

# INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

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## Wide Protests Hit U.S. War Moves in Latin America, European Missile Plan



Top left: Caracas demonstrators demand end to Venezuelan and U.S. support to Salvadoran junta. Bottom left: Cuban youth demonstrate against U.S. threats. Right: November 15 anti-NATO march in Athens.

### Reply to a Reader

**Nicaragua and the  
Economic Emergency**

### South Africa

**Washington, Accomplice  
in Apartheid**

# Reagan's answer to antimissiles movement

By Will Reissner

The thunder of the burgeoning antimissiles movement continues to roll across Europe. Since early October, giant demonstrations have been seen in Bonn, London, Rome, Milan, Paris, Brussels, Helsinki, and elsewhere.

And the movement continues to grow and spread. On November 15 there were huge demonstrations against the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Madrid and Athens. In Madrid, half a million people according to organizers (400,000 according to the police) rallied at Madrid University in opposition to the Spanish government's plans to join NATO.

On the same day, 200,000 in Athens marched past the U.S. embassy demanding Greece's withdrawal from NATO. Among the chants were "NATO and U.S. Bases Out," "Americans — Murderers of Nations," and "NATO-CIA-Betrayal."

On November 21, the scene shifted to Amsterdam. At least 350,000 people jammed the streets of that city demanding that the Dutch government oppose the 1979 NATO decision to place U.S. nuclear missiles in Western Europe targeted on the Soviet Union. Amsterdam police called the march the biggest demonstration in Dutch history.

## A new Reagan?

As the tide against the missiles plan continues to swell, Ronald Reagan is being forced to change gears. Recognizing that Washington can no longer dismiss the antimissiles movement's impact, the U.S. president embarked on a propaganda campaign to combat the opponents of the missile decision.

The campaign was kicked off by Reagan's November 18 foreign policy speech, which was largely aimed at a European audience. At U.S. government expense, Reagan's address was beamed live to Europe and was delivered during peak European viewing hours.

Reagan's constant talk about reestablishing U.S. military superiority over the Soviet Union and his comments about the feasibility of waging "limited" nuclear warfare in Europe have done much to build the peace movement there.

The November 18 speech was designed to establish a different image. European audiences were treated to the spectacle of Reagan playing a man of peace, a part he has had limited experience with. The outpouring in Amsterdam only three days after his address indicates that the audience found his performance unconvincing.

In his speech, Reagan called on the Soviet Union to dismantle *all* its existing medium-

range missiles, some of which have been in place since the 1950s. In return, he said, Washington would cancel its plans to deploy Pershing II and Cruise missiles in Europe in 1983.

## The 'zero option'

This proposal, known in NATO circles as the "zero option," was pressed upon Reagan by his European allies in the vain hope that it might defuse the antimissiles campaign.

Ever since the December 1979 NATO vote to deploy the missiles, the European NATO members have insisted that in order to win acceptance for the missiles, they must be portrayed as part of an arms limitation process. This strategy came to be known as the two-track policy, coupling the missile deployment with arms limitation talks.

European NATO members pressed the Reagan administration to agree to begin talks with Soviet officials in Geneva on November 30 and to put forward the "zero option" there.

But NATO has never viewed the zero option as a serious proposal. In the October 25 *Washington Post*, staff writer Walter Pincus reported that the allies "do not expect the Soviets to accept the zero option approach." He added that "many European officials say privately that they would be disappointed if the Soviets did."

According to Pincus, "U.S. adoption of the zero option at the beginning of the coming talks, these European officials contend, is a necessary public relations move."

Several weeks before Reagan's speech, Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev had already publicly rejected the zero option proposal. In an interview with the West German newsweekly *Der Spiegel*, Brezhnev noted that "those in the United States who are putting forward 'proposals' of this kind apparently do not themselves expect for one second that the Soviet Union may agree to them. Not a single state that was concerned about the security of its people would agree to this if it were in our place."

Reagan's November 18 speech reflected the propaganda line NATO has taken ever since the 1979 missile deployment decision — that the U.S. missiles are needed to counter Soviet SS-20 missiles.

While that argument is constantly repeated for mass consumption, it is not taken seriously by political and military planners because it obscures the crucial difference between the SS-20s and the U.S. missiles: SS-20s cannot reach U.S. targets from the Soviet Union, but the Pershing II and Cruise missiles can hit So-

viet targets from bases in West Germany in as little as six minutes, compared to thirty minutes for missiles launched from bases in the United States.

The NATO missile plan, in fact, has nothing to do with Soviet SS-20s. It is part of a huge U.S. effort to reestablish the Pentagon's nuclear first-strike capability against the Soviet Union. The deployment of Pershing II and Cruise missiles is one aspect of a much larger U.S. arms buildup that includes the introduction of other first-strike weapons such as the MX missile, the Trident II submarine missile, and improved warheads for Minuteman III missiles.

The 572 Pershing II and Cruise missiles are also intended to bolster the U.S. ability to wage a nuclear war against the Soviet Union that would be limited to the European theater. According to NATO military doctrine, U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe could be used against the Soviets, drawing a Soviet retaliatory strike against Western Europe, with the atomic holocaust remaining limited to the European continent.

## Omissions, distortions, and misrepresentations

Because Reagan's speech was designed to bolster the NATO propaganda line that the missiles are aimed at counteracting existing Soviet missiles, his remarks were of necessity a crude amalgam of gross omissions, distortions, and misrepresentations.

For example, to demonstrate that NATO was a defenseless lamb menaced by the big bad Soviet wolf, Reagan focused only on U.S. intermediate-range missiles. He conveniently ignored the fact that right now both France and Britain have their own intermediate-range missiles targeted on the Soviet Union. He also neglected to add in the French, British, and U.S. nuclear missile submarines in Western European waters or the fleets of nuclear bombers all three have on constant alert on European airfields, ready to strike against Soviet cities.

When all weapons systems are added into the equation, "something very close to parity now exists between the theater nuclear forces of NATO and the Warsaw Pact," according to a report issued by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies on the eve of the 1979 NATO missile decision. The NATO missile plan is designed to change a situation of existing parity to one where Washington and its allies have overwhelming superiority.

In his speech, Reagan also claimed that "during the past six years" the U.S. "withdrew 1,000 nuclear warheads from Europe." Sounds pretty impressive. But it is a joke if you know the whole story.

In the early 1970s, the U.S. Army withdrew its Honest John nuclear missiles from Europe because they had reached the end of their service life. But Henry Kissinger insisted that the warheads for the missiles be left behind in Europe so that, according to the November 16



*Washington Post*, they could "be traded away in arms control negotiations."

At the time of the 1979 NATO missile decision, the Carter administration announced with great fanfare that these 1,000 warheads would be withdrawn from Europe. The missile decision was actually a deescalation of the arms race, Carter claimed, since 1,000 warheads were to be taken out of Europe while only 572 missiles would be sent to that continent.

#### 'Hiroshima in a can'

We can, incidentally, expect similar claims about the withdrawal of other U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe in the near future. At an April NATO meeting, the alliance decided to eliminate the twenty-year-old Nike Hercules missiles and the thirty-year-old atomic demolition mines (described by their designers as "a Hiroshima bomb in a can") because those weapons were obsolete and useless.

But the meeting also decided to keep the decisions secret until such time as they could be used, according to the November 1 *Washington Post*, "to counteract the growing antinuclear movement in Europe." The *Post* added that European leaders are now anxious that the move be announced very soon.

President Reagan's new attempt to portray himself as a man of peace is unlikely to be convincing as long as NATO maintains the perspective of fighting and "winning" nuclear wars that would be limited to Europe.

Those who still harbor some doubt that NATO plans include the use of "theater" (i.e., locally based) nuclear weapons in Europe should consider the following comments by Gen. Bernard Rogers, the American who commands NATO under the title of Supreme Allied Commander for Europe (SACEUR), a post previously held by Alexander Haig.

#### Nuclear war scenario

In the November 16 *Washington Post*, General Rogers explained to a reporter how limited nuclear warfare might be fought in Europe, with NATO initiating the nuclear exchange:

"If war starts, suppose we are losing conventionally, and it appears like we are going to lose the cohesion of our defense. The SACEUR goes to the political authorities and says you must authorize me to use theater nuclear forces in order to get the Soviet Union to face up with either the uncertainty of going to the strategic exchange or withdrawing.

"Then they authorize me to use the theater nuclear weapons — I would say at that stage on non-Soviet Warsaw Pact soil and on Soviet soil, but certainly not on our own — on military targets. We send that message, we get our response" from the Soviets.

"The response says, all right, we either continue conventional, and we've already sent the message we're going to use theater nuclears, or they respond with theater nuclears and maybe a massive," meaning a massive nuclear attack against the United States.

"But they have to make that decision," Rog-

ers continued. "Are they prepared with the uncertainties in doing that, to have us respond with a strategic nuclear, which would be our next level of escalation? I can't believe the Soviet Union is any more anxious than we are to have that kind of a strategic exchange," Rogers concluded.

And therefore the nuclear war remains nice and limited to the theater, i.e. European, level,

with perhaps a "massive" or two thrown in for good measure.

Behind Rogers's arcane vocabulary of "theater nuclears" and "massives" and "strategic" strikes, however, would lie a Europe — West and East — reduced to radioactive rubble by that "limited" exchange. NATO's missile deployment would bring that scenario much closer to reality. □

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# Wide protests greet U.S. threats

## Setbacks to Reagan's intervention plans

By Fred Murphy

For the past several weeks the leaders of the Cuban revolution and its supporters around the world have been waging a political campaign to alert public opinion to the dangerous plans of the Reagan administration for military moves in the Caribbean and Central America.

The Cubans have sought to expose Washington's lies about Cuban intervention in El Salvador, demanding that the U.S. government present proof of its charges that Cuban arms and troops have been sent through Nicaragua to the Salvadoran revolutionary fighters. President Fidel Castro even took the bold step of writing directly to major U.S. dailies to expose Washington's lies.

### 'No to Yankee threats'

Defenders of the Cuban, Nicaraguan, Grenadian, and Salvadoran revolutions have taken to the streets in many countries. On November 21, thousands marched and picketed in nearly thirty cities across the United States. When half a million persons rallied against nuclear weapons and NATO in Madrid, Spain, on November 15, many also carried banners and placards reading "No to the Yankee threats against Cuba and Nicaragua!"

Thousands have marched in Peru and Ecuador. On November 14, hundreds picketed the U.S. embassy in London, chanting "Cuba sí,

Yankee no!" Two thousand persons participated in a rally in Paris on November 16 sponsored by the French Communist Party, and a mass march in solidarity with El Salvador is planned by a broad range of organizations for that city on November 28.

Leading political figures in many countries have also spoken out against Washington's dangerous moves. "The Palestinian Resistance will support Cuba in the event of an imperialist attack," said Yassir Arafat in Beirut on November 7.

Juan Mari Bras, leader of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, said in San Juan on the same day, "From the moment the aggressors set foot there we will be in active solidarity with Cuba and on a war footing against U.S. military bases in Puerto Rico."

### Venezuelan president against intervention

The outcry against Washington's plans has proved embarrassing to the Reagan administration. Among other things, it forced some of Washington's closest Latin American allies to take their distance publicly.

Venezuelan President Luis Herrera Campins arrived in Washington on a three-day state visit November 16. Before leaving Caracas, Herrera told the press that his position in talks with Reagan would be "particularly opposed to any type of armed intervention in whatever country

and in favor of respect for the self-determination of peoples."

During a state dinner at the White House on November 17, Herrera declared — in a toast to Reagan — that his government "rejects any kind of armed intervention" in Central America.

Such statements from Herrera are particularly significant in light of the fact that he is a strong backer of the military-Christian Democratic junta in El Salvador that the U.S. plans are designed to shore up.

On November 16, Foreign Minister Bernd Niehaus of the pro-U.S. regime in Costa Rica declared that his government "rejects any type of intervention in Central American problems." According to an Agence France-Presse dispatch from San José, "Niehaus also rejected the possible formation of an inter-American army to intervene in the Central American region."

Organization of such a force is one of the military options that Washington has reportedly been weighing. Top U.S. officers have visited Argentina and Chile in recent days to sound out the Viola and Pinochet regimes on their participation in such an intervention force under the cover of the Organization of American States (OAS).

The Ecuadorian government has also made clear its opposition to U.S.-sponsored military action in Central America. President Osvaldo Hurtado told student and labor leaders in Quito on November 7 that the "armed forces of Ecuador will not be allowed to participate in any U.S. intervention in Central America."

Likewise, Peruvian President Fernando Belaúnde said in Lima November 8 that "we will not support any intervention" in Central America.

And on November 8, José Francisco Peña Gómez, general secretary of the ruling Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) of the Dominican Republic and president for Latin America of the Socialist International, declared that "we oppose a U.S. invasion of any Latin American country." Peña Gómez fought the U.S. marines that invaded his country in 1965.

Venezuela, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, and the Dominican Republic are the countries most often held up by U.S. propagandists as the "model democracies" of Latin America. It would be quite difficult politically for Washington to launch a military adventure in the region without the support of at least some of these governments.

### 'Our sovereignty is sacred'

Commenting on the series of statements by Herrera Campins of Venezuela and others,

## 'No to U.S. intervention!'

Responding to a call by the Emergency Campaign Against U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean, emergency protests were organized in more than thirty cities across the United States November 21.

In New York nearly one thousand spirited demonstrators gathered at the Times Square army recruitment center and marched to the United Nations Plaza. There they heard speeches from representatives of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, the Revolutionary Democratic Front of El Salvador (FDR), and others.

In San Francisco, 600 people marched and rallied against the war threat.

Boston activists turned out 300 strong in very cold weather to solidarize with Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Grenada.

In Baltimore, 150 people rallied. Cleveland brought out 130. In Philadelphia 125 picketed. In Albuquerque 150 turned out

and in Pittsburgh, 100.

The November 21 actions reflected a broad response, including organizations such as the National Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala, National Network in Solidarity with the People of Nicaragua, Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party, Black United Front, National Black Independent Political Party, representatives of the Maryknoll Order, Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, People's Antiwar Mobilization, trade unionists, and many others.

In addition the November 21 actions received wide media coverage, bringing thousands more the message, "No to U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean."

—Nelson González

Sergio Ramírez of Nicaragua's Junta of National Reconstruction said November 17 that "it seems to us that this kind of declarations . . . politically disarm the attempts of the Reagan administration to achieve its militaristic and expansionist aims in Central America."

Ramírez also replied to the ultimatum presented to Nicaragua on November 16 by U.S. Vice-president George Bush. Speaking to a convention of realtors in Miami, Bush said he wanted to "send this message to the Sandinista leadership: the time has come for you to decide. . . . Reject the totalitarian course. That way lies only madness and ruin."

Referring to Bush's complaints about Nicaragua's close ties with Cuba, Ramírez said:

"It makes me laugh that the vice-president . . . wants to tell us who we should be friendly with and who should be our enemies.

"I think that it is very difficult for gentlemen with such a mentality to understand what the change in Nicaragua has meant — how the clock of history has changed since the times

when Somoza's regime broke all records in taking orders from the U.S. government."

The Sandinista daily *Barricada* took up the same theme in a November 17 editorial:

"It is clear that Bush is not offering friendship. Instead, what he wants is to gain publicity, with the well-defined aim of creating an atmosphere in the public opinion of his country that would make Nicaragua appear reticent before his gesture of 'good will.' By presenting us as recalcitrant or even aggressive, the policy of threats, blackmail and attacks would be made easier. . . .

"The new administration thinks anyone can be bought. That is where it goes wrong. The dignity of Nicaragua has no price and it is not for sale. Our sovereignty is sacred, and its great guardian is the people. When will the Americans understand that?"

#### **New threats against Nicaragua**

The campaign to prevent U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean has al-

ready scored some victories. But it would be foolhardy to think that Washington will give up after a few diplomatic and political setbacks.

On November 22 — the day after protests across the United States against the intervention threats — the *Washington Post* reported, "The Reagan administration is approaching a crucial decision on whether to take action against Nicaragua to prevent that country from becoming 'another Cuba,' according to senior officials in several government agencies."

The same day, Haig emphasized that "the hours are growing rather short" in Nicaragua and again refused to rule out U.S. military action in the region.

Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada remain on military alert. The supporters of these revolutions abroad — and all who defend the right to self-determination — must also remain vigilant. □

## **Cuba**

# **Masses mobilize to defend revolution**

*'We are without fear'*

**By Larry Seigle**

HAVANA — With calm determination, Cuba remains mobilized in the face of continuing threats from Washington.

The army reserves and portions of the Territorial Troop Militia are on alert. Workers in public health and other sectors that would be involved in case of an attack or other military emergency remain on twenty-four-hour call.

Billboards across the island carry the slogan, "We are absolutely without fear!"

On October 24, Fidel Castro set the tone of the Cuban response to reports that the United States is planning military action against Central America or the Caribbean.

Speaking at the second congress of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs), he said, "If we are not capable of defending ourselves, we can't expect solidarity from anyone. If we are capable of defending ourselves, then we will see what happens. That will be decided by history and the way in which everyone fulfills their duty of solidarity to the Cuban revolution."

#### **Marches and rallies across island**

The response of the Cuban people to this speech was immediate and dramatic. Beginning the day after the speech, people throughout the island took to the streets in marches and rallies with handmade signs and banners to register their support. Demonstrations were organized by unions, student organizations in the high schools and universities, the CDRs, the

Federation of Cuban Women, and the National Association of Small Farmers.

In Havana on November 1 — a Sunday — demonstrators assembled outside the People's Power assembly for the central section of Havana, which was in session. The streets were jammed with people. Contingents were organized by student organizations from area schools, and workers were mobilized by their CDR chapters.

Signs and banners said, "Cuba will never surrender," and "Fidel, tell us what more we have to do." One quote in particular, from Fidel's October 24 speech, was repeated on banner after banner: "We serve notice on the imperialists that the Cuban people will live with their revolution, or every last man and woman will die along with it."

The demonstration was so noisy that the assembly recessed and delegates came outside to join the demonstration and address the crowd. "We will defend this land and these skies regardless of the price," delegate Isabel Pérez told the crowd.

Speakers also denounced the Jamaican government for breaking diplomatic relations with Cuba and spoke about the murder of two Cuban teachers in Nicaragua.

Similar actions took place around the country. In Santa Clara, an industrial city in the middle of the island, crowds filled the city's Sandino Stadium and overflowed into the surrounding streets. "Cuba will be respected!"

was the slogan of the day.

In the nickel mining center of Nicaro, thousands of workers rallied in the yard of the nickel processing plant. After addresses by union leaders, the workers marched through the streets. Banners and chants carried the slogan, "If necessary, we will change our miners' helmets for combat helmets and our tools for rifles."

At a number of rallies there were Nicaraguan speakers, from the FSLN and students who are studying here. Salvadoran exiles were also present. Also joining the demonstrations have been the large number of Palestinian, African, and Vietnamese students here. In one Havana demonstration, Angolan students carried a sign in English: "Paws off Angola!"

The demonstrations continued for about two weeks following Fidel's speech to the CDRs. Although they have now ended, the entire island remains politically and militarily on alert.

#### **Castro answers U.S. lies**

In an interview with the news media on Sunday, November 15, Fidel said:

"I think that, to be sure, they [the United States] are finding a lot of resistance, with the exception of some governments that also apparently feel rather honored that the United States wants to use them as mercenary troops in Central America. But really, how far are they going to get with that?

"What they are going to do is to set the prairie ablaze. If they really carry out those plans,



the only thing they are going to do is to set the grass on fire. They are going to create an insoluble problem if they get the idea to hunt up South American troops to intervene in Central America. They are going to create a very serious problem."

Speaking of the accusation that Cuba had sent troops to fight in El Salvador, Fidel said: "This is a big lie, a huge lie from head to foot. A total and utter lie. Not a single special troops member has ever been sent there; nor was that ever considered. . . ."

"They hatched that kind of lie in an apparent effort to implement their plan [of aggression], seeking a justification in the eyes of U.S. and international public opinion for their aggressive plans in Central America and against Cuba.

"I denounced that on the 24th. I said that was unquestionably a ruse; that, in this case, they didn't dare to make official declarations, but instead used a couple of journalists. However, just seventy-two hours later, we found out that although that was not an official government declaration, but was supposedly made by journalists, the secretary of state had begun to contact certain governments — important governments of important countries — to notify them about that. That is, that Cuba had sent 500-600 special troops, and that they — that is, the U.S. — would have to adopt measures, et cetera.

"I didn't know that on the 24th. On the 24th, you could say that I guessed what their plan was. But just seventy-two hours later we received confirmation that Mr. Haig had been in touch with certain important governments to inform them of what the journalists were saying. That is, the journalists didn't invent anything. It was the State Department that provided that information to the journalists, and the State Department was already handling that. . . ."

"We challenged them, because in the communication to those governments Haig said they had proof. And then we said, present the proof. . . ."

"So our challenge to them has placed them in an embarrassing situation. Show your evidence. Say whether or not it's true that the same thing that was published by those two journalists was passed on to other important governments.

"Well, they just can't answer. . . . I can say right now that we have torpedoed their maneuver. . . . And we have placed them in an embarrassing situation, and they still haven't answered our challenge.

"Now we have to be alert to what new ruse they will come up with, what new lies they are working on. . . ."

"There are some people who think that they are also trying to intimidate Nicaragua and Cuba. That would be the greatest foolishness in the world. After twenty-three years of threats, we can say that they still haven't managed to intimidate anybody here. So they are wasting their time if they really think they're going to intimidate anybody." □

## El Salvador

# Army massacres refugees

## Fails to dislodge FMLN fighters

### By Arnold Weissberg

MANAGUA — Salvadoran and Honduran troops killed between 200 and 300 people trying to flee El Salvador across the Lempa River November 15-16. The refugees, most of them old people and mothers with children, were attempting to escape indiscriminate terror bombing carried out by the Salvadoran army.

Reports of the massacre began to filter out at once and were confirmed November 18 in an Agence France-Presse dispatch.

The slaughter was part of a Salvadoran government offensive against guerrillas of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in the province of Cabañas. Thousands of people were reported to have fled the government's scorched-earth tactics.

Also as part of this offensive, Salvadoran army units crossed into Honduras and took control of the refugee camp at La Virtud, with the apparent complicity of the Honduran army. The Salvadorans sought to kidnap between thirty and forty refugees, according to press reports reaching here, but were prevented from doing so by the presence of a delegation of U.S. citizens, including Robert Brauer, an aide to U.S. Representative Ronald Dellums.

However, in simultaneous operations at Guajiniquil and La Cuesta, seven Salvadoran refugees were kidnapped and taken away.

The foreigners who witnessed the attempted kidnapping at La Virtud were briefly held by

the Salvadoran security forces. One of the foreigners was Bianca Pérez Jagger, ex-wife of British rock star Mick Jagger. Pérez is a Nicaraguan citizen and has been working to help the Salvadoran refugees in Honduras.

Before Bianca Pérez was allowed to leave Honduras, she was threatened and interrogated by the head of the Honduran security police and was forbidden to make any public statements. But when she got to Miami, she held a news conference and described the raid.

According to Pérez, between twenty and thirty men, some in Salvadoran army uniforms and some in civilian clothes (thought to be from the right-wing Salvadoran paramilitary group ORDEN) attempted to kidnap the refugees, who included children and pregnant women. "We were lucky to get out alive," Pérez said.

Brauer, the congressional aide, pointed to the refusal of the Honduran military officers at the camp to stop the incursion. "We saw lots of things here that indicated cooperation between the Honduran and Salvadoran military," he said.

Humanitarian organizations working with the refugees in Honduras declared that the incursion of Salvadoran troops had created a "climate of terror" in the camps.

The bloody military-Christian Democratic junta that rules El Salvador has long insisted that the refugee camps are little more than hide-

## Provocations against Nicaragua

MANAGUA — The Nicaraguan border post at El Guasaule has come under fire from Honduran troops twice in one week, the second time November 17.

The latest attack lasted thirty minutes and consisted of machine-gun and mortar fire.

According to Guatemalan truck drivers and Costa Rican tourists who were at the border crossing, the attack was completely unprovoked and took everyone by surprise. The Costa Ricans noted that there were no Nicaraguan soldiers in the area, only customs officials.

No one was hurt in either attack, but bullets passed through the building's radio room, and would have killed the operator had he been there.

The Nicaraguan government laid the blame for the attack on sectors within the Honduran officer corps who want to provoke a war between the two countries.

Meanwhile, efforts by bands of ex-Somozaists in Honduras to provoke an incident with Nicaragua have come to light. On November 4, Nicaraguan Vice-minister of the Interior Commander Luis Carrión charged that the Somozaists were planning to attack Honduran villages, dressed in Nicaragua army uniforms and shouting Sandinista slogans. The provocation, Carrión said, was being planned to take place before the Honduran elections on November 29. Such plans were also denounced November 10 by a coalition of thirty Honduran trade-union and political organizations, and reported on in the November 17 issue of the Tegucigalpa daily *El Tiempo*.

Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Fr. Miguel D'Escoto declared that his country would bring the matter of the planned provocations before the Organization of American States.

—Arnold Weissberg

outs for the guerrillas. Its armed forces have carried out other murderous attacks on peasants fleeing their homes.

The FMLN has denounced the government's use of 200- and 500-pound white phosphorus bombs in Cabañas. While the government claimed to have killed or wounded 125 guerrillas in its operation there, the FMLN, whose casualty estimates have been much more accurate, declared it had suffered eight casualties, while inflicting thirty or forty on the army.

#### Government offensives stall

Continued heavy fighting was also reported in Chalatenango Province, long a guerrilla stronghold. The government's latest offensive

there was stalled, with the army unable to reinforce its troops on account of the fighting in Cabañas.

The Salvadoran army has launched some forty offensives this year alone, in thirteen of the country's fourteen provinces. Not one has succeeded in dislodging the guerrillas.

In October, for example, 2,500 government troops participated in attacks in the province of Usulután, some forty miles southeast of the capital, San Salvador. The army refused to report the results, and even took over the local hospital to keep casualty figures secret. United Press International correspondent John Newhagen declared the operation the army's worst setback since January of this year.

Meanwhile, Col. José Guillermo García, Salvadoran defense minister, told reporters upon his return from Washington that the military dictatorships of Argentina and Chile had offered assistance to his government and that some aid had already materialized.

FENASTRAS, one of El Salvador's chief labor federations, has issued a call for a general wage hike, freedom of organization, collective bargaining, and freedom for political prisoners. Héctor Bernabé Recinos, head of FENASTRAS, has himself been imprisoned for fifteen months. The trade-union federation accuses the government of permitting "only the industrialists, landlords, and businessmen to organize" and of using "any and all means to terrorize or break up union organizations." □

## STATEMENT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

# Halt U.S. aggression in Latin America

*'The time to act is now!'*

[The following statement was adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on November 12.]

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The U.S. ruling class, together with its allies in Central and Latin America, is preparing a qualitative new level of military action against the deepening revolutionary struggles of the workers and peasants of Central America and the Caribbean.

Spokesmen for American imperialism, such as U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, state that the moves being actively considered include:

- use of troops from Argentina and other Latin American dictatorships in El Salvador, together with a qualitatively expanded force of U.S. "advisers" and massive new shipments of military matériel to the Salvadoran junta.

- attempts to blockade Nicaragua by sea and land, including an escalation of military action by the Honduran armed forces and Somocista units that operate out of Honduras.

- a "show of air power" directed against Cuba, and a "quarantine" of Cuban shipping to stop the alleged arms flow to El Salvador.

The military chiefs of staff of Latin American governments that have "common defense interests" with U.S. imperialism met in Washington the first days of November to discuss these various alternatives. The Nicaraguan government was excluded from the meeting.

A four-week U.S. naval maneuver in the Caribbean, involving dozens of warships and hundreds of planes began on October 30. The announced site of final exercises for "Opera-

tion Readex" is the Puerto Rican island of Vieques.

The exact moves being planned are of course unknown, but the targets are crystal clear:

- the workers and peasants of El Salvador, who have in recent months made major advances toward bringing down the hated military junta;

- the workers and peasants of Nicaragua, who continue to put their interests and needs ahead of the profits of imperialism and the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie;

- the workers and farmers of Grenada, who are organizing and mobilizing their forces to establish a new social order aimed at meeting the pressing needs of the Grenadian people;

- and the workers and peasants of Cuba, who despite twenty-two years of unrelenting pressure from imperialism — including economic blockade, sabotage, invasion, and biological warfare — refuse to be bought off or intimidated. They continue to courageously reaffirm their right and their internationalist duty to aid their brothers and sisters throughout the Caribbean and Central America who are defying imperialism and struggling to take their destiny into their own hands.

In recent weeks the U.S. rulers have been carefully preparing the political grounds for their escalated aggression by a campaign of slanderous lies and charges directed against the governments of Cuba and Nicaragua as the alleged sources of the arms and aid being utilized by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front in El Salvador.

This campaign has reached a new crescendo following the spectacular military and political

blow struck by the FMLN on October 15, when they destroyed the strategically important Puente de Oro Bridge over the Lempa River. It was alleged that such a professional action could only have been executed by a special strike force of Cuban troops secretly flown into Nicaragua and infiltrated from there into El Salvador.

Despite repeated challenges by the Cuban and Nicaraguan governments that Washington substantiate such accusations, they have only been reiterated without proof. And new accusations appear daily. On November 8, for example, military spokesmen in El Salvador alleged that planes painted red and black, the Sandinista colors of Nicaragua, had been sighted airlifting supplies to FMLN units.

Behind the dangerous new moves by Washington is one simple fact: all else has failed to halt the revolutionary upsurge in Central America.

Despite massive military aid to the brutal dictatorship in El Salvador, despite the murder of more than 11,000 people in the first nine months of 1981 alone, the Salvadoran military has been unable to stop the advance of the FMLN.

Washington has become convinced that the disintegration of the Salvadoran regime cannot be halted, nor the popular insurrection crushed, without far greater outside military intervention.

Despite two years of unrelenting economic and political pressures on Nicaragua to abandon its course of defending the interests of working people against those of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie, the Sandinista leadership has resolutely reaffirmed this line of march and

repeatedly mobilized the workers and peasants of Nicaragua to assure victory.

Central to Washington's concern is the fact that the Nicaraguan people are rapidly building not only a strong professional army, but a powerful popular militia that every day grows more capable of defending the revolution.

The U.S. rulers are now convinced there is no way to stop the creation of a workers state in Nicaragua short of outside military intervention.

Despite the powerful pressures U.S. imperialism has brought to bear against Cuba, the Cuban government has refused to renounce its right to stand shoulder to shoulder with those who are struggling to break the chains of imperialist domination in Central America and the Caribbean. Knowing that the Cuban workers state is the ultimate target in Yankee imperialism's drive to reverse the revolutionary upsurge in the region, the Cuban people have re-

sponded by the millions to Washington's threats. They have organized and mobilized repeatedly to reaffirm their willingness to help extend the socialist revolution in the region.

But imperialism cannot permit the creation of a new workers state in Nicaragua, or anywhere else, without using the various means at its disposal, including direct military intervention, to prevent it.

Given the scope of the revolutionary upsurge in Central America today — the impact of the Nicaraguan revolution not only on El Salvador, but Guatemala and other countries as well — Washington cannot permit the overthrow of the military junta in El Salvador without exhausting its options for preventing it.

When all other means fail, imperialism will not hesitate to escalate their military aggression. That point has now been reached.

The circumstances are reminiscent of other moments in history such as the eve of the Bay

of Pigs invasion of Cuba in April 1961, and the events leading up to the Gulf of Tonkin provocation that preceded the escalation of U.S. aggression in Vietnam in 1964.

That is why the new campaign of lies, slanders, and threats emanating from Washington must be taken with the greatest seriousness. The decision of the Cuban and Nicaraguan governments to go on a full military alert is not crying wolf. The danger is real.

The imperialist warmakers cannot ultimately be stopped until the workers of their own countries succeed in taking power out of their hands. But they can be deterred. That is why a massive response to their threats is important now, before they move.

The workers movement, solidarity organizations, the antimilitarist movement, all have a responsibility to help get out the truth about Washington's new moves and work to mobilize the broadest possible response.

The time to act is now!

## Middle East

# New diplomatic smokescreen

### As U.S. troops land in Egypt

By David Frankel

"Operation Bright Star," the biggest deployment of U.S. ground forces in the Middle East since Washington's invasion of Lebanon in 1958, got under way November 9.

Five thousand troops of the Pentagon's Rapid Deployment Force, together with tanks and other heavy equipment, are taking part in maneuvers in Egypt, Oman, Somalia, and the Sudan. The high point of the three-week operation is the November 22-24 desert warfare exercise in Egypt, complete with bombing missions by B-52s.

Washington, meanwhile, is also moving ahead on plans to put a permanent force of 2,500 imperialist troops in the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula. The Sinai force is being organized under the cover of the Camp David accords. It would consist of up to 1,200 U.S. troops and smaller contingents from other imperialist powers. Among those offering to take part are Britain, France, Italy, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and Australia.

The last time British and French forces were in Egypt was in 1956, when they invaded to try to overthrow the Nasser government and reverse the nationalization of the Suez Canal.

#### A game we have seen before

Publicity about the latest military moves in the Middle East, however, has been greatly overshadowed by commentary on the diplomatic maneuvering around an eight-point Saudi



di Arabian plan presented in August.

Nobody took much notice of the Saudi proposal until the end of October, when President Reagan commented to reporters that the plan showed that the Saudi monarchy "recognized Israel as a nation to be negotiated with."

U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig added that "we are encouraged" by aspects of the plan.

Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin quickly replied that the Saudi plan would "liquidate Israel in stages." Almost immediately the mass media was filled with articles about the tensions between Washington and Tel Aviv.

There is nothing new about this scenario. Ever since the October 1973 war upset the previous political balance in the Middle East, the imperialist media has presented the course of events there as one crisis after another in U.S.-Israeli relations.

In March 1975, for example, after a breakdown in talks on the disengagement of Israeli and Egyptian forces in the Sinai, President Gerald Ford announced a "reassessment" of U.S. policy in the Middle East. This was coupled with a delay in shipments of U.S. arms to Israel, but it did not stop Ford from approving another \$2.2 billion in U.S. aid to the Zionist regime later that year.

President Carter, during his first months in office, talked several times about the need for some kind of Palestinian "homeland." This, coupled with statements in opposition to the establishment of new Zionist settlements in the occupied territories, led to a seemingly endless stream of articles about the differences between Carter and the Israelis.

Later on the same process took place in regard to alleged U.S. pressure on the Israeli regime during negotiations with Egypt, and around the sale of advanced U.S. fighter planes to Saudi Arabia.

Under Reagan, we have already seen oceans of ink spilled over the sale of AWACS radar planes to Saudi Arabia, and now over the Saudi negotiations plan.

What is behind these recurrent diplomatic



crises? On one level, there are some genuine frictions between Washington and Tel Aviv.

Ever since the 1950s, U.S. policymakers have sought to establish a counterrevolutionary alliance in the Middle East headed by Washington and including Israel and the proimperialist Arab regimes. With the negotiations of the Camp David agreement between Israel and Egypt, the U.S. rulers made a breakthrough. But they have failed in their attempts to widen the breach in Arab ranks.

Without the military pressure exerted by the Zionist regime, Egypt would have never been forced into the Camp David negotiations. Similar military pressure would play an essential part in forcing other Arab regimes into the Camp David framework.

However, the provocative stance taken by the Begin government has at times gone beyond the limits of usefulness from Washington's point of view. The same kind of military pressure that can force the Arab regimes to make concessions to imperialism can also arouse the Arab masses and put pressure on these regimes to take a harder line.

#### An elaborate charade

But Israeli provocations have played a relatively minor role in the course of events. Far more important in preventing other Arab rulers from following in the footsteps of former Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat was the impact of the Iranian revolution, which strengthened the hand of all the anti-imperialist forces in the region and put those who look to Washington on the defensive.

In any case, the imperialists know that their domination is inconceivable without the constant threat of military force against the oppressed peoples. That is the cornerstone of U.S. policy in the Middle East, and that is why Washington sees the Zionist regime as an irreplaceable ally.

Looked at from this angle, the continual diplomatic blowups between Washington and Tel Aviv take on the aspect of an elaborate charade enabling Washington to pour billions of dollars worth of arms into Israel while maintaining the fiction that it is opposed to the use that these arms are put to.

In fact, after each of these diplomatic tiffs the argument has been made in Washington that in order to assuage the ire of the Israelis and maintain their trust in U.S. diplomacy, a boost in arms aid is required.

The hard-cop/soft-cop routine is particularly useful for the U.S. imperialists in Mideast negotiations. They can make verbal concessions to the Arab regimes that are "vetoed" by the Israelis, as in the dispute over the Saudi eight-point proposal. The result is that world opinion is diverted from the actual military moves being made in the region to a dispute over diplomatic plans that the imperialists do not have the slightest intention of following through on.

#### U.S. policy in action

If the diplomatic window-dressing is set aside, the trend of events in the Middle East

over the past eight years becomes crystal clear.

- The Israeli regime has taken big steps toward annexation of the occupied territories. It has linked the water and electrical systems on the West Bank with those of Israel; it has expropriated one-third of the land; and it has established a whole system of colonial settlements. As Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon put it November 5, "Our answer to the eight points of the Saudi plan is eight Israeli settlements."

- While pumping huge amounts of arms into the Arab states with proimperialist regimes, Washington has poured even more into Israel. Middle Eastern countries spent some \$50 billion on arms last year alone, the vast bulk of which was supplied by Washington. The flow of arms into the region has increased

steadily since the signing of the Camp David accords. And Israel's military position relative to its Arab neighbors has grown far stronger since the October 1973 Mideast war.

- In the meantime, the U.S. rulers have been demonstrating their determination to intervene against anti-imperialist struggles in the region with their own forces. U.S. fleets have been dispatched to menace South Yemen, Iran, and Libya. U.S. bases have been established in at least half a dozen countries, and maneuvers by the Rapid Deployment Force are now a regular occurrence. Reagan talks about establishing a new "strategic consensus" with Israel.

All the talk about peace cannot hide the fact that Washington's real policy in the Middle East is to prepare for war. □

## Palestinians protest

### Demonstrations throughout West Bank

On November 1 the Israeli government inaugurated a new "civilian administration" for the occupied West Bank. Heading the new occupation authority is Menachem Milson, the former Arab affairs adviser to the military government. Milson is a reserve officer in the Israeli army.

The cosmetic move came shortly before negotiations were set to resume between Egyptian and Israeli officials on the Palestinian autonomy promised under the Camp David accords. The idea was to show the world that the Palestinians do not live under military occupation at all, and that things are improving in the occupied territories.

What was quickly shown once again, however, is the complete rejection of the Camp David deal by the Palestinian population, and the brutal character of the Zionist military occupation.

Demonstrations erupted throughout the West Bank in the days following Milson's appointment. Protests occurred in Jericho, Ramallah, Nablus, Hebron, Bethlehem, and at the Kalandia refugee camp, as well as in smaller towns such as Beit Sahur and Bir Zeit.

Military authorities ordered the closing of Bir Zeit University on November 4 after demonstrations there. The school is the major center of higher education for Palestinians on the West Bank, and a statement by its board of trustees, faculty, and student body called the order "part of a larger political scheme to deny the Palestinian population its right to self-determination."

Palestinian leaders have been subjected to a wave of arrests.

Gabi Baramki, the acting president of Bir Zeit University, was placed under house arrest, and there were arrests of other faculty members and students at the school. In addition, according to a report by David Shipler in the November 18 *New York Times*, "Dr. Samir Katbeh, president of the medical association in

the West Bank, was arrested a week ago and is on a hunger strike. . . ."

Ahram Khania, editor of the East Jerusalem Arabic daily *Al Shaab*, was arrested November 8 and his paper threatened with closure. *Al Fajr*, another Jerusalem newspaper, was closed for ten days by the Israeli military censor.

"Others detained," Shipler reports, "include Dr. Azimi Shoubi, a member of the municipal council of El Bireh, north of Jerusalem, who is still in prison, Ibrahim Dakak, head of an engineers' union in East Jerusalem, who was released by court order after five days, and Jiryas Khouri, president of the Lawyers' Association on the West Bank, who was held for two days. According to the Palestinians who have gathered the information, no charges have been lodged in any of the cases."

Collective punishment has also been used by the Zionist occupiers. Whole villages have been put under extended round-the-clock curfews, which prevent the inhabitants from going to work and even from going outside their houses to buy food. The houses of seven families have also been blown up by Army demolition teams. In each case one family member had been accused of attacking occupation forces.

Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij summed up the situation November 11 by telling *Washington Post* reporter William Claiborne: "It is worse than ever now."

In the midst of the protests and repression, on November 11, four Palestinian liberation fighters were found guilty of killing six Zionist settlers in a May 1980 attack in the West Bank town of Hebron.

"We are people with a just political cause," thirty-three-year-old Adnan Jaber told the Zionist court. "The Palestinian cause is recognized by almost everyone in the world except you." □

# Headed for a hot winter

## Economic crisis fuels growing strikes, protests

By Ernest Harsch

As winter approaches, tempers across Poland are rising.

Popular anger over the authorities' complete mismanagement of the economy — particularly over the severe food shortages — are being expressed in frequent strikes, street protests, and bitter local disputes. But the government of Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski has taken no steps to seriously tackle the economic crisis, which threatens to reach catastrophic proportions during the winter months.

"Even if we do not have a bad winter," said Jozef Kusmierek, a well-known writer on economics, "it will still be cold in apartments and many people will die. We can no longer buy shoes and warm blankets. We are eating poorly and there is no soap, no medicine, even aspirin."

Kusmierek, who is also a figure in the growing movement for workers control of the factories, belongs to an independent commission of doctors and scientists that is urging the government to draw up emergency contingency plans for the winter. The commission estimates that if Poland is hit by a severe winter, as many as 3 million Poles could die. Already weakened by lack of food, warm clothing, medicine, and vitamins, many will simply not be able to survive the cold. Children and the elderly will be the most vulnerable.

Although the government tries to blame Poland's economic woes on Solidarity, the 10-

million-member independent union movement, they actually flow from years of bureaucratic mismanagement, corruption, and irrational planning.

### 'Gierek's biggest crime'

Kusmierek provided an example of how the bureaucracy's economic policies, particularly those adopted in the 1970s under Edward Gierek, will affect the situation this winter. Although the Gierek regime made a big push to build badly needed apartment buildings, it paid little attention to adequate insulation; at the same time, many small district power plants were closed to save money. Since these buildings are heated by hot piped water from the central power plants, there is a danger the long pipes could freeze and burst during a prolonged cold spell.

"It was Gierek's biggest crime," Kusmierek said. "The government acted with total irresponsibility, allowing the heating norm to drop to four times lower than Paris. And this is not a Mediterranean climate."

These structural problems have been exacerbated by the current crisis, particularly Poland's \$27 billion foreign debt, which has made it impossible to import many of the raw materials and equipment needed to keep industry going. Every shoe factory in Poland is now closed, for example, because one glue factory in Radom cannot afford to import what it needs.

To save energy for the winter, thousands of energy-intensive enterprises have been closed, causing further economic dislocations. Half the country's buses are out of service because of a 30 percent cutback in gasoline supplies and lack of spare parts.

And in the food stores, the shelves are becoming increasingly bare.

This disastrous situation has aroused much bitterness and frustration, which has been compounded by the government's refusal to carry out its promises, and its campaign of slander and threats against Solidarity.

In some cases, the authorities have carried out direct provocations against the union. On November 1, the Polish press agency reported that prosecutors had begun investigations of Marian Jurczyk, a Solidarity leader in the port city of Szczecin, for a speech he gave several days earlier. They claimed that his speech contained "criminal elements." Jurczyk is the highest ranking Solidarity leader yet to face investigations. During the union's recent national congress, he was a candidate for chairperson, receiving the highest number of votes after Lech Walesa.

### Workers angry

The workers have responded to these attacks, as well as to the deteriorating economic situation, through a series of local strikes and protest actions. These have been in addition to the one-hour national general strike on October 28, which involved millions of workers around the country. The recent actions included:

- Occupation strikes by 12,000 women textile workers in Zyrardow, just west of Warsaw, to protest food shortages in that city. The strikes ended on November 4 after more than three weeks.

- A twenty-two day general strike in the western province of Zielona Gora, involving 200,000 factory and agricultural workers. The strike was provoked by the dismissal of a Solidarity activist at a state farm. Although the activist was soon reinstated, the workers demanded punishment for three officials of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP, the Communist Party) responsible for the dismissal. The strike ended November 12 after Solidarity promised to raise the issue with a government commission authorized to investigate abuses of power.

- In the southern province of Tarnobrzeg, about 120,000 workers in steel mills, sulfur mines, and other enterprises struck for ten days. They returned to work following a direct appeal by Lech Walesa.

- Several thousand miners in Sosnowiec, also in southern Poland, struck for more than two weeks to protest a particularly brutal provocation: the throwing of poison gas vials at a Solidarity meeting, in which more than fifty miners were hospitalized. The authorities were suspected of being behind the attack. The miners returned to work after they won their demand for television coverage of the incident.

- On November 9, newspaper vendors in Wroclaw went on strike over a wage dispute.



Hunger march in Warsaw. Signs read: "Undernourishment — the disease of our children" and "The lack of cheese and fats is evidence of the authorities' indolence."



The strike soon spread to other cities, involving up to 50,000 vendors.

• In Siedlce, east of Warsaw, a group of farmers began a sit-in at the offices of a PUWP youth group to press a list of twenty-seven demands, including the passage of a law guaranteeing farmers secure ownership of their land. The protest has won the backing of Rural Solidarity, the 1.5-million-member farmers' union, which has called on farmers elsewhere to send representatives to join the sit-in.

• Some 190,000 students in Warsaw, Lublin, Rzeszow, and other cities have boycotted classes in solidarity with a student strike in Radom held to protest the undemocratic reelection of a rector. The students have also protested the government's failure to submit an educational reform bill to the Sejm (parliament), as it had promised to do following a wave of student strikes earlier this year.

In general, the central Solidarity leadership has sought to discourage such uncoordinated

regional actions, fearing that they could undermine Solidarity's unity and provide a justification for a government crackdown on the entire workers movement. The local strikes, Walesa charged, were "breaking up the union from inside."

Solidarity's National Committee has formed "flying squads" to go into troubled areas to try to settle the disputes. It has been partially successful.

#### Leaders press negotiations

At the same time, the union has also attempted to provide some focus to the workers' grievances by pressing for various demands in direct negotiations with the government.

On November 17, the first general talks were held in almost three months, to discuss topics for further negotiation. After ten hours, the two sides agreed to discuss supervision of the economy, Solidarity's demand for greater access to the mass media, ways of solving lo-

cal disputes, and the adoption of a specific program to overcome the winter crisis.

As one of the main solutions to the bureaucratic mismanagement that lies behind Poland's economic crisis, the union has also been demanding the establishment of genuine workers control over the factories and the involvement of workers in broader economic and social decision-making.

Although the authorities have been resisting this — since it strikes at the very basis of their power and privileges — workers across Poland are continuing to set up democratically elected Workers Councils.

On October 17, representatives of Workers Councils and coordinating bodies from twenty regions met in Warsaw to establish the Founding Committee of the National Federation of Self-management Bodies. It marked the first major step to coordinate the activities of the Workers Councils on a national level.

This winter, the authorities may find life in Poland a lot hotter than they would like. □

# U.S. and Moscow: equal warmongers?

## Where U.S. social democrats go wrong on Poland

By Suzanne Haig

[The following article appeared in the November 27 issue of the U.S. socialist news-weekly *Militant*.]

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NEW YORK — Five hundred people attended a November 8 meeting here in support of the struggle of the Polish workers.

Speakers included Tadeusz Kowalik, Polish economist and advisor for the independent union, Solidarity; Pete Camarata, cochair, Teamsters for a Democratic Union; Sam Meyers, president, United Auto Workers Local 259; Michael Harrington, national chair of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee; and others.

Sponsored by an ad hoc group called the Solidarity Support Campaign, the meeting featured prominent social democrats. The leaflet distributed by the meeting's organizers explained, "It is only right that we, not those who create or are accomplices in America's reactionary domestic and foreign policies, defend Solidarity's survival and independence."

The meeting was seen as a way of presenting a radical alternative to the AFL-CIO's pro-imperialist, anticommunist campaign conducted in the name of Polish support work.

Within this framework, speakers presented various viewpoints on the meaning of the Polish revolution and how it can be supported in the United States.

Guest speaker Tadeusz Kowalik effectively refuted charges by Moscow and Warsaw that Solidarity is antisocialist — an accusation not contradicted, but reinforced, by the capitalist

media, he added.

Explaining what kind of aid Poland needs, Kowalik said, "The help from the left should be mainly intellectual. Western public opinion should be better informed about what is going on in present-day Poland, and especially better informed about changes not only at the top — in the central authorities — but also in the factories, schools, and universities."

Cheers and hearty applause went to Bruce Campbell, a striking member of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO). Campbell told the audience about the hardships faced by the PATCO strikers. After Reagan fired them on August 5, many were denied food stamps and unemployment benefits.

"People who paid FHA [Federal Housing Authority] mortgages regularly on their houses, and then missed a payment, were foreclosed upon," Campbell said. Local businesses have refused to hire many.

"But like the people in Poland," he added, "we will persevere. And with support like we see today at this meeting, we know that they cannot lose — and neither can the controllers."

Twenty-five percent of the collection, taken for Solidarity, went to the striking controllers.

As part of their attempt to differentiate themselves from the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, speakers emphasized the need to follow the example of the Polish workers in labor's fight here against the Reagan administration's attacks. A few speakers addressed the importance of support to the antimissiles movement in Western Europe as an aid to the Polish struggle.

The meeting, however, failed to present a

clear and effective alternative to AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland's fake Polish solidarity campaign.

In fact, many of the most prominent speakers expressed a position on Poland and the Soviet Union that made concessions to the basic premises of imperialist foreign policy.

Moscow, for example, was described not only as a threat to the Polish workers, but as a danger to world peace — on a par with Washington.

Speakers failed to deal with the role that U.S. and other imperialist banks are playing in starving the Polish economy. Nor was the fact stressed that the problem with the NATO missile bases in Europe is that they are aimed directly at the masses in Poland, the rest of Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union.

#### Superpower hegemony?

C. L. R. James, West Indian author of *The Black Jacobins* and retired professor, said that "the Russian army was supposed to march through Poland and go to the Atlantic," but the Polish workers are keeping them occupied at home.

Paul Sweezy, editor of *Monthly Review*, said regarding the United States and Soviet Union: "What the world needs more than anything is the end of dual hegemony by the two superpowers. What it needs is to break up both of the superpowers' blocs."

Such positions, especially when presented in the name of socialism, serve to confuse and disarm activists who support the Polish revolution and oppose Washington's war drive, by giving backhanded support to Washington's



foreign policy.

Anti-Sovietism is the cornerstone of Washington's campaign to convince working people of the need to reinstate the draft, increase military spending, and intervene militarily around the world.

Once Washington's premise of Soviet aggression is accepted, then it is logical to accept its conclusion — despite statements to the contrary.

C. L. R. James's unsubstantiated charge that the Kremlin wants to drive to the Atlantic, for example, justifies stationing U.S. nuclear missiles in Europe.

Confusing the source of aggression in the world, not putting responsibility for war squarely where it belongs — on U.S. imperialism — takes Washington off the hook, leads to serious political errors, and lays the groundwork for legitimatizing some form of U.S. military action.

This is especially true considering that the meeting occurred right at the time when serious military moves in the Caribbean and Central America are being considered by Washington.

Putting equal blame for the cause of war on imperialism and the Soviet Union is often referred to as a "third camp" position. It comes from a rejection of anything progressive in the property relations in the Soviet Union that resulted from the workers and peasants revolution in 1917.

According to James, the Soviet Union is capitalist. Sweezy stated at the meeting that "the Soviet Union is not socialist. It is not capitalist, but is a new kind of exploitative class society. It is not ruled by a bureaucracy, not by an elite, but by a ruling class, which has its rule in the control of the state apparatus."

#### Giant step forward

There is a great distinction between the totalitarian Moscow and Warsaw bureaucracies and the economic system over which they hold power.

Failure to recognize this makes it impossible to understand what the Polish workers are fighting for, and is an obstacle to defending them. Overturning the capitalists and landlords in the Soviet Union and Poland represented a gigantic step forward for the working class and all humanity. The state now owns the means of industrial production and distribution and controls finances. The state holds a monopoly over foreign trade. Production is not for profits: there is a planned economy.

The Soviet Union and Poland are neither capitalist nor imperialist, and they do not have a new ruling class. They are states in transition from capitalism to socialism, deformed by ruling, privileged, self-seeking bureaucracies.

Those like Sweezy, James, et al., who do not think that the nationalized property relations in Poland are worth defending, put themselves at odds with what the Polish workers are really fighting for.

The Polish workers and farmers recognize the progressive character of their economy. They

are not fighting to return the nationalized property to profit-hungry industrialists, bankers, and landlords. They want to democratize the current system in order to truly make it work in their interests.

We should stand with them and fight for what they are fighting for.

#### Who is the aggressor?

Whatever can be said about the oppressive nature of the Soviet political system, the fact remains that the economic system of the Soviet Union — unlike U.S. imperialism — does not drive it to expand and dominate the world.

In a system where goods are not produced for profit, there is no economic drive to expand investments to other countries, to find new markets for goods, to seek out cheap sources of labor and raw materials.

Nor is war production a source of profits. In fact, peace is a prerequisite for the full development of the planned economy. Weapons expenditures — which flow from defense against imperialism — weaken the Soviet economy.

It is the imperialist nations, especially the United States, that are the main source of war and aggression today.

Since the Russian revolution, the imperialist nations have attempted to crush any revolution

that threatened to overturn capitalism. This was the basis for the Korean and Vietnam wars, and explains the current threats against Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada. After 1917, the United States and thirteen other capitalist countries invaded the Soviet Union trying to overturn the revolution.

Today, it is U.S. missile bases that circle the Soviet Union, Poland, and Eastern Europe. And Washington's strategy is based on attempting to achieve a first-strike capability against the Soviet Union — not, as NATO pretends, to respond to previous Soviet missile deployments.

In their attempt to present a radical alternative to Kirkland's Polish "support" campaign, these social democrats fail, for they end up giving credence to the cold war rhetoric and foreign policy positions that they want to take their distance from.

The best way to aid the Polish workers is not to give one ounce of credibility to Washington's deceptions about the causes of war. Our job is as Tadeusz Kowalik said: to get out the truth to the American people about what the Polish workers are really fighting for and the dangers posed to their revolution — not only by the Soviet bureaucracy, but by the U.S. warmakers. □

## Antigua

# British flag hauled down

## *New independent state in Caribbean*

### By Baxter Smith

ST. JOHN'S — Church bells pealed, fireworks exploded, and people rejoiced in the streets here as the Caribbean nation of Antigua and Barbuda was granted formal independence by Britain at 12:01 a.m., November 1.

The occasion brought to an end nearly 450 years of colonial rule.

Despite threats of rain, some 25,000 people jammed the Antigua Recreation Grounds to watch Princess Margaret hand the reins of power to Prime Minister Vere Cornwall Bird. The Union Jack was lowered for the last time, and the Antiguan flag was raised.

Officials from forty-two countries were on hand for the ceremonies, including a high-ranking U.S. State Department delegation and prime ministers of neighboring islands.

#### 'This is a good thing'

"This is a good thing," Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop told me. "We want all of these islands to be independent."

For weeks leading up to independence, Antiguans, in preparation, had decorated nearly the entire country with the colors of the flag. The nation's two radio stations played independence and freedom songs by island calyp-

sonians almost nonstop.

In the final days, the air was filled with excitement and people glowed with the pride of ending colonial domination. Many older people, especially, seemed joyful, no doubt remembering decades of bitter conditions under British rule.

But even while the new nation celebrated, many people expressed doubts about the future.

"I'm fifty-fifty for independence," one man said. "We're on our own now. We'll have to see if it works."

Another young man who said he farms and does carpentry explained: "I've been to some of the other islands that are independent and they are worse off than Antigua. I don't know

### Next week

Exclusive interview with Tim Hector, chairperson of the Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement (ACLM). On the struggle against U.S. domination, the Caribbean revolution, and the origins and development of the ACLM.

how we'll do."

Much of the apprehension is instilled because Britain's pullout will mean the cutoff of even the meager British subsidies. And because independence did not come as the result of a mass struggle as in some former colonial countries, people lack confidence and sense that they will continue to be manipulated by ruling powers that are outside their control.

#### Corruption and poverty

As well, there is considerable feeling that the Bird administration is unable to provide a better standard of living.

Corrupt and larded with cronyism, the Bird government has been in power most of the years since Antigua and Barbuda were granted internal self-government in 1967.

Formerly, Antigua was a big sugar producer. Of 33,000 arable acres, 31,000 were under sugar cultivation. The Bird government now owns 25,000 acres. But 80 percent of government land lies fallow while unemployment stands at 25 percent. Most food is imported as there is no large-scale agricultural production. People scrape by through subsistence farming.

After the collapse of the sugar industry in the 1950s, the government turned to tourism, which accounts for 60 percent of government earnings. But like tourism elsewhere in the Caribbean, islanders benefit little from it. Of thirty-two hotels on the island, twenty-eight are owned by Americans.

"Under this tourist playground," Tim Hector, leader of the Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement (ACLM), said, "exist the most degrading circumstances under which people live."

Of the ACLM's estimate of 6,000 houses on this island of 73,000 people, three-quarters are just one or two rooms. There is one hospital on the island, with 216 beds. There are only twenty-one doctors here.

#### Barbuda secessionists

There are no doctors on Barbuda, which lies twenty-five miles north of here and has 1,200 people. Until just a few months ago, Barbuda did not even have a resident nurse.

"There is underdevelopment in Antigua," Hector added, "but in Barbuda there is nondevelopment. No development has taken place in Barbuda."

There is only one road in Barbuda and people there survive mainly through fishing. These conditions have given rise to considerable dissatisfaction and even opposition by Barbudans to independence. A few Barbuda figures have directed this opposition not against the colonial power in London — which has been responsible for Barbuda's plight — but against alliance with the central government in Antigua.

These Barbuda misleaders, according to Hector, "have twisted the legitimate sentiments of the Barbuda people against their own nondevelopment, against the colonial neglect, into this secession movement which aims not

toward the development of Barbuda but for the development of opportunities for capital."

With independence, the Bird regime has of-

fered Barbuda control over many governmental institutions the regime formerly administered in an attempt to break down hostility. □

## Under Washington's shadow

### U.S. corporations and military bases

#### By Baxter Smith

ST. JOHNS — Official fanfare and proclamations aside, independence, according to Tim Hector, means that the island "ceases to be a British colony and becomes what the economy shows it to be — an American colony."

Hector is chairperson of the Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement, a group that has long favored independence.

Hector and members of the ACLM belong to a generation of Caribbean militants, like Grenada's New Jewel Movement, who desire a radical rearrangement of economic and social priorities.

Elimination of "unemployment and development of large-scale agriculture and a health-care system" would be the ACLM's priorities in independent Antigua. "But that will not happen," Hector said in an interview.

"Independence in Antigua is but a formality," the tall, bespectacled leader said. "All the productive and service centers of the Antigua economy remain controlled by North American companies and a few British interests, like Barclay's Bank."

The ruling Antigua Labour Party and its nominal opposition party, the Progressive Labour Movement, have both passed laws in parliament highly favorable to U.S. and other foreign investment. Already, about 80 percent of manufacturing here is U.S.-owned. It consists chiefly of the manufacture of garments and electrical components.

According to the government's "Investors Guide to Antigua," the island "offers generous incentives" to investors. Corporations, the

pamphlet boasts, "can capitalise on the local wage level, which is low in comparison with the wage levels in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom."

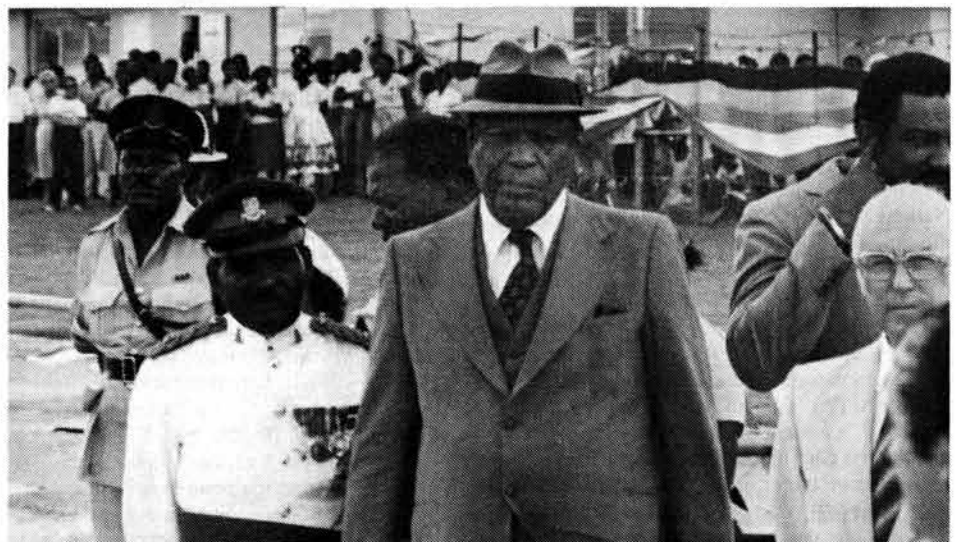
Investors can become eligible for up to a fifteen-year tax waiver, and can import their raw materials and equipment free of customs duties. Antiguans, meanwhile, are slapped with a duty of up to 60 percent on imported goods, including food.

The pamphlet counsels investors that industrial workers can be paid as little as \$18.50 per week.

One of the prime offenders is the U.S. government. The U.S. Air Force base on the island pays Antiguan construction workers \$0.52 per hour, nearly 50 percent below the island's going construction rate, according to the ACLM newspaper *Outlet*.

This base is a major communications center with sophisticated spy equipment. It has huge listening antennae, as well as the world's second largest dish antenna that relays spy messages from satellites.

The local government has recently allowed the U.S. to establish a relay station of the Voice of America (VOA) to beam U.S. propaganda to Caribbean listeners. The VOA, according to Hector, will be especially aimed at the Grenadian revolution which, he says, "is the most significant event to take place in the English-speaking Caribbean and the second most important event to take place in the Caribbean in general — second only to the Cuban revolution." □



Antiguan Prime Minister Vere C. Bird (center) at independence ceremony.

Baxter Smith/IP



# Washington, accomplice in apartheid

*Reagan pushes closer economic, political, military ties*

**By Ernest Harsch**

Almost as soon as Ronald Reagan became president, he announced a "new direction" in U.S. foreign policy. A bevy of advisers quickly began to assess Washington's interests and options in several key regions of the world. Not least among them was southern Africa, particularly the key power in that area — South Africa.

A high-level government briefing paper leaked to the press earlier this year spelled out the essence of Reagan's "new direction" toward South Africa.

One of the administration's central aims, it said, was to "work to end South Africa's polecat status in the world and seek to restore its place as a legitimate and important regional actor with whom we can cooperate pragmatically."

## **Embracing the 'polecat'**

Thus while the demand for economic and other sanctions against the apartheid regime is becoming increasingly popular around the world, Reagan is rushing to embrace the "polecat." Not for a long time has the alliance between U.S. imperialism and the white supremacist regime been so undisguised and blatant.

Although Reagan has occupied the White House for less than a year, his administration has already given numerous examples of its stepped-up support for the government in Pretoria:

- When the South African armed forces staged a massive invasion of Angola in August, the White House refused to condemn it, although almost every other government in the world did.

The State Department even tried to provide some justification for the attack, pointing to "the continued presence of Cuban combat forces in Angola" and the sanctuary that the Angolan government is giving to the Namibian freedom fighters.

When a resolution came before the United Nations Security Council strongly condemning the invasion, the U.S. representative stood alone in vetoing it.

- Since March, the White House has been pressing Congress to repeal the Clark Amendment, which bars covert assistance to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), a South African-backed terrorist group. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker has called UNITA a "legitimate factor in Angolan politics."

- In March, the Mozambican government expelled six Americans from that country, accusing them of working for the CIA and pro-

viding information on South Africa exiles in Mozambique to the apartheid regime.

## **'Friendly' talks**

- Diplomatic and military contacts between Washington and Pretoria have increased considerably. In March, five senior South African military and intelligence officials visited the United States and met with the American representative to the UN, Jeane Kirkpatrick. In April, Crocker paid a visit to Pretoria.

The next month, South African Foreign Minister Roelof "Pik" Botha came to Washington and met with Reagan himself, in what a White House spokesperson described as a "friendly" discussion.

In a reversal of previous policy, three top South African police officers were allowed to come to the United States in September to attend international police conferences in New Orleans and New York. In October, four U.S. government officials went to South Africa for discussion on nuclear collaboration between the two countries.

The State Department, moreover, has announced that it will accept South African military officers for training with the U.S. Coast Guard on a "fairly routine" basis.

- After several bills were introduced into Congress calling for an end to U.S. investments in South Africa, the prohibition of U.S. loans to the South African government, and other measures, the White House declared in October that it was opposed to them and began to actively lobby to prevent them from passing. According to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Princeton Lyman, the bills were "deliberately provocative."

## **Crocker lays out 'realities'**

Perhaps the most detailed exposition of the Reagan administration's policy toward South Africa came in a speech given by Crocker on August 29 — at the height of the South African invasion of Angola. He stressed, "In this rich land of talented and diverse peoples, important Western economic, strategic, moral and political interests are at stake. . . ."

"South Africa is an integral and important element of the global economic system, and it plays a significant economic role in its own region. We will not support the severing of those ties. It does not serve our interests to walk away from South Africa. . . ."

In outlining the "realities" of southern Africa as a whole, the first point that Crocker listed was: "United States economic interests in sub-Saharan Africa are heavily concentrated in the southern third of the continent. Nearly \$3 bil-

lion of direct investment, or about 60 percent of the sub-Saharan total, is located there. Our southern African trade totals over \$6 billion."

Although Crocker did not explicitly state it, it is obvious that the Reagan administration, like its predecessors, views the apartheid regime as the major defender of imperialist interests in southern Africa.

With a highly industrialized economy, with a strong (and exclusively white) capitalist class, with a powerful military apparatus, Pretoria is the only U.S. ally in the region with the ability to deal serious blows to the African liberation movements.

In fact, it is itself an imperialist power. Although weak in relation to its North American and European allies, and dependent on them for support, it nevertheless has an enormous economic and political influence on other countries in southern Africa.

But Pretoria is important to Washington for more than just its role as a regional gendarme. It is, above all, the policeman of South Africa's own Black majority.

South Africa's system of apartheid — a strictly enforced and all-encompassing system of national oppression — is what makes possible the superexploitation of the country's predominantly Black workforce, and the consequently high profit rates that foreign investors, Americans among them, find so attractive.

That may have been what Jeane Kirkpatrick had in mind when she blurted out at a news conference in September that South Africa's political system "has some very good elements in it."

## **U.S. capital moves in**

That is what many American corporate officials have thought for some time. They have long been eager participants in the exploitation of South Africa's large Black working class and vast mineral resources.

Mobil Oil and General Electric began doing business in South Africa as early as the 1890s. Over the next few decades they were joined by such U.S. giants as Texaco, Colgate-Palmolive, and Gillette.

In 1917, the U.S. financial tycoon J. P. Morgan provided some of the capital that helped launch the Anglo American Corporation, today one of the largest South African mining, manufacturing, and financial conglomerates.

But it was not until after the Second World War that U.S. capital began to flow into South Africa on a massive scale. This influx coincided with the brutal extension of the white supremacist system, which was carried out under





South African tanks in Durban. Military gets fuel, vehicles, and computers from American companies.

the name of "apartheid" after the National Party came to power in 1948.

Most U.S. investment was made through the establishment of direct U.S. subsidiaries. Unlike British subsidiaries, the American ones were usually wholly owned. While American investments continued to flow into South Africa's mining sector, they tended to shift more and more toward manufacturing as South Africa's industrial base continued to broaden.

Attracted by South Africa's extremely low labor costs, the U.S. corporate stake there grew faster than its investments in the rest of the continent. It doubled between 1965 and 1975 alone, rising to 40 percent of U.S. direct investments in Africa as a whole.

#### A profitable partnership

Today, U.S. direct investments in South Africa total \$2.01 billion. Accounting for about one-fifth of all foreign investments in South Africa, the U.S. stake is second only to that of Britain, which ruled South Africa until 1910.

But in terms of trade, the United States ranks first; in 1980, the United States sold \$2.5 billion worth of goods to South Africa, and imported \$3.3 billion worth. As of June 1980, outstanding U.S. bank loans to South Africa totaled \$1.37 billion.

Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban — in fact, every city in South Africa — bears the visible evidence of this U.S. economic involvement.

Everywhere, particularly in the downtown areas and white neighborhoods, there are signs advertising for Westinghouse, Avis, Coca-Cola, Mobil, Motorola, Kodak, Xerox, and other well-known brand names. The stores are stocked with hundreds of U.S. products. American cars ply the highways.

Altogether, more than 340 U.S. companies have direct operations in South Africa, and

some 6,000 others do business with that country.

However, nearly three-quarters of all direct U.S. investments are held by just a dozen firms: General Motors, Ford, Goodyear, IBM, Firestone, 3M, Mobil, Caterpillar, Chrysler, ITT, Caltex (jointly owned by Texaco and Standard Oil of California), and General Electric.

Spokespeople for these companies sometimes try to justify their presence in South Africa by claiming that they are providing jobs or pressing for a liberalization of the apartheid system. But they are really there for one simple reason: It is very profitable.

As one South African government journal proudly declared, South Africa offers "the richest return on American capital invested abroad except for foreign oilfields."

In the decade of the 1960s, the overall profit rate for American companies in South Africa averaged 18.6 percent, compared to 11 percent worldwide. Although it has since declined somewhat, it still amounted to an impressive 14.9 percent in 1980, after local taxes.

The importance of South Africa's apartheid system in maintaining such high profit rates becomes especially clear when they are compared to those in the rest of Africa: in 1973-74, the average profit rates for U.S. mining firms and financial institutions were three times higher in South Africa than in the rest of the continent, and manufacturers reported rates six times higher.

The U.S. stake in South Africa accounts for just 1.1 percent of all American investments abroad. But besides their particular profitability, some of them are also strategically vital for U.S. imperialism, including many minerals. In 1979, one-third or more of American imports of chromite ore, antimony, vanadium, and platinum metals came from South Africa.

The U.S. stake in South Africa is likewise

worth more to the apartheid authorities than its simple dollar value would indicate.

For them, it is a concrete affirmation of the U.S. ruling class's interest in the survival of the white supremacist regime and an indispensable lifeline to the strongest imperialist country in the world. When confronted with its own rebellious Black majority, Pretoria likes to boast of its powerful allies.

On top of this, the heavy concentration of U.S. investments in manufacturing and oil gives American firms a dominant role in some of the most important sectors of the South African economy, sectors that are vital to Pretoria's efforts to diversify industry and build up its own military might.

As one extensive study on foreign investments in South Africa pointed out:

In crucial sectors it is with American corporate assistance, and in some instances, leadership, that South Africa has developed into the major industrial power on the African continent and is achieving integration into the Western economic system, itself dominated by the United States. For although the total percentage of the United States' investment in South Africa is small as a proportion of its total foreign investment, it has been applied there to areas critical to the development of an industrial society.\*

Among manufacturing industries, the one that has attracted the most U.S. investment is auto. Ranked in terms of assets, the General Motors and Ford subsidiaries are among South Africa's fifteen largest companies. So many U.S. auto and auto-related firms are based in the coastal city of Port Elizabeth that it has earned the nickname of "Little Detroit."

In response to government measures in the 1960s to stimulate the local production of automobiles (as opposed to the simple assembly of cars from imported parts), Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler built a number of new plants.

Besides the wide range of technologically advanced production methods the auto companies brought to South Africa, the manufacture of cars, trucks, and other motor vehicles stimulated other industries, including steel, rubber, auto parts, glass, and petroleum. During the 1960s, for instance, the auto parts industry alone expanded more than eleven times.

#### Oiling the repressive machine

Oil is the second major sector in which American firms play a leading role. It is also the area in which Pretoria is most vulnerable to international sanctions or boycotts, since oil is the one crucial raw material of which South Africa has no known deposits; it must import 90 percent of its oil needs. (The rest is provided by the expensive process of converting coal to oil.)

Two American companies — Caltex and Mobil — control 42 percent of South Africa's oil refining capacity and 40 percent of the pet-

\*Ruth First, Jonathan Steele, and Christabel Gurney, *The South African Connection: Western Investment in Apartheid* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1973), p. 280.

roleum products market. With combined investments in South Africa of \$784 million, these two firms account for two-fifths of all U.S. assets there.

Despite United Nations resolutions calling on member states to refrain from supplying oil to South Africa, Caltex and Mobil have been significantly expanding their operations.

In 1978 — in the wake of the massive Black rebellions two years earlier — Caltex completed a \$135 million expansion of its Milnerton refinery near Cape Town, increasing South Africa's total refining capacity by 11 percent.

About the same time, Mobil opened a new lubricant refining plant, the second largest in the country. Both companies are actively involved in oil exploration, and another U.S. oil giant, Exxon, is prospecting for uranium.

#### Computers for police and army

Some 70 percent of the computer market in South Africa is controlled by American corporations, with IBM well in the lead.

IBM, Burroughs, and Sperry Rand have sold computers that help implement South Africa's notorious pass laws and that link into the central data bank in Johannesburg that keeps tabs on the entire adult Black population. U.S. computers are also used by the South African army, police, and nuclear agencies.

The computer industry is just one example of how U.S. firms help bolster Pretoria's police and military forces, often in direct violation of U.S. laws barring such sales.

Caltex, Mobil, and other U.S. oil companies sell refined oil that is used by the military and police. Ford and General Motors provide vehicles to them, in spite of 1978 U.S. Commerce Department regulations that prohibit the sale of any U.S. products to the South African military or police.

Recently, it was revealed that General Motors had drawn up contingency plans that pledge the company to cooperate fully with the South African Ministry of Defence "in the event of civil unrest."

Officials of the Motorola Corporation have strongly defended their sales of communications and data control systems to the South African police, arguing that they did not sell the South Africans their best equipment, only their *second* best. Their most sophisticated items, they explained, were reserved for the *Chicago* police.

#### The Sullivan figleaf

Many of the leading American companies in South Africa are signers of the so-called Sullivan principles, a set of "guidelines" for U.S. corporate conduct in South Africa drawn up by the Rev. Leon Sullivan, a Black member of the General Motors Board of Directors.

These principles pledge the signers to eliminate segregation within the plants, follow a policy of equal pay and employment practices toward Black and white employees, promote Blacks to more skilled jobs and supervisory positions, and contribute toward improving

housing, education, health, and other facilities in Black communities.

Scores of U.S. firms have signed these principles in an effort to stave off more and more vocal demands within the United States and South Africa itself that they pull out of South Africa entirely. Signing the Sullivan guidelines serves as a justification for their continued participation in the apartheid system, under the cover of "improving" the lot of their Black workers.

But signing the principles and complying with them are two entirely different things — as many Black employees of U.S. companies have discovered. And this is despite the extremely limited character of the Sullivan principles to begin with.

A 1979 survey conducted by the Washington-based Investor Responsibility Research Center found that 95 percent of U.S. companies responding to its questionnaire paid their Black workers a minimum wage under \$238 a month, a figure well below the 1978 Minimum Effective Level, one of the several indices used in South Africa to measure Black poverty levels.

A U.S. State Department survey released that same year found that 40 percent of all American firms in South Africa paid Blacks wages of less than \$192 a month.

#### 'Ford has done nothing'

According to Tozamile Botha, the central leader of a strike at the Ford Motor Company in Port Elizabeth in December 1979-January 1980, "The multinational corporations who are signatories of the Sullivan principles claim to be making some changes to improve the quality of life of Blacks.

"But if one analyzes the Ford strike, which

started at a plant that is regarded as Number 1 in the implementation of the Sullivan principles, you see from the demands of the workers that in fact Ford has done nothing."

From an entirely different perspective, William Bowdler, the U.S. ambassador to South Africa under the Carter administration, made a similar point.

"Blacks," he said in a confidential cable to the State Department in March 1977, "see foreign investors as deliberately blind to inequities of the South African social system and indeed prepared to profit by it through low wages and submissive force it offers. . . . Even if foreign firms offer minor reforms, it is only to create comfortable black middle class which will perpetuate exploitation of African masses. . . ."

#### Blacks demand halt to investment

Although it is a crime under Pretoria's Terrorism Act to advocate a halt to foreign investments or the imposition of other economic sanctions against South Africa, virtually every representative Black political organization and many individual leaders have made it clear that they favor such measures.

But in open defiance of these insistent demands, the Reagan administration has set itself against anything that would impede American businesses' profitable dealings in South Africa. More than that, it is pushing ahead to further extend the close economic ties between Washington and Pretoria to the political and military spheres as well.

As it has always been, the target of such collaboration is the African masses themselves — both in South Africa and throughout the region. □

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## Sierra Leone

# Brutal crackdown on workers

Interview with exiled journalist

[On September 1, the West African country of Sierra Leone was paralyzed by a general strike called by the Sierra Leone Labour Congress (SLLC). The workers were demanding a reduction in the price of rice and other economic reforms. The government of Siaka Stevens responded by declaring a state of emergency, raiding the offices of the SLLC, and arresting many unionists and journalists. Despite the repression, the strike lasted for several weeks.

[The following is an interview with Bai Kablai, an exiled journalist whose newspaper, the *Tablet*, was closed down by the government on the first day of the strike. It was obtained in London by Larry Herman, and is reprinted from the November 12 issue of *Socialist Challenge*, the weekly newspaper reflecting the views of the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

*Question.* What were the events that led to the general strike?

*Answer.* The workers in the rutile, diamond, port and other industries live and work in appalling conditions. They live six to a room and earn £35 a month when a bag of rice costs £45 [one British pound is equivalent to US \$1.89]. Health facilities are virtually non-existent, and the few houses that have been built are occupied by the local ruling party officials and executive officers of the mining companies.

These conditions have been going on for years and there was not really any one incident that sparked off the strike.

Ibrahim Langley and James Kabia, the secretary general and president of the Sierra Leone Labour Congress, Tejan Kassim of the Employed Workers Federation and many shop stewards, were thrown into the Freetown Maximum Security Prison.

The only radical independent newspaper was attacked and its premises bombed and printing presses destroyed. I.B. Kargbo, a journalist, Pius Foray, the editor, and Lans Joe Sesay, correspondent for the London-based magazine *Africa Now*, are in gaol. Teachers and pupils have been shot, rioting was widespread and Special Branch police attacked activists and political groups.

When people turned up to protest the closing of the newspaper 25 were shot and killed by State Security Detachment officers.

The strike was effective throughout the country. In Makeni, in the north, and in the southern province of Bo, there was a virtual shut-down. In Kenema Province in the east peasants joined demonstrations and refused to sell their produce in the markets. In the capital,



Freetown, no work was done at all.

*Q.* How did the Stevens government react?

A. A state of emergency was declared, a curfew imposed and the army was put on alert. But because of the government's lack of popular support, Stevens had to call in 700 troops from neighbouring Guinea. These troops were everywhere in the capital, armed with automatic weapons, grenades and tear gas.

They attempted to neutralise the strike by monitoring workplaces and killing and jailing strike leaders and those who followed them. The Guinean Army is in charge of security operations.

*Q.* What effect has the strike had on neighbouring countries?

A. The new Liberian government of Sergeant Doe has 200 Green Berets from the American army to ensure that the government stays in power. Gambia totally supports Stevens.

The governments of the neighbouring states are afraid of the effect of the militancy of the Sierra Leoneans flowing over their borders. And, as the last chairman of the OAU [Organization of African Unity], Stevens has received messages of support from various African governments.

Siaka Stevens came to power after a coup in 1969. He came from the trade union movement, and after he became head of state he destabilised the trade union movement, hanged several of his party members, executed top military commanders and non-commissioned officers in the army.

He courted Sekou Touré of Guinea, who provided troops to put down the radicals who objected to the influence of big business and corruption. For the next few years Stevens solidified his power, but in 1977 radical students rebelled and the Sierra Leone army killed 250 people.

*Q.* What is happening at the moment in Sierra Leone?

A. The general strike came to a temporary halt at the beginning of October, after 4 weeks without any pay, workers and their families were starving to death. Troops were continually harassing anyone involved in the strike.

*Q.* What can people in Britain do to help the workers and peasants in Sierra Leone?

A. One of the main contributing factors to the ending of the general strike was the lack of sustained pressure from trade union organisations outside my country. People in Britain and the rest of Europe must develop a new sense of awareness for the plight of workers in Sierra Leone and other countries for that matter.

We implore the trade union movement in Britain to raise their voices in condemnation and to take industrial action against those British and multinational firms that are shattering the liberty of the Sierra Leone people.

We take responsibility for our own struggle against imperialism, but we cannot be successful without international support.

In 1978 Stevens called a snap general election and by various means only 15 per cent of the population was allowed to vote. That same year a one party state was ratified in parliament — a parliament thoroughly in the pay of international business.

*Q.* Who controls the Sierra Leonean economy?

A. As in the South African-occupied territory of Namibia, Sierra Leone is dominated by diamond mining and the Anglo-American Corporation [a South African firm] virtually controls Sierra Leone.

But there are others! German, French, British, American and Lebanese companies predominate. □

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# The FSLN, the working class, and the economic emergency

By Fred Murphy

The questions Morris Starsky raises in his letter (see box) are important ones for all supporters of the Nicaraguan revolution.

In taking up these questions, it is important to keep uppermost in mind the framework of the problem: the mounting threats and pressures — including military ones — against the Nicaraguan revolution from U.S. imperialism and its capitalist allies inside the country. (See, for example, *IP* November 23, p. 1132; November 16, p. 1108; and November 2, p. 1060.)

Besides being directly threatened by imperialist reaction, Nicaragua is beset by a severe economic crisis — as are all countries of Central America. The impact of that crisis was the theme of the article by Matilde Zimmermann to which Starsky refers.

## Economic crisis

As our correspondent in Managua explained, the economic situation of all Central American countries is grave. The gap between the prices of their largely agricultural exports and the prices of the oil and manufactured goods they must import is widening. As a result, foreign debts are mounting to unmanageable proportions.

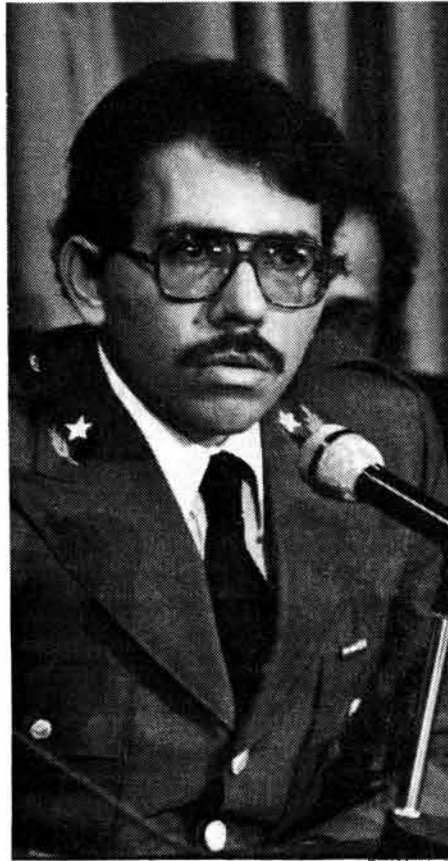
In his October 7 address to the United Nations General Assembly, Commander Daniel Ortega, coordinator of Nicaragua's Junta of National Reconstruction, explained this crisis in stark terms:

In 1977, it was necessary for our countries to produce . . . 98 hundredweight of coffee in order to buy one tractor. Four years later, in 1981, we have to produce . . . 248 hundredweight of coffee — an increase of 145 percent — to buy one tractor.

And the rich countries lend to us on harsh terms! They sell to us more and more dearly, and they buy from us more and more cheaply!

Capitalist regimes like those in Costa Rica and Honduras have forced the workers and peasants to suffer the most from this crisis, with wage freezes, deep cuts in social spending, and massive layoffs. But in Nicaragua, as Zimmermann explained, "Working people and small farmers . . . have to some extent been cushioned from the full effect of the international economic crisis by the social benefits won since the revolution: a massive literacy campaign, new schools and clinics, significant rent cuts, food subsidies, loans for farmers, improved working conditions, better wages, and more job security."

Nicaragua, however, is not exempt from the



DANIEL ORTEGA

effects of the crisis. As Zimmermann noted, Nicaragua's "poverty, lack of infrastructure, low level of industrialization, and economic dependency are not problems that can be solved easily or quickly." And the crisis is made worse by Washington's moves to cut off aid and strangle the revolution economically.

This is the framework for understanding why the government decided on September 9 to declare a "social and economic emergency" for a one-year period.

## Emergency measures

The emergency measures included cuts in government spending, a campaign for efficiency and austerity in state ministries and institutions, controls on the parallel currency market, steep new taxes on luxury imports, and new blows against hoarding and speculation by the local capitalists.

The measures also included a ban on strikes, workplace occupations, and land seizures.

Before taking up these measures, let's em-

phasize that our point of departure as revolutionists is not one or another piece of legislation. Our approach is not to weigh the merits and drawbacks of this or that law, but to understand the overall course of the Nicaraguan revolution and its leadership. On that basis, we have confidence in the capacity of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) to lead the workers and peasants forward, even if we find occasional areas of disagreement.

It was not the intention of the article in the September 21 *IP* to "defend the Nicaraguan government's imposition of an anti-strike and anti-occupation law. . . ." We are sorry Starsky (and some other readers) got that impression, and we are grateful that he called it to our attention. In fact, the article merely reported in passing that such a law had been adopted; it did not express any judgment on it. But further unclarity was introduced with the bad formulation Starsky quotes ("Nicaraguan workers and peasants have never known anything but austerity. . . .").

Starsky's concern was no doubt heightened when he read in the *New York Times* that the Nicaraguan ruling class "welcomed" the new legislation. It is true that one leading capitalist described the emergency measures as "definitely positive" in a September 11 interview with the FSLN daily *Barricada*. But the bourgeoisie quickly changed its tune. A week after the decrees, the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP) declared that "the state of emergency could be harmful to the economic reactivation process" and warned that "the law threatens private property."

## COSEP's declaration of war

The position of COSEP hardened, and on October 19 the big-business coalition issued an open letter to Commander Daniel Ortega that amounted to a declaration of war against the revolution.

"The national economy is collapsing," COSEP declared. "There are no signs of the recovery of production. Social peace has not materialized. The country is in an endless spiral of indebtedness and the mixed economy the government talks about is receding in face of the advancing statization of property. . . ."

No sooner had the COSEP's statement been read to a U.S. Senate committee holding hearings on aid to Nicaragua than the revolutionary government used its September 9 legislation to intervene against the capitalists in defense of the revolution. Four top COSEP leaders were arrested and charged with, among other things, violation of Article III, section "h" of the Law

on the State of Economic and Social Emergency.

That section calls for jail terms for "those who incite foreign governments and international lending institutions to carry out actions or make decisions that cause damage to the national economy." Though they were acquitted of this particular charge, three of the COSEP leaders were sentenced on October 29 to seven months in jail for violating the Law on the Maintenance of Order and Public Security.

The editors of the *Wall Street Journal* were especially outraged at the Sandinistas' lack of respect for these capitalists' "human rights" — that is, their "right" to take part in the imperialist slander and destabilization campaign against Nicaragua. "If you can imagine Ronald Reagan sending Irving Shapiro [former head of du Pont chemicals], Reginald Jones [General Electric], David Rockefeller [Chase Manhattan Bank], and Lee Iacocca [Chrysler Corporation] to the chain gang you have an idea of what's involved," the *Journal's* editors fumed November 4.

#### What class holds political power?

The decision by the revolutionary government to prosecute the top representatives of capital was a reflection of the rising class tensions in Nicaragua. It was a sharp reminder to the capitalists that their participation as a subordinate sector of what the Sandinistas call the "mixed economy" does not give them the right to rebel against the political power of the workers and peasants.

"This revolution is not going to be turned around," Commander Daniel Ortega declared when he announced the arrests on October 22.

It is important to be clear about what class holds political power in Nicaragua today. Starsky refers to the remaining capitalists as the "ruling class" and speaks of "a capitalist state (like Nicaragua)." It is certainly true that capitalism as an economic system, and a capitalist class, continue to exist in Nicaragua. But the capitalists are no longer the "ruling class" in the full sense of the term. As Starsky correctly notes, "a workers and peasants government led by revolutionists" has come to power.

There is no great barrier between the establishment of such a government and the consolidation of a workers state through the expropriation of the capitalists and the establishment of a planned economy. The decisive turning point in this process has already occurred: on July 19, 1979, the armed power of the capitalist state in Nicaragua was broken through a victorious insurrection. In the period that followed, a government with a qualitatively different class content was established.

In past discussions in the Trotskyist movement, the *differences* between the categories "workers and farmers government" and "workers state" have received great emphasis. This was because we were considering regimes headed by petty-bourgeois leaderships whose program and consciousness were usually in conflict with the tasks of the socialist revolu-

tion (such as the Algerian National Liberation Front or the Stalinist Chinese Communist Party). But in Nicaragua we have concluded — based on what it says and how it acts in the class struggle — that the FSLN is a revolutionary proletarian leadership. This gives the workers and farmers government a different content. While it does not in itself guarantee the consolidation of a workers state, it does qualitatively strengthen the working-class side in the battle to complete the task.

Hence we assess measures such as the ban on strikes differently than we would have if such a law had been imposed in Algeria in 1964 or in China in 1951. And we also assess such a ban differently than if it were imposed in Poland today. What is decisive is not whether a workers state has been established, but the specific political context.

#### Workers and farmers government

A workers and farmers government is one that arises out of the revolutionary destruction of the old state apparatus, acts independently of the capitalists, bases itself on the armed and organized toilers, and seeks to advance their interests. In bringing to power such a government under a revolutionary leadership, the Nicaraguan workers gained a new instrument of struggle that is qualitatively more powerful than a trade union or a strike committee.

From the outset, this government encouraged the formation of trade unions. It set up a Ministry of Labor that intervenes on behalf of the workers in disputes with employers. It fostered workers control of production through laws against the looting of enterprises by the capitalists ("decapitalization"). It established the Sandinista People's Militias and organized military training for all workers. It moved to cement the workers' alliance with the small farmers, through a massive literacy campaign in the countryside, a vast expansion of agricultural credit, and the distribution of land to peasant cooperatives and individual farmers.

In the enterprises and big farms confiscated immediately from the Somozaists, and in others subsequently nationalized in response to sabotage and decapitalization, the FSLN-led government has introduced forms of workers' participation in management. As the educational and cultural level of the working class increases through programs like the literacy campaign, such forms can be expanded to all-round workers self-management.

#### Role of capitalists

This workers and farmers government has allowed the capitalists who were not directly tied to the Somoza empire to continue to operate, but within a strictly delimited framework. Having nationalized all the banks and most

## A reader's question on Nicaragua

Dear Editor,

An article written by Matilde Zimmermann and entitled "Central America — in the grip of crisis" appeared in the September 21 *Intercontinental Press*. The article, in part, attempted to defend the Nicaraguan government's imposition of an anti-strike and anti-occupation law on the workers and peasants of that country. Such legislation is not wrong in principle but must be justified in the particular case as advancing the interests of workers and peasants.

A *prima facie* case may be made for the legitimacy of outlawing strikes and occupations as an emergency measure in a workers state with a high level of proletarian democracy. Where there is no capitalist class a revolutionary government gets the benefit of the doubt. On the other hand, in a capitalist state (like Nicaragua), even one with a workers and peasants government led by revolutionists, the imposition of an anti-strike and anti-occupation law is suspect unless there is clear evidence that it will not be used to block strikes against the capitalists. Matilde Zimmermann does not tell us whether nationalized property or private property is being struck and occupied in Nicaragua. The *New York Times* tells us that the Nicaraguan ruling class welcomed the new legislation as a sign of responsibility

on the part of the government. If the Nicaraguan government should use this legislation to intervene on behalf of the capitalist class, it will cease to be an instrument of the establishment of a workers state and turn into an obstacle in the path of the workers and peasants. Matilde Zimmermann never reaches these fundamental questions and issues.

One statement in the article is so unclear and misleading that it could be misinterpreted as a cynical disregard for the Nicaraguan masses. She says, "But the Nicaraguan workers and peasants have never known anything but austerity and sacrifice, and they will not find their lives greatly changed by the new laws." Clearly, M.Z. does not intend to say that the workers and peasants of Nicaragua have been exploited and oppressed for so long that taking away their newly won democratic rights will not matter to them. Clearly, she is not saying that the workers and peasants of Nicaragua should accept the framework of capitalist property relations because now they have a government on their side of the class struggle. What does she mean? Why should the Nicaraguan masses accept the new legislation? Why should socialists support it?

Morris Starsky  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
September 22, 1981



foreign trade, the government controls credit and access to foreign currency. The capitalists are bound to respect not only trade union rights but also all other gains the toilers have won through the revolution — including the right to exercise vigilance over the capitalists themselves. When workers have denounced their employers for sabotage or decapitalization, the government has backed them up and often nationalized the enterprise in question.

As noted earlier, the Sandinistas have described this state of affairs as a "mixed economy." In a speech to Nicaraguan social scientists in August, junta member Sergio Ramírez spelled out the content of this formula:

At this point the revolution continues to favor the mixed-economy project. We do not understand this as the juxtaposition of two economic models, where one of them would represent the same old mechanisms of merciless capitalist reproduction — as though the revolution could permit a kind of "free zone" for an untouched and archaic system of private exploitation. Rather, the mixed economy must start from the harmonious and limited insertion of the private economy into the overall strategic framework of the People's Property Sector. The latter, on the whole, must bear the political responsibility for directing the entire national economic system toward change and toward the production and distribution of wealth.

The capitalists' dissatisfaction and frustration with this state of affairs has repeatedly given rise to clashes, of which the October 21 arrests were only the most recent example.

But as Sergio Ramírez explained, "The Revolution has consciously chosen its model of development and has sufficient power to carry it forward. Within that framework, there is room for participation by the old ruling class. But neither the model nor the revolution itself will suffer any delay in its forward march if such participation is not total or even partial. What is involved is a historic event, not a convergence."

Or, as Commander Tomás Borge put it, speaking of the bourgeoisie, "What they want are political concessions. But that bank account has been closed. Their checks won't draw political credit from any bank" (Interview with the Mexico City magazine *Por Esto!*, No. 8, August 1981).

#### What the law says

Thus the Sandinistas have made it clear in both word and deed that political power in Nicaragua is exercised in the interests of the workers and peasants. The revolutionary government has not used the September 9 legislation, or any other laws, "to intervene on behalf of the capitalist class. . . ."

This does not exhaust the question, however. We still must look closely at the following sections of the September 9 law:

Article III: Under this law, the following [persons] commit crimes against the economic and social security of the nation, and will be punished with one to three years imprisonment: . . .

f) those who incite, aid, or participate in the initia-

tion or continuation of a strike, work stoppage, or takeover of a workplace.

g) those who promote or participate in land invasions or land seizures in contravention of the provisions of the Agrarian Reform law.

On the face of it, these clauses limit the rights of the workers and peasants of Nicaragua. The Sandinistas themselves have stated frankly that this is the case. "The Emergency Law suspends the right to strike as a guarantee," the Junta of National Reconstruction's September 9 communiqué stated. "In practice, the workers lose the right to strike," Commander Henry Ruiz, minister of planning, told 400 FSLN cadres at a Managua assembly on September 14.

As noted above, the capitalists did not regain any confidence in the FSLN as a result of this measure, especially because it came as part of a package of decrees that further curtailed their prerogatives.

#### Aims of FSLN

The aim of the FSLN and the revolutionary government in prohibiting strikes was to bring sharply to the workers' attention the grave situation Nicaragua faces as a result of the imperialist economic squeeze and military threats. "We speak of no work stoppages, strikes, or takeovers because we must be prepared for any kind of military plot, wherever it may come from," Commander Victor Tirado told the national assembly of the Rural Workers Association (ATC) on September 27.

Another consideration, in the Sandinistas' view, is the need to improve labor discipline and productivity in order to proceed with economic reconstruction. The framework in which this problem is viewed in Nicaragua was outlined in a recent speech by Xavier Gorostiaga, a leading economist at the Ministry of Planning:

All social changes bring about a decrease in productivity because they require adjustment. For more than 400 years, our labor force has been under the oppression of the colonial system, the capitalist system and, on top of that, the Somocista dynastic system. Productivity was obtained from the workers through oppression. Now that we are eliminating oppression, there is a relaxed atmosphere among the workers and productivity has decreased. We need to develop new conditions for productivity and these new conditions depend on political consciousness, organization, and new relations of production.

In motivating the ban on takeovers and strikes, the Sandinistas have pointed especially to the other avenues workers have gained for pressing their demands. During the debate in the Council of State on the draft Law to Prevent and Combat Decapitalization, FSLN delegate Federico López explained, referring to factory takeovers:

The course of the process itself caused at one point a spontaneous response by the workers in defense of the program of national reconstruction — taking a direct hand in a few enterprises. That course has now made it necessary that such responses be channeled through revolutionary legality. . . .

The working class is not being demobilized here

— on the contrary, it is being provided with legal instruments, political instruments for exercising defense of the revolutionary process. . . .

Thus it seems to me altogether out of order and irresponsible to claim that this law is going to demobilize the workers — rather it will mobilize them precisely to enforce the law itself, to exercise revolutionary power.

From the outset of the revolution, the FSLN has urged the trade unions to refrain from work stoppages, explaining that rebuilding the country to meet the needs of all the toilers requires maximum effort and efficiency in production. The founding conference of the Nicaraguan Trade-Union Coordinating Committee (CSN) in November 1980 adopted a resolution affirming that "in this transitional period in Nicaragua, the strike should be absolutely the last recourse of the workers."

#### Strikes and takeovers

Certainly most Nicaraguan workers have come to rely more and more on their government as a crucial weapon in fighting the employers. But it is also true that strikes and takeovers and other forms of direct action have often been key to moving the revolution forward. The tough antidecapitalization law decreed last July 19, for example, came as a result of the wave of factory takeovers and protest marches led by the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) and other unions in the weeks leading up to the second anniversary of the revolution.

There have also been instances where the workers in nationalized enterprises have considered it necessary to strike in order to force the removal of incompetent or overly authoritarian managers appointed by the government. In still other cases, workers have gone on strike for higher pay.

When wage demands have been at issue in the nationalized workplaces, Sandinista leaders have usually argued that the country's difficult economic situation precludes big wage hikes for employed workers. They have cited the priority placed on improving the overall conditions of the masses — especially of the tens of thousands of poor and unemployed.

The FSLN has stressed the need to improve the "social wages" of the working class and the oppressed as a whole, through providing free medical care and education, subsidizing the cost of basic foodstuffs and transportation, and so on. Sharp hikes in money wages, the Sandinistas have explained, would only force the revolutionary government deeper into debt and create inflationary pressures.

#### PCN's position

Not all sectors of the workers movement in Nicaragua have accepted this approach. Among those who have pressed most vigorously for wage increases while minimizing other working-class gains has been the Confederation of Trade-Union Action and Unification (CAUS). The CAUS represents some 5 percent of the organized workers, including some important nationalized factories in Ma-



# Frente a la Descapitalización... CONFISCACION!

COORDINADORA SINDICAL NICARAGUENSE: CST-CGT-ATC-CAUS-FO-UPN-ANDEN JORNADA II Y XX ANIVERSARIO



Arnold Weissberg/IP

Billboard in Managua: "To confront decapitalization — confiscation!" Sandinistas' answer to capitalists seeking to transfer their assets out of country.

nagua. It is controlled by the Communist Party of Nicaragua (PCN).

Politically, the PCN is a Stalinist sect. Before the revolution, it attacked the Sandinistas as "adventurers" and "provocateurs" and opposed the armed struggle against the Somoza dictatorship. After the insurrection triumphed, the PCN took a new tack, asserting that as the true communist vanguard of the proletariat its task was to lead the "socialist stage" of the revolution against the FSLN, which was limited by "bourgeois nationalist ideology."

On the trade union level, the PCN has posed as the best defenders of the proletariat by fighting for large and immediate wage increases — particularly in the nationalized workplaces organized by the CAUS.

## Previous clashes

This approach of seeking a confrontation with the FSLN and the revolutionary government around immediate economic demands has led to sharp clashes on two occasions. In the first months of 1980 the CAUS organized strikes and demonstrations for a 100 percent wage increase. The Sandinistas campaigned politically to explain what was wrong with the PCN's course, but they also jailed several dozen leaders of the group and its union federation.

By May 1980 all of these had been released. Tensions diminished, and a period of collaboration opened up. The CAUS received seats in the Council of State and joined the Trade-Union Coordinating Committee. The PCN suspended its sharp public attacks on the FSLN. In June of this year, PCN representatives participated alongside the FSLN in debating capi-

talist representatives in the Discussion Forum on National Problems.

In recent months, however, the PCN resumed its confrontationist course. The fresh dispute flowed from the increasing economic and political pressures by imperialism against the revolution. The immediate issue was the opposition the PCN and CAUS put up against the September 9 economic-emergency measures.

The CAUS issued a leaflet October 6 denouncing the decrees as an antiworker "state of siege" designed to serve the interests of foreign capitalists. It accused the FSLN of "Trotskyism" for supposedly arguing that building socialism will require revolutionary victories in Guatemala and El Salvador. In the same sentence it claimed the FSLN had launched a "social-democratic and capitalist bid to stop the struggle of the Communist Party of Nicaragua for the Socialist Revolution!"

After all the superrevolutionary rhetoric, though, the CAUS wound up calling for a wage readjustment and a three-year freeze on further wage hikes.

## Arrest of PCN and CAUS leaders

Part of the FSLN's response to this campaign was to arrest some thirty leaders of the PCN and the CAUS. The jailings took place at the same time the COSEP leaders were detained. On October 29, four of the PCN/CAUS leaders were sentenced to seven months in jail for violating the law on the Maintenance of Order and Public Security. Three of the four received additional jail terms of twenty-nine months for organizing a takeover at the Plásti-

cos Modernos factory, a nationalized enterprise.

The latter sentence was imposed under Article III, section "f" of the economic-emergency law, the antistrike clause quoted above.

Detentions and jail terms have not been the only response by the FSLN to their sectarian opponents. An intense political campaign to explain the Sandinistas' policy has been waged as well.

The CAUS "ignores the political value to the workers of having taken power, which gives a new dimension to their struggles," said Onofre Guevara, a leading FSLN member on the *Barricada* staff.

"We have the highest respect for communism as a doctrine," said FSLN delegate Federico López in the Council of State on October 21. "But what is involved here is an attempt to hide behind a label and carry out a campaign that has nothing to do with communism."

## A class difference

Sandinista leaders argue that it is the FSLN and not the PCN that has shown its ability to make the revolution and to lead the workers and peasants forward. They point out that the PCN and CAUS did not participate in the mobilizations against U.S.-Honduran military maneuvers, and that the two organizations have also boycotted the popular militias.

The political campaign has had an impact. Members and even some officials of CAUS-affiliated unions have expressed disapproval of the anti-FSLN leaflet.

At the Kativo factory, where the CAUS collected 1,000 córdobas (US \$100) to publish its attack on the FSLN, the union executive is



split five to two against the CAUS line. Workers there say they were never consulted about what the leaflet was going to say.

But at Fabritex, the nationalized textile mill that employs more than 1,000 workers, reporters from the FSLN daily *Barricada* were virtually chased out of the factory the day after the arrest of the PCN and CAUS leaders.

In announcing the arrests and in other political statements the FSLN has tended to emphasize what it sees as the similarity of the attacks on the revolution being launched by the right-wing capitalists and by the ultralefts in the workers movement. It is true that the COSEP and the CAUS use some formulations that sound similar. Both accuse the FSLN of betraying the "true revolution." Both blame the economic crisis on the FSLN. Both call for overthrowing the Sandinista government.

But the COSEP and the CAUS are not the same. The COSEP represents the exploiters, who openly look to U.S. imperialism to overthrow the workers and peasants government and reestablish capitalist rule. The CAUS, however, is a backward, shortsighted, and fundamentally conservative current within the working class itself.

#### Dangers for revolution

By lumping together the PCN-led CAUS and the COSEP, the Sandinistas obscure this class difference. They also obscure the fact that not so long ago the FSLN was taking quite a different approach to the PCN and the CAUS.

Speaking to the Council of State on October 21, Commander Dora María Téllez indicated that the FSLN still continues to make this distinction, although it has been pushed to the background by the simultaneous arrests.

"It doesn't do any good to ask the sellout bourgeoisie to take a responsible attitude," Téllez declared. "But it is different with those who consider themselves revolutionaries. So in the name of Nicaraguan workers, of the entire working class, of the peasants, of the men and women of this country, I call on the representatives of the CAUS to reconsider the course they have embarked on."

The FSLN's decision to take administrative measures against work stoppages and to arrest some of its opponents in the workers movement may reflect frustration with the pace and results of the effort to politically convince less conscious sectors of the working class. Certainly this task is made urgent because of the severe pressures bearing down on the revolution from imperialism. But such administrative moves pose dangers for the revolution. They can make the process of political dialogue with the CAUS-influenced workers more difficult.

The record of the FSLN shows it is aware of such dangers. Since the CAUS arrests, for example, Sandinista leaders have held meetings with the workers from Fabritex and other plants at which the political issues have been debated.

The latter method has been shown to be



Arnold Weissberg/JP

May Day demonstration in Managua. Workers and peasants hold political power in Nicaragua.

the most effective by earlier revolutionary experiences. During the Cuban revolution, for example, a problem arose among the workers in the electric-power industry. Their union had been dominated by a bureaucracy with close ties to the Batista dictatorship. Electrical workers had been accustomed to relatively high rates of pay and the opportunity to earn even more by working overtime. In November 1960 there were a series of bombings at the nationalized electrical plants in Havana. Less serious problems were arising as well — low productivity, absenteeism, agitation for more overtime pay, and so on.

#### An example from Cuba

In December 1960, Fidel Castro arrived unannounced at a meeting of the electrical workers union and spent two and a half hours discussing the problems of the industry and of the working class as a whole. He explained first of all that "the problem did not occur in a more humble sector of the working class; the problem arose in one of the privileged sectors of the working class."

Fidel held that the problem was not basically with the rank and file but with the leadership of the union. It was not revolutionary, but rather, "wanted the workers to resign themselves, resign themselves to a perennial and interminable struggle for a crumb more in wages, another gain."

Under Batista, Fidel went on, "the working class was kept impotent, it was kept divided — not struggling for the true aims for which the working class must struggle." The fundamental aim for which "a working class in the modern country must struggle," Fidel told the electrical workers, is "the conquest of political power."

Fidel went on to read out an extensive police report indicating that a counterrevolutionary grouping inside the electrical workers union had carried out the bombings.

According to an account of the meeting in the January 2, 1961, issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*:

Castro did not accuse the trade-union leaders of actually organizing the sabotage themselves. He regretted that they had decided to take refuge in foreign embassies rather than come down to this meeting to give whatever answer they wished to the accounting demanded of their stewardship. But he did accuse them of the kind of leadership that fostered a counterrevolutionary mood among some of the electrical workers rather than counteracting it.

The meeting ended by expelling all those who participated in planting the bombs, removing from office the executive committee of the union, suspending the union elections, conceding to the CTC [Confederation of Cuban Trade Unions] the right to call new elections, and designating a provisional committee from the meeting to take charge of the union until new elections could be held.

Two things should be noted about this experience from the Cuban revolution. First, the workers and peasants government had the right and responsibility to investigate and prosecute those who had perpetrated sabotage in a key sector of industry, even if these happened to be misguided workers. It would undoubtedly have arrested and jailed the culprits had they not fled into foreign embassies. But top priority was placed on politically convincing the ranks of the workers that the government's actions were correct and that the union officials did not represent their class interests. Convincing proof of concrete acts of wrongdoing played a role in this.

#### Policy of Bolsheviks

During the early years of the Russian revolution, Lenin and the Bolsheviks faced similar problems. Their guiding principle toward other tendencies in the workers movement was to allow them to exist, express their views — which often differed quite sharply from the Bolsheviks' — and receive representation in the elected soviets (councils of workers, peasants, and soldiers deputies). But they also did not hesitate to suppress such groups when they took up arms against the revolutionary government or advocated doing so.

Lenin also laid down some norms with regard to the question of strikes under the workers regime. In a 1922 resolution entitled "The Role and Functions of the Trade Unions Under the New Economic Policy," Lenin wrote that the persistence of "petty-bourgeois ideas" among sectors of the working class had a "socio-economic cause" and should not simply be attributed "to the role of individual groups, still less of individual persons."

The survival of bourgeois notions among the Russian working class, Lenin wrote, was the result of "political influences that serve as the superstructure over the remnants of capitalism and over small production."

An analogous situation obtains in Nicaragua today, where the proletariat and its allies have conquered state power but where the economy is still largely at the mercy of the capitalist market. Even if the remaining big capitalists and landlords are rapidly expropriated, the masses of small farmers, petty merchants, artisans, and the like will continue for many years to provide a basis for petty-bourgeois ideological trends among the working class.

Lenin explained this problem and related it to the question of strikes under the workers regime:

... the Communist Party, and the Soviet government and the trade unions must frankly admit the existence of a class struggle and its inevitability until the electrification of industry and agriculture is completed — at least in the main — and until small production and the supremacy of the market are thereby cut off at the roots. It follows from this that at the present moment we can under no circumstances abandon the idea of the strike struggle, we cannot, as a matter of principle, conceive the possibility of a

law that makes compulsory state mediation take the place of strikes.

At the same time, Lenin pointed out that strikes have a quite different function when the workers hold the reins of power. Under capitalism, he said, the ultimate aim of strikes is to "break up the state machine and to overthrow the given class state power."

#### Strikes under workers government

Once the workers have accomplished that task, "the ultimate object of the strike struggle can only be to fortify the proletarian state and the state power of the proletarian class by combating the bureaucratic distortions, mistakes and flaws in this state, and by curbing the class appetites of the capitalists who try to evade its control, etc."

Lenin said the Communist Party, the Soviet government, and the trade unions had to explain clearly to working people in Russia that "the strike struggle in a state where the proletariat holds political power can be explained and justified only by the bureaucratic distortions of the proletarian state and by all sorts of survivals of the old capitalist system in the government offices on the one hand, and by the politi-

cal immaturity and cultural backwardness of the mass of the working people on the other."

Finally, Lenin pointed to what can now be observed in Nicaragua as well. Once the working class holds political power, "the normal method of settling conflicts between labour and capital, between employed and employers, will more and more often find expression in the working people turning directly to the state authorities." (All quotes from Lenin taken from *On Trade Unions* [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978], pp. 465-66.)

We hope this rather extensive discussion has served to clarify the questions Morris Starsky raised in his letter. We are confident that Starsky will agree that our central task is to mobilize in solidarity with the Sandinistas rather than offer them tactical advice or sideline criticisms.

We hope that the great achievements of the Nicaraguan workers and peasants and their leaders, outlined in part in this article, will inspire all readers of *Intercontinental Press* to redouble efforts to defend the Nicaraguan revolution. In light of the current threat of imperialist military action in Central America and the Caribbean, that task is now more crucial than ever. □

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# Report from a rebel hospital

*FMLN cares for wounded, trains doctors*

By Juan Angel Alvarez

[We have taken the following Salpress news agency dispatch from the November 2 issue of the Managua daily *El Nuevo Diario*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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CHALATENANGO, El Salvador — "We are under frequent enemy attack, but our hospitals have suffered relatively little damage."

The speaker is "Tato," chief health officer for the northern front of the FMLN [Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front] in the province of Chalatenango. "The general staff has assigned eight soldiers to each hospital to defend us. In addition, we are the first to evacuate the areas where the danger is greatest."

Short and robust, Tato used to be a medical student at the University of El Salvador. Now he wears the olive-green uniform of the guerrilla army and carries a .45 along with his stethoscope and thermometer.

In the front-line hospital we visit with Tato, thirteen fighters are recovering from their wounds. Most of them are lying in brightly colored hammocks, while the nurses and a few of the wounded work on preparing medical supplies.

The hospital is a wooden building on a tree-covered hillside. It is camouflaged with branches and dry leaves. The pine trees make the windowless room even darker. Next to one of the three doors, at the far end, a white curtain separates the operating table from the rest of the hospital.

The five hospitals the guerrillas have in this region have had to be evacuated on various occasions. "The enemy's indiscriminate bombing raids mostly hit the civilian population," Tato tells us. "But they affect us too."

The usual tactic of the U.S.-supported military-Christian Democratic junta has been to bomb rebel positions for a few days and then advance overland. "What they want to do is cut us off from the masses, by terrorizing them. To do this they use napalm and poisonous gases.

"Our hospitals can hold a total of 105 people," he says. "But the wounded who are closest to recovery help out with various tasks, so the capacity is actually a bit more. We have a shortage of trained personnel, but to a certain extent we make up for this with the wounded themselves, who learn to prepare medical supplies and in some cases even learn to help cure their comrades. This gives them the feeling that they are still able to participate in the revolution."

Joaquín is a twenty-three-year-old who is

sitting in a hammock writing poems in a much-used notebook. He looks cheerful and confident, even though he has been hospitalized for more than two months, ever since he was wounded in Arcato on June 17. A bullet from a



G-3 went through his lung while he was carrying out an operation as part of the Special Select Forces. "It is much better now," he tells us, "although I still have a little cough."

In early July, while Joaquín was recuperating in the hospital at La Canada, a guerrilla camp near the border with Honduras, the government forces launched a major "cleanup" operation. "We left when the bombing started, under heavy artillery fire. The mortar shells were falling about ten meters away, and dirt was falling all over us." And then he adds, with obvious emotion, "When I get better, I am going back into battle. I am sure that we are going to win."

Tato tells us that one of the major problems the hospitals have is getting medicines. "It is a big problem, but the local population helps us. When we do not have commercial medicines we use home remedies. For example, we treat malaria with *copalillo* and quinine bark boiled in water. It works very well. Mango bark is good for coughs. Many plants and trees have curative effects that we are investigating and using."

Tato goes on, "We are making a big effort here to train nurses. The conditions of the war force us to do this, because we cannot train full-fledged doctors."

They have almost done so, however. Manuel, for example, is a peasant who did not know how to read or write. He never went to school, because he had to work to help support his seven brothers and sisters. When the National Guard killed his parents and five of his brothers and sisters, Manuel fled to his hometown of San Antonio la Cruz to join the guerrillas. In an encampment he learned to sew up and care for wounds, set fractures, and diagnose common diseases like malaria.

In his capacity as a nurse, he was recently accompanying a group of peasants who were seeking refuge in Honduras. On the way a pregnant woman began to go into labor. Hours later, when the baby still had not been born, Manuel decided that it was going to be necessary to do a Caesarean operation to save the lives of the mother and the child. "I had never done one. I had only seen it done," he tells us. "But if I had not tried, they both would have died. Luckily, they both survived," he ends up, smiling.

With all their limitations, and in spite of the invasions the army subjects them to, the rebel hospitals do a surprisingly good job of fulfilling their humanitarian mission. "Our mortality rate is very low," Tato says. "We only lose a small number of wounded who come to us in extremely serious condition." As he talks to us, he is taking a cast off a soldier with a broken foot.

"The hospitals are only supposed to take care of the guerrilla army," he goes on, "but in fact we also take care of civilians and of members of the militia, whose health system is not yet well developed. We give wounded prisoners of war the same care we give to our own comrades."

With the various types of care provided, whether it is pulling molars, dressing wounds, or performing major surgery, the medical and paramedical personnel in the war zone provide what Tato calls "another backup for our fighters."

"For us," he concludes, "this is our battle trench." □

## Nicaragua building burned down in Washington

On the night of November 16, a diplomatic residence in Washington, D.C., owned by the Nicaraguan government was burned to the ground by arsonists.

Valued at \$2 million, the residence had come into the possession of the Nicaraguan government following the overthrow of Somoza. Because of its ostentatious style, however, the residence was not currently being used, and the Nicaraguans were seeking to sell it.

Four months ago, the building was broken into, and the Nicaraguan chancellery recently received telephone threats that it would be burned down. Despite requests for police protection for the building, the U.S. government refused to provide it.

A statement by the Nicaraguan chancellery blamed the Reagan administration's "inflammatory" rhetoric for encouraging such attacks.

The November 18 issue of the Managua daily *Barricada* which reported on the arson attack in Washington, ran a photograph showing, in contrast, how the U.S. embassy in Managua was under Nicaraguan police protection.