R.," the difference of a few hours by airplane constitutes a tremendous difference when it comes to internationalism. But that wasn't what the members of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade thought in 1936, when they left New York by ship to fight against fascism in Spain. Unless we're very bad at geography, Spain is a bit farther from New York than Managua is from Bogotá, especially if you travel by ship. Isn't it? Perhaps "R.R." has not looked at a map recently, or perhaps the reason is more mundane: simply that an airplane ticket to Angola is more expensive than one to Nicaragua?

What about Vietnam, comrade? The Vietnamese don't think that the antiwar movement in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere was just a "platonic" service. On the contrary, more than once that gigantic movement "dissuaded" the imperialists from using atomic weapons or sending more troops. It was the combination of the tenacious resistance of the Vietnamese plus the movement against the war that finally forced imperialism to withdraw its troops. Think of it, comrade—long-distance internationalism!

Within the context of a correct understanding of the political task of mobilizing the working class and popular masses against imperialism, international brigades can have a certain importance.

If they are sufficiently large and well-trained militarily—as was the case with the international brigades in Spain, in which 53 countries were represented—these detachments can play an important military role. In the case of the Spanish civil war the number of volunteers fluctuated between 25,000 and 50,000. Some detachments were vital in the defense of certain bastions, and many of their members—such as General Kléber, who for many was the hero of the defense of Madrid—had been career officers or veterans of the war of 1914-18.

But in most cases such brigades simply take on symbolic importance, as reflections of working-class solidarity with the struggle, of proletarian internationalism.

Was this the case with the Simón Bolívar Brigade?

Unfortunately, the Simón Bolívar Brigade was organized in such a way that it wound up being a poor caricature of proletarian internationalism. First of all, how was it organized? Did the PST propose the task of organizing it to the National Committee of Solidarity with Nicaragua, which was in direct contact with the FSLN? Did the PST propose anything to the trade-union federations or to the parties of the left?

No. On the contrary, the PST cooked it up behind the backs of everyone, and simply announced the existence of the brigade as a PST thing, under its total control. Such a brigade never could represent and never has represented the anti-Somoza sentiment in Colombia. It was a sectarian initiative, one that they never proposed to broaden into something more than just a PST project.

Did the PST contact the Sandinistas to ask whether they needed a brigade? And if so what were the requirements? What kind of training was needed? What special skills?

No. Nothing. In fact, representatives of the FSLN were visiting the capitals of the world, seeking not brigades but political solidarity. They never issued any call for the formation of international brigades. The initiative taken by the PST was not even at the invitation of the FSLN.

And what were the results? The Sandinistas were surprised. This unsolicited brigade of untrained volunteers suddenly turned up. When the FSLN leadership found out that the brigade was the initiative not of the National Committee of Solidarity with Nicaragua but rather of a party, the suspicions about its motives grew rapidly, becoming an additional obstacle—along with the lack of training—to accepting them into the FSLN.

When Edén Pastora met with the bri-

6. A draconian decree issued by Turbay in September 1978, which imposes severe restrictions on political rights in the name of "combating terrorism."

7. One of the two main bourgeois parties in Colombia.

gade he explained that they had precious little time to train anybody, and that it would be irresponsible to send untrained volunteers onto the field of battle. He asked how many of them had military training. It turned out to be very few. This is why the majority of the brigade, including "comandante" Kemel George, spent the last weeks of the war in Costa Rica. And that is why the televised shots of the brigade came not from Nicaragua but from Costa Rica.

In their race to get the brigade onto the field of battle before the end of the war (and the end of their adventure), the PST leadership recruited quite a heterogeneous group of people. Among these were sincere revolutionists who were ready to give their lives for the Nicaraguan cause. Several of them did fight and die.

But there were also some less responsible elements, such as Miguel Angel Palomino, identified on the back page of the June 29 *El Socialista* as the "first comrade of the Colombian PST to join in the fighting in Nicaragua."

But PST member Palomino was forced to leave Nicaragua in disgrace. Why? Because he was involved in a grotesque incident: the kidnapping of a Sandinista official—Ramen, the representative of the Sandinista Foreign Command in San José and an FSLN political instructor. Ramen was freed only when *Comandante* Pastora threatened to shoot Palomino and his accomplices if they didn't release Ramen.

In a letter written after the incident, Palomino describes himself as a member not of the Colombian PST, but of another organization. After signing that letter, Palomino was forced to go back to Costa Rica.

Was Palomino a member of the PST or not? If he was, what explanation does the PST give for the conduct of its member? Has he been expelled from the PST for committing such a grave act in Nicaragua? If he was not a member of the PST, why was he identified as such in *El Socialista*? Who is Palomino really? Just an adventurer? What about the "tramps" described in a letter from a member of the brigade published in *Alternativa* (July 10-26)?

What a miserable, shameful spectacle Kemel George presented August 3, dressed up as a guerrilla and speaking in the name of the Sandinista fighters in the rally for Nicaragua [in Bogotá], even though his only "combat" experience in Central America consisted of stealing journalistic material from Colombian press workers who, unlike him, at least went into the battle zone as war correspondents before the fall of Somoza.

The recruitment of such persons, and the actions they carried out, were a disservice to those serious revolutionists who willingly and with real courage risked their lives on Nicaraguan battlefields. But such

was the result of the opportunistic haste of the PST leadership.

Why didn't the PST propose the brigade last year, as the Panamanians did, or in September during the gigantic uprisings in the largest cities of Nicaragua, or even at the beginning of the final offensive? Why did it do so only when it was already obvious that the final offensive was going to bring down Somoza?

The brigade as such never entered combat. It could not have done so without adequate training and without being prepared to accept the discipline of the FSLN. It is public knowledge in Nicaragua that its leadership demanded a certain "autonomy," which was seen as absurd and suspicious by the FSLN.

When the brigade associated itself with Plutarco Hernández—at the time a spokesman for the FSLN, and who has since been removed from his post within the Front—they called him "comandante." This led to even greater suspicions about the motives of the brigade's leaders.

This is why a large part of the brigade had to remain quarantined in Costa Rica until the fall of Somoza.

When Kemel George spoke in the name of the Sandinistas in Mexico City, the FSLN was forced to disavow it. Later, similar opportunist actions by Plutarco and the brigade, "going to El Salvador," forced Interior Minister Tomás Borge to announce publicly that the FSLN had nothing to do with the Simón Bolívar Brigade (*La Nación*, July 28).

In spite of this, abusing the good faith of its readers and of the PST's members, the July 27 *El Socialista* tried to give the impression that Edén Pastor had thanked the brigade. The fact is that in his salute to the relatives of Colombians who were killed in Nicaragua he never mentioned the brigade.

#### Why Such Sectarian Opportunism?

Why did leaders of the PST organize the brigade along such sectarian lines? What's behind the opportunism of the PST's Nicaraguan adventure?

In an internal bulletin (No. 86) circulated in PST branches, the authors explain one of the reasons for organizing the brigade. They say, literally:

We have the opportunity to strike a hard blow at all the left sectors with treacherous politics, and also to score a very important leap forward ourselves, one that will allow us to become a real alternative for the workers and main sectors of the masses, as indeed we have been doing. Therefore we must exploit this situation to the fullest in order to clobber the CP, Firmes,<sup>8</sup> the Maoists, and the PSR.

Thus instead of trying to mobilize the

8. An organization that arose out of a drive to collect 500,000 signatures on petitions urging a single candidate of "the left" in the June 1978 presidential elections.

broadest possible forces in defense of the Nicaraguan revolution—as the PSR's methods are aimed at doing—the PST leadership seeks to divide the potential solidarity forces with the sole aim of gaining a factional advantage.

In the July 13 *El Socialista* the PST once again affirms that the brigade is being used as a key instrument for recruitment to the PST. In order to join the brigade one has to go through a series of "political education courses" given by the PST. Members of the brigade also have to sell *El Socialista*. Was this how Palomino "joined" the PST? Was it a condition for being accepted in the brigade to be sent to Costa Rica?

#### The Financing of the Brigade

We will conclude by touching on the most sensitive point of all, the finances of the Simón Bolívar Brigade.

A lot of accusations and rumors are being spread around the country about the collection of funds for the Simón Bolívar Brigade and the PST. Trade unions, Nicaragua solidarity groups, workers, and left groups have begun to have doubts about where the funds gathered by the PST are going. There are all kinds of rumors to the effect that those funds are going not to cover the legitimate expenses of the brigade, but rather into Nahuel Moreno's pocket or into the coffers of the PST.

In a "response" in *El Socialista*, the PST leadership denounced Valverde<sup>9</sup> and declared that his charges are slanderous. They also tried to associate Valverde with the PSR, suggesting that the PSR was behind his accusations. In *Combate Socialista* No. 12 we answered those ridiculous allegations, and dissociated ourselves from Valverde and his charges.<sup>10</sup>

But those charges can be categorically answered, and all the rumors about funds for the brigade being used to fill the PST's bank accounts can be refuted only through a public explanation of the income and expenses of the brigade, by giving an accountable balance sheet of the financial campaign complete with bank statements, etc. Such a public disclosure would put a rapid end to the scandalous rumors that are circulating today.

#### Stalinist Methods

In its political dispute with the PSR over how best to build solidarity with Nicaragua, the PST has cooked up fantastic charges against leaders of the PSR and the Fourth International one after another. They've come up with such epithets as "cowards," "Somocistas," or "traitors."

These are the methods of Stalinism, the method of the big lie, of false trials, the

9. See *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, September 10, 1979, p. 854.

10. See *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, September 10, 1979, p. 855.



method of the Moscow Trials. Emotional charges such as those hurled by PST leaders in recent issues of their paper, and these sorts of epithets, are designed to prevent political discussion and debate by closing the minds of members of the PST and the honest persons in its periphery.

But the logic of such charges and epithets is graver still. When someone is characterized as a traitor to the revolution and a "revolutionary court" is convened to try such traitors (see the letter from Múnera en *El Socialista* No. 163-64), and when someone is characterized as a "gusano" [worm], something happens. No one is going to treat a "traitor" or a "worm" as a comrade. Just the opposite.

The Stalinists used such a slander campaign in the 1930s against the Left Opposition in order to justify their physical attacks, including the assassination of Trotsky. It appears that the PST is today approaching that stage of political degeneration.

On Friday, August 3, a few days after Múnera's letter appeared, at the rally in Bogotá celebrating the victory in Nicaragua, several members of the PST attacked Comrade Jorge Ramos, who was selling *Combate Socialista*; they grabbed him by the hair and shook him.

Later on, when Comrade Ricardo Sánchez got up on the platform at the rally to speak, PST leader José del Carmen Rivera, brandishing a heavy club, shouted at him "Come here, you coward!"

Finally, during Sánchez's speech, PST members were whipped up into a lunatic

frenzy by "comandantes" Kemel George, Luis Carlos Valencia, and Eduardo Barragán. After constantly disrupting Comrade Sánchez's speech with whistling and shouts of "Somocista," and "gusano," a large group of PST members started brandishing clubs (which had nothing to do with the banners that are usually carried in demonstrations) and tried to break through the line of monitors in order to attack the comrade and the rally as a whole.

Such gangster tactics and the use of physical violence to solve political disputes are typical of Stalinism, not Trotskyism. Trotskyists adhere to the Leninist concept of workers democracy. Within the workers movement political disputes should be carried on with political arguments and with the test of practice, of history—not with fists, clubs, or bullets. The police have a sordid record of using such tensions among political groups as an opportunity to carry out or instigate physical attacks and assassinations for their own ends.

The events of August 3 show that the PST has reached a dangerous stage. Now that the fraud of the Simón Bolívar Brigade has blown up in their faces, Nahuel Moreno and the PST leadership are looking frantically for a scapegoat, and this is leading them to step up the use of Stalinist methods.

The ranks of the PST and their sympathizers must therefore now make a choice: either to follow Moreno and his friends into the abyss of their political degeneration, or else to demand that this process be

brought to a halt and that the PST retract its slanders, repudiate its physical attacks, and declare its adherence to workers democracy. In these comrades' hands lies the future of the PST as a revolutionary organization.

International solidarity with the Nicaraguan people must be redoubled right now. The working class and its allies must be informed and mobilized in support of every measure that the Sandinista revolutionists take to advance toward a workers and peasants government. In such a situation imperialism will abandon its present "good behavior," and set in motion its enormous military and diplomatic machinery to prevent such advances from taking place.

At that point, what will the PST do? Will it send a few dozen fighters *on its own*? Will it once again attack solidarity actions by the mass movement? Will it try to clobber the "treacherous left"?

Any such action would be to turn their back on the Nicaraguan people. If the solidarity movement and the ranks of the PST don't prevent this from happening, the cynical calculations and the bad faith of the party's leaders will turn the PST into a new reactionary element in Colombia.

Eduardo Medrano  
Libardo González  
Gustavo Consuegra  
Arnulfo Bayona

August 11, 1979

## What Happened With the Simón Bolívar Brigade?

By Ricardo Ramírez

About forty Colombians and Latin Americans from the Simón Bolívar Brigade in Nicaragua were expelled last week by the Government of National Reconstruction. According to the dispatch published in *El Espectador* (August 18, 1979) and *El Tiempo* (August 19, 1979), the Brigade had a total of 250 members, including the Nicaraguans who had joined it.

According to statements made to the press by various members of the government, the main reasons for this action were the following:

Organizing more than seventy trade unions in Managua. (See *El Espectador*, August 19 and 20, 1979.)

Advocating seizure of all the land. (*El Espectador*, August 19, 1979.)

Organizing militias in the barrios of Managua and in Bluefields. (*El Espectador*, August 19, 1979.)

Describing the leaders of the FSLN at

times as reactionaries. (*El Espectador*, August 19, 1979.)

Describing other members of the new government as bourgeois. (*El Espectador*, August 19, 1979.)

The Simón Bolívar Brigade, it is true, has the honor of having helped organize more than sixty trade unions (about eighty, in fact). This it did not only in Managua but also along the Caribbean coastline—trade unions organized through mass assemblies, factory by factory.

It is true that we say that the farmers and rural workers should carry out the agrarian revolution, taking over all the land of the big estate owners. In other words, we say that the land, the principal means of production in Nicaragua, should pass into the hands of the poor peasants and rural workers.

We cannot claim the honor of having ourselves been the main initiators of the militias, which in ninety percent of the

cases were organized spontaneously in the heat of the insurrection against Somoza and in response to the calls made by the FSLN.

What we do say is that the popular militias should not be disarmed—as is now being rapidly done—but that on the contrary it is necessary to extend them; that is, to proceed to the general arming of the workers, peasants and poor people. As the history of all revolutions shows, this is a necessary condition to prevent the revolutionary processes from being contained or reversed.

The fact is, deplorably, that the majority of the members of the junta are bourgeois. We are not to blame for the fact that they are bourgeois, nor was it the brigade that put them there, where they are skillfully and consistently defending the interests of their class.

Mrs. Chamorro represents not the Managua proletariat but the members of the

landowning oligarchy who opposed Somoza. The Chamorro family—and this is not a discovery of the Simón Bolívar Brigade—has played a role in Nicaraguan history and in the Conservative Party similar to that of the Ospina family in Colombia.

Furthermore, in other parts of the government are bodies such as, for example, the National Council for Private Initiative—which is a sort of combination of ANDI [National Association of Industrialists] and ANIF—and other organizations of that type. These are not workers, peasants, or peoples organizations.

Finally, we flatly reject the charge of “describing the Sandinista leaders at times as reactionaries.” We have always said what we thought and acted accordingly. Both before and after the fall of Somoza, we have publicly advocated that the FSLN leadership should not hand the government over to the bourgeois opposition nor help it govern with its program for capitalist reconstruction.

Rather, we have said, it must assume full power and give *all* the land of *all* the landowners to the peasants and expropriate all the basic industries and wholesale trading operations in order to carry out a reconstruction program in accordance with an economic plan that is in the interests of the workers and poor.

Finally, it must enforce the application of this program by mobilizing and arming those who benefit from it: the workers, the peasants, and the poor population. Precisely because we have been among the first—and we did so long before Somoza's fall—to call for and support the FSLN's armed struggle and its leadership against the Somozaist tyranny, precisely because we are and will be the first to recognize the historic merit of these leaders who led it, we are telling them not to stop where they are or to fall back.

### Two Roads Are Opening Up in Nicaragua

Now, none of what we are saying is new. Here in Central America we have been defending this publicly, not for two weeks but for at least two years, since the revolutionary upsurge in Nicaragua began. Why is it precisely *now* that these positions have become the cause for a scandal?

The explanation is the new stage that the Nicaraguan revolutionary process has entered.

A democratic revolution has occurred in Nicaragua. Overthrowing the Somoza dictatorship was not a socialist objective or task but a democratic one. For that reason it was possible to assemble against Somoza—in a complex process whose causes we will not detail here—the broadest and most heterogeneous social forces, both nationally and internationally.

Domestically, the increasing resistance from the workers, students, and other popular sectors was eventually joined by opposition bourgeois sectors that had been

frustrated in their repeated attempts to negotiate a peaceful change in the dictatorial regime.

Internationally, it was not only revolutionary elements that supported the FSLN. The aid in money, arms and territory provided by the Second International and the governments of Costa Rica, Panama, and Venezuela was decisive, and without it the FSLN would not have won. To this must be added the diplomatic support of the Andes countries and Mexico.

Finally, the ultimate misfortune of Somoza was that his old supporter—Yankee imperialism—did not repeat what it had done in Vietnam but followed a vacillating policy that led to his defeat.

As we said, this revolution—which combined such a complex range of political and social forces—had a democratic objective: to overthrow the dictatorship. But to attain this objective, it was obliged to proceed not by bourgeois-democratic methods but by the methods of *socialist* revolution, by the method of an insurrectionary mobilization of the masses to destroy the bourgeois army.

One after the other, the methods of negotiations, diplomatic pressure, plans for peaceful change, and conspiracies in the National Guard failed to work with Somoza. Only the *socialist* method of a revolutionary mobilization of the masses—through urban defense committees, militias, and so forth—attained the democratic objective of overthrowing the dictatorship and crushing its National Guard.

Now that Somoza and his Guard are gone, everything has changed. The playing pieces are taking up new positions on the political chessboard. Two roads are open: *either these elements of socialist revolution will be extended or there will be a course toward rebuilding a new bourgeois state (not dictatorial this time, but democratic)*. This is the fundamental question behind each and every current problem in Nicaragua.

### What Kind of Reconstruction?

This can be seen by starting with the fundamental problem of all revolutions—that of the armed forces. The revolution destroyed the basic pillar of the bourgeois state: the old Somozaist National Guard. From here on there are two roads: either proceeding to the general arming of the workers, peasants, and inhabitants of the poor neighborhoods, organizing them into militias; or their disarming and the organizing of a standing army and police.

The first road points toward the socialist revolution; the second, toward the reconstruction of the bourgeois state. The fact is that a rapid process of disarming the militias and forming a regular army is taking place. The incident with the Simón Bolívar Brigade is only a detail in this picture.

In Managua militias of combative neighborhoods such as Costa Rica, Open 3,

Paraisito, Monseñor Lizcano, Las Américas, etc., have been disarmed, though they had nothing to do with the brigade. The policy is a *general* one. At the same time, in the Sandinista army itself, a sizable number of combatants have been discharged, and a reorganization of the police has been announced.

We could go on, one question after another, from agriculture to the unions. For example, the fact that helping to unionize a large part of the Managua working class is at the top of the list of “charges” against the brigade might appear incomprehensible. But it is a little easier to understand if we consider that at the same time that forty members of the brigade were deported, the newspaper *La Prensa*, the paper of Mrs. Violeta Chamorro, reappeared in Managua.

Moreover, it reappeared waging a campaign against the formation of a single Sandinista trade union and in favor of “free” unionism, that is, company unionism. The road of capitalist reconstruction passes the way of “free” unionism, or its twin brothers, the state-controlled unions. The other road, in contrast, passes the way of the widest development and centralization of all the bodies (unions, factory committees, neighborhood defense committees, etc.) that the masses are creating, and their *fully democratic* functioning.

### Why?

As in any revolutionary process, the key factor is the leadership; in this case, the FSLN. Until now, a process has been taking place that is unfortunately very common in revolutions and that, if not reversed, sooner or later leads them into retreat: the FSLN took power, but as it did this it placed the power in the hands of a national-unity government including the bourgeois opposition, the Government of National Reconstruction.

The lines of agreement were followed in all the local administrations, installing bourgeois figures, despite the dissatisfaction and ill-feeling it provoked among many workers, inhabitants of the poor neighborhoods, and militia members who still remembered the promises of Radio Sandino during the war about organs of “people's power.” The only exception to this rule was, strangely enough, Bluefields, that is, the Caribbean coast, where the general staff was made up to a great extent of members of the brigade.

The junta, like all such governments of national unity including the bourgeoisie in a revolutionary situation, is obliged to make a thousand and one concessions to the mass movement. But these concessions it is making represent tactics in the application of a general strategy, and this strategy is to slow down the process, to keep it from going outside the limits of capitalism. While it waits for the storm to abate, it keeps its hold on the decisive string—control of arms.



Why does this situation exist? Why have the leaders like the FSLN's, with their past history as heroic fighters, put the government in the hands of the junta?

Here various factors come together. First, the character of the FSLN itself, which is neither a workers nor a socialist party, but a democratic, revolutionary nationalist movement, profoundly heterogeneous in character, with the middle class and the intellectuals having great weight, as well as—in recent years—the most radical sectors of the bourgeois opposition.

But, in the second place, the international factor has an enormous and decisive weight. We invite those provincial leftists in Colombia who have expressed horror over the "interventionism" of the Simón Bolívar Brigade to come back to earth and see that the Nicaraguan revolution, among all revolutions in Latin America, has been the one most affected by international factors.

In this sense, to a great degree two factors have weighed on the FSLN leadership. The first and main ones are the Second International (the European Social Democracy) and the Latin American democratic governments (especially the Panamanian government). The second factor is the influence of the Castroist leadership. Both say the same thing: don't make another Cuba, don't make a socialist revolution.

That neither Torrijos nor the Second International desire another socialist revolution in Latin America, we do not think it is necessary to prove. As for Fidel, we refer to his July 26 speech, which is completely devoted to explaining to the Nicaraguans the need to maintain intact the "democratic front" with the Panamanian, Mexican, and Venezuelan governments and with those of other countries of the Andean Pact, and not to break it and try to make another Cuba.

#### Imperialism's Policy

Among much of the Latin American left there are illusions that Nicaragua is sliding like a toboggan toward socialism, repeating the Cuban process. We in no way exclude the possibility that the FSLN leadership, or part of it, will end up breaking with the bourgeoisie, establishing a workers and peasants government, and putting into practice an anticapitalist program, as the leadership of the July 26 Movement did.

Precisely because we do not exclude this possibility, we explain to the Nicaraguan masses, with no sectarianism and more forcefully than ever, that they should demand that the FSLN leadership do this. But this is an abstract future possibility. Today, the real and concrete fact is that the FSLN leadership is not going in this direction.

And here enters into consideration the policy of the force which, in the last analysis, is the main enemy—Yankee im-

perialism, a factor which we are analyzing last but which in the end is of the most importance.

The socialist revolution in Cuba took place in an international framework that was very different from today's and one in which imperialism's policy was quite different. It was the period of the "cold war" between the U.S. and the USSR, not of the détente, as it is today. The Yankees did not put forward a line of "human rights" and democratic counterrevolutions, but of the "big stick" and the landing of marines or counterrevolutionaries. To each blow and each direct aggression from imperialism, Cuba had to reply with a more radical counterblow or else go under.

It seems to us that, especially after its defeat in the OAS and the later fall of Somoza, the Yankees have been applying a very different policy, though more perfidious and intelligent. Time will tell whether it is not more effective, as it proved to be in the Portuguese revolution. This is not a policy of sending the marines right away or rearming the leftover Somozaists (though these will no doubt be cards it holds in reserve).

Today the card being played by Yankee imperialism to obstruct the socialist revolution in Nicaragua is that of the bourgeois opposition and of the "democratic" bourgeoisies and governments on the continent. Nicaragua's economic difficulties are a tremendous help to this blackmail.

Only a blind person could deny the progressive role that these Latin American bourgeoisies and democratic governments played in the fall of Somoza, which also indirectly meant a serious defeat for gringo imperialism. But today Somoza is a thing of the past; the chessboard has changed completely. And today, whatever the differences among Jimmy Carter, Torrijos, Herrera Campins, Carazo, López Portillo, Turbay and company (and we would add Felipe González, Soares,

Schmidt, etc.), all agree with the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie on one thing: *prevent another Cuba.*

This gives imperialism no small margin for maneuver so that, having lost the war, it can try to win the peace.

#### The Masses Will Have the Last Word

This context makes understandable the fuss over the brigade, and the magnitude of its repercussions, both within Nicaragua and outside. Despite its weakness, the brigade succeeded in expressing a potentially very powerful and dangerous thing—the tendency toward socialist revolution. This tendency is still deaf, dumb, and blind, but in a revolutionary situation like in Nicaragua, it brings a formidable pressure to bear every time the masses raise their voice. This was the motive force that made it possible to organize the eighty trade unions, to establish a base in the neighborhoods, and to organize people's power in Bluefields.

Since this dynamic assumed by the mass movement will not be eliminated by deportations, we are enormously optimistic about the future of the Nicaraguan revolution. We will continue more than ever to support the revolutionary process—this is not affected by our differences with the Sandinista leadership.

Nor do deepgoing differences with the policy pursued by the FSLN leaders today prevent us—along with all of Latin America—from hailing them as the heroes of a democratic revolution that put an end to the most hateful tyranny on the continent. What we sincerely desire—and what we think the workers and people of Nicaragua should demand of them—is that they also be the leaders of the second socialist revolution of the Americas; that they put forward the slogan of the glorious years of Castroism—one seemingly forgotten today: "*socialist revolution or caricature of a revolution.*" □

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## The Political and Economic Crisis in Israel Today

[In early August *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* spoke at length with one of the leaders of the Revolutionary Communist League, the Israeli section of the Fourth International. What follows are some of his comments.]

\* \* \*

*Question: How did you get involved in revolutionary political activity?*

*Answer:* I came to Israel from Latin America some ten years ago when I was eighteen. Under the influence of Zionism I went there seeking a solution to anti-Semitism, which was still very strong where I lived.

Israel and Zionism claim to be a solution to that problem. Zionism says that Jews need their own state and their own army to defend themselves, to make sure that what happened in Germany under Hitler will never happen again.

When I was growing up in Latin America most of the youth, including myself, had no idea about the left or about radical politics because of the fierce political repression.

But after I was in Israel for a short time I was struck by the tremendous discrimination against Arabs, the racist attitudes toward the Arab population. As a Jew who had been discriminated against myself, I found this very disturbing and felt that if I was forced to choose, I would rather be oppressed than an oppressor.

That was the beginning of my break with Zionism. I started to study how Israel had been built, and found that it was not, as the Zionists claimed, a case of "a land without people for a people without land." The Palestinians had already been living there and were expelled by the Jews in 1948.

But this alone is not enough to make one an anti-Zionist. Some people realize the injustice that was done to the Palestinians and justify it on the grounds that although it was too bad, we still need our own state and army and had no other choice.

As I studied deeper, I realized that Israel was not established as a progressive, democratic, socialist movement to help the Middle East overcome its problems. The establishment of a Jewish state went against the historical process in the Middle East, the Arab struggle for national liberation. It plays a counterrevolutionary role in the region. I also realized that this was the root of the struggles between the Jews and the Arabs.

*Q. Do many people in Israel still see it as a socialist experiment?*

A. Not any longer. Everything changed

radically after the 1967 war. Until then most of the economy was in the hands of the state and the egalitarian ideology was still quite strong.

But following the 1967 war, the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza strip brought a huge Arab population under Israeli control and a new orientation developed in the economy.

Foreign capital investments were encouraged, as was Israeli private enterprise. New capitalists took advantage of the new markets for Israeli goods in the occupied areas, and took advantage of the big, cheap, Arab labor force.

The old Zionist ideology that was heavily influenced by socialist ideas broke down. Zionists had said that Jews should do every kind of work, from being merchants, to farmers, to bus drivers, to street cleaners. But now all the hard work was being done by Arabs from the occupied territories.

The kibbutzim, for example, had always been held up as models of socialism, although in fact they had always been heavily subsidized by the taxes of the workers. Now they began moving away from emphasis on agriculture to emphasis on industry, and started hiring large amounts of outside wage labor. Kibbutz members became a very prosperous segment of society.

Finally, after Milton Friedman, the University of Chicago economics professor who advises the Chilean junta, became an economic consultant for the Israeli government, it would be hard to find anyone in Israel who still thinks the country is socialist.

The 1967 war brought with it another phenomenon that undermined the strength of Zionist ideology. That was widespread corruption. Israelis did not expect that their leaders, whom they viewed as leading the life or death struggle of the Jewish people to survive, would stuff their pockets with millions in the process.

*Q. Has the current economic crisis—the austerity programs, the triple digit inflation—resulted in a radicalization of the Jewish population in Israel?*

A. You have to understand that the economic problems, while important, are not the overriding question for the Jewish population. The overriding question is how they can live in the Middle East and how they can have peace with the Arabs.

If the Jewish population is convinced that they have no alternative but to follow the present course of constantly fighting the Arab revolution and trying to destroy the Palestinian movement, they will follow

that course even if it means heavy sacrifices, even if it means subsisting on a diet of potatoes.

The reason the economic crisis is having an impact on people's consciousness is precisely because the ideological arguments for following the present course, the course of war, are weakening. There is a fundamental rethinking of what we have been doing for thirty years.

It is the interconnection of this political crisis and the economic crisis that is forcing the Jewish masses toward a basic rethinking of what we want to do with our lives, with our existence.

*Q. Has this developed largely since the 1973 war?*

A. Yes. The 1973 war was a big shock to the Jewish masses. Before that war people in Israel were saying "We never had it so good." No Arab country, they thought, would dare confront Israel. We had decisively defeated the Arab armies in a quick and efficient war in 1967. The Palestinians had been defeated in Jordan in 1970.

The *nouveau riche* were prospering from the occupation of the West Bank. Israeli goods were entering the occupied areas. The 1974-75 world recession had not yet begun.

People felt the Zionist strategy of beating down the Arabs until they finally give up had been proven in practice.

But when the Egyptian army broke through the Bar-Lev line in 1973—which everyone in Israel had thought was impregnable—and there were the heavy Jewish losses in the fighting, it was the beginning of a big crisis of confidence in the Zionist state's traditional approach to the Arabs. People saw we were as far from peace as ever.

Then there was a resurgence of the Palestinian national movement. Arafat spoke at the United Nations and a mass movement of Palestinian youth developed on the West Bank, which reached its height on the Day of the Land protests in Israel in 1976.

A new generation of Israelis, who had not lived through 1948, saw Israeli soldiers beating and shooting Palestinian demonstrators on the West Bank. It was quite a shock.

The source of the political crisis in Israel is the resurgent Palestinian movement. When I came to Israel in 1970, Golda Meir used to say that there was no such thing as Palestinians. But their movement forced the Israelis to recognize that the Palestinians exist.

The 1973 war and the big upsurge on the West Bank in 1976 has also had a big



impact on the Arab population within the 1948 boundaries. That population had been under the domination of clan chiefs who were tied to the Zionist administration.

Israelis refer to the Palestinians within the 1948 boundaries as "our Arabs." They used to say that "our Arabs" are different. They were living proof, according to the Zionists, that there was coexistence between Arabs and Jews in Israel.

But the radicalization of the Palestinians as a whole sparked a radicalization of the young generation of "our Arabs," who had not personally suffered the defeat of 1948. The Israeli Arabs had, of course, always seen themselves as part of the general Arab struggle. For instance whenever Nasser gave a speech on the radio you would never see an Arab on the street in Israel. Everyone was home listening to Nasser. But now close links could develop with the rest of the Palestinians, particularly on the West Bank and in Gaza.

This radicalization of "our Arabs" had a very big impact on the Jewish population. The Jewish population began to ask itself where it would all end. If we have not won over these Arabs after thirty years of living under Israeli rule, how can we ever live with the rest of the Palestinians?

People had been forced to confront the first "big lie" of Zionism—that there was no such thing as Palestinians, and that eventually the Arabs will give up, will realize they cannot beat us, and will learn to live with us. The Jewish population was forced to acknowledge the existence of the Palestinians and many realized that the Palestinian question was the key to peace.

*Q. What was the impact in Israel of Sadat's trip to Jerusalem?*

A. When Sadat came to Israel he exposed the second "big lie" of Zionist ideology. His visit to Israel, and his acceptance of Israel's existence, was objectively a big setback for the Arab struggle. But leaving aside this primary aspect for a moment, within Israel the visit undercut Zionist ideology.

The Zionists had always maintained that we have to fight the Arabs because they want to drive the Jews into the sea. But Israelis saw that Sadat, an Arab leader who had himself fought Israel, was in the country saying that if Israel makes some moves regarding the Palestinians we can have peace.

This raised big questions about the previous justifications for Israeli policies. But I should also point out that the effect of Sadat's visit was less than it could have been. When Sadat said that 70 percent of the problem between Egypt and Israel was psychologically based, he ignored the heart of the question—the Palestinians. By attributing the fighting to psychological motives, Sadat equated the motives of the Arabs and Jews. He covered up the fundamental responsibility of the Zionists.

Our opposition to recognition of Israel has nothing to do with opposition to Jews. We cannot accept the legitimacy of Israel because Israel's existence rests on what it did to the Palestinians in 1948, 1956, and 1967. It rests on the denial of the Palestinian national rights.

So Sadat's visit had contradictory effects. On the one hand it had the negative consequence of legitimizing Israel and was a big setback to the Arab revolution. But within Israel it made it harder for the Zionists to maintain the illusion that the Arabs are a Nazi-like enemy that wants to annihilate all the Jews.

*Q. How do you view the Camp David accords?*

A. Although the media tried to present them as a big step toward peace in the Middle East, in fact, the Camp David accords and the Sadat visit are not steps toward peace. They are part of the strategy of American imperialism and the Israeli state to solve, in their own way, what they call the "energy crisis" by holding down the Arab masses and the Palestinians in the interests of the oil monopolies and the strategic interests of imperialism.

Especially since the Iranian revolution Israel has been driving toward war as the only way to definitively defeat the Arab masses and the Palestinians. Of course this is not what the government is telling the Israeli people.

But Begin's strategy is to first neutralize Egypt so that he can take care of the Palestinians and the rejectionist front, destroying the Palestinian movement once and for all and forcing the rest of the Arab states to sign peace treaties along the same lines that Sadat agreed to, meaning treaties that capitulate to Tel Aviv's and Washington's dictates.

The need for another war to achieve this aim is shown by the invasions and the constant bombing of Lebanon.

Although they have been hit very hard in Lebanon, the Palestinians there and on the West Bank and in Israel itself were not so demoralized that they could not continue their struggle. Israel is still unable to achieve what it calls a "radical solution" to the Palestinian "problem."

Today, despite the Zionist state's big success in getting Egypt to sign a treaty with Israel, the Palestinians are holding fast to their struggle and are opposed to any step that would cut across their national rights. Israel has not been able to get a single Palestinian figure to come out in favor of the Sadat-Begin treaty or the phony Palestinian autonomy plan.

*Q. What is the significance of Israel's military operations in Lebanon?*

A. Today Lebanon is at the center of the Israeli state's present political goals. It is now the main arena of the fight between Israel and the Arab revolution. In Leb-

anon Israel wants to do two things: destroy the Palestinian resistance movement and force Syria to reach an agreement with Israel.

Israel has been putting tremendous military pressure on the Palestinians through the Litani River invasion, the constant bombings of the Palestinian camps, and the arming of the right-wing militias.

At the same time it wants to pressure Syria to withdraw its troops from Lebanon. If Israel succeeds in this aim, it will be left in effective control of Lebanon. That would be a gigantic defeat for the Palestinians, whose main forces are now restricted to that country.

Some of the moderate Arab regimes, such as Morocco and Saudi Arabia, would like to make a deal with the Israelis if the pressure from Syria were lifted or the Syrian army were defeated and forced to make an agreement with Israel.

*Q. How did the Peace Now movement arise and what has been its impact in Israel?*

A. The Peace Now movement arose in response to Begin's intransigence on the question of setting up new Jewish settlements on the West Bank. It was started by 320 reserve army officers who said that unless Begin made some concessions to the Arabs they would have grave doubts about the justice of a future war.

This was one of the most dramatic statements ever made in Israel. No one had ever raised questions on this scale about Israel's right to wage war against the Arabs. It was a symptom of the rethinking that is taking place.

When they saw that no political parties would stand up to Begin, the leaders of the Peace Now movement decided to stage street demonstrations. About 30,000 attended the first, and around 70,000 the second. They were stunned by the response they got. Seventy thousand people is a huge number in Israel.

The government opposed the demonstrations as weakening the Israeli position in the negotiations, and the movement was attacked as a fifth column in the country, playing into the hands of the enemy.

The Peace Now movement has very serious weaknesses and drawbacks, which I will describe in a moment. But on the positive side it is another example of this process of rethinking the old Zionist responses to the Arabs that I mentioned.

These people, primarily youth, are looking for an answer to two questions: how can we as Jews continue to live in the Middle East; and how can we live in such a way that we don't become corrupted by the experience of being an occupying force over the Arabs.

The existence of the movement has greatly increased the margins of "permissible" debate in Israel. We can get a hearing for many anti-Zionist points now

that would never have been considered in the past.

But the Peace Now movement's fundamental weakness, which led to its present virtual collapse, is the fact that it was never able to break out of its Zionist framework, and therefore could not put forward a real alternative that could lead to peace.

Begin has been able to exploit this weakness very effectively. He is quite blunt. Zionism is colonialism, he told them. He said that if the Peace Now movement opposed the settlements on the West Bank they would logically have to oppose the existence of Israel too. We have always settled in the middle of Arab lands and taken the land from the Arabs.

If you don't agree with what we are doing on the West Bank, Begin argued, then you must also oppose Hanita, a long-time kibbutz in northern Israel, which was established exactly the same way.

The Peace Now movement tried to respond by saying that they were the "sane Zionists." But Begin is correct in the analogy he makes. And since the Peace Now movement remains locked into Zionism they cannot present an alternative to Begin.

We are trying to work with the many young people who were attracted to the Peace Now movement, who are looking for a way to achieve peace. We try to show them that the ultimate solution to the problem of war is a unified Palestinian state encompassing Arabs and Jews, while at the same time we work together on the specific demands of dismantling the West Bank settlements and withdrawal from the occupied territories. And we have recruited to our group by intervening in this movement.

Although the Peace Now movement has, as I mentioned, virtually collapsed, opposition to Begin's war drive against the Palestinians, especially in Lebanon, remains strong. The lack of enthusiasm for the invasion of southern Lebanon was reflected in the deep demoralization among Israeli troops. It became known in Israel that Israeli troops had engaged in massive looting of Arab property in Lebanon. And it was recently reported that an Israeli soldier who had killed Palestinian prisoners in Lebanon had been amnestied by the chief of staff.

All this was deeply shocking to many people in Israel and has spurred questioning of the government's policies. But the government and media have been trying to counter the revulsion that this caused by again pointing out that the same things took place in 1948.

For instance, the chief military analyst of *Ha'aretz*, a morning paper, responded to criticism of the amnesty by writing that killing Palestinian prisoners was nothing new. He asked his readers how they explained that the Jews did not take a single Palestinian prisoner in the 1948 war. What

happened to the Palestinian prisoners? What we are doing now, he said, is exactly what we have done in all our wars, and if you oppose what we are doing now, then you are calling into question everything that Zionism has done for more than thirty years, you're calling into question the whole Zionist state.

And the government television and radio are broadcasting huge propaganda barrages to reinforce the idea that the Palestinians are nothing but terrorists and murderers who must be exterminated.

But people are not convinced and are wavering. That is why the Israeli papers for the past two months have been playing down what the army is doing in Lebanon.

One of our campaigns is to call on the newspapers to tell the Israeli people what the army is doing in Lebanon. If the facts are known—that Israel is creating new refugees, is destroying homes and villages—people would oppose that policy.

The reaction of Israelis to the fighting in Lebanon—their uneasiness—is another sign of the growth of questioning of the political and ideological underpinnings of Zionism, the crisis of Zionist ideology.

This is a big problem for Begin because he needs a war to accomplish his two goals—the destruction of the Palestinian movement and an accord with Syria. But today the Jewish population is not at all convinced that justice would be on Israel's side in a new war.

*Q. Could you describe the recent fusion of Trotskyist groups in Israel?*

*A.* In April two Trotskyist groups fused to form the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL). The RCL puts out a Hebrew monthly called *Matzpen-Marxisti* and an Arabic monthly called *Sharara* (Spark).

The fusion was between the Revolutionary Communist League, which was the section of the Fourth International in Israel, and the Palestine Communist Group (PCG).

The PCG had arisen several years ago from a split in the Workers League, a Trotskyist group that had at one time been affiliated with the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI).

The RCL and the PCG began to draw close together in 1977. Discussions and joint activity led to the decision to publish a common paper, and then to the preparation of common resolutions for a fusion congress, which was held April 12-16.

*Q. On what basis did the two groups draw closer together?*

*A.* The fusion of the two groups came from an understanding by both that there had to be a strategic turn in our conception of who we are in the class struggle in the Israeli state. This change was a reflection of a change in the objective situation. For some years Zionist ideology and the insti-

tutions of the Zionist state have been in a crisis, which has led to increased possibilities for doing political work among the Jewish workers.

We came to understand that we were part of the Israeli population, that we were not outside it. We were not a chosen few who could understand what no one else could understand. If we had come to reject Zionism, so could other Jewish workers.

We found that we were part of the population, of the thinking and questioning that was going on, and we realized that the population would, as a result of their material needs, come to understand what we understood.

The fusion was possible because we found a basis on which to discuss the political questions, the political differences, and, equally important, we saw a way to go forward.

If the possibility of going forward did not exist, we could have sat and discussed forever. We could have had theoretical discussions on whether there is such a thing as an Israeli nation, on how to relate class questions to national questions, what position to take with regard to the Communist Party, and so on, without developing a common perspective for intervening in *real* struggles. We would have had no way to test the positions against reality.

So the fusion convention took place as a result of a changing conception of what we should be doing in Israel and a change in what it was possible to do. We were able to draw on the lessons of the past eight years of Israeli Trotskyism, the positive as well as negative aspects.

This will enable our forces to strengthen their participation in the class struggle and find the right way to build the party there.

*Q. What kind of work do you do among the Arab population.*

*A.* We have considerable influence in the Arab student movement within Israel. This is quite important since that is one of the few organizational forms that the Arab population in Israel has available to it.

Because of our influence in the Arab student movement the Communist Party (Rakah), which has big influence among Arabs, has to deal with us. We have been able to force the CP into some united fronts with us, where we work with them without, of course, yielding an inch to the CP's politics.

*Q. What is the strength of the CP?*

*A.* While the Communist Party has almost no influence in the Jewish population, it is a mass party among the Arabs in Israel. This reflects the radicalization that has taken place among Arabs since the 1967 war.

The Arab people look to the Stalinist party to defend them because they are not allowed to have their own nationalist



organizations. Al-Ard, an important nationalist group, was banned by the Zionist state.

The CP has done very little to defend the interests of the Arab population from the assault by the Zionist state and it has not organized big protests against the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Government circles see the CP as playing an important role in moderating the Arab population.

For us the question of relations with the CP is of primary importance for winning influence and support in the Arab population. We are fighting for the democratic demands of the Arab people and against the CP's class collaboration.

Despite the fact that almost all of the CP's support comes from Arabs, it has not fought for a single *concrete* demand of the Arabs.

The CP's role is especially bad for two reasons. First, because it accepts the Zionist state and practices class collaborationism, the CP is tying the Arab struggle to the Zionist doves, who won't do a thing for the Arabs.

Second, because the authentic voice of the Arabs is not being heard in Israel, no one in the Jewish population knows what is really being done to the Arabs, which allows the government to continue its oppression and increases the gap between Arabs and Jews. If the Jews do not know what the Arabs are fighting for and why they are fighting, they won't support the Arabs.

This second point is very important because the Jews will continue to be trapped in the confines of Zionism and the Zionist state until they can understand the Palestinian struggle and identify with it.

*Q. How does the Revolutionary Communist League intervene in this process?*

A. We feel that the main way to intervene is by helping to build a strong movement of the Palestinians on the basis of their national and democratic demands. Such a movement can be built around three points.

1. Unconditional support for the Palestinian struggle against Begin's war drive and the invasion of Lebanon.

2. The democratic rights of the Palestinians on the West Bank, which are closely linked to the rights of the Palestinians within the 1948 boundaries of Israel.

3. The struggle of the Palestinians within Israel against confiscation of Arab land, for housing, jobs, and education, all of which are related to the oppression of the Arabs as Arabs.

We call for the Arabs to organize themselves on the basis of a program of democratic demands, and we call on the CP to participate in and be part of this fight for Arab rights.

We also stress that the Palestinians should not write off the Jewish masses as *potential* allies. It is important to under-

stand that the Jewish masses today are becoming more receptive to ways of breaking from Zionism. The Palestinians have the possibility of providing answers that will further this process.

If the Palestinian movement has a correct attitude to the Jewish masses, that will greatly strengthen the Palestinian and anti-Zionist movements. If the Palestinian movement has the wrong attitude, if



BEGIN: Opposition in Israel to his war drive against Palestinians remains strong.

it writes off the Jewish masses, there will be another war. Unless the Jewish masses are broken from Zionism, there will inevitably be another war.

*Q. What kind of economic struggles are taking place within Israel?*

A. The Israeli economy is in terrible shape today. But as yet no big class battles have taken place.

The reason for this is quite simple. If the Jewish masses remain tied to the Zionist state and Zionist ideology they will be willing to make all sorts of sacrifices because they think they have no other choice. The Zionists present it as a life or death question, which supercedes economic sacrifices.

But confidence in the Zionist road and Zionist ideology is breaking down very rapidly, and this process is shaking up the Jewish working class, so we can expect that economic struggles will increase.

The working class is the crucial arena

where the division between Jews and Palestinians can begin to break down. The only place in Israel where Jews and Arabs are side by side is on the job. Jews do not visit Arab homes, don't live in Arab villages, and Arabs don't live in Tel Aviv. Only at work are they together.

After the Iranian revolution there was general agreement among all wings of the Zionist movement that there has to be a hard line against the Arab struggle. Therefore the Histadrut, which is supposed to be a labor organization but isn't, has been unwilling to lead any struggles of workers since they are afraid such struggles might weaken the Zionist apparatus. From time to time the Histadrut goes along with a struggle for tactical reasons. But even that is rare.

Workers struggles are developing slowly, and the workers face big political obstacles. In order to fight effectively they have to be organized effectively, which means they have to organize real unions. These can only be reorganized together with Arab workers since Arabs are a big component of the working class in Israel.

The working class is beginning to radicalize. And local struggles are taking place through local, elected factory committees.

Sometimes the workers win their local demands, often they lose. But the current economic crisis is so big, with real wages dropping sharply and the standard of living declining, that a purely local response is largely ineffective.

As yet there have been no solidarity activities between workers in different plants or joint actions of workers in different branches of industry. The workers response has remained atomized.

But I believe that a joint response will come, because of the economic and political crisis the country is going through. The working class will be forced to respond. Although the Histadrut has been able to prevent a joint response thus far, I do not believe it can do this for long.

*Q. What does the Revolutionary Communist League propose as the ultimate solution to the struggle of Palestinians and Jews?*

A. At our fusion convention we adopted a call for "a united Palestine of Jews and Arabs." This will have to be further concretized and given content when we put forward our programmatic positions.

We also call for the unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli occupation troops from the West Bank. The cutting edge of our agitation is the demand to dismantle the Jewish settlements on the West Bank. These settlements are very unpopular and are a good issue around which to raise the whole question in the Jewish population. □

# DOCUMENTS

## Full Text of Fidel Castro's Speech at Nonaligned Conference

[The following is the full text of the speech given by Fidel Castro in Havana September 3, at the opening of the conference of nonaligned nations. The translation of the speech is by Prensa Latina.]

Your Excellencies,  
Guests,  
Comrades:

I would like to ask that the first moments of this solemn event be dedicated to the memory of a beloved friend whom we all admired, a hero of his country's liberation and revolution who guided the Algiers Summit Conference brilliantly in 1973 and who did much for the strength and prestige of the non-aligned movement—the late President of Algeria, Houari Boumediene. How it grieves us that he cannot be with us in Cuba to share this occasion in our movement's history. I ask this worthy conference to observe a minute of silence in his memory.

Mr. Chairman, Junius Jayawardene, I would like to express my sincere recognition of your constant concern for the future of our movement and democratic respect for the dissimilar components of this powerful association of countries and the wise prudence you have shown in every difficult situation our non-aligned countries have had to face in the past three years—which have not been easy. In spite of distance and economic problems, your small country has made a noble and worthy effort to live up to the honorable responsibilities entrusted to it.

I thank all of you for the tremendous honor you do us with your presence here. I greet all of you warmly and welcome you on behalf of our people.

I would also like to fraternally greet the new countries that are joining our powerful movement at this conference: Iran and Pakistan have become members following the toppling of the shah's throne and the breaking up of the aggressive, reactionary CENTO military alliance; Surinam, Bolivia, tiny Grenada, and the indomitable people of Nicaragua, whose heroic, self-sacrificing fighters have left recent signs of their historic march that brought freedom to Sandino's homeland and dignity to our America.

Ethiopia and Afghanistan now accompany us with a new revolutionary character, and the Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe has full member status.

Our family is growing and increasing in quality, which is the way it should be.

The Philippines, St. Lucia, Dominica and Costa Rica are new observers and we have a number of guests, including Spain, whose gesture of sending a delegation to this conference for the first time we view as a hope for friendly and useful relations with all the peoples of the world, without allowing itself to be drawn into the aggressive NATO military bloc, which would only serve to compromise and alienate the brilliant future of that self-sacrificing people whose historical, cultural and blood bonds with the nations of our America are so solid. We also need friends in industrialized Western Europe that are not tied to the imperialist wagon.

Ninety-four states and liberation movements are represented here as full members of this sixth summit conference. This summit conference is, therefore, the one with the largest attendance and with the greatest number of non-aligned and national liberation movement leaders ever held. This is not something for which our modest country should take credit; rather it is an unmistakable sign of the vigor, strength and prestige of the movement of the non-aligned countries.

All efforts to sabotage the Havana summit conference have

proved futile. All pressures, hectic diplomatic efforts and intrigues to prevent the conference from being held in our country were in vain.

The Yankee imperialists and their old and new allies—in this case I refer to the Chinese government—didn't want this conference to be held in Cuba.

They also engaged in dirty scheming, saying that Cuba would turn the movement of non-aligned countries into a tool of Soviet policy. We know only too well that the U.S. government even got

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### All efforts to sabotage the Havana summit conference have proved futile . . .

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hold of a copy of the draft final declaration, drawn up by Cuba, and made feverish diplomatic contacts in an effort to modify it. We have irrefutable proof of this.

We believe that the draft—which was submitted to all the member countries earlier than at any other conference and was even modified to include many of their suggestions—is a good draft, subject to improvement. Improvement means strengthening, not weakening, it in any basic sense. Since when does the United States have the right to involve itself in the non-aligned movement and decide how our documents should be drawn up?

What is the reason for the reactionary opposition to Cuba?

Cuba isn't exactly a country that is inconsistent toward the imperialists. Cuba has never ceased to practice a policy of close solidarity with the national liberation movements and all other just causes of our times. Cuba has never hesitated to defend its political principles with determination, energy, dignity, honesty and courage, nor, in over twenty years, has it ever stopped fighting against the aggression and the blockade imposed by the most powerful imperialist country in the world simply because Cuba carried out a genuine political and social revolution just ninety miles from that country's coast.

It is all too well known—and has been admitted and officially published in the United States—that the authorities of that country spent years organizing and methodically plotting to assassinate the leaders of the Cuban revolution, using the most sophisticated means of conspiracy and crime.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that these deeds were investigated and publicized by the U.S. Senate, the U.S. government has not yet deigned to give any kind of apology for those vituperative and uncivilized actions.

The true measure of a revolutionary people, the unblemished honor of a country that cannot be bribed, bought or intimidated, is given by the imperialists' hatred.

In our international relations, we express solidarity with deeds, not fine words. Cuban technicians are now working in twenty-three countries that belong to our movement. In the vast majority of these countries, because of their economic limitations, this cooperation is provided without charge, in spite of our own difficulties. Right now, Cuba has twice as many doctors serving abroad as does the UN World Health Organization.

Noble, self-sacrificing Cubans have died thousands of miles from home while supporting liberation movements, defending other people's just causes and fighting against the expansion of the North American racists and other forms of imperialist attack on human dignity and the integrity and independence of other nations. They express the purity, selflessness, solidarity and internationalist consciousness that the revolution has forged



## 1,400 Delegates Attend Sixth Nonaligned Conference

The sixth conference of the non-aligned movement officially opened in Havana's new Palace of Conventions September 3. It was attended by 1,400 delegates and observers from the nearly 100 member countries and liberation movements.

The nonaligned movement was formed eighteen years ago, and holds summit conferences every three years. As head of state of the host country for the conference, Fidel Castro will serve as chairperson of the movement until the next summit.

Castro's opening speech—a blistering denunciation of imperialist crimes against the semicolonial world—set the political tone for the discussion and

debate that followed.

Throughout his eighty-minute address, Castro was repeatedly interrupted by applause. His condemnation of Washington was too much for Wayne Smith, the chief of the U.S. Interest Section in Cuba, who attended the conference as an observer. Smith walked out of the hall early in the speech. More ominously, the Carter administration stepped up its threats against Cuba (see News Analysis, p. 858).

Wang Zhanyuan, the Chinese ambassador to Cuba, also walked out, after Castro denounced Peking's alliance with American imperialism and its invasion of Vietnam.

Behind the scenes, Washington lobbied to tone down the draft of the final conference declaration written by the Cubans. A report from Havana in the September 5 *Christian Science Monitor* revealed that American officials admitted "to meeting with numerous delegations."

Key among these was the Yugoslav delegation, headed by Tito, who led the open efforts to counter Cuba's growing political influence. In a speech the day after Castro's address, Tito avoided any specific criticism of Washington and urged maintenance of the nonaligned movement's "traditional" stance—that is, a policy of acquiescence to imperialism.

among our people.

What charges can be brought against Cuba? That it is a socialist country? Yes, it is a socialist country, but we don't impose our ideology or our system on anyone, either inside or outside the movement, and being socialist is nothing to be ashamed of. That we have a radical revolution in Cuba? Yes, we are radical revolutionaries, but we don't try to impose our radicalism on anyone, much less on the non-aligned movement.

That we maintain fraternal relations with the Soviet Union and the rest of the socialist community? Yes, we are friends of the Soviet Union. We are very thankful to the Soviet people, because their generous cooperation helped us to survive and overcome the very difficult and decisive periods in our people's life, when we were even in danger of being wiped out. No people has the right to be ungrateful. We are grateful to the glorious October Revolution because it ushered in a new era in human history, made it possible to defeat fascism and created a world situation in which the peoples' self-sacrificing struggle led to the downfall of the hateful colonial system. To ignore that is to ignore history itself.

Not only Cuba but also Vietnam; the Arab countries under attack; the peoples in the former Portuguese colonies; the revolutionary processes in many other countries throughout the world; and the liberation movements that fight against oppression, racism, Zionism and fascism in South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Palestine and elsewhere owe a debt of gratitude to socialist solidarity. I wonder whether the United States or any other NATO country has ever helped a single liberation movement anywhere in the world.

In fact, I am convinced—and I have said so on other occasions—that, without the power and influence which the socialist community exerts today, imperialism, harassed by the

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### In our international relations, we express solidarity with deeds, not fine words . . .

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economic crisis and by the shortage of basic raw materials, would not hesitate to divide the world up again. It has already done so more than once. It is even threatening to do so again and, in point of fact, is creating special intervention forces aimed menacingly at the oil-exporting countries. To cite just one example of this, the United States has unilaterally decided to respect no more than a three-mile limit of maritime sovereignty.

If membership in the non-aligned movement depended on betraying our highest ideas and convictions, it would not be honorable for me or for any of you to belong to it. No revolution-

ary has the right to be a coward.

There are some who have made an art of opportunism. We Cuban revolutionaries are not and never will be opportunists. We are prepared to sacrifice our own national economic interests whenever necessary to defend a just principle or an honorable political position. We Cubans will never renege on what we said yesterday, nor will we say one thing today and do something else tomorrow.

We are firmly anti-imperialist, anticolonial, antineocolonial, antiracist, anti-Zionist and antifascist because these principles are part of our thinking; they constitute the essence and origin of the movement of non-aligned countries and have formed its life and history ever since its founding. These principles are also very fresh in the life of the peoples we represent here.

Was any country that now belongs to our movement really independent more than thirty-five years ago? Is there any member that hasn't known colonialism, neocolonialism, fascism, racial discrimination or imperialist aggression; economic dependence; poverty; squalor; illiteracy; and the most brutal exploitation of its natural and human resources? What country doesn't bear the burden of the technological gap, a lower standard of living than the former metropolises, unequal terms of trade, the economic crisis, inflation and underdevelopment imposed on our peoples by centuries of colonial exploitation and imperialist domination?

Cuba will be in the front line defending these principles, independence, and the unique, prestigious, fraternal and ever more constructive and influential role of the non-aligned movement in international life, so the energetic and rightful voice of our peoples may be heard.

Moreover, I believe that if you thought Cuba was not completely independent or lacked the loyalty and honesty it owes to the movement in line with its concepts and goals, you would not have given your generous cooperation, confidence, interest and enthusiasm to this sixth summit conference.

Throughout our revolutionary life, no one has ever tried to tell us what to do. No one has ever tried to tell us what role we should play in the movement of non-aligned countries. No one told us when or how to make the revolution in our country, nor could anyone have done so. By the same token, no one except the movement itself can determine what it should do and when and how to do it.

We have worked tirelessly to create the material and political conditions to make this event a success. We have respected and we will continue to totally respect the rights of all members of the movement. We have fully and scrupulously fulfilled our duties as host country and will continue to do so. Our views will not always coincide with those of each and every one of you. We have many close friends at this conference, but we don't always agree with

the best of them. We hope that everyone will speak out with the greatest freedom and honesty and feel that he is being heard with interest, respect and concentration. The combined experiences of all of us gathered here can produce tremendous results. If certain topics displease anyone, please understand that we do not mean to hurt or wound. We will work with all member countries—without exception—to achieve our aims and to implement the agreements that are adopted. We will be patient, prudent, flexible, calm. Cuba will observe these norms throughout the years in which it presides over the movement. I declare this categorically.

We have grown and advanced. Fortunately, Mozambique, Angola, São Tomé and Príncipe, Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands are now fully independent countries, after a heroic and unequal struggle. Today, as sovereign states, they are prestigious and influential members of our movement. Just six years ago, at the Algiers summit conference, they were only liberation movements.

Vietnam is united and free after thirty years of extraordinary and admirable struggle.

The Shah is no longer the Shah, CENTO no longer exists, Somoza is no longer in power, and the fascist Gairy no longer

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### **The Camp David agreement is a flagrant betrayal of the Arab cause . . .**

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rules tiny, heroic Grenada. These are unquestionable victories for independence, progress and freedom. Our causes triumph because they are just.

Growing numbers of peoples are joining our ranks as they break the bonds of colonialism, neocolonialism, fascism and other forms of oppression and dependency. In one way or another, all these struggles have been supported by the movement of non-aligned countries, and these are victories for us as well.

Nevertheless, imperialism has not ceased its tenacious effort to maintain its subjugation, oppression and occupation of other peoples and countries, whose causes demand our resolute support. First of all I refer to the long-suffering, courageous Palestinian people. No more brutal pillage of a people's rights to peace and justice has occurred in this century. Please understand that we are not fanatics. The revolutionary movement has always learned to hate racial discrimination and pogroms of any kind. From the bottom of our heart, we repudiate the merciless persecution and genocide that the Nazis once visited on the Jews, but there is nothing in recent history that parallels it more than the dispossession, persecution and genocide that imperialism and the Zionists are currently practicing against the Palestinian people. Pushed off their lands, expelled from their country, scattered throughout the world, persecuted and murdered, the heroic Palestinians are a vivid example of sacrifice and patriotism, living symbols of the most terrible crime in our era.

Piece by piece, Palestinian lands and the territories of neighboring Arab countries—Syria, Jordan and Egypt—have been seized by the aggressors, armed to the teeth with the most sophisticated weapons from the U.S. arsenal.

The just Palestinian and Arab cause has been supported by world progressive opinion and our movement for nearly twenty years. Nasser was one of the prestigious founders of this movement. Nevertheless, all UN resolutions have been scornfully ignored and rejected by the aggressors and their imperialist allies.

Imperialism has sought to impose its own peace, using betrayal and division. An armed, dirty, unjust bloody peace will never be a true peace.

The Camp David agreement is a flagrant betrayal of the Arab cause and of the Palestinian, Lebanese, Syrian, Jordanian—all the Arab peoples, including the Egyptians. It is a betrayal of all the progressive peoples of the world who, at the United Nations and all other international forums, have always supported a just solution to the problem of the Middle East, one that would be

acceptable and honorable for all and guaranteed by all.

True peace in the Middle East will never be built on such injustice, such a Machiavellian policy, such betrayal and such flimsy bases.

Instead of one gendarme for the Middle East, the Arab world and Africa, imperialism now wants two: Israel and Egypt. If peace really exists between Egypt and Israel, why does Egypt need all the weapons it is getting—even though they aren't as sophisticated and modern as the ones that are going to the Israelis? How will these arms be used, except against the peoples in the area, including the Egyptians themselves?

International policy should be ethical. The movement of non-aligned countries should roundly denounce the Camp David agreement. Moral censure, at least, is essential.

We have witnessed ten years of imperialist maneuvers, deceit and crimes in Zimbabwe. Six million Africans there are oppressed by a tiny arrogant and genocidal racist, fascist minority. We should firmly denounce and reject the so-called internal settlement and Muzorewa's puppet regime, which is a mockery of Africa's conscience, and give the Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe—the legitimate representative of its people—the non-aligned movement's all-out support and solidarity.

The people of Namibia are also suffering from South Africa's scorn, mockery, and disrespect for United Nations orders and resolutions—and South Africa is fully supported by the NATO powers, including the United States. Racist South African troops that have no right to be there are depriving the Namibian people of their independence and imposing a Bantustan system on that long-suffering country, in defiance of the international community and world public opinion.

South Africa itself constitutes the most shameful blot for the peoples of Africa and the world. Human dignity cannot help but be offended by that repulsive stronghold of the Nazi-fascist spirit that remains in the southern cone of Africa, where 20 million Africans are oppressed, exploited, discriminated against and repressed by a handful of racists. Who spawned that system? Who supports it? They say the South African racists even know how to make atom bombs. I ask: Against whom are they likely to be used? Against the Black ghettos of Pretoria? Will they perchance be used to block the just and inevitable liberation of the people?

Why are the Rhodesian and South African racists allowed to bomb Mozambique, Zambia, Angola and Botswana almost daily, murdering with impunity thousands upon thousands of refugees and citizens of those countries as well? Why are the Zionist aggressors allowed to bomb the Palestinian refugee camps and Lebanese towns daily? Who has given them that right? Who has given them that power? Why are they allowed to use the most sophisticated weapons of destruction and death? Who supplies them? Isn't this undeniable proof of imperialism's aggressive role and the type of peace and order it wants for our peoples? Isn't it a crime to kill a child, an old man, a woman, a Black adult, a Palestinian, a Lebanese? Can these methods and these concepts

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### **Why are the Rhodesian and South African racists allowed to bomb Mozambique, Angola and Botswana almost daily? . . .**

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be differentiated from the methods and concepts that fascist Germany once used? Reports of genocidal acts of this nature are broadcast daily, even by the imperialist press agencies, as if to accustom us to accepting such needs with resignation and weakness.

Another problem that concerns African and world opinion is that of Western Sahara. Cuba has no particular dispute with Morocco, whose government maintained diplomatic and trade relations with us even in the most critical period of the blockade of our country. But looking at the matter from a principled point of view, Cuba expresses its total support for the independence of the Saharan people, considering the occupation of their territory to be



utterly unfounded and their desire for free self-determination to be unquestionably just. Cuba was a member of the UN commission that investigated the desires of the Saharan people prior to the conflict and can attest to the fact that 99 percent of the inhabitants want independence. We congratulate Mauritania on its courageous decision to renounce all territorial claims and hope that Morocco will reconsider its policy on Western Sahara, a policy that not only isolates and weakens its international position but also exhausts and impoverishes it economically. The right to independence of the valiant Saharan people and the Polisario Front, their legitimate representative, should be recognized by all.

We support the people of Cyprus in their struggle against the foreign occupation of a part of their territory and for the develop-

## **For our people, Vietnam is sacred. We once swore our willingness to die for Vietnam . . .**

ment of peace and fraternal coexistence by all components of that sister country's population.

Cuba's position on the problems in Southeast Asia is crystal clear. For our people, Vietnam is sacred. We once swore that we were willing to die for Vietnam.

No other people of recent times has paid such a high price in sacrifice, suffering and death in order to be free. No people has made a greater contribution to the national liberation struggle. No other people has done so much in this period to create a universal anti-imperialist consciousness. Four times as many bombs were dropped on Vietnam as were used in World War II. The most powerful imperialist country had its claws cut off in Vietnam. Vietnam taught all oppressed nations that no force can defeat a people that is determined to fight for its freedom. The struggle in Vietnam reinforced the respect and unity of all our peoples.

Now, when Vietnam has been made the victim of intrigue, slander and encirclement by the Yankee imperialists and of betrayal, conspiracy and aggression by the government of China, Cuba offers it its firmest support.

With all their talk about the problem of the Vietnamese refugees—who are the direct result of colonialism, underdevelopment and the thirty-year war of aggression—why don't the U.S. government and its allies even mention the millions of Palestinians scattered all over the world and the hundreds of thousands of Zimbabwean, Namibian and South African refugees who are dispersed, persecuted and murdered in Africa?

What right does China have to teach Vietnam a lesson, invade its territory, destroy its modest wealth and murder thousands of its people? The Chinese ruling clique, which supported Pinochet against Allende, which supported South Africa's aggression against Angola, which supported the Shah, which supported Somoza, which supports and supplies weapons to Sadat, which justifies the Yankee blockade against Cuba and the continued existence of the naval base at Guantanamo, which defends NATO and sides with the United States and the most reactionary forces of Europe and the rest of the world, has neither the prestige nor the moral standing to teach anybody a lesson.

We also support the Lao People's Republic against the Chinese government's threats of aggression and expansionism.

Cuba's position on the problem of Kampuchea is known. We recognize the only real, legitimate government of Kampuchea, which is the People's Revolutionary Council of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, and we endorse Vietnam's solidarity with that fraternal country. People keep saying that Vietnam sent fighters to support the Kampuchean revolutionaries. Why don't they say that the bloody clique that had seized control of the country, in complicity with China and imperialism, provoked and attacked Vietnam first and that there is indisputable documentary proof of mass murders perpetrated against Vietnamese women, old people and children?

With all our energy, we condemn the genocidal government of

## **Castro Urges International Aid for Nicaraguan People**

"The new Nicaragua," Castro told the nonaligned conference, "requires the utmost cooperation from the international community for the reconstruction of the country, destroyed by almost half a century of Somoza dynasty, fathered by the U.S. marines. It is just that we offer them our solidarity."

Three days after Castro's appeal, FSLN leader Daniel Ortega Saavedra also addressed the delegates and requested "disinterested help" to enable the Nicaraguan government to rebuild the country's economy. "Forty-one days after our triumph," he said, "we present ourselves before you with open wounds."

In a country of only 2.3 million people, a million are hungry. The new government has appealed for emergency aid of 300 tons of food and medicine a day.

Industry and agriculture were devastated during the fighting by Somoza's U.S.-armed National Guard. The country's gross national product has sunk by 25 percent, and per capita income levels are now down to those of 1962. Capital flight during 1978 and the first half of 1979 exceeded \$550 million. When Somoza left the country, Nicaragua's reserves amounted to only \$3.5 million—about enough to pay for two days' worth of imports; as a result, virtually no goods have been imported in the past three months, and Nicaraguan economists estimate that the inventories of many items will be exhausted within a month.

Despite Nicaragua's vast needs, which at a conservative estimate will amount to at least \$800 million through 1980, and despite Washington's responsibility for the widespread destruction, the American imperialists have sent only \$7 million in emergency aid so far.

Cuba's response has been strikingly different. Despite its own limited resources, it has already sent more than 100 doctors and medical technicians to Nicaragua and has agreed to send between 500 and 1,000 teachers, whose salaries and transportation costs will be paid by the Cuban government.

Pol Pot and Ieng Sary. Three million dead accuse them. Even Sihanouk has admitted that some of his relatives were murdered. It is a shameful thing for the progressive forces of the world that such crimes could ever have been committed in the name of the revolution and socialism.

Nevertheless, Cuba, mindful of its obligations as host country, offered the facilities for both parties to be present in Havana until the movement comes to a decision in this regard. It is inexplicable that, while some oppose the expulsion of Egypt, that allied itself with the United States and Israel, openly betraying the noble Arab cause and the Palestinian people, efforts are being made to condemn Vietnam for its acts of legitimate defense against aggression and the fiction is maintained that Pol Pot's bloody government, an affront to all mankind, still exists.

The movement should preserve its unity and always seek a peaceful solution to any difference that may arise among its members. But it is equally bound to maintain impartiality, realism and political logic in its decisions. Tanzania was also obliged to defend itself against Uganda's aggression and to support the patriots of that country against the repressive regime. Now, the legitimate, revolutionary government of Uganda is represented in the conference. Why should we deny this right to People's Kampuchea?

We firmly support the Korean people's struggle for the unification of their country. We denounce the unjust division and virtual occupation of a part of their territory by U.S. troops. We denounce the inconsistency and hollowness of the U.S. government's

promises, for, far from reducing those troops it is reinforcing them and increasing their aggressive potential.

In our America, we reiterate our firm and staunch solidarity with the fraternal people of Puerto Rico, whose right to self-determination and independence is stubbornly denied by the colonizing power. Puerto Rico—just like Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, Palestine and other countries—needs our help. And we must give it unhesitatingly and unswervingly, in spite of the strong pressures that the United States constantly brings to bear on all countries in this regard.

We support Panama's right to full autonomy over the canal and we condemn the reactionary maneuvers to obstruct the laws for the implementation of the new treaty.

We support Belize's right to independence, which is today thwarted principally by the opposition and threats by the cruel and pro-Yankee satrapy that oppresses Guatemala. The people of Belize, from the ethnic, cultural and historical points of view, have nothing to do with the people of Guatemala and both are in need of freedom.

The new Nicaragua requires the utmost cooperation from the international community for the reconstruction of the country, destroyed by almost half a century of Somoza dynasty, fathered by the U.S. marines. It is just that we offer them our solidarity.

The aspiration of Bolivia, whose territory was mutilated a century ago in a war stirred up by imperialist interests, for an outlet to the sea is absolutely justified and vital. Therefore, we consider it our duty to support it.

We are opposed to the continuance of any type of colonial enclave in this hemisphere, where it still exists.

Cuba also needs solidarity. Our country is the victim of a criminal and cruel economic blockade imposed by the United States which includes even medicines and a piece of our national territory remains occupied by force.

Does the United States have the right to try at all costs to block our development? Does it have the right to possess military bases in another country against the wish of its people?

In all these issues and struggles, which are cause for our concern and call for our solidarity, there is a constant and invariable element: the action of imperialism. Can our movement ignore this? Is it just extremism on our part to clearly bring the deeds to light?

Although the underdeveloped countries, with great poverty, a very low living standard and life expectancy, are the ones who have the least to lose in a war, we cannot be insensitive to the need for peace in our planet. This would be tantamount to renouncing the hopes for a better future for the peoples. We do not agree with the thesis that a nuclear war is inevitable. Such a

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### **Puerto Rico—just like Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, Palestine and other countries—needs our help . . .**

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fatalist and irresponsible attitude is the best way to assure that humanity be annihilated by a universal holocaust. Never before in this life of humankind has such a real technological possibility existed. It is not possible for us to be so insensitive as to ignore this. For the first time in history, it has corresponded to our generation to confront such risks.

In our world of today, mountains of more and more deadly arms accumulate alongside mountains of problems of underdevelopment, poverty, food shortages, squalor, environmental pollution, school and housing shortages, unemployment and an explosive population growth. Such natural resources as land, water, energy and raw materials are beginning to be in short supply in various parts of the world.

The developed capitalist societies not only created wasteful and untenable models for standards of living and consumption but also countries in our area conceive of development only as the aspiration to get to be and live like New York, London, or Paris.

One way or another, the world economic crisis, the energy crisis, inflation, the depression and unemployment oppress the peoples and governments of a large part of the earth. Very few, if any, of the members of our movement are free of these difficulties, because we bear the brunt of these calamities.

The struggle for peace and for a just economic order and a workable solution to the pressing problems that weigh on our people is, in our opinion, increasingly becoming the main question posed to the movement of non-aligned countries.

Peace, with the immense risks that threaten it, is not something that should be left exclusively in the hands of the big military powers. Peace is possible, but world peace can only be assured to the extent that all countries are consciously determined to fight for it—peace not just for a part of the world, but for all peoples. Peace, also, for Vietnam, the Palestinians, the patriots of Zimbabwe and

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### **Cuba also needs solidarity. Our country is the victim of a criminal economic blockade . . .**

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Namibia, the oppressed majorities in South Africa, Angola, Zambia, Mozambique, Botswana, Ethiopia, Syria, Lebanon, and the Saharan people. Peace with justice. Peace with independence. Peace with freedom. Peace for the powerful countries and the small countries. Peace for all continents and all peoples. We understand perfectly well that we will not achieve it without a tenacious, resolute struggle. But we should believe in the possibility of achieving it in spite of imperialism, neocolonialism, racism, Zionism, expansionism and the other regressive elements that still exist in the world. The strength of our united countries is very great. Never before have the forces of progress and the advanced political awareness of the peoples attained such high levels. Even within the imperialist, reactionary countries themselves, important progressive sectors are determined to struggle for the same ends. The important role that the people of the United States and world opinion played in ending the criminal imperialist war against Vietnam should not be forgotten.

We must demand peace, détente, peaceful coexistence and disarmament. We must demand and win them, because they will not come about by spontaneous generation, and there is no alternative in today's world, if we are to preserve the very existence of mankind.

Likewise, we must encourage all progress in this field. Thus, we must greet with satisfaction the SALT II agreements between the Soviet Union and the United States, as well as other steps in this field. We must also denounce the reactionary forces which advocate a cold war policy and are involved in the dirty arms trade business, destruction and death. They also oppose ratification of the treaty by the U.S. Senate.

However, we recognize that these steps, positive and important though they be, are still a long way from the ideal of gradual denuclearization leading to the total disappearance of nuclear weapons, which in the end would be the only equitable and just solution for all nations, and a halt to the arms race.

The day must come when humanity resolutely condemns the manufacturing and trade of arms.

Statistical publications indicate that the world spends more than 300 thousand million dollars a year on arms and military expenditures, and this is probably a conservative estimate.

The forces of the United States alone use up, for example, 30 million tons of oil which is more than the total expenditure of energy by all the nations of Central America and the Caribbean put together.

Three hundred thousand million dollars is enough to build 600,000 schools a year with a capacity of 400 million children; or 60 million comfortable homes with a capacity of 300 million people; or 50,000 hospitals with 18 million beds; or 20,000 factories to provide employment for more than 20 million workers; or make possible the irrigation of 150 million hectares of land, which with an



adequate technical level could provide food for 1,000 million people. That's what humanity wastes on military expenditures every year. We must also bear in mind the huge drain on manpower, in the blood of youth, scientific and technical resources, raw materials and other goods. This is the price for there not being a true climate of confidence and peace in the world.

As far as we Marxists are concerned war and weapons are inseparably linked in the course of history to the system of the exploitation of man by man and the tremendous greed of that system to take over the natural resources of other peoples. As we one day said at the UN, "Halt the philosophy of plunder and the philosophy of war will be halted."

Socialism as a system does not require arms production for its economy. It doesn't need armies to seize the resources of other people. Had unity and fraternity among peoples and men been a reality there would have been no need for arms to attack or oppress anybody, nor for arms to win and defend freedom.

Regardless of how long and utopian the path may seem, regardless of the setbacks and even the betrayals in the progressive movement, we must never be discouraged nor cease our effort to achieve these objectives. At all international organizations and platforms we must demand a shift from rhetoric to action.

The questions lead us directly to the topic of economics. More and more statesmen and leaders in our movement are stating the need to place this matter at the center of our concerns. You are statesmen who wrestle every day with the knotty economic questions of your countries. You know full well what the great difficulties are: the constantly rising foreign debt, a shortage of foreign currency, the soaring prices of fuel and other import products, unequal terms of trade, low prices on the foreign market that constantly and increasingly rob us of the products that are the fruit of our people's labor, inflation, the rise of domestic prices and all the social conflicts that arise from this state of affairs.

Progressive governments that are making a noble effort to develop and increase the well-being of their countries are overwhelmed and may even be wiped out by economic difficulties and unfair, unpopular conditions imposed by the international credit agencies. What political price haven't many of you had to pay because of the rules laid down by the International Monetary Fund? We Cubans, who are excluded from that institution because of an imperialist dictate, aren't quite sure whether that exclusion was a punishment or a privilege.

Some governments placed in power by the people's revolutionary struggles suddenly find themselves faced with horrifying conditions of poverty, indebtedness and underdevelopment that prevent them from responding to even the most modest hopes of their peoples.

I'm not going to tell you half-truths, nor am I going to hide the fact that social difficulties are much greater when, in any of our countries, a small minority controls the basic wealth and the majority of the people are completely dispossessed. In short, if the system is socially just, the possibilities of survival and economic and social development are incomparably greater. Some countries present the phenomenon of growing economies with equally growing poverty, illiteracy, the number of children with no schools to go to, malnutrition, disease, begging and unemployment—all of which show in no uncertain terms that something is wrong.

The underdeveloped countries—some optimistically prefer to call them developing countries, when, in fact, the gap separating their per capita incomes and standard of living from those of the developed countries is constantly widening—contain 65 percent of the world population but account for only 15 percent of total world production and only 3 percent of industrial production. The conglomerate of countries in this category, which have no natural energy sources, now have a foreign debt of over 300 billion. It is estimated that around 40 billion a year goes to servicing this foreign debt—more than 20 percent of their exports. Average per capita income in the developed countries is now 14 times greater than in the underdeveloped countries. In addition, the underdeveloped countries contain more than 900 million illiterate adults. This situation is untenable.

One of the most acute problems facing the non-oil-producing underdeveloped countries—the vast majority of the members of our movement—is the energy crisis. The oil-exporting countries—all of which are in the underdeveloped world and almost all of which belong to the movement of non-aligned countries—have always been supported by the rest of our countries in their just demands for the revaluation of their product and an end to unequal terms of trade and the wasting of energy. These countries now have a much greater economic potential and negotiating capacity with the developed capitalist world.

This is not the case of the non-oil-producing underdeveloped countries. Sugar, bauxite, copper and other solid minerals, peanuts, copra, sisal, tea, cashews and agricultural products in general are terribly underpriced on the world market. The developed capitalist countries selfishly raise their tariffs against those few products that our countries manufacture and even subsidize goods that compete with ours, whenever possible. The European Economic Community and the United States do this, for example, with sugar.

The prices of the equipment, machinery, industrial articles and semifinished products that we import are raised constantly. The privileged exporters of these goods charge ever higher prices for them. It is easier for them than for the underdeveloped countries to pay for fuel. They even export tens of billions of dollars' worth of arms annually and often buy oil with this money. The shah of Iran was one of their favorite multimillionaire clients, until he

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### **Important role people of the U.S. played in ending the criminal imperialist war against Vietnam should not be forgotten . . .**

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was rightly overthrown not long ago. Most of the surplus money from oil sales is deposited and invested in the richest, most developed capitalist countries. The funds are also used to supply them with fuel. But what recourse do the non-oil-producing underdeveloped countries have?

It is absolutely necessary to be aware of this reality, because the situation of many countries, a large number of which are members of this movement, is truly desperate. We should consider and discuss this matter. A solution must be found. Imperialism is already maneuvering to divide us. It is trying to isolate the oil-producing countries from the rest of the underdeveloped world, blaming them for the economic crisis—whose cause really lies in the unjust order established in the world by the imperialist system. And, what is even more dangerous, it is looking for pretexts and covering up its aggressive plans against the oil-exporting countries.

Cuba isn't bringing this topic up in order to defend interests that affect it directly. Of course, we suffer from the indirect effects of the international economic crisis and the low prices established for our products in Western markets, but we have an assured supply of oil which we purchase with sugar, whose price is directly proportional to the price of oil and other articles which we import from the socialist area.

Nevertheless, we should point out that, if all the sugar produced in Cuba—nearly 8 million tons in the 1979 harvest, the largest production of cane sugar in the world—had been sold to the Western world at the price now being paid on the so-called world market—around 8 cents a pound—it wouldn't have paid for the fuel that Cuba uses, at its present price.

We must look for solutions to the energy crisis, but not only for the developed countries, that already use most of the energy produced in the world. Basically, we must also find solutions for the underdeveloped countries.

We appeal to the sense of responsibility of the large oil-exporting countries in our movement, asking them to strike out courageously, firmly and boldly in implementing a wise and farsighted policy of economic cooperation, supplies and invest-

ments in our underdeveloped world, because their future depends on ours.

I am not asking you to sacrifice your legitimate interests. I am not asking you to stop all-out efforts to develop and raise the well-being of your own peoples. I am not asking you to stop trying to safeguard your future. I am inviting you to join us and close ranks with us and struggle together for a real new international economic order whose benefit will extend to all.

No money can purchase the future, because the future lies in justice, in our consciences and in the honest and fraternal solidarity of our peoples.

The solution to the economic problems faced by our countries requires a tremendous, responsible, conscious and serious effort of a world nature.

Those of us meeting here represent the vast majority of the

peoples of the world. Let us close ranks and unite the growing force of our vigorous movement in the United Nations and in all other international forums to demand economic justice for our peoples and an end to foreign control over our resources and the theft of our labor. Let us close ranks in demanding respect for our right to development, to life and to the future. Enough of building a world economy based on the opulence of those who exploited and impoverished us in the past and who exploit and impoverish us today and of the poverty, the economic and social underdevelopment of the vast majority of mankind. May a firm determination to struggle and concrete plans of action come out of this sixth summit conference: deeds, not just words.

Perhaps this speech inaugurating this conference has been somewhat undiplomatic, not quite in line with protocol, but no one should doubt the complete loyalty with which I have spoken.

Thank you. □

## Longest-Held Political Prisoners in Western Hemisphere

# Four Puerto Rican Nationalists Released

By José G. Pérez

[The following article is scheduled to appear in the September 24 issue of *Perspectiva Mundial*, a Spanish-language revolutionary-socialist magazine published fortnightly in New York. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

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In a concession to world public opinion, President Carter September 6 ordered the immediate and unconditional release of four members of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party. Having spent more than twenty-five years in Yankee prisons, they were the longest-held political prisoners in the entire Western Hemisphere.

The four—Lolita Lebrón, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Oscar Collazo, and Irving Flores—were convicted of having taken up arms against the colonial servitude imposed on their country by the United States. A fifth nationalist, Andrés Figueroa Cordero, was released two years ago after he was already—in his own words—“finished off” by cancer. He died March 7.

The release of the four nationalists was for many years the unanimous demand of the Puerto Rican people, regardless of their political positions. Others convicted in Puerto Rico for actions similar to those of the four had been amnestied years ago. Among those who spoke out in favor of the nationalists in recent years were both houses of the Puerto Rican legislature, four ex-governors of the island, all the political parties, as well as numerous trade-union, student, religious, and civic organizations.

The release of the four also represents a victory for progressive public opinion throughout the world. This was reflected, for example, in the resolution adopted August 15 by the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization, which asked

“that the four Puerto Rican political prisoners . . . be immediately and unconditionally released.”

The many demonstrations, rallies, and other activities carried out in the United States for the release of the nationalists were very important.

In addition, the stance of solidarity by the revolutionary government of Cuba played an important role, promoting both the release of the prisoners as well as independence for Puerto Rico in numerous international forums, including the UN and the movement of nonaligned countries.

In fact, U.S. press reports indicate that the release of the four represents an exchange of the type called for by Cuba: “reciprocal unilateral humanitarian gestures.” Cuba has reportedly promised to

set free four U.S. citizens convicted of espionage.

The Cuban government has not yet confirmed these reports. Nevertheless, if it's a question of “reciprocal unilateral humanitarian gestures,” Carter still has a long way to go, since in recent months Cuba has released not four, but thousands of persons jailed for crimes against the security of the revolution.

The release of the Puerto Rican nationalists shows how effective international protests and pressure can be in freeing political prisoners from the jails of the most powerful imperialist country in the world. This victory should encourage us to redouble our efforts on behalf of the compañeros being held in the dungeons of dictatorships such as Chile and Argentina, as well as in supposedly democratic countries like the United States. □

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