

# INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

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## Guards at Rightist Daily Shoot Protesters Nicaragua: Capitalists Turn to Violence



Arnold Weissberg/IP

Militia members in 1981 May Day demonstration in Managua. The banner, held by members of the Pedro Arauz Squadron, says "The Reactionaries Will Not Pass, The People Will Smash Them!"

**POLISH WORKERS  
REMAIN DEFIANT**

**Iranian Auto Workers  
Face Austerity Moves**

# Polish workers still defiant

By Ernest Harsch

More than one month after Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski's December 13 declaration of martial law, the Polish bureaucracy is still a long way from its often-repeated goal of returning the country to "normal."

It has succeeded in inflicting a severe blow against the working class and has put down most mass protest strikes and demonstrations. But it has not been able to silence criticism or stop the activities of clandestine workers committees, let alone win any significant base of support among the millions of supporters of the Solidarity union movement.

Poland's extreme economic crisis, moreover, gives the ruling bureaucracy very little room to maneuver. It is caught between the demands of the imperialist banks for repayment of Poland's \$28.5 billion foreign debt — a debt that is continually growing — and the expectations of a working class that has been radicalized by the deepest revolutionary upheaval in Polish history.

The authorities' only hope of achieving "normality" — that is, the safeguarding of their material privileges and their unquestioned power to make all key decisions — is to break Solidarity's influence among working people. That they have so far not been able to do.

Deprived of any popular support within Polish society, the authorities have been com-

pelled to rely on massive repression.

Since the declaration of martial law, the activities of the most representative organizations in the country have been outlawed, including those of Solidarity and Rural Solidarity, the farmers' organization. A few groups, like the Independent Student Association (NZS), have been banned entirely. Strict censorship has been imposed, and scores of periodicals have been shut down.

A Justice Ministry order established forty-seven internment camps around the country, into which thousands of trade unionists, students, writers, and political activists have been thrown. The authorities admit that nearly 6,000 persons have been detained without charges being brought against them, and that nearly 3,000 others have been arrested.

In addition, more than 30,000 persons have been summoned before special martial-law courts, including people picked up at demonstrations, for organizing or participating in strikes, or for being outside during the curfew.

One message smuggled out of the Bialoleka internment camp, where many top Solidarity leaders are being held, complained about the repressive conditions there, including searches, restrictions on letters and visits from relatives, and lack of exercise.

"We are prisoners of war," it said, "and entitled to better treatment. We have been im-

prisoned despite our innocence. Our only guilt is our refusal to accept the war declared on our own nation by a gang of traitors."

There are many court cases taking place around the country, in which workers are being summarily tried and sentenced to prison terms, often without right of appeal. But in some of them, the defendants or their lawyers have been able to use the courtrooms to restate their support for Solidarity or to denounce the regime's actions.

## Austerity policy

Parallel to these attacks on democratic rights, the authorities are also preparing a major assault on workers' living standards. This is being justified on the grounds of Poland's extreme economic crisis — a crisis caused in the first place by the bureaucracy's gross economic mismanagement, particularly over the last decade.

Opposed to any involvement of workers in economic decision-making and unable to politically inspire them to produce more, the authorities are moving to impose a severe austerity policy. They hope that the repressive conditions of martial law will enable them to carry it out.

Already, Jaruzelski has ordered an extension of the workweek from five to six days. One decree provided for up to a week of compulsory labor for anyone between the ages of sixteen and sixty. The right to strike has been abolished. Although unemployment does not officially exist, in practice it is growing, both through the closure of some enterprises and the firings of thousands of union activists.

## U.S. nerve gas to help Polish workers?

Taking advantage of the Polish bureaucracy's massive attack against the working class of that country, the imperialists, led by Washington, have been escalating their anticommunist propaganda and action campaign.

On January 11, a meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) foreign ministers — the first such "emergency" meeting ever held — threatened to impose economic and trade sanctions against both the Soviet Union and Poland. If actually carried out, such a move by NATO would be a blow to the Soviet and Polish workers states, and only increase the suffering of the Polish workers.

Washington's European allies, while more than willing to beat the propaganda drums against communism, have so far been reluctant to follow the Reagan administration's calls to restrict their substantial trade ties with Moscow and the other Eastern European states.

The NATO foreign ministers' declara-

tion itself did not commit them to any concrete action on sanctions, and the Greek delegation declined to endorse those sections that threatened sanctions.

An indication of the kind of problem Washington faces in this regard came on January 13. The White House announced that it would ask the West European and Japanese governments for increased curbs on the shipment of high-technology products and oil and gas equipment to the Soviet Union. The same day, the West German government declared that it would allow West German companies to fulfill their contracts for the construction of a massive natural gas pipeline from the Soviet Union to Western Europe.

Despite these difficulties, U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig termed the NATO foreign ministers' meeting a "solid success." The Reagan administration was thankful to at least get the other NATO members to threaten the possibility of sanctions, and to paper over the tactical differ-

ences within the alliance over how to take advantage of the Polish crackdown.

A day after the NATO meeting, Haig claimed that "Poland is a test case and European history teaches that the greatest mistake in dealing with heavily armed aggressors is to ignore their violations of international agreements. . . ."

The clear implication was that the imperialist powers need to build up their military might and act to stop the Soviet "menace" — that is, any challenge to imperialist domination anywhere in the world.

Under the cover of this propaganda blitz, which is directed first of all against working people in the United States, the Reagan administration has taken yet another step to strengthen its military position. On January 15, just a week after the White House's announcement that registration of eighteen-year-olds for possible military conscription would continue, it was reported that the administration was planning to double its budget requests for chemical and biological weapons next year.

Prices for some goods have been sharply increased. Other price hikes now being considered would be the greatest in three decades — between 400 and 500 percent for sugar, butter, cheese, pork chops, ham, and beef. At the same time, supplies of even these basic food items are extremely scarce.

These are the kinds of policies the Western banks have been pressing the Polish government to adopt for some time. They want the Polish workers to bear the costs of repaying the loans.

#### Regime's isolation

The official Polish press tries to present an image of popular relief over the imposition of martial law. But there are few concrete indications of that.

Despite all the regime's efforts to break the unity of the Solidarity leadership, and to pressure at least some prominent union figures into open collaboration with the authorities, they have not succeeded. In fact, on January 13 Solidarity's Poznan regional chairman Zdzislaw Rozwalak publicly repudiated a statement of support for martial law he had earlier been compelled to sign, stating that it had been "made under duress."

Prominent intellectuals, despite the threat of arrest, have been circulating protest statements denouncing the "military dictatorship."

Under the pressure of the workers, Catholic church officials, such as Archbishop Jozef Glemp, have been more openly critical of Jaruzelski's crackdown, specifically demanding the lifting of martial law, the freeing of those detained, and an end to restrictions on Solidarity's activities. The regime had initially hoped that the church would use its influence to convince workers not to oppose martial law.

The ruling Polish United Workers Party (PUWP, the Communist Party) has itself been deeply shaken by the crackdown. Many of its rank-and-file members, including both workers and intellectuals, had openly supported Solidarity (one million were actually members of the union). They are now resigning from the party en masse. Others are being expelled.

One party official, in an admission of the extent of the crisis within the party, was quoted in the January 13 *Washington Post* as stating, "We don't need a 3-million-strong party. One million tough, dedicated communists is enough to run this country"

#### 'The Polish nation will not submit'

Nor has the extent of support for the crackdown among the ranks of the army been fully tested yet. So far, the authorities have carefully refrained from using conscript troops to break strikes or demonstrations, relying instead on the riot police or security troops of the Interior Ministry.

According to one eyewitness account of the initial resistance to martial law in Gdansk (published in the January 15 *New York Times*), a group of soldiers came to the gate of the Lenin shipyard on December 13 to bring tea and

coffee to the workers occupying the shipyard. The subsequent attacks against the protesters in Gdansk — which left at least nine people dead — were carried out primarily by riot police.

While Poland's workers were taken off guard by Jaruzelski's crackdown, and have lost some of the rights they previously won, they have not been decisively defeated. They are drawing the lessons of this experience and are beginning to reorganize themselves under the new conditions of repression.

Numerous clandestine Solidarity committees have been formed to organize "passive resistance," circulate information, and provide assistance to those victimized by the authorities.

Zbigniew Bujak, the leader of Solidarity's Warsaw regional chapter, is one of those who managed to escape arrest and is now function-

ing underground. In an interview published in the January 16 *New York Times*, he said that Solidarity was reorganizing and that he was already in contact with union activists in Gdansk, Wroclaw, Lodz, and other regions.

"So it is struggle, struggle and yet more struggle," Bujak said.

"But our chances are much greater than in previous years, because from August 1980 this struggle was conducted in concert by all social groups."

This sense of long-term optimism was also reflected in a protest statement signed by eight prominent intellectuals. Referring to the regime's attempts to subjugate the country, it said, "History proves, however, that the Polish nation will not submit to such a fate, that following a short period of apparent peace a struggle for freedom will erupt with renewed strength." □

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# Outrage over 'La Prensa' shooting

*Right-wing daily shifts from verbal to armed attacks*

By Matilde Zimmermann

MANAGUA — Private guards at the offices of the right-wing daily *La Prensa* here fired into a crowd of unarmed demonstrators on the evening of January 13, seriously wounding one protester and a television cameraman.

Several hours later, a crowd of nearly 1,000 was still gathered outside the newspaper's offices. Bonfires of old tires were burning in the streets, and demands for confiscation of the daily had been painted on one wall of the building.

Using the blood of those wounded, demonstrators had written on a shed the Sandinista slogan, "Patria libre o morir" (Free homeland or death).

A young demonstrator described what had happened at about 6 p.m., after he and some 300 others had marched over to the newspaper from the Eastern Market to protest *La Prensa's* most recent attacks on the revolution.

## Reminder of Somoza's time

"We were standing here, shouting slogans like 'People's power!' when a guard turned a firehose on us. We moved back to about where

we are standing now, still chanting. Suddenly we heard shots. We assumed he was shooting in the air and went on chanting, until we saw that a compañero was wounded. Then we threw ourselves on the ground. But we kept shouting revolutionary slogans."

It had been more than two and a half years since anyone in Nicaragua had fired into a crowd of peaceful demonstrators. "It reminded me of the times of Somoza," said one of those wounded, "when the genocidal National Guard would fire indiscriminately against the people."

Units from State Security, along with FSLN leader Dora María Téllez, arrived shortly after the shootings. They reestablished order and removed the guards and those members of the newspaper staff who were inside the building.

Two guards were placed under arrest, as was one of *La Prensa's* editors, Mario Alfaro Alvarado. Alfaro is a leader of the right-wing Social Democratic Party.

A woman of about forty, a member of the Association of Nicaraguan Women (AMN-LAE), explained the protest to us. People were angry, she said, about *La Prensa's* failure to

condemn a recently uncovered plot to blow up Nicaragua's only oil refinery and only cement plant. "For a while now, the people have been asking the national leadership and the Government of National Reconstruction to put a stop to all this. The people cannot take any more. We have had it."

## All-night protest

Everyone we talked to thought *La Prensa* should be confiscated. But several pointed out that they did not want the paper closed down entirely. "It has to be changed into a paper that serves the people," said a young man named José, "to what it was like before the insurrection."

Some protesters remained outside *La Prensa* all night, and the following day, January 14, further demonstrations were held in Managua and other cities. Throughout the afternoon and evening, contingents of market workers, students, women, and Sandinista Defense Committee (CDS) members from various Managua neighborhoods marched to *La Prensa* and demonstrated outside.

Several thousand members of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) recessed their regional assembly to join the protests. They marched first to the house of *La Prensa* General Manager Jaime Chamorro, and then eight kilometers to the newspaper offices.

There were also angry protests against the shootings in the cities of Masaya, Estelí, León, and Granada.

On January 14 the editorial board of *La Prensa* decided — in light of the situation — to suspend publication "for as long as seems prudent."

## Mounting anger

Even before the shootings at *La Prensa*, anger was mounting against the newspaper and the conservative business interests for which it speaks.

The capitalists, their political parties, and *La Prensa* are linked in the minds of many Nicaraguans with the counterrevolutionary terrorists that have recently stepped up activity inside and outside the country.

During the first week of January, a commando squad belonging to a counterrevolutionary exile group, the Nicaraguan Democratic Union (UDN), was captured with dynamite and plans to blow up the Esso oil refinery and the nationalized cement factory.

The consequences of destroying Nicaragua's only oil refinery and only cement plant would have been catastrophic. Hundreds, or even thousands, of persons might have died in an explosion at the refinery, which is located at

## French aid 'disappoints' U.S.

In a move described by high Pentagon officials as a "slap in the face," the French government made known January 7 that it will sell \$15.8 million in military equipment to Nicaragua.

The sale, announced the same day that U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger was meeting in Washington with his French counterpart, involves two patrol boats, two military helicopters, and fifteen trucks. France has also agreed to provide training for twenty Nicaraguan pilots and technicians.

Washington has repeatedly denounced Nicaragua's efforts to strengthen its defenses as an unwarranted military buildup. Secretary of State Haig has even accused the Sandinistas of seeking to transform their country into "a platform of terror and war."

In fact, as French Defense Minister Charles Hernu pointed out to reporters during his visit to the U.S. capital, the equipment being sold to Nicaragua is "absolutely not offensive" in character.

A French foreign ministry official quoted in the January 9 *New York Times* asserted

that "The United States should be grateful to France" for enabling Nicaragua to avoid relying "entirely on Cuba and the Soviet Union to supply its defense needs."

But what really makes Washington so "extremely disappointed" (in the words of Weinberger) about the French military aid is that the Sandinistas are preparing to defend their revolution at all.

Any such aid — no matter what the source — only complicates the counterrevolutionary plans of U.S. imperialism in Central America. And when the aid comes from a U.S. ally like France, it helps undercut Washington's campaign to isolate Nicaragua politically and exposes the lie about "Cuban and Soviet domination" that Washington uses as a pretext for its belligerent moves.

In a January 10 statement, the Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry responded to Washington's objections to the French arms agreement. It accused the U.S. government of trying "to deny Nicaragua its sovereign right to take the measures necessary to strengthen its capacity for defense."

the western edge of the capital. Immediate fuel shortages would have forced factories to close, halted public transportation, and caused the loss of much of the cotton and sugar harvests. Destruction of the cement plant would have brought many public-works projects to a standstill, delaying reconstruction and throwing thousands of laborers out of work.

#### Friends of 'La Prensa' in bomb plot

The Ministry of the Interior presented its evidence against the UDN commandos on January 12. It also revealed the involvement of several Venezuelan diplomats and Honduran nationals in the sabotage plot.

UDN leaders have often been praised in the pages of *La Prensa*. A former member of the paper's editorial board, Adriana Guillén, has been serving for several months as the UDN's press representative in Costa Rica.

Hence the right-wing daily buried the news of the plot to blow up the refinery on its inside pages. Emblazoned on the front page, however, was a big story alleging that a rock had been thrown through a second-story window at the headquarters of one of the right-wing parties.

Anger against *La Prensa* and the parties it represents was also fueled when the paper printed a telegram to the French government protesting the latter's agreement to sell military matériel to Nicaragua (see box).

The protest telegram was signed by the president of the Democratic Conservative Party (PCD), Donald Lacayo. Demonstrations have been held to demand that Lacayo be expelled from the Council of State — a body that his party has in any case been boycotting for more than a year.

Lacayo is the sales manager for the Coca-Cola bottling plant here, but he is not going to work these days. At a union meeting January 14 the workers at Coca-Cola voted not to allow Lacayo on the premises. Workers from eight other industrial plants demonstrated outside Coca-Cola to show their support for the union's decision.

#### 'Down with Sandino-communism!'

The January 13 shootings outside *La Prensa* marked the second time in four days that pro-capitalist elements had provoked violent confrontations with forces supporting the Sandinista revolution.

On January 10, an antigovernment march and rally ended in a shouting match and showers of rocks. The police had to escort right-wing politicians away from the rally site in order to protect them from an angry crowd.

That march was sponsored by a recently formed bloc of all the anti-Sandinista parties, the Democratic Coordinating Committee (CD). Five antigovernment parties mobilized their forces from around the country, bringing in delegations from all the major cities in western Nicaragua. About 2,500 persons attended.

In the weeks leading up to the action, CD President Alfonso Robelo insisted over and over that the march was to be a purely "civic"

affair with no political overtones — a respectful commemoration of the assassination of *La Prensa's* anti-Somoza publisher Pedro Joaquín Chamorro in January 1978.

But once the march began there was nothing apolitical about the slogans being shouted by the demonstrators. "Russian beasts — out of Nicaragua!" they cried. "Fidel Castro — out of Nicaragua!" "Down with Sandinista mobs!" And even, "Down with Sandino-communism!" — the battle cry of the Somozaists and their exile army of former National Guardsmen.

One well-dressed woman kept shouting at the top of her lungs, "Internationalists, get out!" To which her friends echoed, "Get out, get out!"

## Colombia

# Regime attacks socialists

## PSR leader Ricardo Sánchez kidnapped

The Colombian government has launched an attempt to frame up and victimize the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR, Colombian section of the Fourth International).

Ricardo Sánchez, a central leader of the PSR, was kidnapped by heavily armed men in civilian clothes at 9:30 p.m. on January 14. He was released on January 17 after lengthy interrogations about the PSR's activities, and constant verbal threats of physical harm by his captors.

The government refused to acknowledge detaining Sánchez, but his capture had all the earmarks of an operation by the regime's armed forces. According to witnesses, the kidnapers arrived at Sánchez's apartment building in three army vehicles. They cordoned off the neighboring houses and allowed no one to enter or leave the area during the operation.

The paramilitary squad remained at Sánchez's apartment for six hours. All furniture, books, and household goods were destroyed.

Some witnesses reported that Sánchez was taken to the Military Institutes Brigade (BIM), an army intelligence unit. One military spokesman later acknowledged that there had been a raid on Sánchez's home, but other officials denied this and asserted that Sánchez had "disappeared."

When PSR leaders reported Sánchez's kidnapping to the antikidnapping unit of the Colombian police, they were informed that no such capture had taken place, and that instead the police were investigating Sánchez in connection with the "kidnapping" of a woman student from the University of Colombia who was at Sánchez's apartment at the time of the raid.

The latter frame-up fell through when the woman and her parents totally rejected the cops' version and refused to cooperate with them.

None of this was very popular with the residents of Monseñor Lezcano, a working-class neighborhood with a long revolutionary tradition, through which the demonstrators marched on their way to the cemetery where Pedro Joaquín Chamorro is buried. There were shouted exchanges of slogans along the march route, and at the cemetery a shoving match and then fights broke out as Sandinista youth shouted, "People's power!" and "People, army, unity!"

When the police tried to restore order, the right-wingers began pelting them with rocks. Several police were injured but the rest managed to stop the fights and make it possible for the right-wingers to leave safely. □

The capture and interrogation of Ricardo Sánchez form part of a broader attack on the PSR by the Colombian regime. Several days before, the military prosecutors in the trial of members of the April 19 Movement (M-19), a guerrilla group, asserted in court that the PSR is the "legal arm" of the M-19. They claimed that the M-19 is controlled by the Fourth International.

The PSR and its supporters mobilized immediately to force the release of Sánchez. Leading defenders of human rights in Colombia, such as presidential candidate Gerardo Molina and Bogotá city council member Carlos Bula, accompanied PSR delegations to government offices to protest the kidnapping and demand guarantees of the PSR's legality and the safety of its leaders.

Telegrams and messages calling for a halt to the attacks on the PSR should be sent to President Julio César Turbay Ayala, Presidencia de la República, Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 #7-26, Bogotá, Colombia. Copies of messages should be sent to *Combate Socialista*, Apartado Aéreo 13750, Bogotá, Colombia. □

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# 'La Prensa' — victim of Sandinistas?

*Washington's big lie about 'freedom of the press'*

## By Arnold Weissberg

MANAGUA — According to the U.S. big-business press, Nicaragua is rapidly becoming a totalitarian state. The Sandinista government is supposedly cracking down on dissent, on freedom of religion, on freedom of the press. The number one victim, according to this version of the Nicaraguan revolution, is the daily newspaper *La Prensa*.

*La Prensa* has allegedly fallen victim to the drive of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) toward totalitarianism because it refuses to knuckle under and insists on its right to print the news as it sees fit. The editors of the *Wall Street Journal* lamented November 4 that Nicaragua's "one independent newspaper, *La Prensa*, also once a Somoza foe, has been threatened with permanent closing if it continues to insist on reporting the junta's activities honestly."

"If the Sandinistas make good their threat to shut down the opposition newspaper *La Prensa* permanently," an October 19 editorial in the *Miami Herald* declared, "that will seal their self-definition as totalitarian enemies of freedom."

On November 9 the *Washington Post* editors warned that freedom of the press in Nicaragua is "under siege," and on November 25 a *New York Times* editorial complained that "*La Prensa*, the newspaper that led the fight against the Somoza tyranny, has been repeatedly closed down."

But this version of life in Nicaragua has nothing to do with the truth. In fact, there is a greater degree of freedom and considerably more diversity of opinion expressed in the major news media in Nicaragua today than in any other Latin American country.

Three nationally circulated daily newspapers are freely available in this country of only 2.7 million people. One can also buy *Time* or *Newsweek* or *La Nación*, a daily paper from San José, Costa Rica. None of these publications is friendly to the Sandinista government.

A wide variety of other English- and Spanish-language magazines — ranging from the U.S. socialist magazine *Perspectiva Mundial* and various Cuban publications to *Popular Mechanics* and the Spanish editions of *Cosmopolitan* and *Readers Digest* — are also distributed.

Several anti-Sandinista radio stations broadcast freely, alongside the government's Voice of Nicaragua and the FSLN's Radio Sandino.

## Five closings

It is true that *La Prensa* has been ordered to suspend publication briefly from time to time. In 1981, the paper was shut five times by gov-

ernment order for a total of seven days. The last time was in early October.

*La Prensa* has never been closed for expressing an opinion, however, only for printing demonstrably false information that the editors could easily have checked beforehand or that they already knew to be false.

*La Prensa* prints false information because its publishers are bitterly opposed to the revolution. The paper's political stance is one of willful blindness to the great gains made by Nicaragua's working people in the two and a half years since the overthrow of the Somozaist tyranny.

*La Prensa* speaks for the half-dozen or so political parties that represent the industrialists, big merchants, and big landowners. The Sandinista organizations, which encompass hundreds of thousands of workers, peasants, students, youth, and women members, either do not exist in its pages or are dismissed by *La Prensa* as "officialist."

## A case of deliberate falsification

*La Prensa's* coverage of Nicaragua's difficult economic situation consists almost entirely of proclamations from or interviews with employer and capitalist organizations or leaders, such as the Chamber of Commerce or the Chamber of Industries.

The paper's efforts to discredit the FSLN's economic management led it to print a slanderous interview at the end of September that resulted in a suspension order.

The interview was with one Alberto Mantilla, a pharmaceutical manufacturer. Mantilla, as it turned out, had already left the country permanently. *La Prensa* portrayed him as an honest, hardworking businessman driven out of his homeland by the FSLN's economic policies.

Mantilla, furthermore, declared in the interview that he had been the victim of a harassment campaign by the vice-minister of industry.

Unfortunately for *La Prensa*, Mantilla turned out to have been looting his firm for years through tax evasion and other illegal financial manipulations. The Ministry of Justice announced it had already ordered Mantilla's arrest.

In addition, when challenged, neither *La Prensa* nor Mantilla could provide any evidence of harassment.

*La Prensa* was closed for two days by government order for publishing this slanderous attack and for encouraging illegal business practices and economic sabotage. The fact that Mantilla criticized a government official had nothing to do with it. All three daily papers, in-

cluding the FSLN's *Barricada*, carry regular criticism — sometimes quite strong — of government officials.

## 'Reign of Jesus Christ' in danger?

*La Prensa* was also closed last July for deliberately printing false information. The paper ran a front-page photo of a nun standing beside some religious billboards that appeared to have been torn down. "Unknown persons destroyed these billboards with religious slogans," the caption declared, while an editorial accused "vandals hostile to the reign of Jesus Christ over Nicaragua" — a widely understood reference to the FSLN.

As it turned out, the very nun who had arranged to put up the billboards had also arranged for taking them down. In the photograph, the nun was simply supervising the work. *La Prensa* knew this before the story ran.

*La Prensa* has labored to portray the FSLN as against freedom of religion and has suggested that the Sandinistas seek to impose atheism in Nicaragua by government fiat.

## Division in church

There is no government repression of religion in Nicaragua. The Sandinista television network goes so far as to show the pope celebrating mass every Sunday.

At the same time, there is a deep division today in the Nicaraguan Catholic church. On one side, there is the "people's church," which closely identifies the ideals of Christianity with the goals of the revolution.

On the other side, there is the church hierarchy, far more conservative, which has been pressuring the priests in the government to give up their posts and which has used its power to silence revolutionary-minded priests and nuns.

*La Prensa* sides with the hierarchy. In the world of *La Prensa*, "mobs" — a codeword for Sandinistas — continually threaten the archbishop or one of the bishops.

For example, last November a jeep used by Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo was vandalized while the archbishop was delivering a religious service. Its tires were slashed and windows shattered.

"Mob attacks Archbishop!" screamed the following day's *La Prensa* headline. But the paper was well aware that there had been no mob at all.

## Nicaragua heading for new Dark Age?

So frequently does *La Prensa* use the word "mob" that at many workplaces and in neighborhoods people have hung banners answering

*La Prensa*: "We're mobs — so what?"

*La Prensa's* campaign around religion is part of a larger project aimed at painting a picture of Nicaraguan society as living through a period of unrelieved turbulence.

Thus, "mobs" are in control, traditional institutions such as the family are under attack, the economy is in chaos. Civil liberties are threatened, totalitarian violence is on the rise, and Nicaragua stands on the edge of a new Dark Age. To drive home its point, the paper plays up crime stories, traffic accidents, and similar sensationalist items.

*La Prensa's* efforts to undermine the FSLN fit in with the U.S. government's campaign to isolate and destroy the Nicaraguan revolution. The propaganda from Washington also portrays the Sandinistas as violence-prone and totalitarian.

Meanwhile, in *La Prensa*, the U.S. government appears as peace-loving and interested only in good relations with Nicaragua.

Every word coming from the White House finds a friendly home in the pages of *La Prensa*. "Bush offers Nicaragua friendship," read one headline, when in fact Vice-president George Bush had warned Nicaragua to break its friendly ties with Cuba. Or "Haig: door is open" — when the secretary of state had likewise warned Nicaragua to alter the course of its revolution or suffer the consequences of a total rupture with Washington.

#### Support for Salvadoran junta

*La Prensa's* admiration of U.S. foreign policy extends to the war in El Salvador, where the paper supports the bloody military-Christian Democratic junta that is responsible for tens of thousands of murders.

When the U.S. State Department was insisting that the Salvadoran junta was a moderate government beset by extremists from both sides, so did *La Prensa*. Favorable articles about happy peasants and the success of the junta's phony land reform appeared regularly.

Now, when the White House justifies U.S. military intervention in El Salvador simply on the basis of fighting communism, *La Prensa* readers are treated to articles about alleged Cuban military advisers and lying horror stories about guerrilla atrocities.

For example, when guerrillas dynamited a key bridge in the center of El Salvador last October, both the U.S. government and *La Prensa* implied that it had been done by a special brigade of Cuban troops.

*La Prensa* also dutifully reported a completely false story — featured on the front page — that several hundred peasants had been killed in the attack.

Similarly, when France and Mexico issued a joint declaration last August recognizing the Salvadoran guerrillas of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) as a "legitimate political force," *La Prensa's* coverage was designed to leave the impression that the countries supporting that proposal were few and isolated. (Nicaragua was one of them.) The paper's September 3 issue carried no few-

er than five separate articles criticizing France and Mexico.

As noted earlier, Nicaragua may have the freest press in the world. However, there are certain restrictions. It is forbidden, for example, to exploit women in advertising, or to exploit religious holidays, such as Christmas, or national holidays for commercial purposes.

News media have the responsibility to make sure that what they print or broadcast is accurate. This understandably brings protests from the millionaire press lords of the United States, who have made their fortunes by printing lies and then denying they have anything to do with what appears in their columns.

Media are also forbidden to publish or broadcast stories that might create financial or economic panic. Certain stories dealing with military matters must be cleared first with the Ministry of the Interior.

But within these rather broad limits, intense and vigorous political debate takes place in the press.

To give a recent example: in early December, an upsurge in counterrevolutionary terrorist violence left more than twenty Nicaraguans dead. The terrorists carried out a series of robberies and assaults in rural zones.

These groups were referred to by *La Prensa* as "armed opposition groups," thus making them sound practically legal — little different from the opposition political parties that operate in Nicaragua.

*Barricada*, the FSLN daily, immediately demanded that *La Prensa* clarify its views. The groups, *Barricada* insisted, were counterrevolutionary terrorists and hence "enemies of the people," not "oppositionists," armed or unarmed.

For several days, *Barricada* ran editorials demanding a response, and the paper also ran a series recalling some of the outrages committed by counterrevolutionaries during the year.

*La Prensa* responded a few days later. As its defense, the paper claimed that it had used the term "armed opposition groups" only once, in a picture caption, and that the term did not really reflect what they thought.

*Barricada* responded again, reproducing an article from *La Prensa* in which the term "armed opposition groups" appeared several times.

#### Not the same 'La Prensa'

During the Somoza dictatorship, *La Prensa* was the target of bombing attacks, censorship, and other harassment. In June 1979, just a month before the revolution, the paper's plant suffered heavy damage from a National Guard attack. It was put out of commission for several months.

Because of its courageous role in opposing Somoza, *La Prensa* won many readers in Nicaragua and a worldwide reputation for honesty. It was the only legal opposition voice for years. Its publisher, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, was murdered by Somozaists in January 1978, an act which set off nationwide rebellions and is generally viewed as the beginning of the end for Somoza.

But the *La Prensa* of the prerevolution period is not the *La Prensa* of today. Only the name and some of the top officers remain the same.

In April 1980, angered at the paper's increasingly rightward political course, a big majority of the staff — reporters, photographers, and editors — walked out. Many of them joined in starting a new paper, *El Nuevo Diario*. Among those who left was Xavier Chamorro, the slain publisher's brother. The current editor of *La Prensa* is one of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro's sons, while a second son edits *Barricada*.

Many of the journalists who left *La Prensa* in 1980 or earlier now work for *Barricada*, other news media, or the government. So it is really *El Nuevo Diario* and *Barricada* that are the inheritors of the old *La Prensa's* tradition of fighting journalism.

#### A sensationalist rag

Many people continue to read *La Prensa* today in Nicaragua, even though they may not agree with the paper's politics. Just as in other countries, people read a newspaper for a variety of reasons, ranging from looking at the advertising to reading the sports pages.

*La Prensa* also consciously appeals to readers with a taste for the sensational. The paper holds the Nicaraguan monopoly on stories of the kind featured in the U.S. *National Enquirer* or Rupert Murdoch's London *Sun*. Recent examples include the ones about the chicken with four legs, the tomato with the human face, or the rock with the image of the Virgin Mary on it.

In any case, the U.S. government and the U.S. big-business media are hardly in a position to criticize alleged press freedom violations in Nicaragua. Under regimes allied to Washington throughout Latin America, from Chile and Argentina to Guatemala and El Salvador, journalists are routinely kidnapped and murdered, and newspaper offices attacked and bombed. And where was Washington when the late Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat closed down six papers last September?

The Sandinista revolution has found so far that it can live with *La Prensa's* constant provocations and open alignment with Nicaragua's enemies. But there are limits.

"They can have their press, their radio, their parties, their farms, their Robelos, their Estéban Gonzálezes [right-wing political figures]. That doesn't bother us," said Commander of the Revolution Jaime Wheelock in a speech last November 30.

"What we are going to make sure of is that those parties will not be allowed to stand in the way of the revolution. They cannot roll it back, because this revolution is the culmination of hundreds of years of struggle by the Nicaraguans, and we intend to survive for a long time. They can have the crumbs to play with, but they are not going to get their hands on the cake."

And that is precisely what the owners and supporters of *La Prensa* do not like. □

# Wide opposition to U.S. threats

*Cuba, Grenada, Nicaragua backed against Reagan*

**By Baxter Smith**

CASTRIES, St. Lucia — In face of Reagan administration threats against Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada, prominent Caribbean publications, organizations, and individuals have been speaking out.

The region's most widely read monthly publication, *Caribbean Contact*, editorialized in its December issue: "Let the US Plead 'Not Guilty' to Interference."

The editorial, which condemned Jamaica's October diplomatic break with Cuba, also lashed the hypocritical charges by the U.S. government of "foreign interference" in the Caribbean.

*Contact* warned that behind the Jamaica events was a "US-orchestrated strategy to punish Cuba."

The editorial pointed out that "all this talk we are hearing today about the Caribbean as a 'zone of peace' will prove to be sheer mumbo-jumbo, as the Reagan Administration relentlessly pursues its plans to destabilise Cuba."

"In this context, therefore," *Contact* continued, "we see as a most informative and significant development the official rationale of

the US Administration for Congressional approval of military aid, including training, in fiscal year 1982 for the Jamaican army."

News of the *Contact* editorial condemning U.S. threats against Cuba was the lead story December 23 on Radio Antilles. The 200,000-watt AM radio station is the largest in the eastern Caribbean. Its broadcasts can be heard from the Virgin Islands to Trinidad.

The December *West Indian Digest*, published in London and found on many Caribbean newsstands, editorialized against the U.S. "undercover Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) [which] has tried its damndest to assassinate Castro of Cuba and fuel a counter-revolution in Grenada."

The *Digest* also ran an informative and favorable article on the Grenada revolution.

Here in St. Lucia, the December 23 *Crusader*, newspaper of the opposition Progressive Labour Party, carried a statement by the St. Lucia-Cuba Friendship Association condemning the present U.S. campaign against Cuba.

The campaign, according to the association, is a "serious threat to peace in the Caribbean." "Paradoxically," the statement points out,

"the charge being leveled against Cuba and Nicaragua by the U.S. is that of interference in the internal affairs of 'Central American countries,' a crime only the U.S. is guilty of."

"These threats being carried out by the Reagan administration are nothing new," association chairperson Lawrence Poyotte said in an interview with this reporter. "They are working on the foundation left by his predecessor, James Carter."

Poyotte said the Reagan threats are "a continuation of the policy which is only more vicious and warlike."

Poyotte also lashed anti-Cuba and anti-Nicaragua statements by U.S. officials and others at the recent Organization of American States conference here in December.

Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement chairperson Tim Hector said in a telephone interview that "Caribbean people will resist and oppose any invasion" or other form of aggression the United States carries out against Cuba, Nicaragua, or Grenada.

"Any moves into any of these countries will be opposed by working people in the Caribbean," he said.

As important as Caribbean opposition, Hector added, is that of U.S. workers. "We hope workers in the U.S. will take solidarity moves against these threats."

Another St. Lucian voicing opposition to moves against Grenada is George Goddard, general secretary of the St. Lucian National Workers Union, the largest trade union here. □

## Grenada

# Women on the march

*'The movement of history is forward, not backward'*

**By Pat Kane**

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada — "Anyone who wants to underestimate the women of Grenada, will have to think again. We are the most kind-hearted women in the Caribbean — but when our revolution is threatened, we can be the most tenacious and warlike women in the Caribbean."

Seven thousand revolutionary women of Grenada cheered Patsy Romain, a leader of the National Women's Organization (NWO), when she reminded them of the need to defend their revolution against the increasing attacks of the United States government.

Romain continued, "we don't want to frighten anyone, but we're building a new kind of democracy, a people's democracy, and we are prepared to defend our democracy, our freedom, and our revolution."

The NWO rally, held here on Sunday, December 6, was the highlight of a year of spectacular growth in the self-organization of

Grenadian women. The NWO has grown from 1,500 members in January 1981, to 6,500 members — out of a total population of only 110,000. The NWO now actively organizes 27 percent of Grenadian women. In 1979, the NWO had only 120 members, in 6 groups. Now they have 168 groups, and the NWO is active in every town and village across the island.

The growth of the NWO is yet another sign of the mobilization of the Grenadian people in their own democratic mass organizations. Like the other Grenadian organizations, the NWO is an activists' organization, participating in every aspect of the revolutionary process.

The tasks facing women in Grenada are huge. Before the revolution women were superexploited, and jobs were given in return for sexual favors. The secret police and thugs of the old Gairy dictatorship regularly abused young women. The revolution put a stop to those atrocities. Right from the first day, the

revolutionary government made a positive effort to involve women and youth in the process of creating a new society.

One of the first acts of the new government was to ensure equal rights for women under the law. It is nearly ten years that the Equal Rights Amendment has been before state legislatures in the United States, and it has not been passed. Nor do the U.S. rulers have any intention of approving any such recognition of women's rights.

It took years of struggle to obtain the Sex Discrimination Act in Britain, and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is doing everything possible to undermine it and drive women back into the home.

Yet the revolutionary government of Grenada outlawed discrimination, and also guaranteed rights to paid maternity leave and equal pay, within months of the revolution. It has carried out a nationwide discussion about the role of women in the revolutionary process. It



is from these beginnings that the NWO has grown into the largest and most militant women's organization in the English-speaking East Caribbean.

### Grounds for optimism

Phyllis Coard, secretary for women's affairs in the government and NWO national coordinator, outlined to the rally the problems, goals, and achievements of the NWO. Honesty is characteristic of the leadership of this revolution, and Coard did not try to hide any of the problems facing the women of Grenada. But she also explained why there are grounds for optimism.

"What we see at this rally," she said, "is that women have been stepping forward in 1981 in terms of consciousness and commitment to the cause of defending our revolution and country. We see thousands of sisters from the trade unions, and in numbers too large to ignore, the 6,500 members of the NWO.

"As we look around we also see a large number of brothers, and this pleases us very much, because it shows us that the brothers of revolutionary Grenada do not see our women's movement as something which threatens their lives. Our brothers see correctly that the movement of our women is part of the movement of all our people in this society. We must understand that all over the world, people have been denied any form of power over their lives or countries.

"Today we see a movement of our people which has power — power to construct our own organizations for all our working people. We can see our women playing a deeper and more equal role in society.

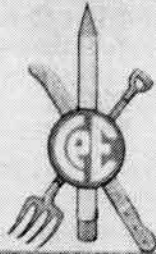
### Big challenges facing women

"We realise that our struggle has only just begun. We have moved forward, but we have problems. Right now here in Grenada, 45 out of every 100 workers are women, and there are nearly 12,000 children and babies under five years old. Our eleven nurseries can hardly accommodate more than 400 children. Our pre-primary schools can only supervise children from 9:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. This is a highly dangerous situation to have our children unattended, because our children are the flower and future of our revolution.

"This year, the NWO, together with our brothers in community work brigades, have built with our own hands and voluntary labor seven preprimary schools and one nursery. Yet we know and recognize the inadequacy of what we have done. We know that we have to push forward, but we also know the economic situation which makes it difficult to build the large nurseries that we so desperately need.

"Unemployment amongst women is serious also. At this time 5,400 women are without work, and 4,100 men. Fifty-seven percent of all our unemployed are women. Mostly these are women with young children. This year we were able to create three women's cooperatives for furniture-making, a bakery, and for preparing currants for cakes. But this is a tiny

**IF YOU KNOW,  
TEACH;**



**IF YOU DON'T  
LEARN**



Colleen Levis/Socialist Voice

PHYLLIS COARD

beginning, and we must step up our cooperative movement in the coming year.

"Our other task for 1982 that we women will have to face energetically is education. Only an educated and developed people can build an educated and developed nation. Despite the success of the first literacy campaign, more women than men are still illiterate, and undereducated. We must ensure that in 1982, every woman steps up seriously on the path to full education.

"But book learning without political understanding leads us nowhere. We all need to understand the history of our country, its economy, how and why it is that we are underdeveloped, and how we get out of the trap of underdevelopment. Every woman must understand the international situation. We need, as women throughout Grenada, to educate ourselves politically and socially."

Many international guests attended the rally. Women came from Cuba, the German Democratic Republic, and from every Caribbean island. Coard also discussed the international situation of women.

### International solidarity

"Let us never forget," she said, "the millions of women throughout the world who live in far worse conditions than we have, especially those struggling for their freedom and independence. We think of our sisters in Latin

America, especially in Uruguay and Paraguay, and of course that most horrible dictatorship in Chile.

"We think of our sisters in South Africa and Namibia, living in fear and everyday brutalized and tortured by the racist police of South Africa. Our sisters in Angola are daily being attacked by that same racist regime. We think of our sisters in Palestine and Lebanon being bombed everyday by the Israelis, with the backing of U.S. imperialism. Most of all, we think of our sisters and brothers in El Salvador who are so near to victory. We think also of our sister country of Nicaragua, right now facing the threat of intervention by the United States, whose aim is to crush both Nicaragua and El Salvador at one time!

"Let us remember how strong the progressive forces have become over the last ten years. Dozens of countries have escaped from imperialism. We also must realize that the women of Europe, east and west, are struggling against the placing of missiles on their territory by the United States.

### 'We are certain of victory'

"We as women must be confident of victory, and we must be prepared to struggle increasingly. The movement of history is forward, not backward. And we are part of that forward movement. We are certain of victory for all the people of the world. We must be ready to confront the warmongers, and the cowboys of the world, and demand that their aggression stop. We as women want a peaceful future for our children and we are ready to fight for it."

The women of Grenada, encouraged by the positive action of their government and the strength of their organization, are now stepping forward to assume their rightful place in the revolution. In the militia and army, the unions and other mass organizations, and in the government ministries and bureaus, women are playing a leading part in creating a new and free Grenada. □

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# Auto workers confront austerity moves

## *Socialists propose program to deal with crisis*

[The following article appeared in the December 19 issue of *Hemmat* (Determination), the newspaper of the Iranian Workers Unity Party (HVK). The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

When the Organization of National Industries of Iran (ONII) cut the Peykan car bonus allotted to the workers at the Iran National auto factory, the workers there were deprived of one of their important benefits.

According to factory rules, workers had been able to buy a deluxe Peykan from the factory every other year for 2,000 tumans (1 tuman = US\$0.13) less than the price to other customers, and without having to wait their turn.

This concession, taking into account the long waiting list and the price of a Peykan in the free market, is considered a very important economic aid for the workers. But on December 1, ONII published a statement calling for ending this bonus. According to the statement, this has already been done.

As can be expected, the news about the abolition of the bonus aroused tremendous discontent among the workers of Iran National, who, like the rest of the toilers, are faced with staggering living expenses. The vast majority of the workers, on hearing about this, protested and called on the responsible officials to review this decision.

### **Ministry of labor's explanations**

On December 3, Mr. Ahmad Tavakkoli, minister of labor and social affairs, explained the reasons for cutting the Peykan bonus and the government's position on the matter in a television interview.

After pointing out the imperialist economic boycott and the effect of economic dependence on the country's domestic production, he noted that under the present dangerous economic circumstances, the nationalized factories were, all told, 6 billion tumans in debt this past year. He then presented figures for some of the profits and losses of the Iran National factory.

According to Mr. Tavakkoli, Iran National lost nearly 500 million tumans the year before last. Based on this, he concluded that the government had paid each of the 12,000 workers at Iran National a sum of 40,000 tumans out of the country's treasury to compensate for the factory's debt.

Mr. Tavakkoli, after he drew this conclusion, said that if each worker were to be conceded a Peykan as before, each Iran National worker would get 60,000 tumans by selling his

car on the free market every other year, i.e., he would get 30,000 tumans each year.

Based on this, Tavakkoli concluded that in addition to paying 40,000 tumans to cover the factory's annual debt, a sum of 30,000 tumans would also have to be paid out of the country's treasury for the Peykans. In conclusion, he asked that the workers at Iran National not protest and threatened that the government could close all the factories because of the loss at Iran National.

### **War and economic crisis**

Undoubtedly, Mr. Tavakkoli's emphasis on the destructive effects of the economic blockade and industrial dependence on the country's economy is completely correct. The economic boycott of Iran is a result of the incapacity of American imperialism to throttle our revolution; and the country's industrial dependence is also a result of what the hated Pahlavi regime bequeathed us.

In the same way, the basic problem of our revolution is currently the problem of the imposed war with Iraq and the confrontation with world imperialism. Therefore, it is necessary that the financial and economic policies of the government be in accordance with the critical situation of war and economic boycott, and act to advance the economic independence of the country.

So the basic question is, in the interests of which class will the economic crisis resulting from the war and imperialist pressures, be solved? In the interests of the workers, peasants, and the other toilers — who for the last three years have spared nothing to advance the revolution; who have raised production, actively participated at the front, and given vast amounts of aid to the fighters for the revolution and for the war refugees; and who have given thousands of martyrs for the defense of the revolution? Or in the interests of the capitalist class and the big landlords — who, in the meantime, have used all means available (hoarding, overpricing, shutting down production, and throwing out food) to sabotage the war and the revolution?

### **The capitalists' exorbitant profits**

The fact is that ever since the February insurrection the capitalist politicians have tried to solve the economic crisis in the interests of the capitalists and the landlords, and to put the burden on the shoulders of the workers and toilers. The capitalist politicians, by giving huge loans at low rates to the capitalists and by making things easy for them, have allowed the capitalists to profiteer and oppress.

For example, according to what Mr. Sahabi said at a meeting held April 6 at the Islamic Consultative Assembly, the private sector was granted 11 billion dollars worth of loans by the state in the last year, and in general reaped vast profits. The profits of the merchant sector alone reached 120 billion tumans. The share of the workers and toilers of the country in these profits has been nothing but inflation and high prices.

It must be emphasized, with regard to Mr. Tavakkoli's figures, that next to the 120 billion tumans of annual profits the merchant sector accumulated, the sums paid by the state to cover the annual deficit of Iran National and give the workers their Peykans is very insignificant.

If, according to what Mr. Tavakkoli said, the state paid from its coffers 6 billion tumans to cover the deficits of all the nationalized factories (including Iran National) and pays 30,000 tumans for every worker at Iran National for their Peykans (adding up to 360 million tumans), it must also be said that the government has lined the pockets of the parasitic capitalists of the merchant sector with 120 billion tumans these last two years.

With a little attention, we see that the profits of these merchant capitalists is over twenty times the losses accumulated by the nationalized factories, 240 times the losses of Iran National, more than 300 times all the income the 12,000 workers at Iran National got by getting their Peykans and one and a half times the 80 billion tuman government deficit of the last two years.

### **Economic crisis and the responsibility of the capitalists**

The above figures show that it has been in fact the spectacular profits of the capitalists that has emptied the state coffers and brought about the government budget deficit and shortage of foreign reserves. The insignificant income of the workers at Iran National from their Peykans plays no role in this.

The loss at the nationalized factories, like Iran National, can also only be understood in connection with the vast profits of the private sector. As a result, the responsibility for the losses at these factories is the government's.

The country's workers, including the workers at Iran National, who have no control or supervision over matters of production and distribution, over what the factory buys and sells, and over the economic and monetary policies of the government, are in no way responsible, and must not bear the burden of these losses and the economic crisis in general.



Peykan cars being assembled at Iran National factory in Tehran.

This is particularly the case at Iran National, where the workers have an illustrious record of active participation in building the revolution (increasing production, sending Teams of Twenty-two to the war and economic and technical aid to the front).

#### Economic shortages

For all that, the officials in charge have freed the hands of the profiteering and parasitic capitalists and are trying to shift the burden of the crisis onto the shoulders of the toilers. In doing so they are beginning to impose tremendous economic pressures on the workers in all the factories.

Abolishing the Peykan bonus is not the only example of these austerity measures imposed at Iran National. For example, early last winter the workers at Iran National noticed, when they got their paychecks, that their benefits, like food and housing allowances and shift differentials, were cut back.

It became known that according to a new decision by the factory management, workers who take a leave of absence from the factory, or are sick, or are late or absent for other reasons, not only would have to take a pay cut, but their food, housing, and other allotments would be cut by the same proportion.

So it is clear that abolishing the Peykan bonus at Iran National and the other austerity measures in this factory are all expressions of

an overall management and government policy to drive down workers' income. Mr. Tavakkoli's statements about cutting benefits and bonuses in other factories shows that it is not simply a matter of cutting the wages of tens of thousands of workers in the country's heavy industry. It was not for nothing that Mr. Tavakkoli, by presenting numerous reasons to excuse the abolition of Peykan bonuses, tried to prepare public opinion to accept these measures and other similar measures.

#### Inheritance from the old regime, or achievement of the revolution?

What were the rest of the reasons Mr. Tavakkoli gave for abolishing the Iran National workers' Peykan bonuses?

One of the points he raised was that this concession was an inheritance from the old regime. According to the minister of labor, in the past at Iran National, every section was given twenty-five Peykans to be divided up among the workers who best followed the management. He expressed his regret that after the revolution this practice continued and became institutionalized.

But the fact is that the old regime used these bonuses to reward obedient workers and to sow divisions among the workers. When this bonus was generalized to include all workers after the revolution, it lost its divisive character. In fact, the current bonus system for the

workers is one of the gains of the revolution for the Iran National workers, and not an inheritance from the old regime.

#### Peykan bonuses and trafficking

Another reason offered by Mr. Tavakkoli in his television interview was that workers at Iran National do not need a deluxe Peykan every other year for themselves, and so they peddle it on the market. He concluded that this makes them into middlemen. This is very wrong.

To be sure, the minister of labor is not referring to trafficking in Peykans, vans, mini-buses, buses, and the vast majority of deluxe Peykans. For example, it must be said that the price of a bus bought directly from Iran National is about 250,000 tumans, but this same bus goes for over 1 million tumans on the free market. It seems that no government official sees any need to take any decisive measures against such trafficking. They only want to abolish workers' bonuses under the banner of confronting this problem of profiteering.

But do the workers at Iran National want to exacerbate this problem? It is beyond a doubt that most of them do sell their cars on the free market to supplement their income. Of course, selling Peykans on the free market is a form of trafficking, but we must see why the workers of Iran National are compelled to resort to this.

In fact, instead of paying the workers their whole wage in cash, which the workers need to get by, the management of Iran National pays out part of the wages as benefits and as Peykan bonuses.

This form of payment yields two important dividends for the management. First, only a portion of the workers' wages is given out of the factory's funds; the other part is gotten not from these funds, but as a result of workers being forced to go from door to door to find a customer and to sell their cars.

The second is that since a portion of the wages is given as a benefit to the workers, getting it back in a situation of economic crisis is made easier for the management, and this is precisely what the capitalist politicians and the management of Iran National want.

#### Part of the workers' wages

Moreover, it is the factory management who compel the workers to become middlemen. If the wages of the workers at Iran National were enough to live on, they would not have to run around trying to sell their Peykans to get part of their own wages.

Of course, Mr. Tavakkoli does not see the need to raise the monthly wages for workers to compensate for the abolition of Peykan bonuses. He does not take into account the dizzying rate of living expenses of workers under the present inflation.

The price of basic foodstuffs like meat, chicken, and eggs are going up even faster than the price of Peykans on the free market. In fact, the rise of prices of the Iran National workers' Peykans on the free market had up until now given these workers' real incomes

some protection against the dizzying increase in the cost of necessities of life.

Every measure taken to abolish these bonuses without increasing the workers' wages is a big financial blow to the workers at Iran National. So in order to prevent trafficking and to protect the real wages of workers at Iran National, the workers' wages must rise with inflation.

#### **Peykan bonuses and discrimination**

Another reason the minister of labor gave for abolishing the Iran National workers' Peykan bonuses was the need to do something about privileges among workers.

He stated in his interview that since the government cannot give every worker who builds buses a bus, and every worker who works in a military industry a tank, and to each worker in every company a bonus of whatever they produce, this discrimination must be ended and the Peykan bonus must be abolished.

The reason offered by Mr. Tavakkoli is incorrect. In order to get rid of discrimination, all the workers' wages must be increased to keep up with inflation. The point is that because of the dizzying rise in prices, workers' real wages, or their buying power, has plunged these last two years. To deal with this, to prevent a severe decline in the workers' standard of living, the current wages of workers must take this inflation into consideration.

The necessary funds for this should be confiscated from the fabulous amounts of capital in the hands of the destructive capitalists. There should be a progressive tax on profits, income, property, and large quantities of capital.

#### **A shutdown of Iran National?**

So none of the reasons offered by Mr. Tavakkoli are acceptable, and cannot justify new austerity measures against the workers at Iran National. All these measures are oriented towards one thing: to sap the workers' income to the degree needed to make industry profitable and to solve the economic crisis in the interests of the capitalists.

Abolishing the Iran National workers' Peykan bonuses should be considered an important step in this direction. The capitalist politicians and managers will stop at nothing to win this, including mass firings of workers and shutting down production.

Mr. Tavakkoli's threat that the government could comfortably close down Iran National does not seem very serious or feasible under the present circumstances. But it is an expression of the fact that the scope of the economic austerity against the workers can even include the shutdown of the biggest units of production in the country and throwing thousands out of work.

#### **Need for a revolutionary program**

It is clear that any kind of economic austerity against the workers, like abolishing workers' bonuses, cutting back benefits, firing workers, and so on, means a weakening of our

revolution with respect to imperialism.

Under the present difficult circumstances (the Iraqi-imposed war, economic sabotage, and imperialist propaganda and threats), securing the interests of the workers and toilers is one of the burning needs of the revolution. The country's economic crisis must be solved in the interests of the workers and toilers, with decisive measures against the capitalists and big landlords.

To consolidate the anti-imperialist stronghold in Iran National, one of the revolution's trenches in the war imposed by Iraq and the imperialists, a program in the interests of the workers of Iran National and of the whole country is needed. A course toward independence and economic self-sufficiency for the country must be chosen, against the capitalist solution and austerity measures like the abolition of the Peykan bonus.

Opening the account books of Iran National by representatives of the workers to find out

about the profits and losses of the factory is the first essential step in this. These facts can play a basic role in rebuilding the factory and formulating a new plan of production in the interests of the revolution.

Opening the factory books must go together with implementing basic measures concerning the workers' demands and the needs of the revolution. Raising the wages of all workers to keep up with inflation; paying all workers' benefits at a fixed rate; workers control over production and distribution to oppose any form of trafficking; planning the production of automobiles to suit the needs of the war and for the countryside; and a single plan for the whole automotive industry based on workers control as a step toward industrial independence — these measures provide the outline of this program.

Choosing and implementing such a program can help confront difficulties and increase production at Iran National as a basic step toward answering the needs of the workers. □

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## **Ghana**

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# **Junior officers seize power**

## *Rawlings pledges major changes*

On December 31, for the second time in two and a half years, Flight Lieut. Jerry Rawlings seized power in Ghana.

With the support of junior officers and enlisted men, Rawlings deposed the government of President Hilla Limann and set up a Provisional National Defense Council that pledged to rid the West African country of corruption and improve conditions for working people.

"This is not a coup," Rawlings declared in his first radio speech broadcast on the day of the takeover. "I ask for nothing less than a revolution — something that will transform the social and economic order of this country."

The first actions of the new ruling council were to arrest Limann and scores of other officials; ban all official political parties; freeze the assets of more than 200 businessmen, traders, and officials pending investigations of their financial dealings; order all commanding officers on indefinite leave; and abolish the country's security services, including the internal military intelligence units. Traders were asked to reduce food prices.

Rawlings announced that "people's tribunals" would be established to try those accused of corruption and shady business dealings. Just prior to the takeover, Limann's People's National Party was rocked by corruption scandals involving its chairman and general secretary. In a country with a 107 percent annual inflation rate and widespread poverty, such revelations of corruption have aroused considerable popular anger.

Ever since Rawlings first seized power on June 4, 1979, he has identified himself with

this sentiment against corruption. Before he turned over power to an elected civilian regime headed by Limann later that year, Rawlings oversaw a "housecleaning" in which eight top military officers — including three former heads of state — were executed. As a result, Rawlings became extremely popular among Ghana's working people, who have high hopes that the new government will act in their interests.

In the wake of Rawling's second takeover, Accra and other cities were swept by demonstrations by workers and students in support of



**JERRY RAWLINGS**

the new government. The Ghana Trades Union Congress has called on its members to participate in these rallies and marches.

Among the seven members of the ruling council are Joachim Armatey Kwei, a unionist who organized a strike last year; Chris Burkari Atim, a radical student leader; and the Rev. Vincent Damuah, a priest who had been extremely critical of the Limann administration.

Rawlings has called for the formation of "local defense committees at all levels of our national life. In the towns, in the villages, in all our factories, offices and work places, in our barracks, we have an immediate task for these committees — that of defending this revolution. . . ."

He also called on workers to begin monitoring the distribution of goods and to organize meetings in their workplaces to discuss how to

weed out inefficiency and corruption. He said that all foreign investment projects in Ghana would be reviewed.

Rawlings warned "those who live in idle comfort" not to impede the new government's measures or "to instigate foreign countries against us."

One of the council's first foreign policy steps was to establish diplomatic relations with Libya.

The U.S. government has expressed its "concern" over the situation in Ghana and the State Department has set up a "working group" to monitor events there.

Rawlings has issued "a stern warning to any country outside Ghana who might want to attempt any kind of invasion. West Africa would burn. We in Ghana are prepared to die for our freedom." □

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## Honduras

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# Report from Colomoncagua

## *Bleak Christmas for Salvadoran refugees*

By Paul Kleinman

COLOMONCAGUA, Honduras — This is the second Christmas in a refugee camp for some of the Salvadorans here on the border with their own country. There are some 20,000 refugees in this area, and more have arrived in the last few weeks, driven from El Salvador by the latest government offensive in the province of Morazán.

"The soldiers killed my brother, my husband, and some of my uncles," one woman said. "When they came into town, they killed everyone they saw — men, women, and children."

According to Radio Venceremos, the voice of the Farbundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), the civilian death toll in Morazán from the latest offensive is close to 1,000. The FMLN temporarily shut down Radio Venceremos for a few weeks during the government offensive, one of the main purposes of which was to wipe out the clandestine broadcasts. Shortly after Christmas, to the delight of the refugees, it began broadcasting again.

### 'I have you on my list'

The refugee camps are run by several church organizations and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Organization here — as opposed to La Virtud, the other main camp — is exceptionally good. There are health, nutrition, and work committees, some of whose members are as young as thirteen years old. Medical care is provided by a group of foreign doctors and Honduran medical students. However, there is a serious shortage of medical supplies.

For the Christmas festivities, the refugees decorated trees, built nativity scenes, and put on skits. The trees were decorated with boxes

of Anacin and Unicap vitamins donated by relief organizations to the medical staff. Some of the skits had a message.

"I am Herod!" shouted one actor during a skit. "They say that a baby was born who is the Savior [In Spanish, El Salvador means "the Savior"]. We will kill *all* the children, including El Salvador."

"Kill them, kill them!" chanted a group of men representing Herod's soldiers.

Repression against the refugees in Colomoncagua has not been as severe as in La Virtud, where there are 3,000 people in the camp itself and another 9,000 refugees in surrounding villages.

"El Teniente," the military commander of Colomoncagua, tried to turn over three young men to the Salvadoran army on suspicion of being guerrillas. He backed down after massive opposition from the refugees. "I have you on my list," were his final words.

### Free-fire zone

In La Virtud last November, the Salvadoran army kidnapped thirty refugees, whose lives were saved only by the presence of a group of visiting North Americans. Despite the presence of international observers, two Honduran relief workers have been killed recently by soldiers. No one knows if the soldiers were Honduran or Salvadoran.

"There is no danger to the refugees from either Honduran or Salvadoran troops," insisted El Teniente. "The soldiers who entered La Virtud were really guerrillas in disguise."

The government of Honduras — at the insistence of El Salvador and with U.S. support — is now relocating the refugees away from the border. They claim it is for the security of

the refugees, but what is really involved is an attempt to clear the border to create a free-fire zone on both sides of the frontier. This would allow intensive bombing of the civilian population and search-and-destroy missions against the guerrillas on both sides of the border. The free-fire zone would also keep more refugees from getting into Honduras.

Foreign relief workers feel that the refugees will be in just as much danger farther away from the border as long as the Honduran military continues to collaborate with the Salvadoreans. There are security problems as well from within the relief agencies themselves. One church group, World Vision, has been accused of turning over names of dissident refugees to the Honduran authorities.

Except for Caritas, a Honduran Catholic relief agency, neither the church groups nor the UN have taken a position openly opposing the relocation program.

### Honduran rulers running scared

Foreign medical observers feel that the program also poses a dangerous threat to the health of the refugees. The Honduran government has begun relocating the inhabitants of La Virtud at the rate of 500 per week. The new camp, Mesa Grande, has completely inadequate housing, sanitation, and medical facilities. Right now it is on the verge of a potentially disastrous measles epidemic, and there is no vaccination program underway.

The Honduran government has ordered the Colomoncagua refugees to relocate beginning January 22. Their new camp is to be located in a part of Honduras which is much higher and colder than what they are used to in El Salvador or here. Many fear that their children will die from the cold. Some say they will go back to El Salvador rather than face winter in the new camp.

In addition, they are reluctant to leave the grass-and-wood, tarpaulin-covered huts they have built for themselves. Although they are refugees, Colomoncagua has become home to them.

Honduras, too, with its deep class divisions, is feeling the political impact of the struggle in El Salvador and the Nicaraguan revolution. The rulers are running scared, and have tried to patch up a democratic façade through recently held elections.

Roberto Suazo of the Liberal Party, which has a slightly more liberal stance than the opposition National Party, was elected. But real power is still held by the military.

In the Honduran town near the camp, the tensions came to the boiling point on Christmas Eve. The mayor, a member of the National Party, got drunk and stabbed the fourteen-year-old son of a Liberal Party stalwart in the abdomen. The boy died before an evacuation plane could arrive from Tegucigalpa, the capital.

"If the mayor has enough money for the lawyers and the judge, he won't even go to jail," said a local resident. "I think he has enough money." □

# How FSLN boosts food production

*National Food Program helps workers and peasants eat better*

**By Matilde Zimmermann**

MANAGUA — After the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship, one of the first concerns of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua was emergency measures to provide food to a hungry population. In fact, during the war itself the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) began to organize the production of basic food crops in areas under its control.

The effects of the war were so devastating that in 1979 some people thought there was a danger of large-scale starvation in Nicaragua. This tragedy was avoided by the mobilization of international aid, quick reactivation of the maize crop, and when necessary buying food from other countries.

In April 1981 the Nicaraguan government launched the National Food Program (Programa Alimentario Nacional — PAN, which means bread in Spanish), with the goal of making the country self-sufficient in food.

## Cash crops more profitable than food

Nicaragua under Somoza, like other underdeveloped countries, had a completely dependent economy. The emphasis was on producing cash crops for export, in particular cotton, coffee, sugar, and meat.

During the 1950s and 1960s many thousands of food-producing small farmers were pushed off some of the best land on the Pacific Coast plains of Nicaragua to make room for giant cotton plantations. Some peasant families were displaced more than once — each time onto more remote, hillier, and less productive land. The province of Chinandega, for example, in the northwest corner of the country, produced more than a quarter of all Nicaragua's maize in the 1940s. Now it is an area of big cotton and banana plantations and produces almost no maize.

Food multinationals like Safeway did begin to grow vegetables such as broccoli and okra in Somoza's Nicaragua. But none of this food showed up on any Nicaraguan tables — the entire crop was frozen and sent to the United States.

Nicaragua did not become a major importer of food for domestic consumption before 1979, but this was not because enough was being produced to feed the population adequately. Rather, it was a sign of the Somoza dictatorship's complete indifference to the falling nutritional level of the peasantry.

## Gains in nutrition

The level of consumption of basic foodstuffs has increased dramatically since the revolution. In an interview with *Intercontinental Press*, Vice-minister of Agricultural Develop-



Matilde Zimmermann/IP

PEDRO ANTONIO BLANDÓN

ment and Director of PAN Pedro Antonio Blandón gave some examples. Per capita maize consumption up 35 percent; beans, 40 percent; rice, 30 percent; cooking oil, 33 percent.

The prices consumers pay for these basic necessities are fixed and kept low by government subsidies. Maize costs one córdoba a pound (1 córdoba = US \$0.10). A pound of rice costs 3.20, and a quart of cooking oil 2.25. This price stability is in marked contrast with Nicaragua's southern neighbor. In Costa Rica, according to conservative government estimates, prices rose more than 50 percent in 1981, and further hikes of up to 100 percent in the prices of basic foods are slated for January 1982.

Much of Nicaragua's increased consumption has been accomplished through imports, however. In 1980 Nicaragua spent \$50 million to import food for popular consumption; and in 1981, even with increased production, \$40 million worth of food was imported.

PAN aims to make such imports unnecessary. Part of the reason is financial. Forty million dollars seriously aggravates an already difficult balance-of-payments problem. But equally important is the goal of reducing Nicaragua's dependency.

In 1981 Nicaragua went through an experience that showed all too clearly the danger of being dependent on a foreign government that uses food as a political weapon. Until March 1981, 100 percent of the wheat consumed in Nicaragua was imported from the United States. When Washington cut off \$9.6 million in wheat credits, the shipments stopped and Nicaragua rapidly ran out of flour and bread.

Because of the overwhelming international response to its "Bread for Nicaragua" campaign, Nicaragua now has perhaps the greatest per capita wheat stocks in the world. But at the same time, pilot projects have been started for the production of wheat in Nicaragua. The Bulgarian government is providing assistance to this project.

PAN's goal is not only to replace current imports with domestically produced food but also continually to raise the level of consumption. The average Nicaraguan now consumes 2,300 calories of food a day, but the level is lower in the countryside. PAN's short-term goal is to see this raised to 3,000 calories a day.

Eventually Nicaragua hopes to become a food exporter. The country is rich in potentially productive agricultural land and could produce enough food for a population many times its size.

The Sandinistas are also looking ahead to the time when there are revolutionary victories in El Salvador and Guatemala. As internationalists they hope to be in a position to respond to the need for food in these and other Central American countries. Nicaragua, with half the population in El Salvador, is seven times as big.

## Working with farmers

PAN does not have a large apparatus and does not seek to duplicate the activities of the Ministry of Agricultural Development, the Ministry of Domestic Trade, or the banks. Rather it works directly with small farmers to help them get assistance from these various government bodies.

"More than anything else, it is a committee of the small and middle producers," Blandón told us. The presidents of the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG) and the Rural Workers Association (ATC) both serve on the national council of PAN.

PAN concentrates on increasing the production of three basic food crops — beans, corn, and rice. The overwhelming majority of these crops are produced by peasants with small and medium-sized holdings. These are the sectors that are now benefiting from the second stage of Nicaragua's agrarian reform law.

On October 16 the government began turn-

ing over agrarian reform titles to cooperatives of peasants involved in the production of basic food crops. It was no accident that the first of these land titles were awarded on what the UN Food and Agricultural Organization had declared "International Food Day."

But PAN also works with the state sector and even with big growers when they have some of their land devoted to food crops. Blandón explained that it was necessary to take advantage of the fact that these are the best, most developed, and most accessible lands in the country. He gave us an example of a bean-growing project in a coastal cotton region, in which the output per manzana (1 manzana = 1.73 acres) is three times the national average.

#### Need for realistic approach

Blandón listed some of the problems PAN has encountered as well. In some cases unrealistic projections were made, leading campesinos to expect services and development projects that will take years to provide. This is a

problem that precedes the founding of PAN. In Nicaragua one frequently hears stories of a somewhat romantic approach to developing the countryside in the first months after the revolution — an infusion of capital and assistance into areas where there was no realistic way to get products to market, for example.

"What we have accomplished in PAN in the last few months," said Blandón, "is to learn to have a real dialogue with the campesinos. To say, 'all right, this is the situation Nicaragua faces, and this is what we can realistically do in the near future. We cannot build every road, we cannot put popular stores everywhere we want. But yes, we can do such and such.' This dialogue has been extremely productive."

When PAN was first launched, there was talk of making Nicaragua self-sufficient in 1981. Blandón pointed out that this was unrealistic because the productive season was already underway when PAN was founded in April, and the first opportunity to see through the whole planting cycle will be in 1982. Blan-

dón thought it was possible Nicaragua might still have to import some food in 1982, although much smaller amounts than previously.

Plans to end Nicaragua's dependence on imported food take on special urgency because of the mounting attacks on the Sandinista revolution from Washington, and the Reagan administration's threat of a naval blockade.

Minister of Agricultural Development Jaime Wheelock alluded to this in his speech to the founding conference of UNAG last April. "The better our reserves of food, the less people will be afraid when the imperialists do things like cut off our wheat. . . . So there are really three things we have to have here. Rice. Beans. And bullets."

UNAG president Narciso González put the same idea a different way in an interview with *Intercontinental Press* in September. "It doesn't matter if our pants are torn," González said, "so long as our stomachs are full. If we have full stomachs, there is no force on earth that can keep us from carrying out our tasks." □

## Second stage of agrarian reform

### 'Empty lands into workers' hands'

#### By Matilde Zimmermann

TOLA, Nicaragua — "Empty lands into workers' hands" and "Agrarian reform: historic commitment of the FSLN" were the two most popular placards at a ceremony in this small Nicaraguan town December 11.

At the event, leaders of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) gave peasant cooperatives "agrarian reform titles" to land that had previously been confiscated from big landowners. A number of such ceremonies have been held around the country in the implementation of the second stage of Nicaragua's agrarian reform, announced last July 19.

"This is one of the greatest victories we could possibly win," Agostino Alfaro Flores told me at Tola. His cooperative received title to 300 manzanas (1 manzana = 1.73 acres) of land that used to belong to a family of the oligarchy. None of the campesinos in Alfaro's cooperative has ever owned land before.

When I asked Alfaro how old he was, he said, "I'm seventy — I have seventy years of struggle behind me." His family collaborated with the FSLN during the war against Somoza, and a twenty-five-year-old son was killed fighting on the eastern front.

#### Landlords have no conscience

"Most of us worked with the FSLN, from about 1976 on," said a member of another peasant cooperative, which received title to 400 manzanas. "We worked as messengers or helped them move arms, or provided them with shelter and food." Another campesino, Aurélio Suárez, estimated that he went to jail

sixty times during the years of the Somoza dictatorship.

The December 11 ceremony commemorated the third anniversary of the death in battle of guerrilla priest Gaspar García Laviana, who was the parish priest in Tola before he went into the mountains with the FSLN.

Moisés Prudente Acevedo, a campesino who worked with the priest, said that before turning to armed opposition, García first tried to use moral arguments to convince the landlords to treat peasants more humanely. "He appealed to their consciences, but it was like talking to a stone."

The first agrarian reform titles were awarded October 17 in the interior town of Wiwilí. Among the 4,000 campesinos who attended — some of whom had to travel several days to get to Wiwilí — were not only those who had fought alongside the FSLN but even some who had collaborated with Augusto César Sandino half a century ago.

#### Provisions of law

The new agrarian reform law is regarded here as one of the most important accomplishments of 1981 in Nicaragua. Under the first phase of agrarian reform, which began as soon as the Sandinistas took power, the lands of Somoza and his top collaborators were confiscated. These large units of production are run as state farms, rather than being split up into small individual holdings.

The 1981 law gives the government the right to confiscate and turn over to peasant cooperatives the property of all landowners with holdings of more than 500 manzanas in the

western half of the country, or more than 1,000 manzanas in the eastern half, whenever this land is not being fully used. The law also puts strict limits on the renting of land, and gives the government the right to take over areas it declares "agrarian reform zones" for the purpose of development.

Minister of Agricultural Development Jaime Wheelock has explained that the scope of the law makes it perhaps the most radical of all the measures enacted by the Sandinista government. "Nothing will be automatically changed as a result of this law," Wheelock said, "but everything is potentially affected."

#### 'This is terrific'

At the Tola ceremony, in addition to giving out titles to previously confiscated land, Wheelock also announced new expropriations of various local holdings totaling some 13,000 manzanas. As he read off the name of each expropriated landlord, the crowd cheered and clapped.

One landowner must have been particularly unpopular among the people standing near me, because I heard shouts of "This is terrific!" and "It's about time."

"We are going to take away more land," Wheelock promised the crowd of campesinos, "but it is going to be done with justice, with fairness, against those who have usurped the land, stolen it, who have so much land they do not even know how much they have."

Local agrarian reform councils have been set up in the different provinces and detailed studies made to determine which lands are subject to confiscation and which peasants need

land and are in a position to farm it productively.

The councils, which include leaders of the Rural Workers Association (ATC) and the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG), collected this data for three months before the first land titles were awarded.

In the province of León, to give one example, they reported that three families owned a total of 54,340 manzanas, while 11,211 peasant families altogether owned 15,980 manzanas.

Preference in the award of agrarian reform titles is given to cooperatives of landless and near-landless peasants who have already demonstrated a certain level of organization and experience. The cooperatives produce basic food crops, predominantly maize, rice, and beans. In turning over the titles, the government also makes a commitment to work closely with the cooperatives in providing necessary credit, technical assistance, and marketing.

#### Law on cooperatives

Complementary to the new agrarian reform law is the Law on Agricultural Cooperatives, passed in September. It lays out a series of measures designed to promote the voluntary association of peasants with small and medium-sized holdings into service or production cooperatives, in order to make it easier to provide them with equipment and assistance and to maximize production.

One of the stated objectives of the law is "to encourage the participation of women through consciously integrating them into the economic and social life of the cooperative."

The new law on cooperatives makes it clear that the government will give preference to peasant cooperatives in allocating credit and technical assistance. Under Somoza, more than 90 percent of all agricultural credit, as well as other forms of support, went to the big growers of export crops like cotton, coffee, and sugar cane.

At the time of the revolution in 1979, land ownership in Nicaragua was distributed extremely unevenly, as is the case in almost all of Latin America. More than 40 percent of all farmers owned or rented less than 10 manzanas of land, while only 200 landowners had holdings of more than 500 manzanas. About a quarter of all peasants owned no land of their own; they were sharecroppers or rented a few manzanas from a landlord.

#### Action against decapitalization

When Somoza's lands were confiscated in 1979, many of these peasants expected that the prime land would be turned over to them. The leadership of the FSLN spent a lot of time explaining why these holdings, which included the most developed production units in the country, should be run as state farms rather than divided into tiny individual plots.

In early 1981, pressure for land began to build again, but this time with a slightly different focus, and under the leadership of the Sandinista mass organizations in the countryside.



Matilde Zimmermann/IP

Tola, December 11. Head of peasant cooperative receives land title from Commanders of the Revolution Luis Carrión (center) and Daniel Ortega.

It became clear that many of the big landowners whose property had not been nationalized in 1979 were refusing to invest or plant, laying off workers, decapitalizing their farms or even abandoning them.

The ATC and UNAG took the lead in exposing this misuse or nonuse of the land and in organizing a series of militant demonstrations around the country. There was a new wave of land occupations.

The Ministry of Agricultural Development—Institute of Agrarian Reform (MIDINRA) was already stretched to the limit of its resources, trying to manage the 1,500 farms totaling some 1.2 million manzanas confiscated in 1979. At the same time, the cooperative movement among the peasantry, although never without its problems, had advanced in the two years since the revolution. These factors help explain why the second stage of Nicaragua's agrarian reform has a different emphasis than the first.

#### 'Towards socialized labor'

Shortly after the new law went into effect,

Jaime Wheelock explained the part agrarian reform plays in the social transformation taking place in Nicaragua.

"What is it that guarantees we will be able to carry out this transition?" Wheelock asked. "It is our ability to transform the relations of production. . . . If we want to transform Nicaraguan society, we have to begin in the countryside."

He then explained the two means through which the social and economic transformation would be carried out. "The first is the incorporation of production units and private lands with a certain level of capital investment into the state sector, and the consolidation of the state sector as a central axis for development.

"And the second is the conversion of an individualistic, primitive, and backward peasantry into an organized peasantry — or, to put it another way, into a member of the social layer we are building, which is a socialized peasantry. A peasantry which is in transition between capitalist or precapitalist relations toward forms of socialized labor." □



# Young Socialist Alliance convention

*Registers growth, gains among working class youth*

By Harry Ring

[The following article appeared in the January 22 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

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PHILADELPHIA — Nine hundred people attended the national convention of the Young Socialist Alliance, held here December 31 through January 3.

It was an unusually successful gathering in all respects. The convention capped a year in which the YSA, for the first time in a number of years, has grown significantly in size. The organization is also more working-class in composition, and a greater number of Black and Latino youth have been won to the movement.

The principal business of the convention was conducted by the 105 elected delegates and alternates. But many of the visitors participated in the wide range of workshops and classes held during the gathering.

Delegates were elected from each chapter following discussions based on documents circulated to the entire membership. The voting at the convention confirmed that all but a small handful of delegates were in agreement with the stands taken by the gathering.

One focus of the convention was discussion of the recently established National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP). The delegates assessed the emergence of the NBIPP, with its anticapitalist and anti-imperialist program, as a development of signal importance for Black liberation and the entire workers movement.

## Industrial working class

The convention also decided to press forward with the YSA's drive to have the big majority of its members be industrial workers. A major component in this endeavor will be to expand the number of YSA members working in the garment and textile industries. The superexploited workers in these industries are certain to play a vital role in the developing labor fightback against the ruling-class drive to lower living standards, weaken the unions, and further restrict democratic rights.

The resolution adopted by the convention explained, "Only an organization that is firmly planted in the working class, and one that has its eyes on the young workers; the women, Black, and Latino workers; can maintain a revolutionary perspective today."

High priority was also given to activity in support of the 1982 election campaigns of the Socialist Workers Party across the country.

The YSA also voted to throw its active support behind Mel Mason, who has announced his campaign for governor of California. Mason, a member of the city council in Seaside, California, is a leader of the SWP and is the Far West regional director of the NBIPP.

The delegates further decided that the YSA will participate in helping to launch a campaign within the labor movement against the firings of union members in the war industries on the basis of their political beliefs and union activities. Several YSA members at the Lockheed aircraft plant near Atlanta, and at McDonnell Douglas in St. Louis, have been among those fired.

The convention elected a new YSA National Committee, and the committee in turn selected two national officers. Malik Miah was designated national chairman. Lisa Hickler was selected national secretary.

Hickler and Miah gave two of the principal reports to the convention. Hickler's report focused on international developments, while Miah discussed the political situation in the United States.

## Revolution in Caribbean

Hickler opened her report by focusing on the advances for the world revolution being registered in Central America and the Caribbean. It is in response to these gains for the workers and peasants, she said, that Washington is moving toward direct military intervention in the region.

The sharpening conflict between U.S. imperialism and the revolutionary governments in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada, as well as the insurgent forces in Guatemala and El Salvador, Hickler said, is at the heart of world politics. Therefore, she explained, at the center of the YSA's activities in the United States must be efforts to mobilize maximum opposition to threats and plans for U.S. military intervention in the area.

Similarly, she declared, the YSA must continue to oppose Washington's unceasing efforts to destabilize the government in Iran. She also called for a big step-up in the activity of the YSA aimed at opposing the U.S. campaign to politically and economically isolate Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea.

Turning to the imposition of martial law in Poland, Hickler declared, "The YSA condemns these acts." The attempt to crush Solidarity, she said, is "a blow to the worldwide struggle for socialism."

The crackdown in Poland, however, will not put an end to the "irrepressible struggle" of the Polish working class and its allies, she said. The political revolution that has been shaking

Poland since August 1980 will continue, seeking new forms as the working class absorbs the lessons of its experiences.

Denouncing the hypocrisy of Reagan's "solidarity" with Polish workers, Hickler charged, "The last thing the imperialists want to see is workers democracy in Poland. They much prefer 'stable' bureaucratic rule."

She also scored the stand of AFL-CIO [the U.S. labor federation] officials, explaining that their backing for Reagan's foreign policy and participation in the rulers' "orgy of anti-communist propaganda" are of no aid to the Polish workers.

## New leadership needed

On the domestic front, the convention discussion centered on the problem of developing new leaderships for the struggles that are urgently needed to beat back the rulers' offensive. The resolution adopted by the convention analyzed the default of the labor bureaucracy in the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) strike and other struggles. "Their class-collaborationist perspective," the resolution stated, "makes them opponents of the independent political action needed to take on the bosses' government and win. They are already looking to the elections in 1982 and 1984 to rebuild the Democratic Party. Their betrayal of PATCO confirms a political truth today. No section of the labor bureaucracy has any perspective of organizing the kind of fight that is necessary to beat back the ruling-class offensive.

"Only from the fresh ranks of the young workers, Blacks, and women can a fighting leadership for labor be forged. Only from the workers who have not complied with sellout after sellout can a new leadership emerge."

Despite the massive turnout for the historic Solidarity Day demonstration last September,<sup>1</sup> Malik Miah explained in his report, the labor misleaders mulishly cling to their bankrupt course. The union misleaders' plans for "Solidarity Day II" are aimed at nothing more than a vote-hustling campaign for the Democratic Party, Miah said.

The YSA and SWP put forward an alternative course. "We are for a break from the big-business parties that are carrying out this offensive against working people," Miah said. "We argue for the perspective that workers must organize their own party, a labor party based on the unions, to fight for a workers government to transform this society."

And, he added, just as many PATCO

1. See *Intercontinental Press*, September 28 and October 19.

workers are drawing basic political conclusions from their struggle, so in the days ahead the most exploited of American workers — Black workers, Latinos, women, and youth — will become increasingly receptive to socialist ideas.

### **Worst crisis since 1930s**

This theme was developed by Doug Jenness, coeditor of the *Militant*, who delivered greetings from the SWP Political Committee.

Jenness pointed to the ravaging effects of the current recession, which “are hitting the working class harder than any recession since the 1930s.”

“It shows the depth of the crisis the capitalist system is in. The capitalists have no alternative but to drive forward with their attacks on working people in order to maintain their profits.

“But the measures they must take are also educating the working class about this system and the role of the government, and are driving more workers to look for answers. More and more workers are beginning to realize that the problems cannot be solved on the level of getting a better union contract. They realize more is needed, and are looking for explanations that give a broader picture.”

Jenness cited the big change that has taken

place in the thinking of thousands of PATCO workers in just a few months. “And this is only a taste of the changes we are going to see as hundreds of thousands, millions of workers get hit as hard as the air controllers.”

He noted the importance of the YSA convention’s decision to deepen its turn to the working class, especially its decision to get more members into the garment and textile industries. “If we cannot win members from this most exploited sector of the industrial working class,” he said, “there can be no socialist revolution in this country.”

Jenness pointed to the importance of Mel Mason’s campaign for governor in California and to SWP campaigns in many states as excellent opportunities to reach tens of thousands of workers with the broader picture. “Our answer to capitalism is socialism,” he said. “And to get socialism, the workers and their allies must establish a workers government. And to get a workers government, a labor party based on the unions needs to be established.”

### **Ferment in women’s movement**

The widening gap between the kind of leadership needed to defeat the new attacks and the miserable performance of the official leaders of the established women’s rights groups has

stimulated new discussions on the road to women’s equality. This was the topic of a report on the fight for women’s rights presented by Margaret Jayko.

To achieve desperately needed increases in their profit margins, Jayko explained, the capitalists must try to divide, demoralize, and ultimately crush the organized capacity of the working class to resist their offensive.

“It is under the lash of this offensive,” she said, “that the oppressed and exploited in every country, including the United States, are being shaken up. New ideas are being generated, interest in class-struggle alternatives is developing, along with a willingness to fight back on the basis of *our* class interests as against *their* class interests.”

“The ruling class,” Jayko said, “uses the fact that women can be more easily shunted in and out of the workforce as a club over the heads of all workers, to modify their demands and militancy, and to increase competition instead of cooperation among workers.”

A central factor in the oppression of women, Jayko continued, is “that most fundamental of all questions affecting a woman’s life — the right to choose whether and when to have children.”

Opposition to abortion and reproductive rights in general, she continued, “are clearly the cutting edge of the anti-woman drive.”

Discussing the activities of the most vociferous of the anti-abortion forces — the Catholic church hierarchy, Moral Majority, and other “misnamed right-to-lifers” — Jayko noted that the Democrats and Republicans peddle the idea, accepted by some feminists, that this “radical right” is pressuring the government to cut back on abortion rights.

“But the real relationship is the opposite,” Jayko explained.

“It is the open anti-abortion stance of Reagan — and before him Carter — that encouraged and emboldened these groups. And it is the two parties — not Jerry Falwell or Phyllis Schlafly — that call the shots.”<sup>2</sup>

The development of a leadership that can effectively mobilize women requires an understanding of the basic issue involved, Jayko said. “The oppression of women,” she said, “is a central pillar of capitalism. That is why women’s welfare and women’s status is a class question. This is, objectively, a big concern for the working class, which is the class that must ultimately solve the question.”

### **Friedan’s betrayal**

As an illustration of the treason being committed by the established leaders of the women’s rights movement, Jayko analyzed the new book by Betty Friedan, entitled *The Second Stage*.

Friedan’s 1963 book, *The Feminine Mys-*

2. Jerry Falwell is head of the Moral Majority, a right-wing fundamentalist group. Phyllis Schlafly is a leader of the forces opposed to ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment as part of the U.S. Constitution.

## **‘The fight against Reaganism at home and abroad’**

A spirited rally — organized around the theme “The Fight Against Reaganism at Home and Abroad” — was held during the Young Socialist Alliance national convention.

Featured speakers included Víctor Rubio, a representative of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador; Gregory Pardlo, president of the Newark, New Jersey, local of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO); Barbara Arnwine, a national leader of the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP); and Mel Mason, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and elected member of the city council of the town of Seaside, California.

Amid chants by convention participants of “No Draft, No War!” and “Salvador Vencerá!” Víctor Rubio of the FDR and FMLN declared, “The people of the land of Farabundo Martí are fighting to establish a new order to overthrow a historically surpassed class.” Rubio hailed the achievements of the Nicaraguan, Grenadian, and Cuban revolutions, and pointed to the similar goals held by the Salvadoran rebels.

PATCO leader Gregory Pardlo pointed out that before striking last August, air-traffic controllers had been viewed as a “class-

ic middle-American group, supporters of President Reagan.” But as a result of the rulers’ union-busting, PATCO leaders and members have been speaking at socialist rallies and considering socialist ideas. “And right now I don’t give a damn who hears me,” Pardlo concluded, “I’m here and I’ll stay.”

Barbara Arnwine of the NBIPP outlined the new party’s program and explained that its goal is “to unite with people throughout the world, of all colors, who are struggling against the capitalist order.”

SWP leader Mel Mason described his experiences as the only revolutionary socialist elected to public office in the United States.

Other speakers included Anita Morales, a leader of the striking students at the University of Puerto Rico; Jody Curran, a YSA member fired from her job at the McDonnell Douglas aircraft plant in St. Louis, Missouri; and Richard Rozanski, who represented Revolution Youth, the YSA’s sister organization in Britain.

The rally was chaired by YSA leader DeAnn Rathbun, who described her visit to Poland in mid-1981. Rathbun denounced the imposition of martial law by the Polish regime and condemned the campaign of anticommunist propaganda launched by the imperialists.

tique, had an important and positive impact on women's consciousness, Jayko said. But the present book amounts to a shameful capitulation to the ruling-class offensive against women's rights.

Friedan argues that the women's movement is suffering setbacks because its goals are too radical, and women must modify their demands and perspectives.

It was the fight for women's right to choose abortion, Friedan asserts, that brought on the "backlash."

Friedan goes so far as to advise that women should not be "unreasonable" in their demand for child care and other essential social services when "our country" is in crisis.

Friedan has fallen to this level, Jayko pointed out, because she accepts the framework of capitalism. "In 1982," she added, "to accept the limits of capitalism is to give up the struggle."

The leadership of the National Organization for Women (NOW), Jayko continued, falls into the same political trap as Friedan, going so far as to be proponents of drafting women to fight in the imperialist wars Reagan is preparing.

That is why NOW refuses to lead a fight to defend the right to abortion. In doing so, it cites as an excuse the need to focus on the fight to win ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. But, at the same time, NOW reduces the fight for the ERA to vote-catching for capitalist politicians who assure us — once again — that they can be relied on as "friends" of women's rights. That is the very strategy that has failed to win the ERA so far, Jayko said.

The YSA, Jayko concluded, needs to participate in every meaningful activity carried out in behalf of women's rights, doing everything it can to advance the kind of fightback actions needed. A crucial part of this perspective, she stressed, is explaining to the membership of NOW and other women's rights groups the kind of fight that is needed to achieve their objectives. "There is simply no way around thinking and talking in the women's movement today," she said. "We have to present a perspective of struggle that points toward political action independent of the capitalist parties.

"We have to talk socialism. Friedan and the other misleaders are talking capitalism. We must talk socialism."

#### Independent Black party

In sharp contrast to the policy of retreat and the orientation toward deeper ties with the Democratic Party that characterize the leaderships of the AFL-CIO, NOW, and the established civil rights groups, stands the newly formed National Black Independent Political Party. The significance of this positive development was a theme that ran through the entire convention.

It was the centerpiece of the report presented by Melvin Chappell on perspectives for the Black liberation movement.

The development of NBIPP, which had its first national conference last August, Chappell

explained, points the way forward for the entire working class.

"The party's break from support to capitalist parties," he said, "sets an example to labor and to the women's movement. It helps concretize our slogan for a labor party by providing an example in action of independent working-class politics. The mere existence of NBIPP helps to deepen the debate and discussion in the labor movement over the need to take a similar step to build a mass labor party based on the trade unions. The NBIPP is a living example of what a union-based labor party would do: adopt a radical program, reach out to other forces with its perspective, and try to win adherents to the idea of independent labor political action."

Chappell also explained that "the development of NBIPP reconfirms our analysis that Blacks will be a major part of the vanguard of the American working class. It shows the Black liberation movement as a central, dynamic component of the battle that must be waged to overturn capitalism and begin to construct a socialist society.

"When Blacks are in motion," Chappell said, "when they struggle for social and economic equality, it wins gains for the entire working class." As an illustration, he pointed to the positive stands taken by NBIPP on the fight for women's rights, including its strong position on affirmative action for women within the party itself.

Another significant side of the development of the NBIPP has been its positive stance toward the advancing revolutions in the Caribbean. Chappell noted the participation of NBIPP co-chair Ron Daniels in a recent conference in Havana on the situation of minority communities in the United States. He also noted the fraternal ties that NBIPP is forging with the People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada, the first Black workers and farmers government ever.

Chappell explained that the development of NBIPP should be viewed as part of the international struggle against capitalism and imperialism.

"In this current period, when the liberals are collapsing under the pressure of the Reagan anti-working-class offensive, it is the YSA and SWP, the NBIPP, and revolutionary Grenada, Nicaragua, and Cuba that are standing up and pointing the way to fight back."

Chappell stressed that while NBIPP has been increasingly active — holding conferences and forums, joining actions like Solidarity Day and the January 15 Martin Luther King demonstrations<sup>3</sup> in Washington and other cities — it is still a new organization. "NBIPP is still in its infant stage of development. The party is not yet a mass-based party. It is still an idea, although one that is growing and becoming more popular as a result of carrying out con-

3. On January 15, 1981, more than 100,000 Blacks demonstrated in Washington, D.C., demanding that the slain civil rights leader's birthday be made a national holiday. Nationally coordinated actions took place on the same day this year.

sistent work."

The main job of the YSA is to help explain and publicize NBIPP's ideas and activities, and collaborate with it in united actions. Black YSAers are active as members of the new party, encouraging all who agree with its perspectives to join up.

Discussing the role of Black elected officials who are tied to the Democratic and Republican parties, Chappell said, "Black Democrats and Republicans, regardless of their intentions, can only administer the capitalist apparatus for the needs of the ruling rich."

An excellent contrast, he said, is how Mel Mason, a Black socialist, utilizes his city council seat to build opposition to the ruling-class attacks. Chappell said Mason's independent campaign for governor of California will be particularly valuable in promoting the example of independent political action within the Black communities.

#### 1982 elections

Participation in the Mason-for-governor campaign, and support to SWP candidates around the country, was projected as a major activity of the YSA in a report by Etta Ettlinger.

It will take a huge effort to win ballot status for Mason, she reported. The YSA will help achieve this goal. It was projected that, in addition to Mason campaigners in California, fifty activists will be enlisted to spend three weeks in California helping to organize the huge petition drive.

A very important election tool, Ettlinger said, will be the *Militant*, which will serve to publicize the campaign nationally.

Additionally, she said, it is important for YSA members to help expand the circulation of *Perspectiva Mundial*, the Spanish-language sister publication of the *Militant*.

This assumes greater importance, she noted, as recruitment of Latinos to the YSA increases. (Of those who have joined the YSA in the past nine months, 13 percent have been Latino.)

Presently, she said, 45 percent of the YSA members are industrial workers, and another 4 percent are laid-off workers. An additional 13 percent are now seeking jobs in industry.

Of new recruits to the YSA, 18 percent are industrial workers. This is a gain of 3 percent over the previous period.

In addition to winning some 122 new members since last April, the organization has also been greatly strengthened by the return of more than 100 former members who had left the YSA for activity in the SWP.

Ettlinger's report emphasized the need for sustained, organized educational activity in the YSA. It was agreed that the YSA will give special attention to studying the writings of V.I. Lenin.

This was as it should be. The high level of the political discussion at the convention, combined with the confident revolutionary spirit so apparent at the gathering, marked it as a genuinely Leninist youth organization. □

# LCR holds its fifth congress

## Urges united action on demands of workers

[The following appeared as two articles in the December 31 issue of *Rouge*, the weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the French section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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The fifth congress of the Revolutionary Communist League took place December 16-19, 1981, at Nanterre. One hundred and sixty delegates took part. In August a draft resolution on the political situation had been adopted by the majority of the central committee and was presented for several months of discussion by the entire LCR membership.

At that point a tendency (Tendency 1) was formed on the initiative of several members of the central committee. The tendency put forward alternative theses to those of the majority of the central committee.

The debate had to do with the assessment of the LCR's activity during the presidential campaign, the assessment of intervention by LCR members in the Unity in Struggles movement,<sup>1</sup> and their trade-union activity at the time the Marseille Call<sup>2</sup> was issued.

The discussion was also, and mainly, concerned with tasks. How should we analyze the situation opened up by Mitterrand's victory in the May 10 election? How should we assess the scope, and the limits, of the Socialist Party's growth in the working class? How should we characterize the new government, and what attitude should we take toward it? How should we give concrete form, today, to the demand

1. The Unity in Struggles movement emerged around a petition campaign, signed by tens of thousands of workers, calling on the Communist- and Socialist-led trade unions to work together in joint struggles. In many places committees made up of members of the CP, SP, the various unions, and other organizations were formed to circulate the petitions.

2. On February 19, 1981, eight officials of the Communist-led General Confederation of Labor (CGT) from the Marseille area, representing 200 trade-union signers, held a press conference to announce the Marseille Call, which stated that "The CGT should do everything possible to defeat Giscard. It should contribute to the unity of the CP and SP so they might govern together. Before, during, and after May 10 the demands must be maintained."

Twenty press conferences were held in cities throughout France by groupings of activists supporting the call. On March 17, in a Paris mass meeting, CGT leader Georges Ségué, who is also a leader of the Communist Party, denounced the 5,000 signatories of the Marseille Call, using terms like "Trotskyist termites."

for a break with the bourgeoisie? What kind of unity policy should we follow with regard to the other organizations that describe themselves as Trotskyist — Workers Struggle (LO) and the Internationalist Communist Organization (OCI)?

### How discussion was organized

To carry out this discussion, an internal bulletin was published every two weeks. It was open to contributions from individuals, bodies, and tendencies.

The right to form tendencies is recognized in the LCR's bylaws. The concrete organization of the discussion was carried out in line with that. Tendency 1's theses were made known to all the members, and 20 percent of the space in the internal bulletin was given over to this tendency to present its positions, in whatever forms it chose. General assembly meetings were organized in all the cities, in the course of which the members of the tendency were able to present their position, with equal speaking time for their reports and with travel financed by the organization.

The discussion in the local congresses and at the national congress took place on a series of amendments to the resolution of the central committee majority (for example, on the place of jobs in building the party, on the united front, on the political situation, and so on).

At the end of the discussion, during the course of which some amendments were integrated into the resolution and several passages were rewritten, the resolution presented by the central committee majority received 77 percent of the votes. The one presented by Tendency 1 got 21 percent of the votes.

The election of the central committee was carried out in line with these proportions.

\* \* \*

It would be impossible here to provide a detailed account of the contents of the political resolution adopted by the fifth congress (which will soon be published in a pamphlet). We will instead limit ourselves to providing some points of reference concerning several questions discussed at the congress.

### The political situation

Mitterrand's election did not inaugurate a "new era of Social Democratic stability." On the contrary: a "series of factors make it possible today to outline the perspective of a confrontation between the proletariat and bourgeoisie that will eventually lead to a revolutionary situation in France, although we cannot predict the pace, depth, or duration."



Mitterrand: his election will not usher in a new period of capitalist stability.

Among these factors are "a working class that is endowed with solid experience and acquisitions; an unprecedented majority for the workers parties; a severe economic crisis of long duration; a bourgeoisie that is weak politically, but must carry out a fight to preserve its profits; a major crisis of orientation and leadership in the traditional workers movement, whose leaders are in the government; and institutions that were developed to work against the workers but are today occupied by them."

At the same time, we are seeing "deepgoing structural changes in the workers movement, the most obvious signs of which are the rise of the Socialist Party and the decline of the Communist Party." In the factories, "the CFDT<sup>3</sup> has, on the whole, reduced the gap between itself and the CGT<sup>4</sup>" in recent years.

But "because of the SP's weakly organized presence in the factories . . . there is a divergence between the election results and the organizational capacities" of the two big workers parties, and "the CP retains hegemony in the big industrial concentrations."

Furthermore, the growing contradiction between the government's austerity policy and the hopes the workers have placed in it will lead to differentiations inside the SP and the CP themselves. We will see opposition tendencies crystallize. And — through this process — "the preconditions for building a revolu-

3. CFDT — French Democratic Confederation of Labor, the labor federation that is led by the Socialist Party.

4. CGT — General Confederation of Labor, the federation aligned with the Communist Party.

tionary party rooted in the working class will come together."

The LCR gives no support to this government, whose composition and policies are directly aimed against mobilizing the workers, as was also the case with the 1936 Popular Front government.

But the LCR recognizes that the masses who identify with the SP and CP see this as "their" government. That is why the LCR focuses its fire on the bosses and the right wing. And it is from this vantage point that the LCR criticizes the government's capitulations toward the bourgeoisie.

With the workers who have confidence in these two parties, the LCR encourages the development of working-class mobilizations against the bosses, while demanding that the SP and CP parliamentary deputies, with their majority in parliament, and the CP and SP ministers break with the bourgeoisie, satisfy the demands of the workers, and support their struggles.

At the same time, the LCR systematically develops its own responses and program. In this way the LCR will provide the best opportunity for the workers — through their own experience — to break loose from the SP and CP leaderships and seek the path of the revolutionary party.

This stance is the only one that will allow us to avoid both the opportunist pitfall of "critical support" to the government, and the ultraleft attitude that "Giscard and Mitterrand are six of one, half a dozen of the other."

Breaking with the bourgeoisie means break-

ing with the bosses, the bourgeois institutions, the bourgeois ministers. But in the present situation (where in contrast to 1936, the SP and CP have a majority by themselves), we do not make a central focus of the demand for the departure of the Radical and Gaullist bourgeois ministers. We focus our agitation on breaking with the employers.

In another political situation (a governmental crisis or an attempt to enlarge the coalition to other bourgeois forces) we may decide to focus our intervention on rejecting any alliance with the right in government and on committing the SP and CP to govern alone in order to respond to the aspirations of the masses.

#### United workers mobilizations

The balance sheet of recent struggles (Renault, Peugeot) and the fights waged around an immediate thirty-five-hour workweek unquestionably show two basic facts:

- Although the SP and the CP are together in the government, the division continues in the factories. That is why the struggle for workers unity "constitutes a central aspect of all revolutionary activity in the present situation."

- The government's policy, supported more or less openly by the unions, increasingly leads to trying to manage the crisis, to watering down demands and gains already won. Therefore the struggle against any "refocusing" of demands and for objectives that respond to the vital needs of the workers is of decisive importance.

Class-struggle opposition groups in the trade unions will consolidate around these poles.

In 1936 the Trotskyist militants, who were only a handful and ran the risk of being marginalized, chose an entryist tactic in the Socialist Party. Today, however, independent organization is the heart of the axis of party building.

"As in any period of working-class upsurge, new groupings of militants will emerge as a result of activities carried out through partial united fronts, or by bringing together militants who are breaking with the traditional organizations (in the manner of the Unity in Struggles movement). These new groupings will lead struggles that converge with those of the revolutionaries.

"The LCR's attitude toward them must be to avoid all sectarianism, to adopt a positive approach that combines unity in action and fraternal discussion, within the perspective of building the revolutionary party."

Moreover, in France there are three organizations that describe themselves as Trotskyist: the LCR, the OCI, and LO. We do not favor this dispersal. Our stance is as follows: we feel that given the existing disagreements, "a fusion is not on the agenda" today. We consistently make proposals for unity in action and political discussion. Only the test of serious, loyal, and prolonged unity in action can make it possible to break through the obstacles that stand in the way of overcoming the dispersal of forces claiming allegiance to Trotskyism. Strengthening the LCR and its roots in industry are the key to success of such a move. □

## Some figures on the LCR

In eighteen months, since its fourth congress, the LCR has grown 11 percent in membership. Compared to the period right after the split in 1979, the increase is 25 percent.

The percentage of women has remained stable (a little less than 30 percent), as has the percentage of blue-collar and white-collar workers (more than one-third of the total), and the distribution of union members between the CGT, CFDT, and National Teachers Federation (respectively 30 percent, 26 percent, and 22 percent of the total membership).

But important changes have taken place:

- On the one hand, the number of LCR members who hold posts in the trade unions has grown. Two-thirds of those in the CGT and CFDT have union responsibilities: about one-third are in elected positions (stewards, plant committees); more than half the CFDT members and 40 percent of those in the CGT have a position of responsibility in their union section; one-third of those in the CFDT and 10 percent of those in the CGT have responsible positions on

the local, departmental [provincial], or regional level.

- Moreover, in certain branches of industry the LCR's implantation has clearly grown: the number of members in metalworking has almost doubled (while the total membership of the LCR grew by 11 percent in the same period). In addition, there has been strong progress on the railroad (up 60

percent).

But certain sectors still retain a numerical importance that is far greater than their political weight: for example, 22 percent of the LCR's members are teachers and 11 percent work in health care.

This only confirms the need to pursue the effort to root the LCR in industry.

—from 'Rouge'

### Breakdown of LCR members by occupation

Occupation	% of LCR members in occupation	of these, % who are women
Skilled/Semiskilled . . . . .	7.5	9
White Collar . . . . .	27	30
Technicians . . . . .	7	21
Supervisors/Managers . . . . .	7	20
Teachers . . . . .	22	36
Students . . . . .	14	38
Unemployed . . . . .	4	40
Other . . . . .	8.5	—
Total . . . . .	100	29

[The following selections are devoted to responses to the December 13 declaration of martial law in Poland. For further opinions on this topic, see last week's issue of *Intercontinental Press*, dated January 18.]

## Socialist Voice

Fortnightly newspaper published in Montreal, Quebec. Reflects the views of the Revolutionary Workers League, Canadian section of the Fourth International.

The January 11 issue, in addition to extensive coverage of the U.S. war threats in Central America and the revolutionary struggles in that region, carried a number of articles on the crackdown in Poland.

Two of them explained the aims of Solidarity's struggle for workers democracy and of the movement in Poland for workers control of the factories. Another placed the struggle against bureaucratic rule in Poland in a broader historical context, from the time of Stalin's rise in the Soviet Union in the 1920s.

An editorial in *Socialist Voice* took up Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's comments on the declaration of martial law in Poland.

Shortly after the crackdown, Trudeau had stated, "Any effort to prevent a civil war is a positive step. If a military regime has the effect of preventing a civil war, then I can't inherently say it is bad."

He later elaborated this view: "We see unions in Canada are always asking for more. I don't suppose the union movement in Poland is very different, they would want more, but at some stage it was obvious that the government couldn't give any more . . . hopefully the military regime will be able to not only keep Solidarity from excessive demands but keep the Communist government from excessive repression. . . ."

*Socialist Voice* then noted that this was the same view held by the Reagan administration in Washington, but that "Trudeau and Reagan have a tactical difference over whether it is appropriate to express such ideas publicly. . . ."

"Reagan believes maximum use should be made of the propaganda opportunity to smear socialism with the totalitarian label.

"Above all, the U.S. president is using the largely symbolic sanctions against Poland to prepare public opinion for the real upcoming military moves the U.S. is preparing against the alleged 'Communist threat' in Central America and the Caribbean.

"Trudeau has different problems. He is faced with a radicalizing working class that is not inclined to accept austerity without a fight. And pro-independence sentiment in Quebec has been growing in reaction to Trudeau's moves to put Quebec in a constitutional strait-

jacket. . . .

"With his statements, Trudeau is warning labor and the Quebec people he is prepared to pay a heavy political price to maintain the vital interests of Canada's capitalist rulers. For them, social stability and profits take higher priority than democratic rights.

"Trudeau has provided convincing evidence that protests against Poland that join together labor and procapitalist forces render no service to Solidarity."

This last point was amplified further in an article entitled, "How NOT to defend Solidarity."

"Imperialist governments and the big business media are trying to channel the enormous progressive support for Solidarity among working people into support for . . . reactionary objectives. That's exactly how the Liberals and Tories have been using the joint campaign launched by the Canadian Labour Congress and the Canadian Polish Congress, an organization of right-wing anticommunist émigrés.

"For example, at the December 16 Toronto rally organized by this alliance, Michael Wilson, the Tory federal financial critic, warned of the specter of socialist revolution that has threatened the 'free world' since the Russian revolution of 1917. Paul Cosgrove, the Liberal housing minister, led the crowd in the singing of 'O Canada'. . . .

"NDP [New Democratic Party, the labor party] Leader Ed Broadbent, speaking at the rally, made a point similar to that of Wilson and Cosgrove. He claimed that Solidarity's struggle symbolized what he described as a forty-year-long fight of the Polish people 'against fascist and communist totalitarianism'. . . .

"The trade unions, the NDP, and the Quebec national movement should have nothing to do with these rallies. Though they're called in the name of Solidarity, they only give a platform to supporters of Reagan's war drive, to opponents of the labor movement, and to professed anticommunists like the Canadian Polish Congress."

## Granma

Daily newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party. Published in Havana.

Only three issues of *Granma* have been received by *Intercontinental Press* since martial law was declared in Poland.

On the international page of the December 11 issue of *Granma* — published two days before the declaration of martial law — a dispatch from the Soviet news agency Tass was featured.

Among other things, the Tass dispatch cited reports on Polish television alleging that "leaders of local 'Solidarity' organizations have begun to form 'combat groups' in the enterprises. . . . Incidents of theft of arms and explosives from state depots have been detected. Thugs from the so-called 'Confederation for an Independent Poland' have appeared in the streets of Polish cities. . . ."

Tass also charged that Solidarity had "put on the agenda the question of overthrowing both the legislative and executive powers of the country."

"The critical situation arising from the unbridled counterrevolution," the Tass dispatch concluded, "obliges the authorities to take additional measures in defense of the constitutional pillars of the state."

The other two issues of *Granma* available to *Intercontinental Press* thus far are those dated December 29 and 30.

At the top of the international page of the December 29 edition were two dispatches from Warsaw, one by Tass and the other by the Cuban news agency Prensa Latina. The Tass dispatch, dated December 28, reported that "at 1800 hours today the 'protest committee' in the 'Pjast' coal mine of Upper Silesia was dissolved. By 2000 hours all the miners forcibly held underground by the 'Solidarity' extremists had left the mine."

The Prensa Latina dispatch in the December 29 *Granma* cited the resumption of work at shipyards in Gdansk and Gdynia, at the Huta Katowice steel mill, at the Ziemovit coal mine, and at the ports of Szczecin and Swinoujscie as key examples of "the process of internal stabilization" in Poland.

Prensa Latina also cited a Polish television report that villas belonging to the former Polish ambassadors to Washington and Tokyo, who defected to the United States, were being confiscated and turned into child-care centers.

Other information reported by Prensa Latina in the December 29 *Granma* included the Polish response to Reagan's "brutal interference in the internal affairs of Poland" and charges by the Polish CP daily *Trybuna Ludu* concerning "the counterrevolutionary activity of the parallel trade union [Solidarity]."

Two Prensa Latina dispatches were carried in the December 30 edition of *Granma*. One reported from Warsaw that the Jaruzelski regime had reduced the curfew hours and was considering the introduction of "obligatory labor" for "all male citizens between eighteen and forty-five years of age who neither study nor work, and especially for those who cannot present evidence of their sources of income."

The other Prensa Latina dispatch was datelined Moscow and reported that Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko had informed the U.S. ambassador there that "the United States government must put an end to its open and secret interference . . . in the affairs of Poland,

which is a sovereign state."

Finally, the December 30 *Granma* carried a news item, datelined Los Angeles, that reported on Reagan's imposition of economic sanctions on the Soviet Union.

## Socialist Challenge

*Newspaper sponsored by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International. Published weekly in London.*

Continuing its extensive coverage of the crackdown in Poland, *Socialist Challenge* devoted nine of the sixteen pages in its January 7 issue to the subject.

An editorial explained the reason for this kind of emphasis:

"The struggle taking place in Poland is crucial not only for the future of that country, but for the workers of the whole world. It would be difficult to overestimate the stakes involved. . . .

"The significance of the struggle in Poland for the workers of the whole world was that Poland in 1980 and 1981 represented the *highest point of the world revolutionary process*, the most politically advanced struggle taking place anywhere.

"The struggle of Solidarity against the bureaucratic system gave rise to forms of organisation and struggle which contained lessons for the workers of every country. Control over hiring and firing; veto rights over works managers; democratic organisation of strikes and unions; access to the media; direct access by tens of thousands of workers to the negotiations between party leaders; massive use of factory occupations; and the extension of Solidarity's membership and influence into every sphere of Polish society — all these things represented a threat not only to the bureaucracies in Eastern Europe but also to the capitalist system in the West. Despite the crocodile tears, Solidarity's radical actions had few friends in the Western governments.

"The defeat of the Polish proletariat, either at the hands of the Polish army or at the hands of Soviet tanks would amount to a major reversal of the world relationship of forces between the working class and its enemies.

"On the other hand, if the Polish masses can continue the struggle against bureaucratic repression then it will be continued at an infinitely higher political level than even the struggle during 1981. The question of power is posed. The alternative to bureaucratic rule is workers' power. No intermediate solution is possible. . . .

"The defence of the Polish workers is the single most important task for socialists everywhere. Public meetings, collections of money for the Polish resistance, and trade union delegations to visit Poland should all be planned. Poland must be raised in every workers' organisation — and those like [Labour Party left-wing leader] Tony Benn who hesitate to speak

up in defence of the Polish workers must be forced to act."

In regard to this last point, an accompanying article on the same page scored those on the left in Britain who did not actively protest against the crackdown in Poland.

"Tony Benn, for example, has said virtually nothing in public since the imposition of martial law. The majority of the Labour Party's national executive refused to support a call from Eric Heffer for a Labour Party demo on 20 December in London in support of the Polish workers. . . .

"Sad to say apart from individuals such as Heffer and [Scottish miners' leader and Communist Party member Mick] McGahey it is right wingers who have been most vocal. . . .

"At times, such individuals have used the Polish events as part of their anti-left, pro-imperialist crusade.

"For example, Joe Gormley the moderate president of the miners alleged that Polish workers 'are only fighting for the things we take for granted in Britain, freedom and true democracy'. . . .

"But Gormley and others of his kind will be allowed to get away with distorting what Polish workers want, and will use the imposition of martial law as a way of whipping up anti-left feeling, unless the left out-guns the right in attacking the Polish government.

"It is true that many of the larger meetings and demonstrations in this country which have been held in protest over the events in Poland have been dominated by cold war rhetoric.

"But that is inevitably the case if the left muffles its voice, or prattles on about the 'difficulties' in giving one hundred per cent support to Solidarity."

## klasse-kampen

*"Class Struggle," published weekly in Copenhagen by the Socialist Workers Party, Danish section of the Fourth International.*

The December 17 issue featured an editorial entitled, "All power to Solidarity."

"On the horizon," the editorial stated, "hangs the threat of invasion from the bureaucratic government in the Kremlin. It is now so much more important for the whole workers movement to be clear that it will not tolerate attacks against the Polish workers."

The editorial concluded with the slogans, "The Polish workers fight is our fight! Free the jailed Solidarity members! Away with the bureaucrats and their military rule! All power to Solidarity!"

An article on a facing page was entitled, "Who supports whom?" It declared, "The Catholic church, the Danish Communist Party, [Danish Foreign Minister] Kjeld Olesen, and the big Western banks each support the new regime for their own reasons, while the workers movement in many countries is demanding repeal of martial law and release of the jailed

leaders of Solidarity."

According to *Klassekampen*, many demonstrations took place across Denmark within days of the declaration of martial law. Hundreds marched in Aalborg, Odense, Haderslev, and other cities. And 1,000 people assembled on December 14 at the Polish embassy in Copenhagen. The demonstration was initiated by the Socialist Workers Party, the Left Socialists, the People's Socialist Party, and the Communist Workers Party.

*Klassekampen* criticized the Danish Communist Party for not participating in any of these actions and the Social Democrats for refusing to take part in some of them.

The January 7 *Klassekampen* devoted eight pages to the topic of Poland. An editorial headlined "Workers solidarity" stated:

"Every time the Stalinist rulers in Eastern Europe commit a crime in the name of socialism, the bourgeois antisocialists have a field day. Their hypocrisy is without bounds when they see a chance to pose as the real freedom-loving democrats."

The editorial noted that Reagan is using the events in Poland "to alter the international political climate so that the United States can better jump in against the revolutions in Cuba, Grenada, Nicaragua, and El Salvador.

"Other governments, such as most of those in Western Europe, are more interested in ensuring their economic interests in relation to trade with Eastern Europe.

"What they all have in common is that they do not give a damn about the Polish workers and Solidarity. They want a stable bureaucratic rule in Poland — a government that can make sure the money is going to the Western banks, and one that can keep down the workers, a government they can use as a bogeyman against the workers in the West."

The editorial stated that boycotts of Poland or the Soviet Union — apart from concrete solidarity actions like the one by Danish dockworkers in Århus — are a tool of the bourgeoisie.

The Århus dockworkers held a work stoppage and refused to unload the *M.S. Wila* from Poland in protest against the declaration of martial law. According to *Klassekampen*, they issued a statement explaining, "We know from various international sources that the ship was loaded in Poland by our colleagues on the docks who had the military's machine guns at their backs. We express our continued solidarity with Solidarity."

The editorial stated further, "Poland's workers have only one ally in the West or East: the working class. . . . Solidarity from worker to worker is what they need. Public protests, broad workers' demonstrations for the repeal of martial law and the release of jailed Solidarity members; attempts to send workplace and trade-union delegations to Poland to investigate what has happened to Solidarity members in corresponding factories and workplaces, direct and unconditional economic aid to Solidarity or its representatives abroad. That is the support they need."

# Those disappearing 'hit squads'

*Is Carlos the Jackal still in Mexico?*

By Will Reissner

Whatever happened to the Libyan hit men who were supposed to be stalking President Reagan? For three weeks, from late November to mid-December, the front pages of U.S. newspapers and the radio and television airwaves were filled with lurid accounts of Libyan hit squads unleashed against Reagan and other top U.S. officials.

Depending on which account you read, trained assassins had already been sighted in Canada, poised to cross the border; one hit man had succeeded in entering the United States due to a foul-up at New York's Kennedy Airport; "Carlos the Jackal" was already in the country with a trained band of killers; "Carlos the Jackal" was still in Mexico preparing to sneak across the border.

Palestinians, Libyans, Lebanese, Iranians, and an East German were positively identified as the assassins, complete with composite sketches that were run in the newspapers and shown on television screens.

The charge that Libyan leader Muammar el-Qaddafi had dispatched the hit squads was made by Vice-president Bush, President Reagan, and high officials at the State Department.

Day after day new "information" was leaked to the capitalist media, which could be counted on to splash it across the front pages and airwaves. According to Reagan himself, "we have the evidence, and he [Qaddafi] knows it."

And then, after December 13, the reports of hit men evaporated as suddenly as they had ap-

peared. December 13 was the date of the proclamation of martial law in Poland. The U.S. rulers finally had something that was really happening on which to base a propaganda campaign.

In fact there was never a single shred of evidence for all the wild charges against Libya. There never were any hit squads. There were no hired assassins. There was no plot whatsoever — except on the part of the U.S. government.

Columnist Jack Anderson reported on January 7 that "it's possible the CIA's foreign hirings cooked up the 'hit squad' on their own. It fit neatly into the Reagan Administration's political scheme of things, and — voila! a full-blown international incident was born."

According to Anderson, one of his associates was shown a forty-page Central Intelligence Agency report on the "hit squads," revealing that the key informer supposedly present when Qaddafi ordered the establishment of the murder teams "demanded \$500,000 for his information (whether he received it is unknown)."

This informer also offered to put the CIA in contact with other sources in Beirut. Anderson reports that the CIA knew these people as "hustlers who had been peddling phony documents for years." Despite this, the Reagan administration seized on their tale.

One congressman who had been secretly briefed on the administration's "evidence" regarding the hit squads stated that "I could never discover just what it was that made them

## Another Libyan trick?

According to an article by Philip Taubman in the January 14 *New York Times*, "Senior Administration officials say the threat of a terrorist attack against President Reagan by a Libyan assassination team has apparently receded."

The administration steadfastly denies, however, that the whole scare was manufactured in the first place. According to Taubman, "one senior official said: 'This was not an artificial affair created by the White House to justify punitive action against Libya.'"

Some White House officials, Taubman reports, "believe the latest intelligence is a ruse planted by the Libyans to make American officials believe that the threat has lessened."

take this threat any more seriously than they would any of the others that must come to the White House every day."

The entire exercise was a cynical propaganda campaign carried out with the compliance of the entire capitalist media. It was designed to isolate the Libyan government internationally and to provide justification for the Reagan administration's economic and military moves against that country.

On January 3, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) director William Webster was interviewed on ABC television. Webster admitted that the FBI never had any evidence that there were any "hit squads." When asked if these reports could have been planted to throw the government "into a tizzy" and make it "look somewhat silly," Webster acknowledged, "That's always a possibility." □

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