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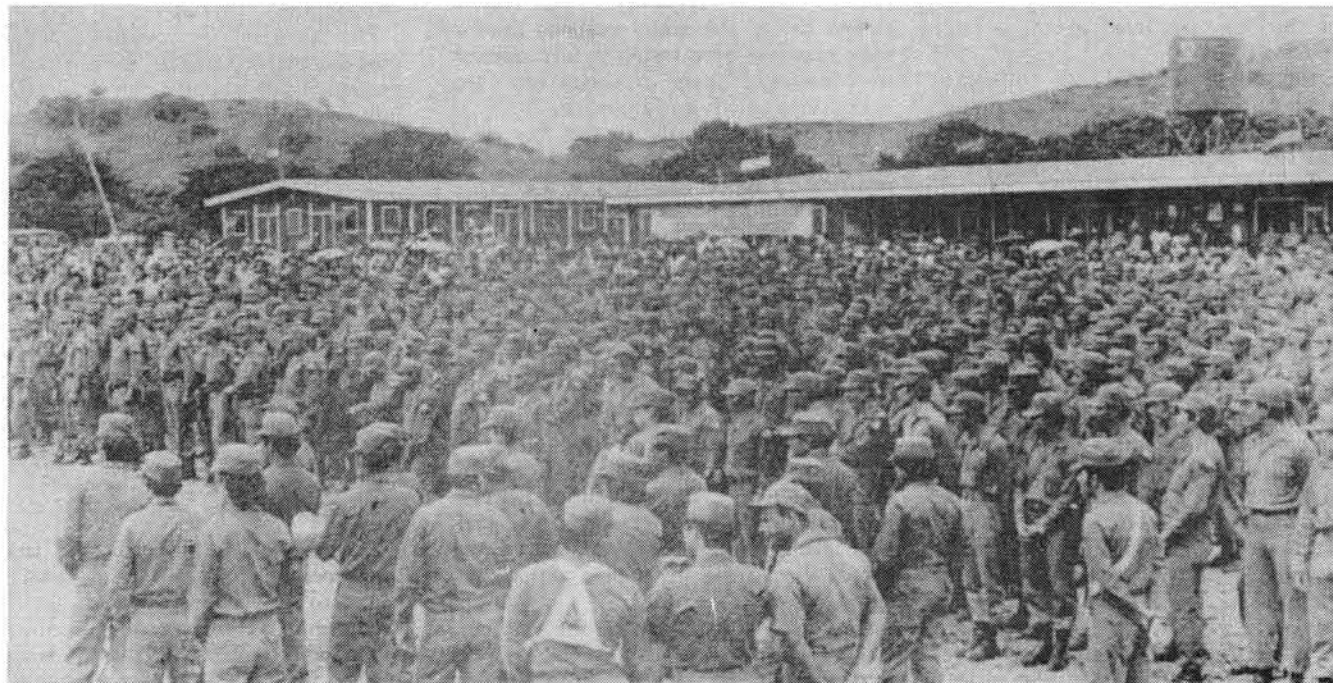
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November 24, 1980

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Bourgeois Representatives Walk Out of Council of State **Nicaraguan Capitalists Push Toward Showdown With FSLN**



Barricada

JINOTEGA, Nicaragua, November 4: Special brigade of Sandinista People's Militia assembles before departing to do battle against counterrevolutionary gangs in northern part of country. Step-up in armed attacks by Somozaist forces has coincided with new political provocations against FSLN by bourgeois parties.

**Alain Krivine on French
Presidential Elections:**

**FOR UNITY
AGAINST GISCARD'S
AUSTERITY DRIVE!**

**Interview With
Tony Benn and a Reply:**

**HOW WILL A LABOR
PARTY BE BUILT
IN THE U.S.A.?**

Polish Workers Score Major New Victory

By Gerry Foley

In the face of a determined, organized movement of the majority of the Polish working class, the Stalinist bureaucracy was forced to make another major retreat on November 10.

The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the independent union confederation, Solidarity. It upheld the union's appeal against the inclusion in its statutes of a pledge to accept the "leading role" of the ruling Communist Party.

As the union squared off with the bureaucracy in the days before the ruling was to be handed down, it developed a posture that combined resoluteness with tactical adeptness and flexibility.

If the bureaucracy had refused to yield on the question of writing subordination to the party into Solidarity's statutes, the union announced that it would start a series of rolling local general strikes. It planned to call out one city after another across the country.

The union's plan would have made it possible to exert substantial pressure, but also left room for retreat, if necessary.

During the week before the ruling, hospital workers, doctors, and medical students asserted their right to strike by carrying out job actions in Gdansk, Warsaw, and other cities. Solidarity lived up to its name by calling a successful one-hour strike by bus drivers in selected cities to support the health workers. Postal employees were also on strike in Gdansk and other cities.

At a decisive moment in the buildup toward the ruling, the union leadership made another tactical maneuver. It agreed to add an annex to the statutes that simply repeated the pledges to respect the established authority of the Communist Party, the character of the state, and Poland's existing international alliances that were included in the Gdansk accords. Along with that, it added another annex recognizing Conventions 87 and 98 of the International Labor Organization on the rights of trade unions.

Thus, the bureaucracy could not claim that the union was defying the political authority of the established government and its institutions. At the same time, however, Solidarity effectively asserted its right to determine its own statutes and function as an independent organization directly responsible to the workers for defending their economic interests.

The face-off between the workers and the bureaucracy took place in the wake of a tour by Solidarity leader Lech Walesa through southern Poland, where he was

repeatedly greeted by massive turnouts. "Don't be scared of rockets, tanks, and other things," Walesa told the crowd in Czestochowa.

Throughout the two weeks leading up to the Supreme Court ruling, the union made it clear that it was not responsible for the growing tensions in the society or the disruption of the economy. In this way, it spiked one of the main weapons the bureaucracy has been trying to turn against it—widespread fears of social and economic breakdown and invasion.

For example, on the eve of the court decision, the official Polish wire service reported an appeal attributed to a group of women at the Zdunska Wola factory. The statement called on all Polish women and mothers to protest against forces that "want to destroy a social order in the country." It said that "chaos in the country might bring still bigger troubles and general famine."

Tensions, Threats, and Slanders

Tensions had risen to a high pitch before the Supreme Court's decision. The government broadcast a film of joint maneuvers by the Polish and Soviet armies on television. Some foreign correspondents were barred and others threatened with expulsion.

Only a few days before the Supreme Court ruling, a top Polish official asserted that the union's statutes *must* include the disputed clause.

One of the most prominent members of the CP Central Committee, Tadeusz Grabski, gave a speech over the radio, claiming that "forces alien to our system, which want to weaken or replace it, are trying to influence changes within the trade union movement."

On November 7, the Central Committee member assigned to oversee the press, Jozef Klasa, told journalists, "The party has decided for the first time since August to exploit all possibilities . . . to prevent a strike. This includes resorting to administrative measures such as declaring strikes illegal in certain enterprises."

Gdansk, the birthplace of Solidarity, was described as "the principal center" of the "antisocialist forces." Klasa claimed that Jacek Kuron, leader of the Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR), was a representative of such elements.

In the period before November 10, the Communist Party called regional meetings of cadres throughout the country in an attempt to "fight against the strike politi-

cally." Evidently, the perspectives were not promising.

The government's pressure campaign against Solidarity was launched by Stanislaw Kania, the CP first secretary, in a speech at the Nowa Huta steel plant on November 5. The party boss pointed to the worsening state of the economy and charged that the union would be responsible for economic disaster if it did not stop the "agitation."

Even this attempt to crack down revealed how much the bureaucracy's control has weakened. When the television and radio broadcast Kania's address, they also picked up remarks by local CP activists who were sharply critical of the party's management of the economy and the country.

The latest victory reveals that the August-September strikes and mass independent trade unions—now reportedly 10-million strong—have already brought about changes so extensive and so profound that millions of Poles correctly believe these gains cannot be reversed by the bureaucratic caste on its own. That is why the Polish Stalinists have sought to intimidate workers by hinting about the danger of a Soviet occupation.

Moreover, the Stalinist bureaucracies throughout Eastern Europe and nonruling Stalinist parties everywhere are more on the defensive politically than during previous antibureaucratic upsurges, even the Prague Spring in 1968.

Who Really Defends Socialism

The leaders of the democratic workers movement in Poland have made it clear that they are defenders of socialism. They are fighting for the principles on which the bureaucratic rulers and Stalinist parties falsely claim to stand—the rule of the workers over the economy and the society.

In fact, the Stalinist Communist Party of Italy has publicly rebutted the slanderous charges against the independent union movement and prominent Polish opposition figures.

The November 7 *Rinascita*, a weekly journal of the Italian CP directed toward intellectuals, carried an article with an introduction stating "For the first time in a people's democracy, the right of the civil society to exist and organize has been recognized."

("Civil society" is a term used for the *people* as opposed to the *state* in the writings of Italian CP founder Antonio Gramsci.)

In this article, Francesco Cataluccio wrote that the recognition of Solidarity meant that for the first time "civil society" had been accorded the right to "organize to watch out for its own interests and voice its own aspirations."

Cataluccio also gave a positive assessment of the KOR and Kuron, directly contradicting the campaign of lies being

carried on by the Polish, Soviet, Czechoslovak, and East German press:

Having arisen as a committee to defend the workers, the KOR later assumed a more political structure and adopted a minimum program of trying to promote the development of 'independent institutions. . . . Today many of its members think the time has come to change the society (while respecting the political situation of the country and its socialist character) in the direction of more democracy and pluralism. This is the program . . . that two young Communists, Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski, set forth in 1964 in their *Open Letter to the Communist Party*.

The Open Letter* in fact laid out a program for political revolution. It openly paid its respects to the fight by the Left Opposition in the Soviet Union in the 1920s to preserve the program of Lenin against the privileged bureaucracy headed by Stalin.

The Italian CP writer wrote: "In front of a crowd of 15,000 persons, Walesa said [about the KOR], "They are not antisocialist forces, because I know these people very well."

The reason for the attacks on the KOR now, Cataluccio wrote, was that "some elements in the government are trying to break up the alliance between broad sections of the working class and groups of intellectuals, which proved key to victory in the summer."

The Polish official press itself, for its own reasons, has also had to recognize some basic facts about the new movement. For example, it gets harder and harder to claim that a movement to which the majority of the Polish working class belongs is "antisocialist" or dominated by the "class enemy."

Thus, in its November 1 issue, *Zycie Warszawy*, the country's most important daily, drew attention to the following remark, which was made by Lech Walesa in a symposium printed in the influential weekly *Polityka*:

"We are not questioning socialism or the country's alliances. We respect reality, that is inevitable. We are certainly not going to go back to capitalism. And we are not going to copy any Western model."

Crisis of Stalinism

Even the most subservient followers of the Soviet bureaucracy such as the American CP have had to display an uncharacteristic caution in what they say about the democratic workers movement, as well as admit some of the misdeeds of the Polish regime.

The rise of the mass democratic workers movement in Poland has opened a new stage in the crisis of Stalinism worldwide.

*Available in *Revolutionary Marxist Students in Poland Speak Out*, from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y., 10014; \$1.25, also include \$.75 for postage.

After the November 10 victory, the example of the militant workers in Poland is going to become even more pervasive in the world Communist movement and in the other bureaucratized workers states.

For the first time since the rise of Stalinist totalitarianism, the bureaucratic misrulers face a mass, fighting workers move-

ment and one with leaders who have authority, a strategy, and proven tactical capacity.

Thus, the regime's retreat is unlikely to usher in a period of even relative quiescence. The chinks in the totalitarian rule of the bureaucracy will certainly widen. New battles are already beginning. □

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Nicaraguan Capitalists Walk Out of Council of State

By Lars Palmgren

MANAGUA—All the representatives of the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP) and the bourgeois parties staged a walkout from Nicaragua's Council of State here on November 12. Joining them were the delegates from two small trade-union federations whose leaders identify with the capitalist forces.

The walkout was planned well in advance. COSEP representative Jaime Montealegre even read and distributed a printed document that explained why the bourgeois delegates and union bureaucrats were leaving the Council.

The Council of State is a consultative and legislative subordinate to the executive branch of the revolutionary government, the Junta of National Reconstruction (JRN). The bourgeois forces were allocated a minority of seats in the Council when it was set up last May.

The November 12 session of the Council of State had begun in the usual way, with the week's correspondence being read by

the presiding committee. Among the letters received was one from each of the bourgeois parties protesting the banning of a Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN) rally and complaining about demonstrations that had taken place outside the MDN's headquarters in Managua.

Another letter from Interior Minister Tomás Borge explained the considerations involved in prohibiting the MDN rally.

MDN representative Alvaro Jerez demanded the floor for an immediate response to Borge's letter. This was denied by the Council's president, Commander Carlos Núñez.

At the top of the Council's agenda for the day was an important discussion on proposed improvements in the wages and working conditions of farm workers involved in the coffee harvest. Núñez explained that the urgency of coming to decisions about those proposals before the beginning of the harvest was more important than the MDN's complaints against

Borge. In addition, the Council's own bylaws prohibit alterations to the agenda once it has been adopted.

Taking a flexible attitude, however, Núñez proposed including Jerez's request as a special point at the end of the day's agenda. And that was when the bourgeois delegates walked out.

As a result, Núñez decided to suspend the session.

The dominant sector of the bourgeoisie in Nicaragua is on the warpath. But they seem to have forgotten that there has been a revolution here, a revolution made not by them but by the workers and peasants. As Eloisa Corrales, a chemical worker, said, "If we fought once for a free homeland, we will struggle to the end to defend this process, because it has given us the opportunity to participate in the government that represents all the workers."

The fact that the delegates from the Confederation of Nicaraguan Workers (CTN) and Confederation of Trade Union

Nicaraguan Government Bans MDN Rally

MANAGUA—The Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN), the country's most important capitalist political party, had planned to stage a big rally Sunday, November 9, at Nandaime, a town about thirty miles south of here.

The reactionary daily *La Prensa* carried out a big publicity campaign for the rally, indicating that it was being planned as the start of a general political offensive by the bourgeoisie against the FSLN and the revolutionary government.

But the rally never took place. It was banned by the government under Decree No. 513, which was adopted in August and prohibits all electoral campaigning until 1984.

At a November 10 news conference, Interior Minister Tomás Borge and Defense Minister Humberto Ortega explained that more was involved than a simple political campaign. They reported that Sandinista security forces had received information that counterrevolutionary attacks had been planned to coincide with the MDN rally.

Borge said that he had spoken with MDN leader Robelo several days earlier to inform him of the counterrevolutionary plan and to urge him not to go ahead with the meeting in Nandaime.

"Although we could not prove that people in the MDN knew anything about the attacks in the North, we suspected that there were elements who had infiltrated it to try to carry out provocations," Borge said.

Commander Humberto Ortega added: "There are infiltrators in local political organizations who are not in agreement with our revolution and who utilize these groups to create problems."

Despite the efforts to persuade Robelo to suspend the rally, however, he and the MDN insisted that they would hold it. That was when the government decided to invoke Decree No. 513 and ban the rally.

At least one of the expected counterrevolutionary attacks did take place on November 9 in the village of Santa María, on the border with Honduras.

Santa María was attacked by between forty and fifty well-armed men. One member of the Sandinista People's Army was killed and at least one militia member seriously injured. One of the counterrevolutionaries was also killed. He was wearing a uniform of the type used by Somoza's National Guard and by the Honduran army.

When a helicopter from the Sandinista

air force arrived on the scene, the counterrevolutionaries fled toward the Honduran border.

Commander Ortega reported that the attack on Santa María was not an isolated incident. Almost every day during the past two months some incident has taken place, including frequent penetration by foreign aircraft of various kinds.

Most of the attacks have originated in Honduras, but the government of Honduras seems to have done nothing to prevent them.

"If we know where the [ex-National Guard] camps are, how is it that the army of that country does not do anything about those groups?" Borge asked. "The Honduran government will have to give an explanation about this situation," he concluded.

In light of the stepped-up counterrevolutionary attacks, Borge, Ortega, and the members of the junta said that the strengthening of national unity around the tasks of economic reconstruction and defense of the interests of the people was more urgent than ever.

And, said Commander Borge, "That ought to be shown in practice and not simply in words."

—Lars Palmgren

Unification (CUS) left their seats in solidarity with the bourgeois representatives has caused strong reactions among the ranks of the unions that make up those two federations.

Fabio Galo González, who works at the Aceitera Corona, a cotton-oil processing plant where the union belongs to the CTN, said: "The CTN's withdrawal from the Council of State confirms that it defends the interests of the bourgeoisie." The union members at the Aceitera Corona, together with other workers belonging to the CTN, are planning to hold an assembly to discuss the matter.

Following the walkout from the Council of State, mass organizations led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) quickly organized rallies, demonstrations, and meetings in cities and towns throughout the country to reject the bourgeoisie's provocations.

The capitalist forces "are mistaken about many things," Moisés Hassán of the Junta of National Reconstruction told one of the rallies in Managua on November 13. "They think that when there are expressions of discontent among our people, when the people complain and raise demands . . . that this signifies support" for the capitalists.

"But they are mistaken," Hassán said. "They do not understand that this is an expression of confidence in the Sandinista Front and the government; that the people now feel free to express their discontent. Such liberty is a conquest guaranteed by the FSLN and the government."

At another meeting the same day, Junta member Sergio Ramírez explained why the capitalist representatives had walked out of the Council of State. "We cannot delude ourselves about what is occurring at bottom," he said. "In Nicaragua now there is a dispute over power."

"On July 19 [1979] we saw the Somozaist National Guard fleeing, defeated, and other Somozaists who ran off with their millions. But there were others who were also defeated—those who couldn't impose their own interests."

Ramírez explained how the second defeat came about: "It was very important to them that the National Guard not be totally defeated, that part of the Somozaist Guard remain in place and help to establish their power—the power of the ones who are now seeking provocations."

The capitalist forces "do not hold power in Nicaragua," Ramírez said. "They forget—and it is a grave error—that here the power was conquered in a war that was very costly for the people."

"So the only way for this power of the people to be transferred would be to change the hands that hold the weapons that defend this popular power. . . ."

"What they want is to erase this revolution from the map. That is the most



Fred Murphy/IP

SERGIO RAMÍREZ

infantile dream they could have—because we are not in Jamaica, we are not in Chile in 1973 or Guatemala in 1954: We are in liberated Nicaragua."

All the rallies and meetings concluded with a call for taking the offensive against the efforts of the capitalists to undermine support for the FSLN and the revolution. "This is an ideological struggle in which we must not ignore even a single argument of the bourgeoisie," Moisés Hassán said. "That is the only way we can explain and clarify things for those who may still be confused about the aims of these gentlemen."

One of the complaints of the COSEP and the bourgeois parties is that the Sandinists

have violated their own call for "national unity." Alfonso Robelo of the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement said November 12 that "it is necessary to understand that when the FSLN uses those words [national unity] what it means is the subordination of all the forces of the country to their dictates."

Sergio Ramírez answered Robelo directly at the November 13 meeting. "Yes," he said, "we should declare proudly that the FSLN wants unity around its own interests. Why? Perhaps because the Sandinista leaders have used their positions to make money?"

"No!" the demonstrators responded.

"Perhaps the Sandinista leaders have bought farms and factories, or have sent their money off to Miami?"

"No!"

"Perhaps because we have used our power to enrich ourselves?"

"No!"

"Why not?" Ramírez asked. And the crowd answered with him: "Because the Sandinista Front has no interests separate from those of the people themselves."

"Without the hegemony of the Sandinista Front one cannot speak of national unity in Nicaragua," Ramírez concluded.

That doesn't mean that the FSLN and the government are not prepared to hold discussions with the groups that walked out of the Council of State. "The government is open to a dialogue," Sergio Ramírez said. "But so long as those gentlemen do not return to take their seats in the Council of State, there is no possible room for a dialogue." □

Catholics Denounce U.S. Role in El Salvador

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, meeting in Washington November 8, denounced the U.S. government's support to El Salvador's brutal junta.

The bishops declared, "The United States Catholic Conference continues to oppose all military aid to the government of El Salvador and any further intervention by our government in the internal affairs of El Salvador."

In an implicit expression of sympathy with the liberation forces, the conference statement continued:

"We fervently hope that an accommodation, fully incorporating the positions expressed by the major segments of the Salvadoran population organized in the democratic and revolutionary opposition, may be achieved soon and with a minimum of bloodshed and hatred."

In a separate expression of opposition to

Washington's policy, Bishop Frank J. Harrison of Syracuse, New York, published a letter to Secretary of State Edmund Muskie.

Harrison declared that "the military dominated government" in El Salvador "enjoys the support of your administration, but not the support of the Salvadoran people."

He urged Muskie to resist any "pressures and temptations" to intervene militarily in Central America.

"We, along with millions of Christians in Latin America, are not afraid of the wave of change sweeping Central America because the change is rooted in a desire to create more just societies," Bishop Harrison said.

The statements represent a big political blow to administration efforts to gain public tolerance for step-by-step escalation of the U.S. military role in El Salvador.

Nicaraguan Capitalists Sharpen Attacks on FSLN

By Lars Palmgren and Lorraine Thiebaud

MANAGUA—"We are going into difficult times," Commander Bayardo Arce, the FSLN's political secretary, said at a November 8 meeting commemorating the fourth anniversary of the death of FSLN founder Carlos Fonseca Amador.

Arce was speaking of the economic difficulties that Nicaragua will face in 1981. The proposed new economic plan promises no major improvements for the broad masses of the Nicaraguan people. Rather, the plan calls for hard work, further austerity, greater sacrifice.

"But," Arce continued, "1981 will be a crucial year. We intend to conclude the phase of economic reactivation, so that in 1982 we can begin to develop the economic project that will lay the basis for the profoundly and truly new Nicaragua."

The prospect of creating what Arce called "the new Nicaragua that frightens the bosses" has caused the bourgeoisie to redouble its campaign against the FSLN. "The country's reactionary sectors," Arce explained, "understand perfectly that we are entering difficult days. They want to weaken the power of the people. They want to demoralize our people and weaken the FSLN so that it cannot guide the energies of our workers and peasants to overcome the difficulties."

Weakening the masses' confidence in the FSLN has been the objective of those responsible for counterrevolutionary activities and the increase in provocations in the recent period.

Some of the most obvious provocations are those of the daily bourgeois opposition paper, *La Prensa*.

There are only three daily papers in Nicaragua—*La Prensa*, *El Nuevo Diario*, and the FSLN daily *Barricada*.

El Nuevo Diario was founded in May 1980, after a conflict at *La Prensa* led most of the journalists and technicians to walk out and form their own paper. Since then, *La Prensa* has become strictly the voice of the bourgeoisie. The progressive journalists who previously worked for it now all work for *El Nuevo Diario*.

But *La Prensa* is the oldest newspaper in Nicaragua, and many people still associate its name with the important role it played in opposing the Somoza dictatorship. It has a well-established distribution system, and still has the largest circulation of the three dailies. Its influence is not easily counteracted by the two papers that support the revolution. Lack of money prevents the majority of people from reading more than one daily paper.

Since May, *La Prensa* has been using its influence to attack the revolution. These attacks are not always open, or only on the editorial page. Rather, *La Prensa* has developed a technique whereby the selection of news, the layout of headlines, and the use of quotation marks often play as big a role as the actual content of articles.

The handling of international news is important to *La Prensa's* efforts to confuse its readers. The image of the world situation conveyed by *La Prensa* is that freedom-loving people the world over are fighting against communist dictatorships.

The Cubans who emigrated to Miami "in search of liberty" are some of *La Prensa's* heroes. Another Cuban frequently quoted by *La Prensa* is Huber Matos, who recently founded a new Cuban exile organization in Venezuela that aims to "crush the Castro dictatorship."

La Prensa joyfully greeted the election results in Jamaica with bold headlines declaring "Marxists Routed in Jamaica."

And when it comes to El Salvador, *La Prensa* joins its political idols—Venezuelan President Luis Herrera Campins and his Costa Rican colleague Carazo—in cheering on the military/Christian Democratic junta. According to *La Prensa*, the real "revolutionaries" in El Salvador are the members of the junta, who are caught between the "extreme right" and the "extreme left."

To sum it up, *La Prensa's* view of the world is in complete accord with that of the U.S. State Department.

What *La Prensa* fails to report is also significant. For example, on the anniversary of the death of FSLN founder Carlos Fonseca Amador, *La Prensa* initiated a campaign to have Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, the publisher of *La Prensa* who was murdered by Somoza's agents in January 1978, declared a national hero. It wrote nothing of Carlos Fonseca.

When the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) recently called for a conference of all the trade-union organizations in Nicaragua, *La Prensa's* only comment was a small article titled "CST Insists: A Single Federation." The article never mentioned the content of the CST's proposal.

Some days later *La Prensa* published a document by the bourgeois Social Democratic Party protesting strongly against attempts to limit "trade union pluralism." For *La Prensa* and the bourgeoisie, "trade union pluralism" means the existence of competing union federations, dividing the working class and benefitting the bosses.

Another important event in recent weeks

was the special training of thousands of militia members organized into the Commander Ezequiel Brigade. These working-class men and women have volunteered to reinforce Nicaragua's northern border, where counterrevolutionary bands from Honduras have been launching attacks. *La Prensa* did not write a word about this.

La Prensa's letters column is also devoted to attacking the revolution. The editors find this technique especially useful, since they can always disclaim responsibility for the contents of these "letters." No effort is made to verify the accuracy of the allegations in these letters. If it turns out that the contents are false, *La Prensa* never bothers to inform its readers.

For example, on October 24 the paper published a letter allegedly received by a member of the Social Christian Party (PSC) in León, in which the PSC militant was threatened with death if he did not leave his party or get out of town. The letter appeared over the signature of the "Western Sandinista Coordinating Committee."

The fact that the "Western Sandinista Coordinating Committee" does not exist is well known to the journalists at *La Prensa* and in any case is easy to verify. But no clarification was ever published. A letter sent in response by the FSLN Departmental Directorate in León was not published either.

On October 22 *La Prensa* printed a letter signed by one "Armando Rojas," purportedly an economics student at the National Autonomous University (UNAN). The letter was published under big headlines saying "Economics Student Outlines Government's Marxist Plan."

Some quotations from this letter:

All vestiges of religion are to be erased from the consciousness of the Nicaraguan people. Since Marxism is essentially an economic system based on the atheistic principles of historical materialism, it considers religion of any kind to be the greatest obstacle to the exercise of total power. . . .

The entire work force of the country is to be controlled and manipulated by means of the mass organizations. They will form the shock troops that will allow us to displace the bourgeoisie in the future. . . .

The deplorable bourgeois sentiments of human dignity and civic rights are to be erased from Nicaraguans' consciousness, so that they can serve the objectives of mass manipulation with greater servility and effectiveness.

One need not read many lines of this before realizing that Armando Rojas is either a fake or a fool. No Marxist would

write in this way. But it is not uncommon for ignorant bourgeois opponents of Marxism to produce such fabrications. And the contents of this letter coincide closely with what *La Prensa* implies is the real program of the FSLN.

Barricada checked at the National Autonomous University and found that no student named Armando Rojas was enrolled in economics or in any other department of the university. *La Prensa* has made no comment or retraction.

But the main thrust of *La Prensa's* campaign has been against the Sandinista armed forces, and its provocations in this regard have not been so amateurish as the "Rojas" letter.

The Sandinista army, police, and militia are the chief villains in the rumormongering and in the daily complaints in the letters column. When an incident or accident involving the armed forces takes place, it is sure to be on *La Prensa's* front pages for days.

Such an accident occurred in Managua on October 19. As part of an effort to round up a criminal band, roadblocks were set up by the Sandinista police. When a taxi driver refused to stop at the roadblock and ignored repeated orders to halt, a Sandinista police officer shot at the wheels of the escaping vehicle. He missed and a female passenger was injured.

A terrible accident. But for *La Prensa*, it was an opportunity to heap suspicion and disrepute on the police.

In the week following this accident *La Prensa* published several more articles about police shooting at cars that failed to stop at roadblocks. The implication was that the police enjoy shooting indiscriminately at cars.

The low point of this campaign was reached on October 29 when *La Prensa* published an article on the case of "Pepa," a mule shot by police for not halting at a roadblock.

The rumormongering reached such proportions that Minister of the Interior Tomás Borge called a special news conference to deal exclusively with the taxi incident.

Borge first clarified the police policy concerning the use of weapons. "The police are prohibited from using arms except in self-defense, when they are threatened," he said. Borge added that, unlike the situation when Somoza's National Guard was in control, those police officers accused of inappropriate use of weapons were immediately suspended from the police force, tried, and punished.

Borge went on to clarify the innumerable falsifications and omissions in *La Prensa's* reporting of incidents concerning the police. In the case of Urania González, the injured woman taxi passenger, Borge said the government was assuming full responsibility for her medical care and would be sending her to Venezuela or Mexico for further treatment. But, Borge pointed out,

Marxistas aplastados en Jamaica

Por Jacques Thonon
 KINGSTON, (AFP). La victoria de Jamaica a la tribuna neoesclarecida, unida a la voluntad de restaurar una economía prospera, serán los grandes ejes de la política del nuevo primer Ministro conservador jamaicano, Edward Seaga.
 «Un verdadero nuevo populista», dice el Partido Laborista de Seaga, en las elecciones legislativas del jueves, una victoria obtenida de más del 80 por ciento de los votos en el distrito electoral del Partido Nacional del Pueblo (PNP-SOCIALISTA) del primer Ministro saliente, Michael Manley, en el poder desde 1972 en la isla del Caribe.
 El triunfo representó el fin del dominio que ejerció contra el ex-Primer Ministro Michael Manley, que sin embargo tiene una enorme popularidad que se advierte, en el comentario agitado de la ex-cabecera británica, independiente desde 1962.
 Causado de la violencia cotidiana (más de 600 muertos entre dos millones de habitantes), los colchadores Roberto Soza Tena y Roberto (estudiante de los Repúblicas de Honduras y El Salvador respectivamente), así como gran parte del cuerpo diplomático.
 El otro factor del valor de Pizarro cubrió a los que asistieron a un acto tan singular: se hicieron presentes, desafiando personalidades del cuerpo diplomático, aunque las autoridades del Cuartel Militar 117 se oponían a que entraran en un espectáculo de alta costura.
 La Causa
 CARLA MONTESINAMEDIT
 El gran acalor del frío escenario. Agusto Hamann tomó la palabra y los embajadores de Honduras y El Salvador se inclinaron a la izquierda y derecha del auditorio. "El diálogo entre los hombres, cuando existe verdadera voluntad de hacer la paz, trasciende en seriedad de los partidos, por lo que cualquier cosa que se convenga en la casa del PNP, al momento de las elecciones del jueves por la noche, no puede restringirse por la fuerza, y su expresión es el vivo reflejo de la dignidad."
 Pasa a la última Pág. No. 2



Michael Manley, Primer Ministro de Jamaica por los últimos ocho años, sostiene la cabeza con su mano derecha después de conocer el resultado de las elecciones del jueves por la noche, no pudo restringirse por la fuerza, y su expresión es el vivo reflejo de la dignidad.

Tratado para la paz no para la guerra

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 Pasa a la última Pág. No. 2

Sindicato agrícola recuerda al INRA: queremos trabajo!
 Hemos recibido la siguiente carta abierta:
 Don Pablo Antonio Cuadra, Director del Cuadro "LA PRENSA".
 Sindicato campesino de los agricultores afiliados y sus



De Monteleagre a Martínez: Ministerios obligados

A typical 'La Prensa' front page. Headlines gloat over right-wing victory in Jamaican elections, hail new treaty between Salvadoran and Honduran regimes.

La Prensa had never mentioned that the taxi driver was found to be completely drunk and had shouted insults at the police while refusing to halt.

"*La Prensa* writes about the police with the objective of creating distrust," Borge said. "Their aim is to create lack of confidence in the FSLN and the government. *La Prensa* takes an isolated example, which it does not even describe correctly, and says, 'This is the way the police act, this is what the FSLN and the government represent.'"

Borge did not deny that there are problems within the police. "We started from zero," he said, "without experience, without files, with all the criminals outside the jails. We started with young people, many of whom were illiterate, who came directly from the fighting against the Somoza National Guard. We cannot even say that the police force was born on July 19. It really did not come into existence until the end of September 1979. So of course we've had problems."

In the attempt to solve these problems, more than 1,500 persons have been removed from the police force for mistreatment of citizens or for abuse of their position. But at the same time, fifty-one members of the police force have been killed on the job by criminal bands and counterrevolutionaries.

"It is no accident that *La Prensa* directs its attacks against our armed forces," Borge explained. "They know that our armed forces do not represent their class interests, but the interests of the workers, the peasants, the poor people. They know that the armed forces are the guarantee

that this revolution is going to continue."

The day after Borge's news conference, *La Prensa* reported only that the policeman would be punished and that the police were forbidden to use their weapons. It said nothing about the objective problems discussed by Borge, nor about the additional information he provided on the accident.

COSEP Denounces FSLN

But the provocations that Commander Bayardo Arce talked about in his November 8 speech are not limited to *La Prensa*. The prospect of a "new Nicaragua that frightens the bosses" has caused the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP) to become increasingly aggressive.

While *La Prensa* has focused its attack on the armed forces, COSEP has concentrated on criticizing the economic policies of the FSLN. The obvious implication is that if COSEP were running things, everything would be better.

Bayardo Arce challenged COSEP in his speech. "We are a country that has begun its revolution under the weight of \$1.6 billion in debts, a country that scarcely brings in \$550 million in foreign currency each year," Arce said. "Some elements seek to find in these limitations reason to denigrate the revolution. . . . They want to see if we are able to administer a revolution, and they say it worries them that we haven't fulfilled all the goals of the 1980 Economic Reactivation Plan."

The point is, Arce said, that the critical elements he referred to "have been among

the main factors inhibiting many sectors from being reactivated."

Only a few hours after Arce's speech, the COSEP released a document defining a position that means a step toward an even more radical confrontation with the revolutionary government, the FSLN, and the plans for economic reconstruction.

The COSEP document explicitly puts forward all those opinions that *La Prensa* in recent months has been presenting only implicitly.

The COSEP document states that "fifteen months after the triumph of the Nicaraguan revolution, the Government of National Reconstruction [GRN] has separated itself from the program of national reconstruction. . . ."

That means, COSEP says, that "the GRN has ceased to be a pluralist government of national unity and has become a one-party government of the FSLN."

In regard to the economic situation, the

COSEP states that "the production goals outlined in the Economic Reactivation Plan have not been met." But the COSEP prefers to pretend it has not played any role in those shortcomings. The reasons for the economic problems, for the COSEP, are that "the government has imposed a series of price ceilings that are below production costs. This inhibits production and investment in those areas."

Another complaint put forward by COSEP is "the lack of definition of the scope of the statized sector and its characteristics. This does not allow one to visualize a system of mixed economy. . . . Political uncertainty, seizures of lands and enterprises, illegal expropriations and confiscations, and political manipulation of the labor sectors confirms this assertion in this sense."

Finally, the COSEP says: "All the foregoing leads us to conclude that the most radical sectors of the Sandinista Front

party, with an open Marxist-Leninist tendency, are laying the bases to implement a communist economic and political project in Nicaragua."

The recommendation the COSEP generously makes to the government is that "the GRN and the consistent and patriotic leaders of the FSLN . . . return to the outlines of the original Program of Government." If that doesn't happen, COSEP threatens, then the situation will end in "political and economic chaos."

But the answer to COSEP and the deepening of the class struggle was clear in Bayardo Arce's speech: "There are those who think . . . they are going to divert the course of our revolution. . . . Others think we are going to soften up, and thus they will gain ground. Both are mistaken."

Arce emphasized: "We will not tolerate further provocations against the revolution. We are clear about this game, and we are ready to confront them." □

MDN Files Charges in Court

Sandinista Youth Also a Target of Capitalists

By Lorraine Thiebaud

MANAGUA—The Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN) has filed charges in the courts here against the July 19 Sandinista Youth (JS-19) for damages done to the MDN's headquarters on Sunday, November 9.

The MDN says that windows were broken and files were burned. "Owing to the slogans they were shouting and their age," the MDN's complaint states, "it is believed that [the attackers] were from the so-called July 19 Sandinista Youth."

The charges against the JS-19 came as one more part of the well-orchestrated campaign of provocations and slander that the political parties, organizations, and communications media of Nicaraguan capitalists have been carrying out in recent weeks. Their aim is to undermine support for the Sandinista National Liberation Front among the Nicaraguan people and to discredit the revolution abroad through the foreign press.

That the bourgeois forces would direct their fire against the Sandinista Youth came as no surprise.

After all, the participation of young people in the liberation war against Somoza was decisive to the victory. The unselfish commitment of tens of thousands of youth to spend five months in difficult conditions in the farthest reaches of the countryside was crucial to freeing 500,000 men and women from illiteracy this year. And now Nicaraguan youth are ready to confront further revolutionary tasks; they are preparing to spend part of their academic

year in the countryside, harvesting coffee, cotton, and sugar cane as part of the recently announced "work-school" program.

Events on Friday, November 7, at the Colegio Franciscano, a Managua high school, prepared the way for the MDN's charges against the Sandinista Youth. During a school assembly to commemorate the 1976 death of FSLN founder Carlos Fonseca, several members of the MDN's youth affiliate climbed atop the school's water tower and unfurled an MDN flag. A scuffle ensued, in which MDN youth reportedly trampled on an FSLN banner. Further trouble was prevented by the school principal.

Similar provocations by MDN youth reportedly took place at other high schools in Managua and León.

To protest these actions and the desecration of FSLN symbols, the July 19 Sandinista Youth organized a demonstration in front of the MDN's headquarters in Managua on Saturday afternoon, November 8.

Angry words were exchanged with MDN youth who were at the headquarters. Lumpen elements tied to the MDN youth were reportedly among the crowd, acting as provocateurs and urging an attack on the building.

Sandinista National Police chief René Vivas arrived on the scene and asked both groups of youth to leave before anything unfortunate occurred. After a brief discussion over which group would leave first, the JS-19 departed in a disciplined fashion.

Later that day, two more demonstrations

organized by the Sandinista Defense Committees took place at the MDN headquarters. Members of the JS-19 and the Association of Nicaraguan Women (AMNLAE) formed human chains to prevent anyone from entering the building.

Various groups of anti-MDN demonstrators continued to gather throughout the night. On Sunday morning, November 9, an angry crowd did enter the MDN's offices. Some windows were broken and papers burned.

On Monday, November 10, an editorial in *La Prensa* laid full blame for the vandalism on the JS-19. The MDN then filed charges against the organization.

The Sandinista Youth responded quickly. Meetings were held in high schools throughout Managua, addressed by Sandinista leaders Carlos Carrión and Fernando Cardenal and by Commander of the Revolution Luis Carrión.

Ivette Fonseca, organizational secretary of the JS-19, denounced the MDN's attempts to blame her organization for the damage done to its headquarters. The JS-19's demonstrations were peaceful, she said: "We reject violence, but in face of those who would provoke us we have to defend ourselves."

Fernando Cardenal, speaking at the Colegio Manuel Olivares, asked if anyone had ever seen the MDN's flag flying over a street barricade or a high school during the war against Somoza.

"No!" the crowd shouted.

"And where were those youth during the war?" Cardenal asked.

"In the United States!"

Carlos Carrión said the MDN's charges were "a reactionary maneuver aimed at sabotaging the harvests of agricultural exports and the plans for reconstruction." If the MDN youth wanted to compete with the JS-19, Carrión said, they should do so by forming more brigades to pick coffee. □

British Labour Party Leader Looks at American Politics

[The following interview with Tony Benn, the most prominent leader of the British Labour Party's left wing, appeared in the October 2 issue of the British Trotskyist weekly *Socialist Challenge*. The interview, conducted by Pat Kane and Hugh Richards, took place shortly after Benn's return from a visit to the United States, where he spoke at Williams College in Massachusetts.]

* * *

Question. What were your impressions of the United States after your recent visit?

Answer. The convocation at Williams College was about the future of capitalism. There was a panel with the president of Dupont, the chairman of the American Stock Exchange, the vice-president of Ford, and the former chief economic adviser to President Nixon.

On the previous evening I gave a lecture on the future of democratic socialism. I took the opportunity of giving this lecture to about five hundred students, and then taking part in the panel.

What was so interesting and in a way amazing to me was that it was exactly like talking to a university audience here. The response on the power of corporate capitalism, Wall Street, and the risk of war was received in exactly the same way as if I was talking to the Labour Club at one of the London polytechnics or something of that kind.

On the panel, all the American businessmen were saying that the government should get off their backs, and productivity was low, and all the stuff that we've heard here for 20 years. The argument I put forward, which was that we don't accept capitalism as it's structured in the West, produced a very positive response.

There's another conference in December which I'm going to, called "The conference on Euro-Socialism and America," where they have invited a lot of trade union people and so on. This will also be a big event. My impression is that in the United States now there is a considerable interest and curiosity in what we are saying in the Labour Party in Britain.

Q. Do you think there is a serious prospect of establishing an American labour party?

A. You have to be careful about expectations of that kind. I think what is happening, and the tactics of this may well be right, is to try to form a socialist tendency, a genuine socialist tendency, within the Democratic Party. There's a big debate

going on as to whether socialists should link themselves with Barry Commoner's ecological group or whether they should try to form it around the Socialist Workers Party or whatever.

Given the context of American society, I think the right thing to do at this stage is to form a labour representation committee and a socialist fraction within the Democratic Party. I believe these are the tactics that Michael Harrington's group and others are pursuing.

It's very early days. It's a bit like Keir Hardie going to the Dundee Congress of the TUC in 1888, when he was denounced for his pains. But I would have thought that was the stage of development in America.

If you try and do it outside, separate from the existing structures, I've no doubt whatsoever that you could have a bright flame of socialism burning: the question is how many people would be influenced by it? But I can't pretend to have followed this very carefully.

Q. Don't you think that this would be in conflict with the interests of Jimmy Carter?

A. Oh yes, there's no question of this. Jimmy Carter represents an extreme fiscally conservative element within the Democratic Party. This is widely recognised, if you read some of the literature.

But at the same time I think that there is a merit in starting something within a party which, if it can have an influence, will go well beyond the range at this stage of a socialist party outside the existing structure. That is a tactical decision; it's not for me to decide.

Q. What role do you think the trade unions can play in the formation of such a party? It would be extremely important in world labour movement politics if the American workers formed a labour party.

A. It would be, and I think the plan is to try to do it from within the Democratic Party where there have been some links with the trade union movement. The American unions have a fairly strong socialist tradition within them, going back to the Wobblies. But it's weak, and its leadership has been very conservative in recent years under Meany—desperately conservative.

But at the same time it's bringing the socialists and the progressive trade union people together under the auspices of Harrington and the others, who are prepared to give it a push.

This seems to me to offer the best hope.

At this stage you want to encourage its growth everywhere in the United States—you don't want to fix it rigidly in one place—so that we can see where it grows most strongly.

In the end, of course, if there was a move towards labour representation of an explicit character with a socialist inspiration within the U.S., it would be enormously significant.

In this country I'm pretty clear, as you would appreciate, that the right thing to do is to operate through the Labour Party. If you're saying that about the American Democratic Party you're saying something that has far less inherent validity.

Q. You are in favour of the principle of establishing a labour party?

A. Of course, but I still think you have to look at their stage of development. What is so interesting is the extent to which for years they have been talking about the "British disease," now I think they appreciate that they've caught it themselves. What they've caught is the ageing process of capitalism.

One of the things I found interesting about going to the seminar at this particular college is that they had an identical seminar in 1932 and the participants were Jacob Viner, the American economist, William Z. Foster, secretary of the Communist Party, and Norman Thomas. Could you imagine a single American college today which would agree to have the present secretary of the Communist Party to speak at their convocation.

At the moment there is great curiosity about socialism in the U.S. just as there is in Britain. Even people who make no claims to be socialists are so frightened by what they are seeing happen that they are reading and are anxious to listen to an alternative analysis. That's about all you can say.

Q. What role do you see the American unions playing in the formation of a labour party?

A. It should be a very big role, but of course they are weak, and they have had in the past a collaborative tradition among some of the leadership which has diverted them from examining the real nature of the problems facing them—exactly the same as the trade union movement had in Britain in the 1880s, and indeed there has always been a collaborative tradition within the British trade unions.

After all, there are six million trade unionists who are not yet affiliated to the

Labour Party, apart from anything else.

Q. What were your impressions of the anti-war movement in the United States?

A. There was a demonstration against Cruise missiles taking place in Massachusetts while I was there.

I would guess from reading such left-wing papers as one can get hold of, and they are few and far between, that exactly the same arguments that are taking place here are taking place there, but in more of a minority position.

Of course, it is a bigger thing in America, which is the dominant capitalist country in the world, to come to terms with demands for transformation there. It's very much behind our own development.

What was interesting was the response to what I said, which was an uncompromising speech of the kind that I might make here; and secondly, what was being said by the industrialists, bankers, and economists when there was a big student audience present.

Q. Did you get any feeling of the Vietnam syndrome—the inability of America to intervene in Nicaragua or El Salvador?

A. I believe that the frustration of American power is one of the dangerous factors in the American situation, rather like in 1956 with the frustration of the anti-colonial movement leading to the Suez operation.

But it's a great mistake to think that capitalism is about to collapse. One of the difficulties for the left is supposing that

the first time capitalism runs into difficulties, either at home or abroad, that the whole thing is about to be toppled. I don't believe that.



TONY BENN

On the other hand, one has to be clear that it's much less impregnable than it thinks it is; that the way in which you change it is opening up issue after issue after issue, and then gradually changing people's perceptions.

Potentially capitalism is very strong but

when it really comes under challenge it moves sharply to the right to defend itself. On the other hand it isn't so powerful that we should be pessimistic about the possibility of transforming it. It clearly is vulnerable and at the same time has considerable capacity for the defence of its own interests.

One of the tragedies of the Cold War and the polarisation involved is that the military are really in a very dominant position in both East and West. Whether Brezhnev wanted to go into Afghanistan I wouldn't be absolutely sure; whether the military said if you let this one go down you'll really be in difficulties. I should think it was touch and go whether they intervened in Poland on exactly the same basis, and in Czechoslovakia, and similarly.

Similarly in the United States I would assume the military have an enormous influence over the decision-making of the president.

Decolonising is a problem because once you start decolonising where do you stop? To what extent are you then taken unawares? This is the Russian problem as well. If the Polish events get out of control, what happens if it takes place in East Germany?

This is the moment when strong systems are very vulnerable to the sudden cascade of the Prague Spring or whatever. And then they drive in desperation to a sudden counter-stroke that can put the whole thing back again.

There is an audience to hear another analysis at this stage, that is the most important thing in America. □

An Answer to Tony Benn

How Will a Labor Party Be Built in the United States?

By Frank Lovell

[The following article appeared in the November 7 issue of the U.S. socialist newsweekly, *Militant*.]

* * *

The leader of the left wing of the British Labor party, Anthony Wedgewood (Tony) Benn, spent three days in the United States last September. He was a guest at Williams College, in Williamstown, Massachusetts, where he lectured on socialism, and participated in a panel discussion with representatives of U.S. capitalism about the future of their economy. Speaking for capitalism were the president of Du Pont, the chairman of the American Stock Exchange, a vice-president of Ford Motor Co., and Nixon's former chief economic advisor.

Upon his return to London, Benn was

interviewed by *Socialist Challenge*, the British weekly of the International Marxist Group, on his impressions of America. He found the students at Williams College "exactly like" university audiences in Britain, he said. The capitalists are the same too. "On the panel, all the American businessmen were saying that the government should get off their backs, and productivity was low, and all the stuff that we've heard here for 20 years," Benn said.

He also noted that there is "considerable interest and curiosity in what we are saying in the Labour Party in Britain." And this is undoubtedly true, especially in the ruling class. The transformation which the British Labor party is presently undergoing is of great concern to U.S. imperialism, and is probably why Tony Benn, a member of Parliament, was asked to lec-

ture at Williams College and has been invited to participate in another conference in December on "Euro-Socialism and America."

The debate in the British Labor Party is bound to attract the attention of American workers as well as the bosses in this country. The labor movement here is being driven to defend itself in the political arena. And for that reason what Benn is saying should be of some interest.

Prospects for Labor Party

He was asked if he thinks there is a serious prospect of establishing an American labor party. He said he thinks the formation of a labor party here will be a slow process, as it was in Britain. He also thinks it will take form "within the Democratic Party where there have been some

links with the trade union movement.”

Benn said he agrees with the approach of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC). Top union officials who are members or expressed sympathy with DSOC include William Winpisinger, president of the Machinists (IAM); Douglas Fraser, president of the Auto Workers (UAW); and Jerry Wurf, president of the State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

“Given the context of American society, I think the right thing to do at this stage is to form a labor representation committee and a socialist fraction within the Democratic Party,” says Benn. “I believe these are the tactics that [DSOC head] Michael Harrington’s group and others are pursuing.”

The alternative course, as he sees it, is to build a socialist tendency outside the Democratic Party. “There’s a big debate going on,” he says, “as to whether socialists should link themselves with Barry Commoner’s ecological group or whether they should try to form it around the Socialist Workers Party or whatever.” For Benn this is “a tactical decision . . . not for me to decide.”

These are questions that touch on the crucial decisions in the union movement about the need for a labor party and how it will be formed in this country.

The question as to whether socialists should work inside the Democratic Party for the purpose of building a labor party or for any other purpose has been debated since 1936.

Turning Point

That was the year of the apostate. It was then decided by the Communist Party, by assorted social democrats in the old Social Democratic Federation and Socialist Party, and by top officials of the industrial unions (separately and collectively, each bunch for their own reasons) to help reelect the Democratic president, Roosevelt, for a second term. The mistaken idea behind this was that the Democratic Party could be transformed into a political instrument to serve the needs of working people. That was forty-four years ago.

Prior to 1936 and the false promises of Roosevelt’s “new deal,” Marxists and others who called themselves socialists all agreed that it was impermissible to join political parties of the capitalist class. They were opposed to joining in principle.

They knew that the ruling class organized and financed the two-party system as a necessary part of their governing apparatus.

The socialist movement, in the days of Eugene Debs prior to World War I, taught that the employing class and the working class had nothing in common, least of all politics, which is the art of governing.

The working class, and only the working class, is capable of reorganizing society and eliminating the evils of capitalism.



Benn supports the strategy of Social Democratic leader Michael Harrington (above), who calls for working inside the Democratic Party.

And to accomplish this historic mission, the working class must organize its own political party in all countries of the world, the purpose being to establish the world socialist order for the liberation of all humankind. This is what socialists learned from Marx and Engels. And they understood that anyone who claimed to be a socialist and joined one of the master class political parties, which exist for the sole purpose of deceiving the voters, was a renegade.

Labor Loses Ground

Since 1936 this question of “working within” the Democratic Party has been debated in radical circles, and it has been put to the test by the union movement. For forty-four years the unions have been pouring millions of dollars into the coffers of Democratic Party politicians, and supplying thousands of foot soldiers to corral the working class vote for “lesser evil” candidates.

The result is that the unions are now in the weakest position they have ever been in since they embarked on the disastrous course of trying to reform the Democratic Party, pretending it is “labor’s own.” The “friends of labor” in this capitalist class political institution have proven to be labor’s disguised enemies.

Michael Harrington, leader of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee even now defends “lesser evil politics,” and counsels the union movement to continue its support of the Democratic Party. Harrington has, for several years, been trying “to form a labor representation committee and a socialist fraction within the Democratic Party.” This is what Tony Benn, left-wing leader of the British Labor Party, thinks ought to be done now, “at this stage.” It has been tried many times before, never successfully at any stage.

Four years ago, in the 1976 presidential

election campaign, Harrington debated with Peter Camejo, presidential candidate of the Socialist Workers Party in that election.

Harrington defended “lesser evil” politics and solicited votes for Carter. He ridiculed the idea that the union movement can be transformed and that the American workers in the process can build their own mass labor party based on their unions.

Harrington said, “the labor movement in this country is supporting Carter.” He then reminded Camejo that the SWP urges workers to “think politically.” According to Harrington, “the workers are thinking politically. They are thinking Jimmy Carter.” That was four years ago.

A few of the unions that endorsed Carter then because they thought he would be better than Ford, the Republican candidate, have refused to be stung a second time, most notably the Machinists. And a serious discussion is developing in the union movement about the need for a labor party and how it will be formed.

In this discussion the history of the British Labor Party has some useful lessons, but not what Tony Benn thinks. He got the impression that our union movement is analogous to the British unions in 1888 when the Scottish socialist Keir Hardie appealed unsuccessfully for a union-sponsored workers party.

The British unions underwent considerable transformation in the decade of the 1890s. The British economy faltered at that time. A wave of lockouts and provoked strikes swept the country. The employers were demanding givebacks from the workers, much the same as they are today in this country.

In 1900 the socialists of the Independent Labor Party and other groups made their historic first breakthrough in the union movement of Britain.

A few unions joined with existing socialist groups to establish the Labor Representation Committee. They ran their own candidates for Parliament, independent of both the Tory and Liberal ruling-class parties.

Prior to that the British union movement had been powerless politically because it was tied to the parties of the employers, as the unions in this country today are tied to the two-party system of the ruling class.

The lesson to be learned from the history of the British union movement is that it remained powerless until it broke with the “great Liberal party,” and challenged the capitalist candidates by running working class candidates for Parliament.

Continuing attacks by the ruling class pushed more unions onto the road of independent political action. The British rulers at the turn of the century were demanding “a union-free environment,” like the ruling class in this country today. One of the measures taken by the British rulers was the “Taff Vale judgment.”

This was a judge’s decision (upheld by

the House of Lords) ordering the railway workers union to pay heavy damages to a company which claimed financial loss from a strike. Such rulings are sometimes handed down by the courts in this country today, and some states fine public employees for striking.

In 1901 and 1902, after "Taff Vale," the Labor Representation Committee grew rapidly, many more unions joined it, some reluctantly. But even those top union officials and their political hangers-on who only wanted to operate as a "pressure group" soon discovered that they were more effective *outside* the Liberal Party than in it. And besides they had little choice in the matter.

Ramsay MacDonald, who served as secretary of the Labor Representation Committee, explained why. "We didn't leave the Liberals," he said. "They kicked us out, and slammed the door in our faces." Isn't that what is happening here to labor lobbyists in the Democratic Party?

By 1906 a group of 50 Labor candidates were elected to Parliament. That was when the Labor Party became a force to be reckoned with in British politics, only six years after the first definitive break with the old two-party system.



Elizabeth Ziers/Militant
There is growing interest in socialist ideas among American workers. Above, Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Andrew Pulley (left) talking with auto workers at Ford's giant River Rouge plant in Detroit.

In this country today the union movement can become a greater power in government in a shorter time, once the break

with capitalist politics is made and the movement for a labor party begins to roll. □

Latest Casualties in Militarization Drive

Thirteen Die During U.S. Maneuvers in Egypt

Thirteen U.S. Air Force personnel—eleven men and two women—died November 12 as a giant C-141 cargo plane crashed in flames in the Egyptian desert. These men and women were the latest casualties in the militarization drive being carried out by the U.S. ruling class.

The crash of the C-141 came as some 1,400 U.S. troops were being moved to Egypt for maneuvers of the Pentagon's new Rapid Deployment Force. Although officers involved in the exercise stressed that it was only a modest effort—some even complained that it was "cosmetics"—Washington views these maneuvers in Egypt as the thin end of the wedge.

Pointing out the drawbacks to relying "on the temporary movement of relatively small forces to a place such as Egypt," especially in view of the "fluid military situation" in the Middle East, Pentagon officials told *New York Times* reporter Drew Middleton that "they believe that the best American contribution to the region's stability and security would be instead to station troops and aircraft at bases in Egypt. . . ."

Although Washington has negotiated for

bases in Oman, Kenya, and Somalia, a senior U.S. officer told Middleton: "The track record of third-world countries in emergencies gives no ground for optimism. Soviet pressure, hostile demonstrations by neighbors, anything might make them pull out of an agreement at the last moment."

Officials in Washington know that they can rely on the Zionist regime in Israel for help in any counterrevolutionary intervention in the Middle East. But they do not want to pay the political price that would be entailed by the establishment of a formal U.S. base in Israel.

As a result, the U.S. imperialists are making greater use of Sadat, who has centered his foreign policy on closer ties with Washington. Sadat has already made air and naval facilities available to U.S. forces, but has stopped short at signing any formal agreement, especially one for the permanent stationing of U.S. ground troops in Egypt.

"Many Egyptians say, nevertheless, that they suspect a rotation of American troops, coming for specific purposes, will lead eventually to a permanent presence, in fact if not in name," *New York Times* corres-

pondent Henry Tanner reported from Cairo November 12.

The workers and peasants throughout the Middle East know that such a U.S. military presence is against their interests and will be turned against their struggles for a better life. That is why Sadat has been so cautious about signing any agreements for military bases with Washington.

But the moves toward greater U.S. military involvement in the Middle East are also a deadly threat to the American working class, and not only because it increases the chances of a nuclear confrontation that would endanger the whole world.

Working people in the United States are already paying in blood for the schemes of the U.S. imperialists. Eight American soldiers were killed in April during President Carter's abortive commando raid on Iran—a raid which was launched from the Egyptian air base at Qena.

Two U.S. Air Force men died in August when their Phantom fighter crashed near Cairo during the Rapid Deployment Force's "Operation Proud Phantom."

The thirteen deaths in "Operation Bright Star" are the latest, but if the Pentagon brass and their masters on Wall Street have anything to say about it, they will certainly not be the last. As Gen. Mohsen Hamdi of Egypt explained November 13, it is "normal and acceptable" for losses to occur in operations of this kind. □

Namibia: 'Independence Lies Within Our Hands'

[The following are major excerpts from an interview with Sam Nujoma, the president of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), which is fighting for Namibia's independence from South African rule. The interview originally appeared in the November issue of *Anti-Apartheid News*, a monthly newspaper published in London by the British Anti-Apartheid Movement.]

* * *

Question. International negotiations for a Namibian settlement have now been in progress for quite a number of years. Why is SWAPO still waging an armed struggle?

Answer. Because all our peaceful endeavours, through strikes, through boycotts, through demonstrations against the illegal South African administration have always been met with brute force. Ever since the racist regime took over the administration of Namibia under the League of Nations mandate in 1920, firearms have been used to suppress the Namibian people. The South African air force was used in 1922 to kill and maim many Namibians in Swartzberg in the southern part of our country. In 1959 twelve people were killed and more than 50 wounded during demonstrations against the removal of residents of the Windhoek old location to the new township of Katutura.

This kind of action forced the Namibian people to organise themselves under the leadership of SWAPO. All the ethnic groupings united, and took action under the unified leadership of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia.

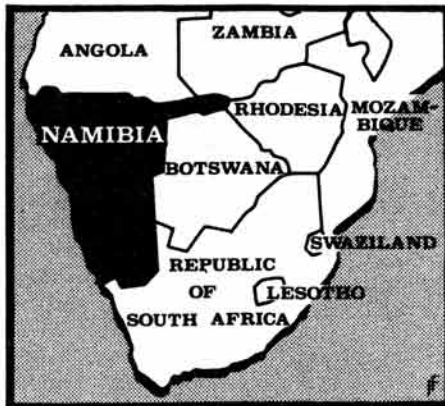
Today, while South Africa claims to have conceded our demands for genuine freedom and independence, it is in fact using delaying tactics and resorting to intrigues. It is continuing to implement its diabolical scheme of bantustans, or "homelands," in Namibia.

Q. How do you assess the state of the armed struggle at the present time?

A. The armed struggle has given the mass of the Namibian people great confidence. They know that their freedom and independence lies within their own hands. The workers and peasants are joining the People's Liberation Army every day in their hundreds, as a result. The most important thing is that because of the mass mobilisation carried out by SWAPO leaders, members and supporters inside Namibia, the people are politically mature.

Despite all its harsh laws, the regime is unable to completely suppress SWAPO's

activities. After we launched the armed struggle in 1966, SWAPO leaders such as Comrade Herman Toivo ja Toivo were arrested, detained for more than a year in



South Africa, and sentenced to life imprisonment or long jail terms. But this kind of thing has never demoralised the masses of our people.

Recently the People's Liberation Army has increased its actions against the enemy, so that we now have semi-liberated areas in the north-western, north and north-eastern parts of Namibia. In fact, we are now expanding our military actions against the enemy towards the central and southern regions. Today the southern part of Namibia which borders with South Africa is also politically liberated.

Q. How is South Africa responding to the struggle at the present time?

A. The regime continues to impose its repressive laws such as the so-called Administrator-General's Proclamation AG26 and AG9. Many members of SWAPO as I'm talking are in prison under AG26—which, of course, is an extension of the Terrorism Act, itself passed way back in 1967 as a deliberate measure against SWAPO. Many others have been tortured—some are paralysed because of electric shocks—while others have been beaten to death.

The so-called Administrator-General, furthermore, has proclaimed martial law affecting more than half the country, including Windhoek, the capital. Under martial law, South African soldiers—even newly recruited soldiers with no experience whatsoever—are empowered to shoot on sight and to kill anybody whom they suspect to be a "terrorist."

To make the situation even worse, the South African army has recently trained special paramilitary commandos, whom I

can call a Murder Squad. They comprise 40 whites and 50 blacks, some of whom are Namibians and some South Africans, and they are being trained at Durban and at Benoni near Pretoria.

The white commandos normally paint themselves black and they put on uniforms similar to those worn by SWAPO guerrillas and carry AK47 rifles. They break into houses after midnight and kill people. In fact, they have drawn up a list of individual Namibian citizens, mostly blacks and known to be members of SWAPO, who are to be physically liquidated by either torture or shooting. The list is comprised of teachers, doctors, nurses, medical assistants, businessmen and clergymen. Between March and now this year, they have openly killed two businessmen.

So there is an extremely dangerous situation existing in Namibia today similar to that under the Nazi SS. People live in a state of fear.

Q. How does SWAPO see the role of the West in the negotiations for Namibian independence?

A. Regarding the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 435, as far as SWAPO is concerned this is not a matter for the Western Contact Group alone, but for the entire United Nations.¹ Three members of the Contact Group—USA, UK and France—are permanent members of the Security Council and as such they have an obligation under the UN Charter to support the implementation of all UN resolutions with regard to Namibia, above all resolution 435. To us the Western countries cannot be regarded as a separate group but as part and parcel of the entire group of UN member states.

But in practice the Western Contact Group are closer to South Africa and are the regime's chief trading partners. They are the main suppliers of war materials—Mirage jet fighters, helicopters such as Pumas which are of French origin, Buccaneer jet bombers of British origin, and

1. United Nations Security Council Resolution 435, adopted in September 1978, reiterated that the UN's objective was "the withdrawal of South Africa's illegal administration of Namibia and the transfer of power to the people of Namibia." It also called on South Africa to cooperate with UN proposals for "fair and free elections" in Namibia under UN supervision and control. The Western Contact Group—composed of the representatives of the U.S., British, French, Canadian, and West German governments—has participated in some of the negotiations with the South African regime over Namibia.—IP

other types of war materials manufactured in NATO countries.

Q. How will the growing resistance inside South Africa affect the struggle in Namibia?

A. SWAPO of Namibia fully supports the struggle of the majority in South Africa. SWAPO condemns puppets such as Matanzima and Mangope who are being used as instruments of oppression by the racist regime and to mislead and deceive the people.² These reactionary elements must be condemned by the entire international community. Here again I would like to appeal to the Anti-Apartheid Movement to continue to expose these elements who are in the service of the enemy. □

2. Kaiser Matanzima and Lucas Mangope are the titular heads, respectively, of the Transkei and BophuthaTswana Bantustans in South Africa.—IP

'Dynamic Businessmen' Launch Literacy Drive

Another literacy campaign has just gotten under way in Latin America, this time in Venezuela. Two out of five persons in that country do not know how to read and write, so such an effort is certainly needed.

The Venezuelan campaign involves a rather different approach than that used so successfully in Cuba and Nicaragua, however. José Álvarez Stelling, president of a self-styled "group of dynamic businessmen" known as the Cultural Association for Development (ACUDE), explained:

"The examples of Cuba and Nicaragua are too close. With a regime like the Cuban or the Nicaraguan, one can mobilize thousands of young people from the cities to go and eradicate illiteracy. Up to now, democracy has seemed incapable of such an effort."

To avoid the hazards that might accompany massive youth mobilizations, ACUDE conducted a three-year study and came up with a kit containing a 125-page booklet, a portable record player, and thirty-one phonograph records.

The kits have just gone on sale for \$23 apiece in supermarkets, shops, banks, and pharmacies, backed up by an intense advertising campaign on television and radio and in movie theaters.

Asked if illiterate Venezuelans, who of course are among the poorest layers of the population, might be unable to afford the cost of the kit, Álvarez Stelling replied: "We do not wish to give anyone a gift. . . . But the price is quite accessible." □

'Uncle Tom of Barbados' Feels Wind in His Sails

Barbados Regime Attacks Grenada Revolution

By Sam Manuel

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada—Statements and actions taken this week by the government of Barbados have further strained relations between that regime and the nearby island of Grenada.

In an interview on November 5, Barbados Prime Minister Tom Adams charged that there is no free press in Grenada and challenged the legitimacy of Grenada's People's Revolutionary Government (PRG).

Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop responded quickly on Radio Free Grenada. Pointing out that the attack by "Uncle Tom of Barbados" came the day after the U.S. presidential election, Bishop stated:

"Like an expectant dog barking for his supper [Adams] rushes in to please his new master Reagan like a good old yard-fowl by attacking Grenada."

At a subsequent meeting here November 8, Bishop reported that the government of Barbados had physically intimidated and harassed Grenada's Minister of Agriculture Unison Whiteman.

As Whiteman arrived at the Barbados airport in transit to a conference in Europe he was surrounded by twenty armed men. Whiteman was forced through regular immigration and customs, a highly unusual procedure for cabinet ministers. A

customs officer even demanded to inspect all of Whiteman's bags.

When Whiteman protested that he was a minister in the government of Grenada and carried a diplomatic passport, the customs officer pulled out a knife and threatened to cut open the bags.

Customs officials also demanded that the security officer accompanying Whiteman come to a private room with them to be searched. Again Whiteman protested. After several minutes of heated argument, several men grabbed Whiteman's security officer and dragged him off to another room.

Bishop explained that this was not the first time that members of the People's Revolutionary Government had received such treatment at the Barbados airport.

Bishop also noted that the actions by the Barbados government come in the wake of the defeat of the Manley government in Jamaica.

To loud applause Bishop explained, "While on the one hand we are not going to reciprocate by denying the usual courtesies and privileges to Barbados' ministers and officials, at the same time we are not going to accept and we are not going to tolerate any physical force and any physical demonstration against our people." □

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'For United Action Against Giscard and Austerity'

[Alain Krivine, a member of the political bureau of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the French section of the Fourth International, is the LCR's candidate for president in the 1981 elections.

[Krivine's candidacy faces a major obstacle, however. Since the last presidential elections in France the law has been changed to make it harder for small parties to get on the ballot. In order for Krivine to run he will have to secure the signatures of 500 elected officials, no more than 50 of whom can be from a single department. Krivine's supporters are now waging a campaign to get elected officials of the Communist Party and Socialist Party, both of which opposed the new law in parliament, to sign for Krivine's right to run.

[Krivine's campaign focuses on overcoming the division of the working class between the CP and SP and between competing union federations.

[French elections take place in two rounds. Krivine calls for all working-class candidates to agree in advance that in the second round they will step down in favor of whichever workers candidate received the highest vote in the first round. If this is done the French workers will be able to vote for a single working-class alternative to President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.

[The October 29 issue of the Paris daily *Le Monde* featured a front page interview with Krivine regarding his attitude toward the elections, which will take place on April 26, and May 10, 1981. We are reprinting that interview, conducted by Patrick Jarreau, below. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Question: What policies will you put forward in this presidential campaign?

Answer. We have a simple objective. First of all, we must do everything possible to impose unity [of the workers movement] and to get rid of Giscard and his policy of austerity and repression. Today, with the many scandals of all kinds, we could say that there is a real Mafia in the highest posts, serving the big bosses and the little Nazis.

Then too, by sweeping away the right wing in these elections we would create conditions that are a thousand times more favorable for mobilizing the workers to win their demands.

Q. Do you think these conditions could be created with the Socialist Party as it is today?

A. There are no basic programmatic



ALAIN KRIVINE

differences between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party. Neither of them wants to move to socialism. With some differences regarding the extent of nationalizations, both of them propose to run the capitalist economy better.

When we vote for them on the second round, we do not vote for their program, but rather we will be voting against the right. The defeat of Giscard would be a victory for the workers, regardless of the program put forward by [possible SP candidates] Rocard or Mitterrand or [the CP's] Marchais.

Q. You say that there is no difference in program between the SP and the CP, and yet there is no Common Program.

A. That is because the CP and SP share a common feature. Neither of them wants to go into the government with the other one on the basis of a powerful, united mobilization of the workers.

This is very clear in the case of the Communist Party. The CP's main target is not Giscard but the Socialist Party. Therefore, in its competition with the SP, it tries to project itself as the party of struggle.

Georges Marchais says that automatic stepping down in the second round is "outdated" because this "anti-Giscardian" sees the defeat of the president as "six of one, half-a-dozen of the other."

When the CP candidate speaks of "strug-

gles, struggles, and more struggles," without ever trying to coordinate these struggles (except perhaps for twenty-four hour periods every once in a while), and while refusing to provide these struggles with a united political focus, Marchais reminds me of an actor who makes stomping sounds on stage while declaiming "let's march, let's march, let's march."

Increasingly the Socialist Party wants to get into the government all by itself. It wants to manage the austerity with the help of CP votes, but without any CP ministers in the government. The SP says it is for unity. But it has not clearly said it would unconditionally step down in the second round in favor of Marchais if Marchais should do better than the SP candidate in the first round, and it certainly hasn't come out in favor of a government of the CP and SP.

Q. Do you think that both parties will reject the moves toward unity that you are talking about?

A. Both the CP and SP reject this unity, but to different degrees. The CP openly rejects it with the ultrasectarian course that Georges Marchais and his party are putting forward. They are trying to rally the working class solely around the CP and its general-secretary as the candidate, and they oppose any unity in action with the SP, whether in concrete struggles or in the electoral arena.

One gets the impression that the CP is doing everything it can to drive the SP into the arms of the right, forgetting that the millions of workers who vote for the SP see that party as a vehicle for fighting the right.

Although perhaps in a less obvious way, the SP too encourages disunity, particularly with its many winks in the direction of the Gaullists, which increasingly resembles a mutual political assistance operation.

The SP leadership, which is preparing itself to manage the economic crisis for the capitalists, is unable to answer the CP's policy of dividing the workers by proposing that the two parties get involved in a concrete plan for mobilizing against the austerity, for example with a campaign for the thirty-five-hour workweek with no cut in pay.

This existing political division is reflected on the trade-union level by virtual civil war between the CGT [General Confederation of Labor] and the CFDT [French Democratic Confederation of Labor], which flies in the face of the common interests of the workers. The CGT calls for

struggle, without doing anything to prepare for a joint movement. The CFDT, with its policy of "recentering its focus" [from political to economic issues], seeks only to negotiate some crumbs from the austerity policy.

Edmond Maire [of the CFDT] and Georges Séguéy [of the CGT] in fact both take responsibility for seeing that the trade-union organizations serve as transmission belts for their political factions.

Q. Do you think it is possible to change this situation?

A. This requires the mobilization of the workers. We know there are millions of workers throughout the country who are sickened by this fratricidal warfare. They feel they were duped in 1978 [when the Union of the Left between the SP and CP broke up].

Between 1972 and 1978 the CP and SP called demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of people around the slogan "Unity, Action, Common Program"! Having done that, you cannot with impunity decide in twenty-four hours that this unity was not good unity, that the program was not a good program, and then resolutely turn your back on any perspective for unity.

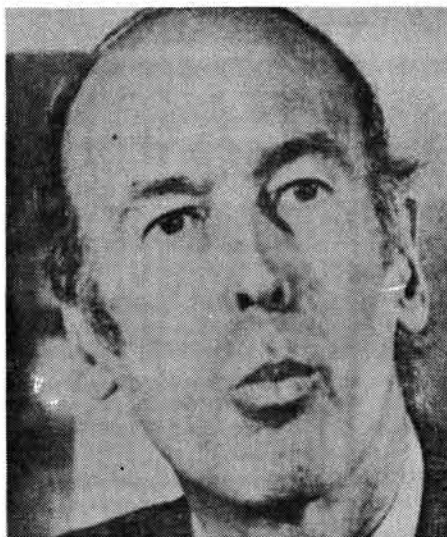
Q. On what do you base your assertion that there is this disgust?

A. You can see this reaction on the trade-union level. While some activists have abandoned all union activity in disgust, a growing number have decided to take part in the struggle for unity. In the last several months we have seen the development of trade-union oppositions in all the union federations of both the CGT and the CFDT. Although these oppositions are still unorganized, they have made themselves felt in the union conventions, with amendments and motions that share two common features. They are saying: sweep away the trade-union disunity; sweep away the divided struggles that lead nowhere. We want united activity by all the unions against the austerity.

We also see this proumity current on the political level, with the success of the petition for unity in struggles that was signed by forty thousand people and that gave rise, for the first time, to united committees that brought together members of the CP and SP, trade unionists, and revolutionary activists.

Q. Does this current have much capability for carrying out initiatives on its own?

A. We saw its capacity last May Day when a call from several dozen officials of CGT and CFDT unions and several hundred union members led to a proumity contingent joining the CGT and CFDT contingents. Recently 1,300 unionists demanded a united response to Giscard's



GISCARD D'ESTAING

visit in Lille. We could cite other examples too.

We think that it is vital today to insure that in one way or another hundreds of thousands of workers mobilize to force the CP and SP to reach an agreement on stepping down in the second round. This could avoid a repetition of the farce of the March 1978 elections, when they stepped down only grudgingly.

The CP and SP machines would be forced to take this current into account, which would also give the workers more confidence in their struggle against the regime.

Q. Why is it that after a dozen years of existence the LCR is not strong enough to impose unity of action on the CP and SP, since you say that this unity alone responds to the aspiration of the workers?

A. The situation of the LCR is changing. When we spoke against the [Union of the Left's] Common Program, calling it an agreement concocted by the political chieftains without the participation of the workers, we were treated as splitters.

Today a significant portion of the working class is beginning to draw up a balance sheet, and they are seeing that the real splitters are not the people who were originally charged. In no way is the LCR responsible for the present disunity of the workers movement.

The workers are beginning to recognize the character of the electoralist maneuvers of the Union of the Left and the Common Program, which they never had anything to do with. That is why our policy of workers unity is getting a bigger hearing.

In this election we want to try to break through the vicious circle where hundreds of thousands of people who are tired of the policies of the CP and SP and have some sympathy for the ideas we put forward,

say that we are too small. Okay, this time they have the chance to vote for their ideas on the first round. They have a chance to say "no" to the maneuvers that led from false unity to real disunity, to say "no" to the present policies of the CP and SP, and to cast a vote, which could be decisive, for unity in the second round to assure the success of the left candidate against Giscard.

Q. The Trotskyist current, of which you are a part, will also be divided, with two candidates for 1981. Does this fact do anything to increase the confidence of these voters?

A. Whenever possible, we do everything we can to have joint activities or campaigns. Still, there has to be agreement on the basic themes.

This time, unfortunately, Arlette Laguiller and Lutte Ouvrière have an analysis that is the opposite of ours. They argue that the left parties and right parties are the same thing. This leads them to reject any policy of unity and (like the PSU's [United Socialist Party] candidate Huguette Gouchardeau) not to take a position in favor of stepping down, meaning not to take a position in favor of the defeat of Giscard. While this position might get some support in the election, it is dangerous.

All this could still change if Lutte Ouvrière changed its attitude on this key point.

Q. The Organization Communiste Internationaliste, another Trotskyist formation, is waging a campaign in favor of the whole left running a single candidate.

A. That fight is lost in advance, and it is a bad fight. It is logical that in the first round each of the workers formations should present its own program to the workers.

Q. Do you think you will be able to collect the 500 signatures of elected officials that you need to get on the ballot?

A. We do not have them yet. But we are glad to see that dozens of Communist and Socialist elected officials have given us their signatures, in this way cutting across the regime's moves to impose its own criteria of what is representative. The CP and SP deputies in parliament voted against the antidemocratic law and we are now waiting for their leaders to have the dignity to translate their words into deeds by lifting the shameful ban they have imposed on their elected officials signing for us. It would be unthinkable for these parties to be responsible for reducing us to silence. □

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Statement of the Fourth International

New Advance of the Nicaraguan Revolution

[The following resolution was adopted September 28 by majority vote of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

* * *

During the thirteen months that have passed since the insurrection and overthrow of Somoza, the revolutionary process has deepened in Nicaragua.

Between April and August 1980 new thresholds were crossed. The advance of the revolution was shown by the whole series of economic and social measures taken by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), in its firm stance in face of the bourgeoisie's demands concerning crucial political questions (such as the composition of the Council of State and, still more important, the holding of elections), and in the consolidation of the FSLN's hegemony in the exercise of political power.

The specific situation of dual power that arose in July 1979 has nonetheless still not been resolved. But the showdown is approaching. The decisive test of strength with the bourgeoisie is taking shape in a context marked by growing civil war in El Salvador and by the determination of U.S. imperialism to stem the revolutionary upsurge in Central America.

1. The armed struggle led by the FSLN, the general strike, and finally the popular insurrection (with the development of popular militias and the Civil Defense Committees) gave rise to a special situation of dual power. As in any such situation, authority was not shared equally from the outset. The relationship of class forces and the very results of the battle against the dictatorship meant that from July 1979 on the coercive instruments of the state apparatus—the new army (EPS) and the new police—were in the hands of the FSLN. The Panamanian military and police advisers were put to one side. Formation of militias was encouraged. Having thus strengthened its control, the FSLN initiated the phase of "national reconstruction."

This exclusion of bourgeois forces from any control over the repressive apparatus of the state, along with their weakness at the institutional and political levels, express the particular nature of this very unequal division of authority. The coalition government installed on July 19, 1979, reflected this as well.

The bourgeoisie, organized in the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP)

and various professional organizations, nonetheless retained a series of positions that found their extension at the level of political power. They had a significant presence in sectors of the state apparatus (administration, judicial apparatus, ministries) and effective representation on the Junta of National Reconstruction (Robelo and Chamorro). Given the relatively limited extent of the measures expropriating Somoza and his allies, the bourgeoisie also had important economic strongholds.

While holding a few trump cards, the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie sought to utilize its posts in the state apparatus, its participation in the struggle against Somoza, and the aid of the top Catholic hierarchy and the daily *La Prensa*, to promote itself to the rank of full partner with the FSLN. It tried to exploit its control over large sectors of the economy (80 percent of industry and 75 percent of agriculture) to assure the supremacy of the market system and to obtain political and institutional concessions. The bourgeoisie counted on the support of its Latin American counterparts and imperialism in this effort.

At the end of September 1979 the FSLN itself declared: "In fact, the financial and economic sector of the state—with the exception of the implementation of the agrarian reform—is in the hands of the bourgeoisie."

The FSLN's response at various stages of the class struggle has resulted in reducing still further the bourgeoisie's points of support inside the country.

2. In the latter months of 1979 the FSLN completed the first measures expropriating the Somozaist sector. It created the Natural Resources Institute (INRENA), nationalized first the banks and then the insurance companies (which gave the state still greater control over the financial sector), nationalized the mining industry, and, by means of a November 3 decree, integrated all the state enterprises responsible for the export and the distribution on the domestic market of key products such as cotton, coffee, sugar, beef, marine products, basic foodstuffs, fertilizers and agrochemical products, bananas, and petroleum.

Besides all these measures, the resignation of the government in early December led to the FSLN's reinforcing its direct control over the most important ministries, naming Humberto Ortega as minister of defense, Edén Pastora as vice-minister of defense in charge of the militias, Henry Ruiz as minister of planning, and Jaime Wheelock as head of the Ministry of Agri-

cultural Development (MIDA). The latter was to centralize the sectors involved in the production and processing of agricultural products. Constant efforts were made to organize and mobilize the masses—the agricultural workers and poor peasants, the working class, the youth, and women.

Taken as a whole, these decisions showed the FSLN's willingness to develop the embryos of the new power that had appeared in the course of the popular insurrection (the Sandinista Defense Committees [CDSs], the Sandinista People's Army, and the militias), and to broaden its control over the various parts of a disorganized state apparatus.

3. Attempting to involve the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie in the task of "national reconstruction" and obtain credit from international financial institutions and imperialist governments, the FSLN granted some real concessions to the industrialists and landlords. These included explicit recognition of the role of the private sector in the "economic reactivation plan," loans to private enterprises, unification of exchange rates, the sale of foreign currency, agreements on price and wage levels, and so on.

At the end of 1979 and the beginning of 1980, the FSLN carried out a campaign around the theme of "national unity." But the contradictions that were ripening in the first months of the new year would accelerate the timetable:

A. Following on the heels of their victory over Somoza, the agricultural workers and poor peasants began a series of mobilizations in early 1980 against sabotage by the bosses and the big landowners, for extension of state control over industry, for wage increases and improvements in working conditions, for the full exercise of trade-union rights, for the expropriation of fallow lands, and for the deepening of the agrarian reform. The effort to gain wage increases resulted from the drop in real income in 1978-79 and the inflation of previous months. It was all the stronger in that while the workers could feel their own power, the distribution of the increase in social wages was too slow to hold back demands for money increases.

B. Capitalist smuggling into Honduras and Costa Rica accelerated, as did the practice of overbilling imports and underbilling exports. The volume of imports was difficult to control. All this was made easier by the close ties between the employers' organizations in Nicaragua and their counterparts in the Central American Common Market.

The lack of adequate supplies of consumer goods, particularly of agricultural and manufactured products, created favorable conditions for parallel markets and speculation, thus nourishing inflation. The imports required to counteract these tendencies accentuated the disequilibrium in the balance of payments. Price controls "encountered serious difficulties. . . ."

The state does not control a dominant sector of distribution and thus cannot rationally distribute the supply of basic goods. Also, the laws of the market not only determine prices that favor middlemen at the expense of producers but also reestablish direct distribution channels to favor those social layers with higher incomes. . . . Besides that, the popular mechanisms for controlling supplies, in which the CDSs must play a central role, have not developed. [Balance Sheet on the First Trimester of the Plan, Ministry of Planning, May 15, 1980.]

C. Important sectors of the economy in the hands of the capitalists and landlords did not respond to the demands of the economic plan, despite plentiful credit: "The information available on the private sector is quite limited. We consider its own investments to be minimal, not enough to attain the 470 million córdoba goal" (Ministry of Planning). Underutilization of productive capacity was significant. The private construction sector alone (controlled by the Nicaraguan Chamber of Construction) was operating at an estimated 77 percent of capacity for the first three months of 1980. The effects of such investment stagnation on exports and the creation of jobs can only be negative.

D. Despite the measures taken in 1979, the management of economic development remained basically uncontrolled, owing to the predominant weight of private property, to the still-insufficient control over the state apparatus as a whole, and to the contradictions inherent in any "mixed economy" project. Among the defects in economic policy cited by the Ministry of Planning, the following must be singled out:

Overestimation of the state's capacity—while we based ourselves on the premise that there was a sufficiently centralized economic management in the financial sector . . . the state was seen to be dominated in reality by a short-term policy, seeking to extend itself generally to all spheres of the economy, and to satisfy all classes and social groups, without recognizing the limits and contradictions. . . .

4. The tensions brought on by the demands of the masses and the economic contradictions grew stronger during the first half of 1980. The FSLN leadership responded, not with economic or political retreat, but with new initiatives:

A. Beginning in February the broad outlines of the organization of the people's militias were set forth.

B. Decrees were adopted in March that called for penalties against merchants, industrialists, and landlords in order to halt decapitalization and sabotage of all

kinds. A campaign was launched to encourage the workers to oppose sabotage and take measures of workers control. Against speculation, the FSLN encouraged popular control over prices.

C. At the end of March the immense five-month-long literacy campaign was launched. This was exceptionally important not only for the politization and organization of tens of thousands of young literacy teachers, but also and above all because it allowed the FSLN to consolidate its influence over broad layers of agricultural workers and poor peasants, thus reinforcing popular mobilization.

D. Land occupations by poor peasants and agricultural workers were formalized. A rent ceiling was established by law for lands used in basic-grain and cotton cultivation. An important effort was launched to broaden the organization of small proprietors, the rural poor, and agricultural laborers (cooperatives, expansion of the Rural Workers Association [ATC]).

E. After the assassination of Archbishop Romero in El Salvador, the FSLN denounced the military junta there and reinforced its solidarity with the organizations in the Revolutionary Coordinating Committee.

F. The alliance with the Cuban workers state was forcefully reaffirmed. FSLN delegations visited the Soviet Union and the "people's democracies." In the framework of tension between Cuba and U.S. imperialism, heightened by the revolutionary upsurge in Central America and the Caribbean, the evolution of Sandinista foreign policy became a new factor in the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the FSLN.

5. All these measures together gave rise to sharp reactions among the bourgeoisie, which saw its area of understanding with the FSLN melting away before its eyes. The bourgeoisie demanded regulation of the relations between workers and employers and an end to all encroachments on private property. It denounced the growing prerogatives of the CDSs closely tied to the FSLN, "which contradict the existence of a state of law and accustom citizens to solving their problems outside of the normal institutional channels that the law sanctions and protects" (COSEP document).

The bourgeoisie focused its energies on relaunching its main political formation, the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN), led by Alfonso Robelo, a member of the Junta. It sought to reinforce its ties to the petty and middle bourgeoisie, especially in commerce and agriculture. It sought to make use of its relations with the imperialists and the Latin American bourgeoisies, in order to have foreign loans serve as an element for consolidating the capitalist sector and as a political weapon for subordinating the socio-economic program of the FSLN to its demands. In March, the bourgeoisie concentrated its

attacks on the politization of the literacy campaign and on the necessity of organizing "free and democratic elections."

In this context, the battle took place over the composition and nature of the Council of State, whose convocation was set for the beginning of May.

The FSLN answered the campaign of Robelo and the MDN by emphasizing the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie's "last minute" participation in the battle against the dictatorship and the FSLN's own hegemonic role in leading the revolution. It put the accent on the real social and economic conditions for democracy for the masses, and on the economic sabotage by the capitalists that lay behind their professions of "democratic" faith.

The FSLN did not retreat. It assured itself and the mass organizations of a majority in the Council of State, whose purely consultative role was reaffirmed. Upon the announcement of the composition of the council, Robelo—the representative of the private sector in the Junta of National Reconstruction—submitted his resignation on April 22. Violeta Chamorro had done the same three days earlier. Archbishop Obando joined the fray, demanding the resignation of all priests who held official posts. In face of this open crisis in the coalition—a new exacerbation of the antagonisms within the state that are characteristic of a duality of powers—the FSLN held to its course by convoking the Council of State. It clearly showed its intention to reinforce its position on the political and institutional levels and stepped up its denunciations of Robelo.

At the same time, the FSLN announced its respect for the "mixed economy" and "political pluralism" and lifted the state of emergency that had just been extended to April 1981. A series of legislative measures were taken with the aim of reassuring the private sector. Pushed into a corner, the COSEP finally decided to send its representatives to the opening session of the Council of State on May 4. Finally, on May 20, the FSLN leadership itself designated—much to the COSEP's indignation—the replacements for Robelo and Chamorro in the Junta: Rafael Córdova, a leader of the Democratic Conservative Party and member of the Supreme Court, and Arturo Cruz, director of the Central Bank and a former official of the Inter-American Development Bank.

The crisis opened by Robelo's resignation demonstrated the true relationship of forces. It provoked fissures and sowed disarray in the ranks of the bourgeoisie.

6. Strengthened by the points scored in this test of political strength, the FSLN renewed its proposals for the participation of the "patriotic bourgeoisie" in the reconstruction effort. The latter was trying to do what it could to use its position in production and the resources that imperialism and the Latin American bourgeoisies could

provide. In this framework, the meaning for the bourgeoisie of the appointment of Cruz and Córdova can be understood. The international financial circles responded favorably to these appointments.

Their manner of joining the Junta—pure and simple appointment by the FSLN—expressed the way the relationship of forces had changed to the detriment of the bourgeoisie. The two new appointees did not have the same representative relationship with the bourgeoisie that Robelo and Chamorro had had. Their presence in the governmental apparatus reflected the unstable compromise with the private sector and the imperialist financial institutions that the FSLN was trying to prolong after the April crisis.

Cruz openly explained his political perspectives to *La Prensa*:

I firmly believe that any government . . . must be the product of a popular election. . . . I have already said that both the action taken by Alfonso Robelo and the initiative of COSEP have had positive results. The state of emergency has been ended and the due-process law adopted. There is no doubt in my mind that the government's firm decision is to put a system of mixed economy into effect. . . . [May 26, 1980.]

The COSEP finally resigned itself to Cruz's appointment in order to preserve a point of support at the top of the state institutions.

7. The concessions made by the FSLN after April are a result of the relationship of forces. They do not mark the replacement of class struggle with class peace. Social and economic tensions have put new confrontations on the agenda. The FSLN is using its position of strength to counter the private sector.

The unfolding of the agrarian reform sharply poses a threefold problem:

- It accentuates the land needs of the small proprietors and poor peasants. But disorderly land occupations risk disrupting production and make the effective integration of the occupied lands into the agrarian reform quite difficult.

- It increases the state's need for an adequate area of cultivable land in order to centralize productive activities and make the transformation as smooth as possible.

- It brings to light the need to closely coordinate the cooperatives and the state-run sectors, so as to assure the MIDA of maximum control over the agricultural surplus.

This is why a stabilization or a pause in the agrarian reform is impossible. Jaime Wheelock explained this clearly on July 14 in offering a balance sheet on the revolution in the countryside: "It is necessary to seek out areas into which the state sector can expand, since the farms we now possess are nearly all separated in what we might call an anarchic way. This leads to enormous problems of time, economy, administration, and development." Concluding on the question of wildcat land seiz-

ures, Wheelock said "the lands the state now holds are insufficient."

At the same time, the main economic weaknesses revealed in the first quarter of the year were reconfirmed in the second. The need for state industry in the key sectors (agrochemicals, for example) was urgently felt. The necessity of a "new conception" in the 1981 economic plan was announced by Humberto Ortega and at the big August 23 rally closing the first stage of the literacy campaign.

Once it recovered its wind, the bourgeoisie relaunched its campaign for free elections and a constituent assembly in 1981. It sought in this way to rally broad layers of the petty and middle bourgeoisie. It put top priority on building opposition with the support of sectors of the peasantry in several regions. The bourgeoisie's hopes for reestablishing its positions rest on a defeat of the workers, peasants, and revolutionary organizations in El Salvador, and on direct or indirect aid from imperialism. Sectors of COSEP were mixed up in the subversive efforts of former defense minister Bernardino Larios.

8. The FSLN's response shows once again that it is not willing to have the revolution held back:

A. On July 19, the first anniversary of the revolution, the FSLN announced that all fallow land or lands not adequately cultivated could be immediately expropriated. This decision is an additional weapon against the landlords who prefer to let their holdings go unused instead of renting them out at the low prices set by law. In the context of the unfolding class struggle in the countryside, this measure is likely to strengthen support for the revolution among the poor peasants and agricultural laborers.

On July 11, against COSEP's opposition, a decree-law imposed an increase in the minimum wage. This decision followed the launching of a "plan of struggle" by the ATC and the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST). State control was established on the import and distribution of petroleum. To diminish the volume of exports, allocation of foreign currency to the capitalists was restricted.

B. The people's militias, which had been built for several months in the enterprises and farms, were the centerpiece of the July 19 anniversary celebrations, along with the Sandinista People's Army. To give full meaning to the mobilization against armed reaction and to encourage popular vigilance, the militias have been called up to fight the counterrevolutionary commandos along the Honduran border and the plots of the Somozaists.

C. On August 23, before tens of thousands of young literacy teachers, Humberto Ortega read the Sandinista leadership's statement in response to the bourgeoisie's campaign for elections and a constituent assembly:

1. For the Sandinista Front democracy is not measured solely in political terms, and is not reducible only to the participation of the people in elections. Democracy is not simply elections—it is something more, much more.

For a revolutionary, for a Sandinista, democracy means *participation* by the people in political, economic, social, and cultural affairs. The more the people participate in such matters, the more democratic they will be. It must be said once and for all—democracy neither begins nor ends with elections. It is a myth to want to reduce democracy to such a condition. Democracy begins in the economic order, when social inequalities begin to diminish, when the workers and peasants improve their living standards. That is when true democracy begins, not before.

Once such objectives are achieved, democracy is immediately extended to other terrains: the field of government is broadened, the people have influence on their government, the people determine their government—whether this be pleasing or not.

In a more advanced phase, democracy means workers participation in the management of the factories, farms, cooperatives, and cultural centers. To summarize, democracy is the intervention of the masses in all aspects of social life. We point all this out to set down on a principled basis what the Sandinista National Liberation Front understands democracy to be.

Moreover, the Sandinista Front recognizes constructive criticism as the only fruitful form of criticism. Disagreement and pluralism continue to be essential components of *Sandinista democracy*. But the FSLN points out that the criticisms that must be taken into account are fundamentally those made by the working people, because they are the most disinterested, genuinely sincere, and revolutionary ones.

2. The National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front reaffirms before the Nicaraguan people and the world that the revolutionary process our country is currently going through will not be turned back. It will continue its march to the ultimate consequences. There should not be the slightest doubt that it is a *revolution* that is now under way, and that it was to make a revolution that the Sandinista National Liberation Front took power July 19, 1979, after eighteen years of struggle and at a cost of nearly 100,000 lives.

3. The responsibility we assumed in leading the liberation war led us to study the concrete reality of our country. In that way we were able to grasp the state of economic, social, and moral destruction and backwardness that the triumphant revolution found the country in.

Therefore we considered with all seriousness that upon achieving victory we should begin a *process of national reconstruction* as the first big step of the Sandinista People's Revolution.

4. Once in power, the Sandinista Front, as the authentic vanguard and the guide of Nicaraguan people, decided to install a Junta of Government that would organize and head the management of government, supported by the work of the people, in order to make national reconstruction possible.

5. After one year of the revolution, we can responsibly affirm that the moral, social, and economic destruction and backwardness of the country is of such depth and magnitude that it cannot be expected that the country will be reconstructed before 1985. Thus the National Directorate of the Sandinista Front has decided that the organized Junta of Government will have to remain at the head of governmental management until 1985.

6. Therefore, our working people, our workers and peasants, our youth and women, the professionals and patriotic businessmen dedicated to national reconstruction, should be prepared in 1985 to decide on the program of government and choose the best individuals of the country, who will take charge of the government and continue carrying forward the tasks of our revolution. . . .

D. Finally, three new laws open the way for intervention in various fields against the plots of the bourgeoisie. The designation of candidates for elections has been banned until the electoral commission is set up in 1984. Propaganda campaigns to foment speculation and the black market were neutralized by the imposition of censorship halting this type of information. And rumormongering about military confrontations, aimed at creating a climate of insecurity, was halted by the application of a similar decree.

The course of events since April has undermined the perspective that the entry of Cruz and Córdova into the Junta might have represented for the bourgeoisie.

9. On the whole, these measures mark a new step forward by the Sandinista leadership. They illustrate the extreme narrowing of any area of understanding between the FSLN and significant sectors of the bourgeoisie.

The formation of a consultative Council of State with a worker-peasant majority, the refusal to bend to the COSEP's demands in the choosing of replacements for Robelo and Chamorro, the rejection of the bourgeoisie's calls for elections in 1981, and, at the same time, the affirmation that the development of the embryos of the new power take precedence over elections (which in fact must ratify the power of the mass organizations), the repeated affirmation of the predominance of the National Directorate over the official governmental organs, the deepening of the agrarian reform, and the generalization of the militias—all these elements combined demonstrate the existence in Nicaragua of a government that is based on the workers and peasants and that affirms its independence in face of the bourgeoisie. This is a workers and peasants government, a brief episode on the way toward the installation of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In effect, the decisive test of strength between the classes has still not taken place. The resolution of the specific situation of dual power—which would imply a change in the class nature of state power, socialization of the principal means of production, and the planned centralization of accumulation—is still to come.

The Nicaraguan revolution has been able to benefit from the crisis of imperialism and the accompanying exacerbation of interbourgeois contradictions at the national and international levels. The existence of the Cuban workers state is an important help in the success of the Nicaraguan revolution. The latter, in turn,

opens a breach in the twenty-year imperialist encirclement of the Cuban revolution.

In this first stage, the FSLN has been able to utilize this international situation to improve the relationship of forces vis-à-vis its domestic and foreign enemies. But



the very process of the Nicaraguan revolution and its effects on Central America and the Caribbean contribute to modifying this context. The room for maneuver is diminishing.

U.S. imperialism is not ready to accept the extension of the socialist revolution in this region. It is multiplying its efforts to consolidate the power of the bourgeoisie in Guatemala and Honduras, to help the Salvadoran junta to stem the revolutionary upsurge there, and to forge an alliance among the reactionary forces of Central America, Venezuela, and Colombia.

At the same time, the imperialists continue to utilize financial credit to keep the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie alive and to prepare its ranks with the perspective of future battles in which the breadth of the forces involved will largely be determined by the outcome of the Salvadoran revolution.

10. After one year, the Sandinista leadership has victoriously met the test and responded to each new challenge from the bourgeoisie with a new advance of the revolution.

The workers and peasants, under the leadership of the FSLN, will not accept seeing their conquests threatened by the counterrevolution. They will know how to mobilize to defend their gains and thus aid the struggles of the peoples of Central America. They will no longer accept seeing their organizations and power of decision

strengthened in the political sphere on the one hand and on the other come up against the bosses' authority in the work places and sabotage attempts by the private owners.

Workers control over production and the nationalization of the key sectors will become more and more necessary for effective planning of production and managed distribution of social wealth.

To the bourgeoisie's campaign for immediate free elections, the Sandinista leadership rightly responded that true democracy for the masses begins at the economic level (with the abolition of exploitation and oppression) and at the level of education (with literacy and the right to instruction). But all historical experience shows how such democracy, to be broadened, must be based on the mass organizations—the committees, militias, unions, and associations.

The struggle to deepen the revolutionary process takes place through:

- Reinforcement of the mass organizations and their capacity to truly express the collective will of the workers and mobilize the living forces of the revolution.
- The democratic functioning of such organs; that is, the possibility for the various currents in the workers movement to express themselves within them, and the right of the workers themselves to decide the broad options of their organizations and elect their leaders at all levels. Such workers democracy is essential for trade-union unification, which would assure greater implantation of the FSLN among the ranks of the workers.

- Centralization of organs of proletarian democracy, through which the masses can resolve the central political, social, and economic questions and elect revocable representatives at the national level. The extension and centralization of the functions of the CDSs and unitary organs such as the Economic Reactivation Assemblies would be a step in this direction.

- The recognized vanguard of the Nicaraguan revolution has been forged in the Sandinista Front through its laborious battle against the dictatorship. The tasks of the revolution pose to this conscious vanguard the problem of its constitution as a party. Only the democratic centralization of this party can assure the greatest unity in action and the free debate necessary for confronting future challenges.

The Fourth International reaffirms its support to the Nicaraguan revolution led by the FSLN. It commits itself to continue its campaign of international solidarity carried out throughout the past year in many countries. □

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Central Africa a Year After the French Occupation

By Ni-Gbarake

[The following article appeared in the October 14 issue of the French-language fortnightly *Inprecor*, published in Paris. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

French troops have occupied the Central African Republic for a little over a year. On September 20, 1979, French paratroopers overthrew the "imperial" regime of Emperor Bokassa I and installed David Dacko in his place. Ironically, Dacko himself had been overthrown by the French on the last day of 1965.

Bokassa had become an embarrassment to French President Giscard d'Estaing after dozens of schoolchildren were gunned down during a demonstration against the high price of school uniforms.

But underlying the overthrow of Bokassa was the chaos that had been rampant in that impoverished, landlocked country for several years. Clearly the situation could not go on like that for much longer, and so the French military organized "Operation Barracuda" to get rid of Emperor Bokassa. The operation was designed to wash Paris's hands, and those of its president, of the bloody deeds of its imperial protégé.

However, the banishment of Bokassa, far from making France the liberator of the Central African people, reveals the sordid involvement of three presidents of the Fifth Republic of France, and especially Giscard, in Central African affairs.

There have been a number of recent scandals regarding French involvement in Central Africa. There were the diamonds that Bokassa gave to Giscard and Giscard's family members. Then there was the scandal of the imperial archives, which were seized by the French army and subsequently disappeared. There was the scandal of the overly friendly relations of Giscard and his family members with Bokassa.

Finally, there is the latest scandal—the Roger Delpey affair. Delpey, a secret agent, was arrested leaving the Libyan embassy in Paris and was charged with having links with agents of a foreign power. Actually Delpey was trying to score an extraordinary scoop by collecting Bokassa's reminiscences after his overthrow. Apparently Delpey has in his possession some explosive revelations, and the Bureau of Internal Security (DST) is feverishly trying to find the hidden documents.

Delpey, who has not yet come to trial, had the nerve to want to call Bokassa as a

defense witness. One can imagine the embarrassment in high places. There are also reports that Bokassa asked Delpey to give copies of the documents to Giscard's political rival Jacques Chirac!

This imbroglio shows once again that these African countries are the arena for shadowy conflicts between spy networks, which are often reflections of the political divisions within the right-wing parliamentary majority in France.

At the very least, from Central Africa we get a whiff of the sickening odor of the twenty years of slime accumulated by these characters who govern France. Central Africa is a very interesting showcase of how French imperialism operates in fully one-third of the African continent.

* * *

We can already conclude that the French military intervention that brought David Dacko back to power—the same man whom the French government had gotten Jean-Bédél Bokassa to overthrow on December 31, 1965, because of his unpopularity—has been a failure in every regard.

The promised democracy still has not arrived. A single party has been set up. Repression is again becoming the norm. The economic crisis is worsening, and there has been no improvement in social conditions. Struggles for higher wages continue to spread. The new "government of public safety," caught in its own contradictions, is in panic and can no longer find temporary measures to appease the discontent. The French government, for its part, is in a blind alley.

The reshuffling of the Central African cabinet last July, and the August visit by Giscard's adviser for African affairs, Martin Kirsch, have not yielded a real solution.

An Occupied Country

When the French soldiers intervened in Central Africa a year ago last September, Paris stated they would be withdrawn after a couple of months. This has not happened. On the contrary, the French paratroopers who struck from the neighboring country of Chad have set themselves up at a base in Bouar in the west-central part of the country. They had previously occupied Bouar from the time of independence in 1960 to 1968. In July Gen. Bigeard went to Bouar to inspect the progress of the base.

The paratroopers are also spread throughout the border cities in order to maintain better surveillance of the country because no one, not even the French,

would really claim that the country is calm and that there is no chance of an uprising. In late September Dacko stated that the troops will remain in Central Africa for a long time, perhaps even ten years.

In the capital city, Bangui, the troops patrol the main arteries. They are also stationed at the airport and next to the university, to better control the student movements. French police and guards are also numerous.

Recolonization

The French presence is not just military. There are French "technical advisers" in the state-owned and state-controlled companies and in the administration. The upper-level Central African administrators, who theoretically "run" these companies, have no freedom to act on their own. The young African general director of a state-controlled transport company, who is a graduate of the prestigious French *École Nationale d'Administration*, is surrounded by several French "technicians" and freely admits that he is there simply as window dressing.

At the Treasury and the Finance Ministry French advisers keep their eyes on everyone. They are, they claim, controlling the money that France "gives" the Central African Republic. In reality the country has reverted to the status of a French colony.

Jacques Serres, a former French settler in Central Africa, has become Dacko's main personal adviser. His office is in Dacko's waiting room. It is even rumored that he was the one who removed Alphonse Blagué from his post as Dacko's personal adviser.

The 1980-81 two-year economic plan, an austerity plan, was worked out in Paris. Central Africans have taken to calling it the "Central African Barre Plan."¹

Some state-controlled companies have been transformed into private firms and handed over to French interests. The Central African Agency for River Transport, for example, is now controlled by the Rothschild group. Some of its Central African employees were fired.

The French stranglehold also extends to the realm of training administrators. For example, this year, out of 2,100 applicants for post-secondary education, only 580 were accepted. A French teacher expressed

1. The Barre Plan, named for French Prime Minister Raymond Barre, includes measures for restructuring French industry and cutting social services.—IP

satisfaction with having reached the point of accepting less than one-third of the applicants for post-secondary schools.

The final straw was when the French minister of cooperation totally did away with 188 scholarships for Central African students in France and renewed another 115 scholarships only until October, pending the September results. Only 255 scholarships were fully renewed. This means that by October nearly half the Central African students in France will have had their scholarships eliminated and will, according to a circular from the minister of cooperation, automatically be returned to their country within two months.

Those affected were mainly graduate students and college students who have not yet finished their studies.

The Union Nationale des Étudiants Centrafricains (UNECA—National Union of Central African Students) in France sent a letter to the Central African government protesting this arbitrary decision by the minister of cooperation. Central African Minister of Education Alphonse Blagué hastily went to Paris last August 10 to settle this problem. But all he was able to accomplish was to get the decision carried over to the next university year.

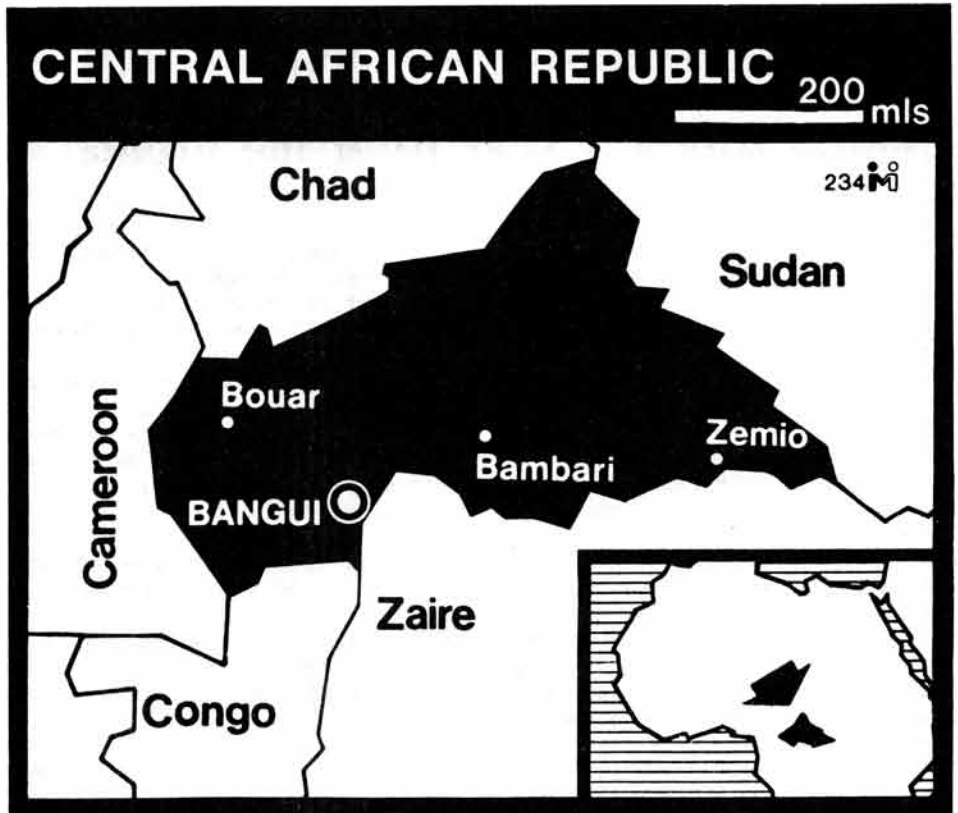
In fact, the minister of cooperation does not have the right to arbitrarily do away with the scholarships of Central African students. A national scholarship commission that meets in August in Bangui has to make such decisions. By acting in this manner, the French minister puts the Central African Republic (which is theoretically a sovereign state) on the same level as the so-called French Overseas Territories and Overseas Departments (direct colonies).

French technicians freely state that since Paris pays these scholarships it therefore has rights in this area concerning Central African students. The elimination of these scholarships is part of the French policy of trying to block the training of Central African administrators and continuing to send its officials to control the University of Bangui, where they carry out a vicious weeding out process. Each year in the faculties of law and economic sciences, which are totally controlled by French faculty, the passing rate for all years combined is no more than 5 percent. It is the same for the faculty of arts and sciences.

No Democracy

Right after the French intervention, David Dacko proclaimed his support for pluralism. On October 29, 1979, in a speech laying out his program, Dacko specifically stated: "Very soon we will have a law authorizing a multiparty system. . . . But the multiparty system we want would remain an illusion unless accompanied by freedom of the press, freedom of association."

Several days later he issued a decree



prohibiting demonstrations. Prime Minister Bernard-Christian Ayandho, in turn, called the Radio Bangui journalists to order, specifically stating that they were there to serve the state and not to broadcast their own opinions.

A conference called by Ange Patassé's *Movement de Libération du Peuple Centrafricain* (MLPC—Movement for the Liberation of the Central African People) and Dr. Abel Goumba's *Front Patriotique Oubanguien* (FPO—Ubangi Patriotic Front) was denied permission to meet and leaders of the MLPC were arrested, imprisoned, or exiled. Patassé and his supporters are still in jail. Some teachers' union leaders were also arrested after strikes and demonstrations, although they were later released.

The *Union Démocratique Centrafricaine* (UDC—Union of Central African Democrats), the single party set up by Dacko, which is a new version of MESAN,² held its founding congress March 10-17. The founding president of the UDC is Dacko himself, and the secretary is Kazagui, who was formerly minister of national education under Bokassa.

In his speech opening the founding congress, Dacko defined the UDC as "basically a liberal organization. . . . The UDC is a multitendency political party, which does not discriminate on the basis of

region, religion, opinion, culture, or birth. . . . As a true school for responsibility and integrity, the UDC must be the gathering point for honest patriots of integrity who support the activity of the founding president, but who should not hesitate to formulate in total freedom all criticisms that might improve that activity for the greater satisfaction of all."

In the UDC statutes, membership by the population is theoretically not obligatory. In practice, it is another matter. In the provinces the party has already begun to draft the village chiefs, the peasants, and so on.

In April the government tried to subordinate the youth to the party. This led to a stinging defeat for Dacko's adviser at that time, Alphonse Blagué, who had become minister of youth and is now in charge of national education.

The same thing happened with the *Union Générale des Travailleurs Centrafricains* (UGTC—General Union of Central African Workers) where the regime is trying to replace the present leadership, which is not tied to the government.

Personnel Changes

The new draft constitution and the establishment of a single party does not benefit all the members of the government. For example, the new constitution does not include the post of vice-president, which is now held by Henri Maidou. Maidou is no longer part of the leadership of the UDC. This means that if the new constitution goes into effect, Maidou could end up

2. *Movement d'Evolution Sociale de l'Afrique Noire* (MESAN—Movement for the Social Evolution of Black Africa) was the only legal party under Bokassa. Membership in MESAN was compulsory for all people over thirty.—IP

disappearing from the political scene.

Maidou's legal adviser, Manedjapou, has sharply criticized the draft of the constitution and the UDC, which he calls the "Union of Dacko's Cronies." That term has been picked up and is now widely used by Central Africans in referring to the UDC.

In July, Maidou went on the radio to say that he supports a multiparty system and he criticized the present government. He did this to try to increase his stature a little. It should be noted that he is very unpopular in the country, where they call him "Mister Denial," because when he was Bokassa's prime minister he denied that there had been a massacre of the school children.

Maidou, who in the opinion of Paris seems the most intelligent politician and "most looks the part," is trying to attract to the government university students who support him in his activity.

Rifts within the government began to appear with the "Guéret affair." Guéret was the minister of justice. The "Guéret affair" began when a young examining magistrate named Gatoua ordered the arrest of one of Dacko's cousins for diverting public funds. Gatoua also wanted to interrogate Maidou and Alphonse Koyamba, the minister of the economy and finances.

Dacko didn't want any interrogation and pressured Guéret, demanding that he fire the examining magistrate or turn in his own resignation. Guéret chose the latter course.

After resigning in March, Guéret blasted the government, going so far as to accuse Dacko of intending to free those condemned to death for crimes committed under Bokassa.

Added to these many problems is the unpopularity of Prime Minister Ayandho. The population feels he is guilty of tribalism, and opposes his placing of his own people (Yakomas) in positions of responsibility. Ayandho is also felt to be notoriously incompetent.

Finally, Minister of the Economy and Finances, Alphonse Koyamba, who is the richest man in the government and indeed in the country, continues to divert public funds into his own pocket. For example, at a meeting of the Council of Ministers, Dacko asked Koyamba for an accounting of his ministry. Koyamba stated with an absolutely straight face that he had been keeping the state's money in his personal account so it would be more "secure."

In July Dacko had to dissolve the government. The people expected that Ayandho and Maidou, the two most unpopular ministers, would leave the government. But this did not happen. Why not?

The French government wants Maidou to succeed Dacko in the medium- or long-term. Maidou has to prepare the way for this by presenting himself as a liberal. Ayandho, who, along with his friend

Dacko, is an objective embarrassment to Paris, remained in the government because there was as yet no designated replacement for him. But it is only a matter of time.

One of Giscard's advisers stated that "if we were to do Operation Barracuda over again, I am not sure that we would take David Dacko on one of our [transport planes], but it is too late."

Finally on August 22, when the unions threatened to go into the streets, Dacko did kick out his two closest collaborators. Does this mean that Maidou, whose residence was quickly surrounded by troops after his dismissal, is definitively removed from the regime? That is not certain. Not only does he still have political friends in the government, but the French government has not totally abandoned him. His withdrawal could mean that he is being held in reserve by the government.

The Real Problems

Since Operation Barracuda there has been little improvement in conditions in the Central African Republic.

While the salaries of executives have been adjusted, nothing has been done for the workers and peasants. A study done by a French mission indicates that a family in Bangui needs 60,000 CFA francs³ (about \$275) per month to live on. But the monthly minimum wage is, theoretically, 10,000 CFA francs (\$46),⁴ and some wages are even lower. There have been delays in the payment of wages. Often peasants never receive money for the sale of their crops.

Factory layoffs are increasing. Nearly all the employees of the Central African Agency for River Transport are threatened with layoffs. The civil service is reducing its staff and all hiring has been suspended. In the state-owned and state-controlled enterprises layoffs are increasing. All this adds up to a sharp rise in unemployment. There is no sign of a beginning of economic revival. Quite the contrary.

The budget deficit is 4.6 billion CFA francs (\$20 million) and the public debt has risen above 75 billion CFA francs (\$345 million).

While the country gets poorer the members of the government are getting richer. Since the fall of Bokassa the salar-

3. CFA—African Financial Community. The CFA is made up of former French colonies. Its members are the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Gabon, and Cameroon. The CFA franc is issued by the Banque des États de l'Afrique Centrale, with the French government naming three of the twelve members of the bank's Administrative Council.—IP

4. The former vice-president of the Supreme Court stated (as reported in *Le Monde*) that "the workers only earn 12,000 CFA francs per month, while a recent study showed that a family in Bangui needs 60,000 francs a month to make ends meet."

ies of government ministers have tripled. Salaries of the president and cabinet ministers range from 2.5 million CFA francs (\$11,500) per month down to 1 million francs (\$4,600). Expense allowances have been raised to 30,000 CFA francs (\$138) per day.

While he was prime minister, Ayandho built himself a luxurious villa in record time on the banks of the Ubangi river.

Simmering Unrest

The people hailed the fall of Bokassa. They were the ones who had struggled for months to drive him out of the country. But the mass of common people saw Paris and its flunkies in power grab the fruits of their struggle.

Since then struggles have resumed. The main demand is still democracy. Dacko, protected by the French paratroopers, opposes these struggles.

There was a resumption of strikes in the administration. In late April the government offices in Paoua were ransacked. In Bambari the cotton harvest was burned. Several times the minister of agriculture found it was not easy to conduct a dialogue with the peasants.

In Batangafo the peasants refused to fulfill the requirement to work on public works programs. They attacked the Central African police, and French legionnaires had to intervene to put down the uprising. (There are now about 8,000 French Legionnaires in the country.)

There were several strikes at the University of Bangui. In June high school students demonstrated their discontent over the ferocious tests for post-secondary school admissions.

Tension reigns throughout the country, and the government and the French troops cannot contain this movement for very long. The movement reflects deepgoing opposition to the French military intervention and the antipeople policy of the Dacko government.⁵

The Political Forces

The growth of these struggles cannot help but pose problems for the regime, which owes its survival to the French presence, a presence that the Central Africans no longer fear so much. The real problem is the lack of structured organizations. To win their demands, the people will have to build such organizations.

Trade unionists now distrust certain opportunists who misused and tricked them once they were in power. They have already been disappointed by some of their former comrades in the struggle against Bokassa who are now in the government. This is especially true with respect to Alphonse Blagué, a former Maoist, who

5. According to the July 25 *Le Monde*, "time is playing against President Dacko, whose only real trump cards are the school vacations and the presence of French troops."

tells everyone who will listen that freedom and democracy have been established in the country.

The Central African political spectrum looks empty. Patassé's MLPC now exists in name only. The activity of Dr. Abel Goumba's FPO is restricted to distributing leaflets in Paris. The majority of its members have resigned, their reason being that Dr. Goumba no longer wants to fight. The FPO is in shambles. Goumba's right hand man, Idi Lala, has taken refuge in Chad after being accused of using movement funds for personal ends. Lepa, the person in charge of the group's "military wing," has joined the Central African army. Alphonse Blagué, who is today in the government, is thought to have been a member of the FPO at one time.

What remains is the unionists, the students, and the high-school students. They are the ones who shook Bokassa's throne until he fell. They are the ones who are still struggling and will continue to struggle against the Dacko government.

Today the Central African trade-union federation, the UGTC, is the only organized force, the only one with a following.

But it too now has to fight against certain people who have been won over by Dacko and who want the young leadership to collaborate with the regime.

The Association Nationale des Étudiants Centrafricains (ANECA—National Association of the Central African Students) is now paralyzed. It has broken into three small groups. One is subordinated to the regime, the second is pro-Patassé, and the third tendency calls itself independent.

The organization of high-school students (USCA), which was reorganized after Bokassa fell, seems to be quite unified, as witnessed by its repeated strikes and marches.

French Troops Out!

When Bokassa fell, French President Giscard d'Estaing did a song and dance about being a sincere democrat who had decided to jump into the front lines to save the Central Africans. What is left of the rationale?

The poverty in Central Africa is still there, as is the absence of all civil liberties. Government corruption is as bad as it was under Bokassa. And everything is done

under the orders and control of the French army.

That is why the first task of the workers and youth of the country is to struggle for basic rights—the right to work, the right to a free education for all, the right to strike, the right of association, the right to establish independent unions, freedom of the press, and so on. In this struggle the small nuclei of militants must buckle down to the hard work of building unions, youth groups, and political parties.

But from the start they will have to confront the French troops. For that reason, at the top of the list of democratic demands must be the demand for the immediate withdrawal of the French troops. Central African activists must concretely appeal to the French workers and the anti-imperialist movements to carry out their responsibilities and show their solidarity with the Central African people's movement.

The Dacko regime is a very revealing case-study of French imperialist policy in Africa. The country is occupied as a simple colony. This fact must be made known in France and everywhere else. □

Forcibly Returned to Haiti

U.S. Spurns Pleas of 102 Stranded Haitian Refugees

By Osborne Hart

After forty-one days stranded on a tiny desert island in the Caribbean Sea, 102 Haitian refugees were forcibly loaded on a Bahamian ship November 12 to be returned to Haiti. The loading operation was carried out by heavily armed, club-wielding Bahamian police.

The previous day, refugees had fought off a similar attempt to "rescue" them and ship them back to Haiti. The Haitians were shipwrecked on Cayo Lobos, an island no bigger than a football field, on October 3. Five of the refugees died of dehydration and starvation before they were spotted on October 9 by a U.S. Coast Guard patrol plane, which reported their presence to the U.S. embassy in the Bahamas. Another six had perished during the trip from Haiti.

The discovery of the marooned Haitians, however, did not solve their plight. For nearly a month the U.S., Bahamian, and Haitian governments debated who had jurisdiction over the refugees, while their existence was kept a secret.

A Coast Guard memo in the Miami office, dated October 20, instructed its personnel: "Do not release any detailed information on this incident."

The Carter administration alleges that it knew nothing of the refugees until the

Miami Herald contacted the White House on November 7.

At that time, Eugene Eidenberg, special assistant to President Carter, vowed to the *Herald*, "Either the Bahamian government solves this problem today or the U.S. government will pick these people up tonight or tomorrow, and bring them to Florida if necessary."

On November 11—thirty-three days after the Coast Guard sighting—the Bahamian government sent a "rescue" ship to Cayo Lobos.

The Haitians refused to go. The Bahamian authorities were going to take them back to Haiti.

"I can't go any place but Miami," explained Claude Pierre, the captain of the Haitians' boat. "We lost everything in Haiti. They will beat us up, kill us, put us in jail. It is a decision between life and death."

In contrast, thirty-three Cubans leaving their homeland in 1970, stranded on the same island, were promptly rescued by the U.S. Coast Guard at the request of the Bahamian government.

Tens of thousands of Haitians are desperate to escape Duvalier's repression. The U.S. government refuses to grant them political asylum because it supports the

Duvalier dictatorship. There are 25-30,000 Haitian refugees in the United States seeking asylum.

In recent weeks the stream of Haitians arriving in Florida has increased to an average of 200 a day.

The increase is attributed to the Bahamian government's crackdown on Haitians, ordering 25,000 there deported to Haiti, and the stepped up repression by the Duvalier regime.

Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste, director of the Haitian Refugee Center, Inc., in Miami, reported:

"A close friend who arrived from Haiti... said the repressive machine is crushing down on everyone—not just the poor and peasants anymore.

"And the people who want to get the word out are being beaten, mutilated and killed."

In recent weeks, for example, Marie-France Claude, the vice-president of the Haitian Christian Democratic Party and daughter of the jailed party leader Sylvio Claude, was herself arrested. Yvens Paul, a popular radio commentator, was released after ten days in detention, but was taken immediately to a hospital. His doctor reports that Paul may be permanently crippled as a result of ill-treatment in detention. □

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