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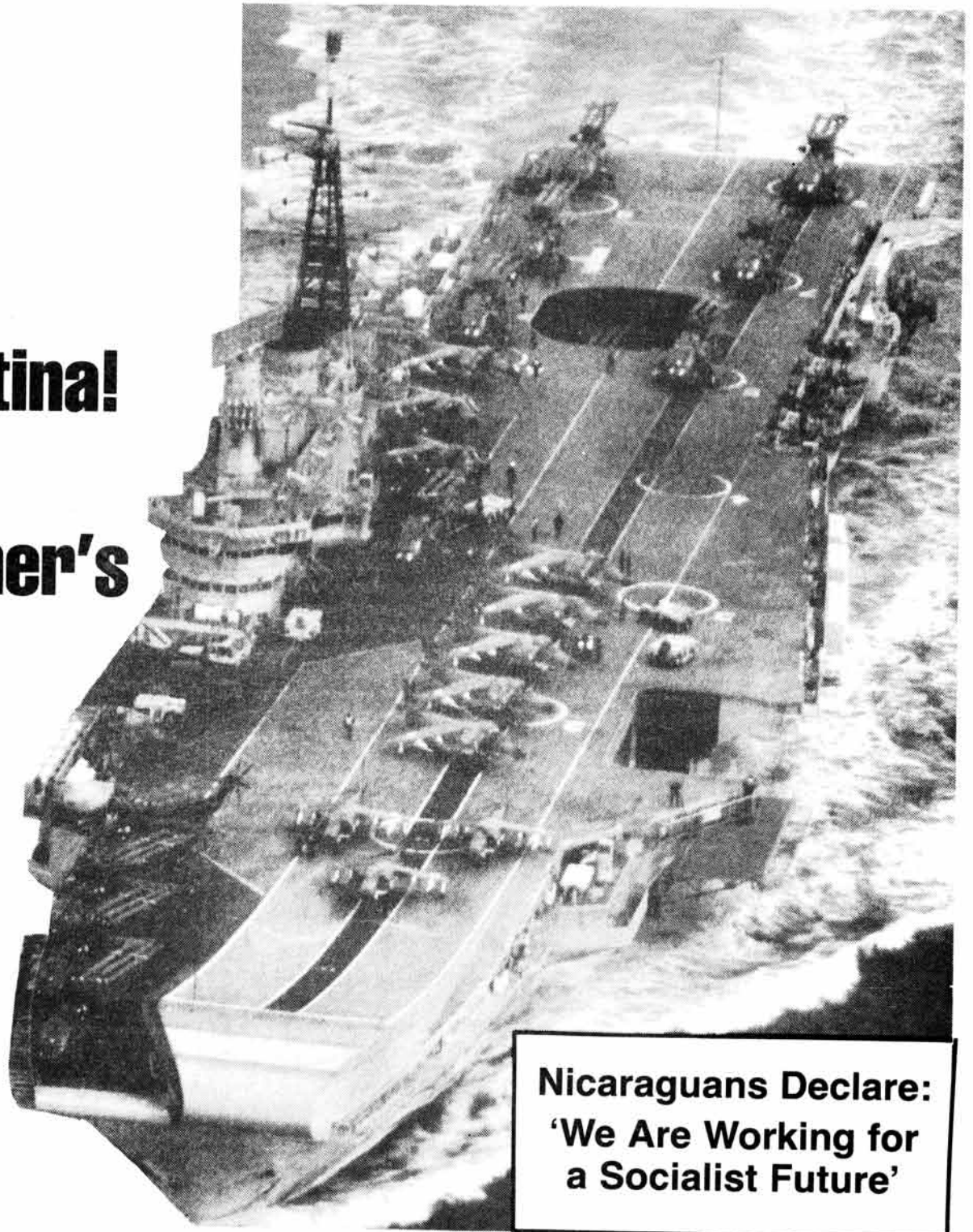
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Vol. 20, No. 17

May 10, 1982

USA \$1.25 UK 50p

**Hands
Off
Argentina!
Stop
Thatcher's
War!**



**Nicaraguans Declare:
'We Are Working for
a Socialist Future'**

Seven years after liberation Vietnam still needs solidarity

By Will Reissner

At 12:15 p.m. on April 30, 1975, soldiers of South Vietnam's National Liberation Front raised the NLF flag over the presidential palace in Saigon. It was an act that symbolized the Vietnamese people's victory in their 35-year armed struggle against foreign domination and for social progress, and it paved the way for the reunification of Vietnam and the establishment of a workers state throughout its territory.

The last U.S. Marines were evacuated from Saigon by helicopter only hours before the city's liberation.

The victory of the peoples of Indochina over the strongest imperialist power in the world was a victory for all humanity. It was a turning point in history that gave encouragement to all the forces fighting for liberation.

Today the example of the Vietnamese continues to encourage the rebels in El Salvador and Guatemala, locked in combat against brutal U.S.-backed regimes.

But the victory of the Vietnamese people was won at a terrible price, a price they are still paying in their attempts to rebuild and develop their country, which had been subjected to colonial and imperialist rule since the French conquered Saigon in 1859.

U.S. intervention

Between 1940 and 1975, the Vietnamese freedom fighters had fought the Japanese army which occupied the country during World War II; the French colonial army, which reoccupied Indochina after the Japanese defeat; and the armed forces of the United States and five U.S. allies, who took up the slack after the French were driven out in 1954.

U.S. intervention in Vietnam began long before the first U.S. troops were committed there. By 1954, Washington was paying 78 percent of the French war costs in Indochina.

The first U.S. troops were sent to South Vietnam in 1959 by President Eisenhower, and the first American soldier was killed there in July of that year. Before U.S. combat troops were withdrawn in 1973, another 58,654 American soldiers would die in the fighting.

Washington also prevailed upon South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, New Zealand, and Australia to send troops to battle the Vietnamese freedom struggle.

Direct U.S. expenditures in the Indochina war totalled \$168.2 billion. But adding in payments to U.S. veterans and interest on the national debt, the total figure comes to \$479 billion!

More than 3 million U.S. soldiers served in the war zone at one time or another.

The Pentagon dropped more than 14 million

tons of bombs and explosive shells on North and South Vietnam between 1965 and 1972. (During World War II, 160,000 tons were dropped on Japan.)

Another 539,000 tons of bombs were dropped on Kampuchea, and huge amounts on Laos.

U.S. forces also used more than 200,000 tons of napalm — jellied gasoline — against the Vietnamese people.

'Operation Ranch Hand'

The Pentagon waged chemical warfare on the peoples of Indochina on a scale never before seen in human history. Between the time President Kennedy began the chemical warfare program in 1961 and its end in 1971, the Pentagon sprayed 11,266,929 gallons of the chemical defoliant Agent Orange on Vietnam, as well as one-half million gallons on Laos, and an undisclosed amount on Kampuchea. Huge amounts of other chemical defoliants were also dropped on Indochina during the course of the chemical warfare program known as "Operation Ranch Hand."

This chemical poisoning of Indochina has had severe and lasting effects on the region, as well as on the U.S. troops who carried it out.

No people in history have been subjected to the level of devastation suffered in Indochina. No one knows how many Vietnamese died in the fighting. Prime Minister Pham Van Dong told Canadian journalist Michael Maclear that "we did not keep statistics. That is the truth. We fought year after year in extremely hard conditions which went beyond all imagination."

But the disruption of Vietnamese society was total. In the South, "Operation Ranch Hand" was consciously carried out to drive millions of peasants out of the countryside. E.W. Pfeiffer, a zoologist at the University of Montana, notes in the May 1982 *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* that it is "clear that both the spray and crop destruction programs were essentially techniques to force peasants from their land into areas where they could be controlled. The idea of generating refugees from Vietcong areas by defoliation gained acceptance early in the war."

Destruction in North

In the North, the impact of the bombing was stunning. According to Michael Maclear, who spent considerable time reporting from North Vietnam during the war, U.S. "bombers had totally destroyed urban life, or anything of brick and mortar, in the provinces below Hanoi. Life here had been reduced to the simplest village level. . . . Only the straw world of the villages, essentially indestructible, could

safely be rebuilt."

In 1980, Nguyen Khac Vien, a Vietnamese physician, described the results of the war in South Vietnam: "the consequences of this long period of history can be summarised thus: considerable material destruction, traditional rural society turned upside-down (ten million peasants were displaced from their villages which had been bombed out of existence by the Americans), uncontrolled 'urbanization' without industrial development, growth of parasitic strata among a population continually enticed into the life of a consumer society, complex social problems, gangsterism, prostitution, drugs, superstition, the disappearance of national cultural and moral values."

When the U.S. withdrew its combat troops from Vietnam in early 1973, it promised to provide \$7.5 billion in reconstruction aid to Indochina over a five-year period. Although this was a pittance compared to what Washington had spent on the war, it reneged on the agreement and never provided a penny in reconstruction help.

Instead, Washington continues to wage economic and political warfare against the peoples of Indochina to this very day.

The food embargo

According to a 1981 World Bank report, Vietnam has only 83 percent of the food needed to meet the minimum nutritional requirements for its population to maintain normal activity. Some 20 percent of the children in the country are thought to suffer from some degree of malnutrition.

But Washington, which bears so much of the responsibility for Vietnam's suffering, is intent on making that suffering even worse. In the words of Assistant Secretary of State for Pacific and East Asian Affairs John Holdridge, current U.S. policy aims to make the Vietnamese "feel pain" by applying "maximum political and economic pressure."

To that end, Washington prevailed upon the European Economic Community to stop sending 15,000 tons a year of dried milk, oats, and oil to Vietnam's children's hospitals.

When Vietnam appealed to the United Nations for 384,000 tons of cereal to feed 10 million people, Washington refused to contribute and lobbied other countries to do the same. The Reagan administration has also tried to prevent private charity and relief organizations in the United States from sending humanitarian aid to the people of Vietnam.

And on April 30, the anniversary of the liberation of Saigon, the United States government — with the help of Argentina, Canada, West Germany, Japan, Thailand, and Britain — blocked \$5.3 million in aid by the UN World Food Program.

The February 8 issue of *U.S. News & World Report* notes that "most Western countries and Japan also are cooperating with the U.S. in withholding reconstruction funds" from Vietnam. Although Sweden and now France contribute small amounts, the magazine estimates

that "the Western embargo costs Hanoi a half-billion dollars yearly in aid."

U.S. Support for Pol Pot

In addition to trying to make Vietnam "feel pain" through financial and economic pressure, Washington is encouraging Vietnam's neighbors to take military action against it. Both the Carter and Reagan administrations have encouraged the Chinese regime and the Pol Pot forces that previously ruled Kampuchea to attack Vietnam militarily.

In 1975 Pol Pot's forces in Kampuchea began raiding Vietnam. For four years they rejected all Vietnamese offers to negotiate their differences. In January 1979, one month after terrible floods had ravaged Vietnam, Pol Pot launched an invasion in the south, while the Chinese regime concentrated large numbers of troops on Vietnam's northern border.

Vietnam's armed forces were able to drive back the Kampuchean invasion and, with the help of Kampuchean revolutionaries, they overthrew the Pol Pot regime. As this was taking place, in February and March 1979, Chinese troops moved into northern Vietnam with the advance knowledge and approval of the Carter administration.

Today the Reagan administration is continuing Carter's policy of supporting the remnants of Pol Pot's forces, now based in Thailand. Washington provides them with financial and military aid and backs them at the United Nations and in other international forums.

As a result, despite the serious economic problems and the gigantic reconstruction needs facing Vietnam, it must keep up to 200,000 troops in Kampuchea to insure that Pol Pot's rightist guerrillas cannot return, and large numbers of troops mobilized on its northern border to prevent a recurrence of the 1979 Chinese invasion.

The 'yellow rain' lie

In an attempt to increase Vietnam's isolation — and to justify its own chemical warfare buildup — the Reagan administration is waging a propaganda campaign accusing the Vietnamese of using chemical weapons, so-called yellow rain, in Kampuchea and Laos.

Richard Burt, the director of the State Department's Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, claims that the State Department's physical evidence means "we now have the smoking gun." The sum total of the "evidence" consists of one leaf and stem and one water sample supposedly brought from Kampuchea by Pol Pot's forces, and two scrapings from rocks in Laos. One of the samples was provided by *Soldier of Fortune* magazine, a publication for mercenaries.

In the May 1982 *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Jamie Kalven notes that "the State Department's conclusions have been received by the scientific community with a measure of skepticism — not only because the full evidence upon which they are based has not been made available for independent analysis but

because various of the assertions made by Burt have, upon examination proved at best premature and at worst demonstrably erroneous."

While Washington is pointing its finger at Vietnam, the Pentagon is rapidly increasing its own chemical weapons arsenal. The Defense Department has presented a chemical weapons production program that could eventually cost up to \$6 billion. In fiscal 1983 alone, the Pentagon's budget requests \$705 million for chemical warfare, of which more than \$100 million is earmarked for the development of a new generation of chemical weapons. Last year, Congress appropriated \$20 million to build a new nerve-gas factory in Pine Bluff, Arkansas.

Vietnam is directly threatened by this build-

up. The commander in chief of U.S. forces in the Pacific, Adm. Robert Long, has asked Congress to approve deployment of chemical weapons in the Pacific and Indian Oceans as part of a big buildup of U.S. forces in the region.

The people of Vietnam have shown in action that they can and will stand up to any pressure exerted on them. Their example has inspired a generation of fighters throughout the world, who owe the Vietnamese a tremendous debt for the defeat they inflicted on U.S. imperialism. It is up to us to repay that debt by waging a campaign to break the economic and political pressure against Vietnam and by demanding that the imperialist countries provide reconstruction aid to the Vietnamese people. □

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Intercontinental Press (ISSN 0162-5594).
Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Published in New York each Monday except the first in January and the third and fourth in August. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y.

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Intercontinental Press specializes in political analysis and interpretation of events of particular interest to the labor, socialist, colonial independence, Black, and women's liberation movements.

Signed articles represent the views of the authors, which may not necessarily coincide with those of Intercontinental Press. Insofar as it reflects editorial opinion, unsigned material stands on the program of the Fourth International.

To Subscribe: For one-year subscription in the U.S. or Canada send \$35.00 (41.00 Canadian dollars) to Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014.

Write for rates for first class and airmail; or telephone: (212) 929-6933.

For air-speeded subscriptions to Australia: Write to Pathfinder Press, P.O. Box K208, Haymarket 2000. In New Zealand: Write to Socialist Books, P.O. Box 8852, Auckland.

For airmail subscriptions to Britain, Ireland, and continental Europe send \$50 for one year; \$25 for six months. Write for subscription rates to all other countries.

Subscription correspondence should be addressed to Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014.

Please allow five weeks for change of address. Include your old address, and, if possible, an address label from a recent issue.

Intercontinental Press is published by the 408 Printing and Publishing Corporation, 408 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Offices at 408 West Street, New York, N.Y.

'We are fighting for a socialist future'

FSLN opens mass discussion on goals of revolution

[Nicaragua is currently on a war footing due to continued counterrevolutionary attacks. The National Emergency declared in March was extended for another month on April 15. But the U.S.-inspired attacks on Nicaragua have not forced the revolutionary government to retreat.

[What is the current stage of the revolution in Nicaragua? What lies ahead?

[In the last weeks of April, these questions have been the main theme of organized educational discussions in union halls, factories, neighborhoods, and agricultural cooperatives across the country in preparation for May Day. And the central axis of these discussions has been concretized in the slogan for this year's May Day march and speeches — "Defend the revolution, for the building of socialism!"

[We print below an interview with Lucío Jiménez, general secretary of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST). In it, Jiménez takes up both the question of what this slogan means, and the tasks imposed on a revolutionary union movement by the continuing imperialist threat and the economic impact of mobilizing the country in defense.

[The interview was printed on the front page of the Managua daily *Barricada* April 24, under the headline "We want to move on to socialism." The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Question. During the second month of the National Emergency, what will be the central axis of the mass mobilization on May Day?

Answer. From the point of view of propaganda, workers will be discussing in mass meetings the objectives for which we are fighting and making sacrifices. Because the objectives we are defending are the revolution and its conquests — in short, socialism. In the days leading up to May Day this year, workers are grappling with and discussing the ideas of scientific socialism.

We have to take into account that in this period of emergency, many workers have had to be mobilized and many sectors of production have been affected. Our orientation from the beginning to compensate for the personnel who have been mobilized has been to make greater efforts to assure production with the remaining personnel. But even maintaining the same levels of production is not enough. We have to attain higher levels, for defense can only be assured by increasing production, so as to meet the most urgent necessities of the population and create the material conditions for car-

rying through the plans for defense of the revolution.

The great conquest of this May Day is that both of these aspects are the subject of broad discussion. The ideas of socialism are being widely publicized, and conscious efforts are being made to regain and advance production levels in the various sectors, particularly those affected by the national emergency.

Q. The mobilization of thousands of reserves — can you tell us how and to what extent it has affected production?

A. It is difficult to give an answer in percentages. We can say that the effect has been minimized by the fact that we understood beforehand that greater efforts would have to be made so as to produce at the same capacity with fewer workers.

The exact percentages we have fallen behind will have to be established by governmental institutions; then we can begin the task of catching up as far as possible.

Q. In some enterprises, however, it is clear that the level of production has fallen. What do you think the CST should do to regain this ground?

A. The CST has supported and will soon issue, along with the rest of the labor organizations, a statement declaring that this May Day we are setting concrete goals aimed at reaching optimal labor efficiency over the next few months.

Our orientation is to reach a level of 100 percent in attendance at work. That is, we intend to make great efforts to increase labor discipline, not only now but permanently, something that is quite in keeping with the situation of national emergency. Consequently, the unions will be meeting to discuss not only the establishment of labor discipline, but also how to meet production and productivity goals.

Q. When will the statement you referred to be released?

A. Well, the orientation has already been made clear that the unions are to hold meetings, that they are to set their goals democratically. We have also reached an understanding that this is not something that will come and go with May Day, but that instead May Day is the framework for setting goals and dedicating ourselves to fulfilling them in the months that follow.

Specifically, two fundamental aspects are involved. First we are proposing specific, realizable goals for certain aspects of production in

a given enterprise. We must reach a 100 percent level in attendance and punctuality at work. We produce for defense of the country, which, it should be added, also requires 100 percent attendance at militia training, something that has slipped a little lately. The unions, therefore, will have to establish in a democratic fashion that the workers who have signed up actually attend the training.

On the other hand, the unions have to reach a maximum level of organization to carry out these tasks. In this framework we have set an orientation that the payment of dues be kept up to date, something that can only be accomplished if the unions refine their organizational methods, provide orientation for the actions of their members, and in general function in a correct manner.

Q. What can you tell us about the central slogan for May Day, "Defend the revolution, for the building of socialism"?

A. We, the toilers, workers, peasants, and most progressive sectors of society, under the leadership of our vanguard the Sandinista National Liberation Front, have taken power in order to make substantial changes and radically transform the country's economic and social structure. For we are convinced that only a transformation of this type will enable us to fulfill the most deeply felt needs of the workers, which can be summed up as social progress, a sense of well-being among the people, and the attainment of a just, dignified, and durable peace.

This is the way we defend the conquests the revolution has already made. We are not prepared to return the land, the factories, and the banks, nor are we prepared to see the agrarian reform law disappear. We are fighting to hold onto these things, but also for a future in which exploitation of man by man will be done away with forever, a future in which the workers and the entire people will be the rightful owners of the product of their labor and sweat. In other words, we are fighting for a socialist future.

For the workers, the triumph of the Sandinista people's revolution is the starting point for a slow but sure advance, led by our vanguard, our national leadership, to this strategic objective.

Q. The Ministry of Industry pointed out recently that in Nicaragua the creation of an economic base for the revolution will be no easy matter. What strategy is the CST proposing for helping attain this necessity?

A. We have for some time been encourag-

ing the appropriate government agencies to strengthen ties with the socialist countries so as to diversify our markets, a step that will objectively enable us to break our economic dependence on the United States and other capitalist countries.

In general, however, the strategy of the CST to reach a new stage of production is to build a strong union organization that continually links its activity to the problems of production, that makes its central concern such questions as labor discipline; fulfillment of production goals; effective operation of the institutions that administer the national economy and the

budgets of local enterprises; and the fight against bureaucratism, against administrative inefficiency, and for a new consciousness toward work.

We also want to see the unions make it their special concern to promote a fundamental savings — that of imported resources that we do not produce, such as energy, fuel, and paper, as well as of raw materials, which are in many cases wasted.

This in general is the long-term line of action of our unions. Only in this way can we play a dynamic, active role in building a society that breaks with dependency. □

Report from the battlefield

Washington's undeclared war

By Michael Baumann

NICARAGUAN-HONDURAN BORDER, April 26 — As dusk gathered, the young peasant woman lay crying on an army cot. Outside the tent, the red-and-black Sandinista flag flew at half-mast.

"They killed my brother," she sobbed. "My brother is dead."

Seventeen-year-old Rafael Aragon Ney was one of four Nicaraguan guards killed this morning in an attack by counterrevolutionaries on the Los Planes border post. Rafael's sister Sofia and an older brother, Marco Antonio, had just learned that Rafael was one of the soldiers who had fallen in battle that day.

An officer sat talking with Sofia. A few words could be heard. "Remember, our revolution has cost 50,000 mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters."

The young soldiers killed here were not the only casualties today. Near Jinotega, to the south, three Nicaraguan militiamen and an eight-year-old child were gunned down by counterrevolutionaries based inside the country. Their bodies were then hacked to pieces with machetes.

These barbaric raids have been going on for months. They are carried out by counterrevolutionaries who oppose the 1979 overthrow of U.S.-backed dictator Anastasio Somoza. The terrorist bands operate along the Honduran and Costa Rican border with protection and backing from the Honduran, Costa Rican, and U.S. governments.

Los Planes is one of the remote outposts of the Nicaraguan revolution, along the rugged border with Honduras. Connected only by narrow, winding roads that at times are no more than dirt tracks, over the last few months this border region has become a front line in a war that is almost totally unreported in the U.S. press.

But it is very real, as this reporter can personally testify.

About 100 counterrevolutionaries attacked Los Planes. The attack came at 8:15 in the morning, just as the night patrol was returning

for breakfast. The post is located on a hill, surrounded on three sides by other hills, the tops of which mark the border between Nicaragua and Honduras — between a revolution and the forces Uncle Sam is using to try and crush it.

Some 4,000 to 5,000 Somozaist ex-National Guardsmen are based in camps just across the border — armed, trained, and paid by the U.S. government.

Of the 18 defenders of the post, 4 were killed and 4 were wounded. Bullet holes were everywhere — the walls, ceilings, the kitchen shanty. The entire hillside to the east was still ablaze from artillery fire.

This reporter, one of a small group of journalists taken in by armed convoy, spoke with several of the soldiers who had taken part in the fight. Each of them had their own story to tell. A soldier of 19 still considers himself lucky to be alive. He took one bullet through his cap and another through the fold in his shirt.

A young woman of 14 served as a cook on the post. But during the combat she carried ammunition to the others, and then took a rifle and a position in the trenches herself.

A peasant of 48, by far the oldest of this very young group of Sandinista soldiers, explained that he was fighting because the future of the revolution meant the future of his children. He said he was not worried if he falls in combat, "because I know there are others that will follow me to defend our country."

Among the shells that were found after the invaders were driven back across the border were a number of items of U.S. and Israeli manufacture.

Of American manufacture were 40-millimeter artillery shells and grenade firing pins. The date stamped on the firing pins was August 1970, an eerie reminder of another war — in Southeast Asia — that went on for years before the American people were informed of what was being done in their name.

"Tell the American people," Marco Antonio Ney requested, "that my brother was a soldier in the frontier border guard who died defending his country. Tell them that we will defend our revolution till the last drop of blood." □

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Begin talks peace, presses war

Jets bomb Palestinian villages in Lebanon

By Ernest Harsch

Shortly after dawn on April 25, an Israeli flag was lowered at Sharm el Sheik in the southern Sinai Peninsula. A few hours later an Egyptian flag was raised in its place, marking the completion of the Sinai's return to Egypt, 15 years after Zionist forces seized it in the 1967 war.

Both governments hailed the turnover as proof that the Camp David accords are leading toward peace in the Middle East.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, in a recorded speech broadcast on Israeli television, maintained that the accords were "an important step toward a comprehensive peace, and its aftermath has spread throughout the Middle East."

Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, in the same transmission, claimed that his government was for "peace forever."

In a statement to Israeli military forces, Defense Minister Ariel Sharon proclaimed, "We are demonstrating our desire to move forward to peace."

Cover for aggression

Just how committed the Zionist rulers are to "peace" in the Middle East was demonstrated in the weeks preceding the return of the Sinai:

- Since late March, Israeli troops and settlers in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been shooting down Palestinian youths protesting against the occupation.

- In the Golan Heights, Syrian territory that was annexed by Israel in December, Israeli troops and police have been trying to impose Israeli identity cards on a defiant population. Haim Cohen, a former justice of the Israeli Supreme Court, condemned the Zionist regime's policy in the Golan Heights April 15 as "the law of barbarians."

- Following weeks of threats and provocations, Israeli jets struck at a series of Lebanese villages south of Beirut April 21, just four days before the Sinai's formal return, killing more than a score of Palestinian refugees.

- On the very day of the turnover, a military tribunal in the West Bank convicted Mayor Wahid Hamdallah of Anapta of violating occupation regulations, specifically for his "involvement in political affairs not directly related to his activities as mayor — he signed protest petitions, issued manifestoes and protests." The Israeli authorities dismissed Hamdallah from his position five days later, the fourth Palestinian mayor they have deposed since March 18.

- In the very statement in which Defense Minister Sharon preached about peace, he spelled out the government's determination to

extend its grip over the occupied territories even further — in opposition to the 1.3 million Palestinians who live there.

"We shall turn to increasing and consolidating our settlements on the Golan Heights, in Judea, Samaria [the West Bank] and the Gaza district," Sharon said, "settlements that are an integral part of our security, settlements that are a true basis for political plans — all in the framework of the Government's avowed policy."

The same point was stressed two days later by Begin, who stated that the dismantling of the Israeli settlements in the Sinai would never be repeated in the Golan Heights, West Bank, or Gaza Strip. "It will not happen again," Begin declared.

To underline this determination, nine new Israeli settlements were opened in the West Bank the same week.

Rather than being a prescription for peace, these constant provocations against the Palestinian people are part of the Israeli government's preparations for a new war. The return of the Sinai will do nothing to lessen that danger.

What Zionists wanted

The Israeli rulers never intended to abandon their aggressive policies when they signed the Camp David accords in 1978.

What they did want was an agreement with the Egyptian government. This, they calculated, would free their hands to try to crush the Palestinian liberation movement, both in the occupied territories and in Lebanon, and enable them to concentrate their military forces against Syria.

Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat agreed to this betrayal of the Palestinian struggle and of the Arab masses in exchange for a return of the Sinai. So far, his successor has followed this same course.

But the Zionists have actually gotten much less than they had wanted. They were totally unsuccessful in crushing the Palestinians. As the aggressive intentions of the Israeli regime have become unmistakably clear, the influence of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has grown both in the region and internationally.

Israeli hopes that they would be able to deepen the split in the Arab world by enticing other governments to join the Camp David framework were also a total flop. Instead, the Egyptian government found itself politically isolated.

But the Israelis have not given up on their plans.

Since early April, several divisions of Israeli troops have been massed in northern Israel, along the border with Lebanon, and Israeli spy

flights over Lebanon have been stepped up. The Palestinian forces in Lebanon braced for an Israeli invasion, and the Lebanese government was so concerned that it sought to raise an international alarm about an impending attack.

On April 21, Israeli jets pounded the predominantly Palestinian villages of Damur, Naameh, Aramun, Saadiyat, Khalde, Doha, and Ein Mazbud, just south of Beirut. According to the Lebanese government, 23 people were killed in the bombings and many more were wounded. Two Syrian jets that challenged the Israeli attack were shot down.

While this was not the massive invasion that had been feared, the Israeli authorities made it clear that that could still come. Maj. Gen. Yehoshua Saguy, the chief of Israeli military intelligence, called the raid a "warning operation."

As a justification for it, the Zionists claimed that they had been "provoked": Israeli jets were fired at while flying over Lebanon and an Israeli soldier was killed when he stepped on a landmine — in Lebanon!

As usual, the Reagan administration in Washington chose to remain silent on this blatant aggression.

In addition, just a day before the raid, the U.S. government vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution that condemned the April 11 attack by an Israeli soldier on the Dome of the Rock, an Islamic religious site in Jerusalem.

The same day, Reagan sent a letter to the Begin regime promising to maintain Israel's military superiority in the region. The Israeli radio called the letter "the best document ever sent by an American President to Israel."

In light of these U.S. moves just before the attack into Lebanon, Shafik al-Hout, a member of the PLO Central Committee, stated, "We hold U.S. policy responsible for this aggression."

Palestinian defiance

The Zionist war preparations, however, are meeting growing opposition in the region.

Within Israel, more and more Israeli workers are resisting the government's efforts to drag them into a war. The Palestinian forces in Lebanon are getting ready to meet any Israeli invasion. And in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Palestinian youths are continuing to stand up to the brutality of the Israeli occupation forces.

Following the statements by Begin and Sharon that they would never give up the occupied territories, a new wave of protests broke out. Israeli troops answered with gunfire, killing two more demonstrators by April 30.

In towns and refugee camps throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip, youths demonstrated by the hundreds, blocking roads and clashing with troops and police.

When they raised the outlawed Palestinian flag — the symbol of their hopes and their struggle for national liberation — they defiantly showed just what they thought of Begin's "peace" policies. □

British out of the Malvinas!

'Inprecor' condemns imperialist intervention

[The following editorial by Daniel Bensaid appeared in the May 3 issue of *Inprecor*, a French-language fortnightly published in Paris. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Taking a roundabout route, the British fleet is "making haste slowly" toward the Malvinas, and diplomatic solutions remain at an impasse.

On Sunday, April 25, the British landed on South Georgia Island, about 1,500 kilometers east of the Malvinas. This was a limited-risk operation to save face and relaunch negotiations. But a slide toward escalation cannot be excluded.

Without going into the various factors that pushed Argentina's General Galtieri into this operation, it remains true that in the conflict between Argentina and Britain, there is no place for neutrality. Those who would like to place equal blame on the Buenos Aires military murderers and on Margaret Thatcher — still stained with the blood of the Irish martyrs — would also like to view the people of the Malvinas as the embryo of a nationality and escape the dilemma by calling for autonomy or self-determination.

But it is very difficult to demonstrate the existence of a Malvinas nationality made up of a small number of old colonial settlers dropped off on an island group. The one certainty in this affair is that the British presence in the South Atlantic is the direct heritage of its imperialist presence. The real owner of the islands is a corporation, Coalite Ltd., which took control in 1978 when oil was discovered in the surrounding waters.

In short, the question of the Malvinas must be considered above all from the vantage point of its international significance: The islands are an outpost of British imperialism, tied to both economic interests (oil) and geostrategic interests (control of the passage around Cape Horn).

In addition, we cannot forget that Argentina remains a dependent country, which has a long history of conflicts with British imperialism. In all oppressed, subordinate, or dependent countries, two questions are combined: the national question against imperialism, and the class conflict between proletariat and bourgeoisie.

Even partial success for the Argentine government against Britain will not consolidate that regime. It would be totally incorrect to get bogged down in misleading impressions of the initial scenes of "national unity" in Argentina. If General Galtieri wants to come out on top against Britain in an armed conflict, his only alternative is to exploit, in his own manner, the

anti-imperialist sentiment of the Argentine masses.

It is perfectly correct for the working-class organizations that have always fought the dictatorship to oppose the British intervention, without however dropping their demands against the dictatorship or falling into "national unity." During the Mexican revolution, when the Americans occupied Veracruz in 1914, Venustiano Carranza and the revolutionaries condemned the invasion without reservation, but refused to grant the slightest truce to the counterrevolutionary Huerta.

Today, the European press hypocritically reproaches victims of the Argentine dictatorship like Miguel Angel Estrella or the Nobel Peace Prize winner Pérez Esquivel for having been "reconciled" with their torturers.¹

But these figures have expressed in the clearest possible way that their opposition to British intervention does not involve any reconciliation or any truce with the junta. This is also the position of the Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez, when he points out that the demonstrations by the "Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo" will continue as before, "with or without the Malvinas."² The "mothers" have already declared their position by demonstrating as they have each week for five years, but this time with the slogan: "The Malvinas are Argentine, and so are the 'disappeared'!"

As the dangers of confrontation between Argentina and Britain have increased, the international positions taken on the question speak volumes.

Only a few weeks ago, the Argentine army was preparing to intervene openly in El Salvador. In the meanwhile, it landed in the Malvinas. Those who were behind the scenes encouraging Argentine intervention in El Salvador now indignantly condemn the landing in the Malvinas. Those who condemned the aggression against El Salvador, today defend Argentina's rights against British imperialism — beginning with the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador and the government of Nicaragua. The latter im-

1. Pianist Miguel Angel Estrella had to ask the newspaper *Le Monde* to publish a statement reestablishing his true remarks.

2. Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez is best known as the author of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *Autumn of the Patriarch*, and *Chronicle of an Announced Death*. Facing death threats from far-rightist squads in his country, he lives in exile and carries out important anti-imperialist activities. [The "Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo" carry out weekly demonstrations outside the presidential palace in Buenos Aires to demand that the government clarify the fate of their "disappeared" children. — IP]



Thatcher and Haig — imperialist allies.

mediately issued a communiqué making known its "backing to the government of the Argentine Republic in this dispute." Clearly, the near-unanimous position of the Organization of American States (OAS) — with the sole exceptions of Colombia and the U.S. — in favor of Argentina, can only complicate any future attempts at intervention in El Salvador.

On the other hand, all the imperialist powers, starting with those of the European Community, have staunchly lined up with the interests of British imperialism. Taking hypocrisy to its extreme, they are quick to picture the Royal Navy's expedition as a crusade of democracy against dictatorship, as civilization against barbarism.

But their noses were less sensitive and their democratic sentiments less developed when Margaret Thatcher let ten Irish hunger strikers die. We should make a point of reminding those with short memories that several days before the Malvinas affair, Britain was still delivering arms to Argentina — as was the French Social Democratic government — without looking too closely to see if those arms would be used against the people of El Salvador.³

U.S. imperialism, deploring the dispute between two states it considers "friends," offered to act as a mediator. But as time passed and the underlying situation came to light, U.S. imperialism showed that some friends always count for more than others. The U.S. voted to condemn Argentina in the United Nations; it refused to support Argentina at the OAS assembly; and, in line with its agreements with Britain, it provided supplies for the British fleet.

Revolutionary militants in Argentina, while opposing the British aggression, have not stopped struggling to overthrow the dictatorship.

The task of revolutionaries and anti-imperialists in the rest of the world, on the other hand, is to oppose the British intervention and the economic sanctions imposed against Argentina.

April 25, 1982

3. "Ten days before the invasion of the Malvinas, the British minister of defense again agreed to the delivery of spare parts for the Argentine navy" (*Le Monde*, April 24).

Imperialist Britain goes to war

Stakes get higher as fighting escalates in South Atlantic

By Fred Murphy

Imperialist Britain and semicolonial Argentina are now at war. Ships have been damaged, airplanes have been shot down, and the British — now backed openly by U.S. imperialism — are poised for an invasion of the Malvinas Islands.

War increases the pressures on any society. It brings class contradictions into sharper relief. It speeds up the evolution of the class struggle.

The context of this war is the deepest international recession since the 1930s. In Britain there are 3 million unemployed. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's savage cuts in social spending, her opposition to programs that could put the jobless to work, and her tax breaks for the rich have accelerated the growth of a left wing in the Labour Party. The longer the war in the South Atlantic goes on, the more the underlying class conflicts in Britain will come to the surface.

On April 28, the Labour Party's national executive — which had initially backed the sending of the fleet — unanimously called on Thatcher to refrain from further military action and to instead take the dispute to the United Nations "at the earliest possible moment."

Earlier, when Thatcher reported that British troops had attacked and captured the island of South Georgia, she was greeted with shouts of "warmonger!" from the Labour Party benches.

Benn speaks out

The leader of Labour's left wing, Tony Benn, has begun speaking out more forcefully against military action. In an interview with BBC radio, Benn termed the Malvinas "an outpost of empire which we seized by force from the Argentine in the last century and which Britain neglected." Benn continued:

"Britain did not care a bit about the Falkland Islands. Then when things go wrong, we mount this huge task force which will probably cost £500 million to £1,000 million and may lead to massive loss of life."

The BBC reporter suggested Benn was being unpatriotic. He replied: "In a month or two you will not find many people in favour of the task force, because, I fear, it will lead to the most terrible tragedy."

Confirming Benn's view was a poll published in the May 2 issue of the London *Sunday Times*. More than two-thirds of those polled said the goal of regaining the Malvinas was not worth the life of a single British serviceman.

Opposition to Thatcher's war has begun to be expressed in action. On April 17, more than 5,000 persons marched in Manchester in an ac-

tion called by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. All speakers at the rally that followed demanded the withdrawal of the British fleet.

Pressures on junta

Unlike the British defense of colonial rule, Argentina is fighting a just war for its national rights against imperialism. It must be supported in that war. But the ruling military junta headed by Gen. Leopoldo Galtieri is incapable of carrying out this fight effectively. Furthermore, as a semicolonial country, Argentina has suffered much more than Britain from the effects of the worldwide economic crisis. These two factors make for a highly unstable political situation in Argentina.

Galtieri moved to recover the Malvinas at a moment when the dictatorship was entering an acute crisis. Six years of brutal repression and harsh austerity have failed to crush the Argentine workers. A wave of industrial bankruptcies brought on by Economy Minister Roberto Alemann's "shock treatment" has spurred working-class resistance and even brought sectors of the bourgeoisie into open opposition.

Pressure from the ranks forced the trade-union bureaucracy to break off any collaboration with the junta and begin calling strikes and demonstrations. Things came to a head on March 30, when tens of thousands of workers took to the streets of Buenos Aires and other industrial cities. The protests were met with repression. One worker was killed in Mendoza, and some 2,000 were jailed in Buenos Aires.

Facing the threat of a general strike, the junta decided to launch the recovery of the Malvinas. In this way, the generals hoped to defuse the rising opposition movement and gain some popularity. But they did not foresee that Thatcher and her imperialist allies would react so sharply, or that popular support for recovering the Malvinas would fail to translate into backing for the military regime.

As a result, Galtieri confronts both an imperialist military attack and a reinvigorated mass movement that is demanding serious resistance to London and Washington along with political and economic concessions.

'No to junta, yes to Malvinas!'

Argentine working people have hailed the recovery of the Malvinas as a progressive step against imperialist domination. But they place no confidence in the junta's ability to effectively defend Argentina's interests. On April 26 and again on April 30, thousands of Argentine workers demonstrated to demand both intransigence in face of the British attack and an end to the dictatorship.

The April 26 action, called by the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), was the larger of the two. According to the April 27 *New York Daily News*, the "huge demonstration . . . turned into the largest public condemnation ever of the ruling military junta.

"More than 40,000 demonstrators jammed the Plaza de Mayo in front of the government palace to shout: 'No to the government! Yes to the Malvinas!'"

The April 30 demonstration was called by the CGT to celebrate May Day; it had the support of leftist groups that have emerged from clandestinity as the regime has been forced to ease its repression. An April 30 dispatch from Buenos Aires by *New York Times* correspondent James Markham gave the flavor of the May Day demonstration:

One long white banner held aloft read, "May 1 — the workers against the English and the exploiters." Pamphlets tossed into the crowd called for the expropriation of English banks and companies in Argentina and for the "appearance to life" of people who had "disappeared" during the military crackdown on urban terrorism in the late 1970's. The pamphlets also asked for greater freedom for the Argentine union movement.

"To defeat the imperialist aggression it is necessary to mobilize and arm the workers," said one pamphlet issued by a left-wing group. Another booklet, from a Socialist faction, said: "If English imperialism and its Yankee ally defeat Argentina, the workers and the people will be in a much worse situation. The misery, hunger and unemployment we now suffer will be far greater."

In an earlier dispatch, Markham quoted a "well-connected Buenos Aires editor" as saying, "The Malvinas has completely changed the situation in Argentina. The Government no longer controls the streets."

Pray for Galtieri?

Expressing the concern of the imperialists about this political shift inside Argentina, the *Times* writer cited the worries of diplomats and "educated Argentines" — that is, the bourgeoisie — that defeat at the hands of Britain "could unleash the darker forces now coming to the surface of Argentina's political life."

"Those who wish well for the West should pray for the survival of Galtieri," one ambassador in Buenos Aires told Markham.

But the Reagan administration has now dropped its mask of "neutrality" and come down squarely on the side of its British imperialist allies. This can only accelerate the decline in Galtieri's standing. It was he who engineered the regime's rapprochement with Washington in 1981, offered to send troops to aid U.S. imperialism in El Salvador, and com-

mitted the major blunder of counting on Reagan's acquiescence in the recovery of the Malvinas.

Now Reagan has pledged "matériel support" to the British war effort and applied economic sanctions against Argentina. British strategic bombers are flying their missions against the Malvinas from the U.S. air base on Ascension Island. The Pentagon is providing London with spare parts, fuel, and intelligence on Argentine positions.

Protests in Latin America

Washington's complicity in the British attack has already begun to evoke protests in Latin America. A May Day march of thousands of Venezuelan workers in Caracas was led by a contingent of Argentine exiles chanting "The Malvinas are ours!" and "English and Yankee imperialists out!" Similar slogans were raised at a May Day demonstration in Panama.

In Managua, Commander Tomás Borge told a crowd of 100,000 Nicaraguan workers celebrating May Day that "The Nicaraguan people know how to uphold, despite everything, their unconditional solidarity with the Argentine people, who have been attacked by English planes at the Malvinas Islands."

In a May 1 statement, the Cuban government blasted the "obscene support of U.S. imperialism" for the British government's aim of "seizing by force what does not belong to it by right."

"Cuba repudiates this intolerable aggression and reiterates its solidarity with the struggle of the Argentine people to defend their sovereignty," the statement said.

Virtually every Latin American regime has been compelled to take Argentina's side in the conflict. When the Organization of American States (OAS) held a special session April 26-28 to consider the crisis, Washington could

muster only three abstentions (Colombia, Chile, and Trinidad) in a futile attempt to block a resolution affirming Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas and opposing the economic sanctions London and other imperialist powers had imposed on Argentina. Haig's speech to the OAS meeting was met with stony silence from the delegates, while Argentine Foreign Minister Nicanor Costa Méndez was greeted with a standing ovation and prolonged applause.

Summing up the views of Latin envoys in the United States, the *New York Times* noted May 1. "Several diplomats spoke bitterly about the irony of Washington talking about the possibility of Soviet MIG aircraft being introduced in Nicaragua while offering material support to a large British fleet in the South Atlantic."

Thatcher's ominous military escalation

Salvadoran rebels in solidarity with Argentine people

[The following statement was issued April 17 by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador. We have taken the text from the April 21 issue of the Managua daily *Barricada*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

The FMLN views as indisputable the right of Argentina to exercise its sovereignty over the Malvinas, part of its territory violently taken away in 1833 by British imperialism. The aspiration to reintegrate the Malvinas into the national sovereignty has historically been a just demand of all Argentine people and an anti-imperialist and anticolonial demand of the peoples of Latin America.

Independently of the initial motivations under which Gen. Leopoldo Galtieri's government sent troops to regain the islands, and even though this government is the continuation of a reactionary military dictatorship which has bled the Argentine people for so many years, which has strangled liberties and protected an unjust social and economic structure, the military occupation of the Malvinas it is carrying out is a legitimate, sovereign, and patriotic action that deserves the fullest support of this brother people.

The FMLN voices its solidarity with the position that, in the face of these facts, has been adopted by revolutionary and democratic forces and the great majority of the Argentine people who, on the basis of their energetic support for the recovery of the islands, have demanded absolute firmness on the part of General Galtieri's government in carrying through the action that it has undertaken to its ultimate consequences.

They have also demanded a halt to the repression, an end to the state of siege, freedom for the political prisoners and the "disappeared," elimination of repressive legislation, respect for liberties and democratic rights, and social and economic measures aimed at removing from the shoulders of the people the main weight of the grave economic crisis the country is suffering.

The government of General Galtieri and his predecessors has collaborated with the genocidal dictatorship against which the Salvadoran people are fighting, sending military advisers and war supplies to our country. The government of the United States has outlined plans for aggression against our people based in large measure on the use of Argentine troops, disguised as "mercenaries" or sent in officially in the event that Washington succeeds in having the Organization of American States invoke the Inter-American Treaty of Mutual Assistance [Rio Treaty].

The Argentine nation has today seen, through its own experience, the anti-Latin American character of Yankee imperialism and of the Rio Treaty itself, notable for its absence now that a genuine aggression from another continent is under way — specifically the naval blockade of the Malvinas and the sending of the British war fleet against Argentina.

The Rio Treaty has been unmasked as an instrument of blackmail and aggression at the service of Yankee imperialism, which intends to use it against the peoples of Latin America while hypocritically maintaining that the treaty calls for "reciprocal assistance" in face of aggression from other continents.

The same Reagan government that has

used the Argentine military to attack our people rejects the sovereign action of recovering the Malvinas. It is visibly supporting the British imperialist government, its most docile and faithful ally in Europe. And it is trying to make the Argentine government accept under pressure a humiliating process of mediation, which Washington hopes to use as a starting point to plant its own foot on the Malvinas under the formula of a "tripartite administration," that is, a joint British, Argentine, and U.S. administration.

The FMLN, in keeping with its principles of self-determination, independence, defense of national sovereignty, and anticolonialism, and anti-imperialism, has decided to take this position of support to the cause of the Argentine people. At the same time, however, we demand of General Galtieri's government that it adhere to the principles it invoked to justify its legitimate right to reintegrate the Malvinas under the sovereignty of its country. That is, we demand that it order the immediate withdrawal of military advisers and cease all types of military cooperation with the genocidal Salvadoran regime, against which our people are fighting under the leadership of the FMLN-FDR [Revolutionary Democratic Front].

Like it or not, for the government of General Galtieri, this is an hour of necessary rectification of its national and international conduct. Only in this way can it bring to victory the patriotic demand that has been voiced against British imperialism and its allies.

United to fight until the final victory!
Revolution or death!
We shall win!

shows how high the stakes in the conflict have become. As Labour left leader Tony Benn warned May 2, the British prime minister has lost control of "the war machine she set in progress."

The threat of direct U.S. military intervention also exists. According to the May 3 *Wall Street Journal*, U.S. officials are pointing to a possible American combat role if "American citizens are somehow placed in danger in Argentina. In that case, the President could order to the South Atlantic one or both of the two aircraft carriers participating in war games in the Caribbean."

Grenada urges peaceful settlement of Malvinas Islands dispute

[The following press statement was released by the Permanent Mission of Grenada to the United Nations in New York on April 22, 1982.]

* * *

The People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada favors a peaceful, negotiated, political settlement of the Falkland (Malvinas) Islands dispute between the United Kingdom and Argentina.

At the same time the People's Revolutionary Government continues to support Argentina's claim to sovereignty over the islands as just.

Over the years, many international organizations to which we belong have identified the issue, quite rightly, as one of colonialism. These include the United Nations, the Non-aligned Movement and the Latin American and Caribbean sections of the Socialist International.

In the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 1514 of 1960, 2065 of 1965 [and] of 1973, the question was clearly stated as a colonial problem. As stated in the 1965 resolution, the 1960 resolution "was prompted by the cherished aim of bringing to an end everywhere colonialism in all its forms, one of which covers the case of the Falkland Islands." The 1973 resolution recalled those of 1960 and 1965, always emphasizing that the main principle at stake in this matter, was "the granting of independence of colonial countries and peoples." The 1973 resolution expressed, in addition, grave concern "at the fact that eight years have elapsed since the adoption of Resolution 2065 without any substantial progress having been made in the negotiations." It seems therefore that successive British governments have had ample opportunity to settle this question in accordance with the U.N. resolutions.

The Movement of the Nonaligned Countries at the 6th Summit in 1979 called for decolonization, whilst reaffirming its support for Argentina's claim.

The Latin American and Caribbean sections of the Socialist International, of which the New Jewel Movement of Grenada forms a part, gave its support to Argentina's claims at

What is now required is a campaign to demand the withdrawal of the British fleet and an end to the U.S. and British attacks on Argentine sovereignty. Working people everywhere have a stake in this fight. The military attacks on Argentina are part and parcel of the imperialists' overall drive toward war. Their targets are the struggles of working people — both in semicolonial countries like Argentina and inside the imperialist countries themselves.

Workers in the United States, Britain, and elsewhere need to unite with their Argentine brothers and sisters and tell Reagan and Thatcher: "Hands off Argentina!" □

its meeting held in Aruba during March 1981.

Our support for Argentina's claim to sovereignty is therefore nothing new or strange.

The People's Revolutionary Government, however, wishes to make it clear that it does not support the use of force to give expression to [Argentina's] claim. In a news conference

Montoneros call for solidarity with Argentina

An article in the April 18 issue of the *Granma Weekly Review*, published in Havana, reports:

"The Montonero Peronist Movement (MPM) has called on the Argentine people to defend Argentina's sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, and has warned the military junta not to enter any negotiations that will lead to national humiliation."

The MPM is one of the main organizations on the Argentine left. *Granma* summarizes and quotes from a document signed by MPM General Secretary Mario Firmenich. "Regardless of who carried out the operation or their intentions," it states, "the recovery of full national sovereignty over the territory is still a genuine demand of the Argentine people."

"However, we must stress that full national sovereignty is impossible as long as there is no people's sovereignty," the MPM continues. It notes that only three days before the recovery of the Malvinas, "these same rulers had repressed thousands of Argentines" who were demonstrating against the junta's repression and austerity policies. On that day, the MPM points out, demonstrators shouted to the repressive forces, "Don't fight against Argentines. Go fight the British."

In face of the threat of British military attack, the MPM says, there is "no room for cowardly positions or negotiations that will only lead to high treason against our country. . . ."

"The only alternative in the present situation is to defend the Malvinas at all costs and against all opposition. If suspicions of dishon-

given on Thursday, April 15, we declared that Grenada condemned the use of military forces by Argentina to establish control over the island.

Equally, we reject the threat of the United Kingdom to use force to restore the colonial status quo.

As we declared on April 15, we share with Britain membership in the Commonwealth and with Argentina, membership in the Non-aligned Movement and the Organization of American States. We therefore have a deep interest in the achievement of a just and peaceful settlement in the South Atlantic.

It is to be clearly understood that supporting a country's claim does not suggest support for non-peaceful means of settling the claims, and our policy continues to be that while we support the justice of the claim, we would wish steps to be taken to ensure that the transition — the realization of Argentina's just aspiration — proceed without resort to force and violence.

Our policy on the Falklands (Malvinas) problem therefore is based on two principles we have long defended: we support Argentina's claim to sovereignty over the territories as just and we reject the use of force to press or settle that claim. □

est motives in negotiating the recovery are linked to evidence of a cowardly sellout in the negotiations, the implacable anger of the people will immediately fall on the culprits."

Mediation by Washington is "absurd," the MPM says. "To think that Reagan could be a neutral mediator between the interests of the British crown as administered by Conservative Margaret Thatcher and the national interests of the Argentine people is at best extraordinarily naive and at worst a betrayal of the country, which means handing it over to the most reactionary imperialist sectors."

In the event of British attack, the MPM calls on workers at British firms in Argentina to take them over and demand nationalization.

The MPM concludes, "Defeating the invasion [by Britain] is a service to the cause of the liberation of peoples, because it is a defeat for the interventionist and warlike policies promoted by Reagan. The MPM will seek worldwide solidarity against the imperialist aggression of the British conservatives." □

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Campaigning against Thatcher's war

'Socialist Challenge' fights for withdrawal of fleet

By Robert Mance

"Labour must stop Thatcher's war drive," declared the large front-page headline of the April 8 issue of *Socialist Challenge*, the newspaper of the International Marxist Group (IMG), the British section of the Fourth International.

In that and subsequent issues, the revolutionary socialist weekly has been campaigning to build opposition to the Tory government's military moves against Argentina and against its attempts to reassert colonial rule over Argentina's Malvinas Islands.

News articles, feature stories on the question of the Malvinas and the role of British imperialism, polemics with other currents in the workers movement, and calls to action were all part of the paper's efforts to convince British working people why they should oppose Thatcher's military aggression.

Answering the lies

The article on the front page of the April 8 issue — the first following Argentina's reconquest of the Malvinas — outlined some of the basic issues involved by answering the lies being spread in Britain:

"LIE No. 1: the navy is going to defend the islanders.

"THE TRUTH: The navy is defending *territory* to which it has no rightful claim, pushed by an oil lobby which kills, robs and lies.

"If the government is so concerned for the rights of its subjects, why has it for three years visited anguish on Britain's black people with deportation and exclusion orders under racist immigration laws?

"It evacuated the whole island of Diego Garcia [in the Indian Ocean] for military exercises. If it wants to give the islanders real protection it should offer resettlement with full compensation for the loss.

"LIE No. 2: the invasion happened because the island was undefended.

"THE TRUTH: The invasion happened *because* the government clung onto the islands when they rightfully belong to the Argentine people. . . .

"LIE No. 3: the navy will defend freedom in the South Atlantic.

"THE TRUTH: The Tories and their warships will never fight dictators. Why did they keep . . . Gairy in office until the Grenadian people rose up to oust him? Why did they send observers to the election farce in El Salvador? Why is the warship *Exeter* still in Caribbean waters, where it went as part of the US show of force against Cuba and Nicaragua?

"In 1979 they closed the door on the Argentinian refugees in the interests of a joint 'struggle against terrorism.' Only weeks ago they and their American friends were plotting an Argentinian invasion of El Salvador and Nicaragua."

Socialist Challenge then pointed to the hypocrisy of the Labour Party leaders who claim that they had opposed the Argentine dictatorship all along. The article recalled the previous Labour government's military aid to the Argentine junta, and concluded:

"A military adventure by the Tory junta will do nothing to help the peoples of South America, nothing for British workers, and nothing for the islanders. It is the shameful last gasp of an empire with no clothes. It must be opposed by socialists with all the strength they can muster."

British imperialism

To counter Thatcher's efforts to whip up jingoist sentiment in Britain, *Socialist Challenge* sought to educate its readers about the real role and history of British imperialism around the world.

In the April 8, 15, and 22 issues, the paper featured articles on the extent of British imperialist investments abroad, Britain's crushing

5,000 marchers say, 'Bring back the fleet!'

More than 5,000 supporters of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) marched through Manchester, England, April 17 to demand the return of the British fleet and to protest Thatcher's war moves against Argentina.

A *Socialist Challenge* contingent marched with the local El Salvador Committee behind a large banner calling for the recall of the fleet and no war with Argentina.

Speakers at the rally included Frank Allaun, a local Labour Party member of Parliament, and Kerry Wade of the Youth CND. Wade condemned the support the Labour Party leadership has offered Thatcher's war drive. She urged the CND to raise the slogan, "Bring back the fleet!"

The Manchester demonstration was only one of numerous expressions of opposition to Thatcher's military campaign.

A front-page editorial in the April 22 *Socialist Challenge* stated:

"No British worker has any interest in

backing Thatcher's battle to defend Britain's predator world role. It is to defend the international operations of British companies that Thatcher has launched her war against the British working class.

"Despite the press hysteria, many workers sense this connection. Already the opinion polls show 32 per cent opposed to any military conflict over the islands. And this is before the first shot is fired. When we look at Labour voters the figures show 30 per cent opposed even to the sending of the fleet at all.

"The tide is turning."

The editorial pointed out that on April 18, the day after the Manchester demonstration, the National Committee of the CND handed a petition to the government demanding that the use of nuclear weapons by the British fleet be categorically ruled out, that all war preparations be halted and the fleet be returned, and that the government begin negotiations on the basis of United Nations Security Council Resolu-

tion 502.

While expressing disagreement with the last point (Resolution 502 calls for an Argentine withdrawal from the Malvinas), *Socialist Challenge* urged its supporters to take the CND's call into local branches of the CND, Labour Party chapters, and the unions to initiate action around the CND's first two demands.

In addition, *Socialist Challenge* supporters have been holding public forums and meetings to build support for the movement against Thatcher's war moves. Reg Race, a Labour Party member of Parliament, spoke at one such meeting in London April 19.

Several other Labour Party MPs have also criticized Thatcher's war policies. Joan Maynard, in an interview with *Socialist Challenge*, declared, "We need a massive campaign like that which took place at the time of Suez," a reference to the campaign of public protests organized by the Labour Party in 1956 against the British-French invasion of Egypt's Suez Canal.

of the 1916 Easter Rebellion in Ireland, the British role in the suppression of the Greek workers and farmers in the late 1940s, British involvement in the Korean War, Britain's 1956 invasion of the Suez Canal, and British aid to the apartheid regime in South Africa.

"Our armed forces," Alan Freeman wrote in one article, "are a world police force for the multinationals and banks against all threats — which means *both* threats from other capitalist powers, and from 'communists and subversives' — that is, socialist revolutions."

Countering the argument that the British empire ended with the granting of formal polit-

ical independence to most of its colonies, Freeman noted that the establishment of the British Commonwealth was a cover for maintaining the old British colonial domination under a new guise: "Because of British industrial, military and financial supremacy, Britain ruled the waves — and waived the rules — long after the gunboats left. The empire never ended."

This new system of neocolonialism, Freeman pointed out, showed its worth following World War II. "In twenty years over £12.5 billion was invested overseas, 60 per cent in the Empire. South African sweat, Australian sheep, African minerals, Indian foods and cot-

ton, and Middle East oil were the foundations of Britain's share of the postwar spoils."

Socialist Challenge documented how it was not only the Tory Party that defended Britain's imperialist interests, but the Labour Party as well, both when it was in government and in opposition.

Labour Party deputy leader Denis Healey has supported Thatcher's war moves against Argentina on the grounds that the conflict is one between "democracy" and "dictatorship." Healey declared, "The navy should be sent against the Argentinian dictators instead of to the Caribbean."

Healey's short memory

Socialist Challenge answered Healey's hypocrisy: "Denis Healey should know all about fighting dictators. Between 1974 and 1979 the government of which he was chancellor supplied more arms to the Argentinian government than any other country — 17 per cent of Argentina's total arms purchases."

In separate articles, *Socialist Challenge* described the extremely repressive character of the Argentinian junta. After it seized power in 1976, the paper stated, it "launched a campaign of terror.

"The 85,000-strong army and the infamous 'Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance' death squads are reckoned to have caused over 6,000 deaths. At least 20,000 have 'disappeared' — kidnapped by armed or paramilitary forces and never heard of again. . . .

"The best method of fighting the dictatorship is to strike up links with the opposition in Argentina, recognise the just claim of the Argentinian people to the Malvinas — and join forces to overthrow tyranny on both sides of the Atlantic."

Some of Healey's arguments on the Malvinas have been echoed by opportunist currents within the labor movement. For example, the *Militant*, the newspaper of a tendency in the Labour Party, refused to support Argentina on the grounds that its government is a capitalist dictatorship. Although it also opposed Thatcher's "lunatic adventure," its "neutrality" did not prevent it from calling for a trade embargo against Argentina, supposedly in support of the Argentine workers.

In reply, *Socialist Challenge* warned against "making an over-riding concern the political character of the semi-fascist junta."

Argentina: an oppressed nation

In one article, Freeman documented Argentina's continued domination by imperialist powers — including Britain — despite Argentina's higher level of industrialization than many other semicolonial countries. Much of its industrialization has been the result of European, Japanese, and American corporations shifting their production there. Argentina has an extremely high foreign debt. And the bulk of its exports remain agricultural goods.

"Starvation and slavery — this is the reality of today's Argentina — and it will not end until the Argentinian workers have lifted, not just

'Stop this military adventure'

[The following appeared as an editorial in the April 8 *Socialist Challenge*.]

* * *

Thatcher is preparing for war.

Not in defence of the Falkland Islanders, as the Tories pretend, but to defend British imperialism's economic and military interests in the South Atlantic.

The labour movement's first duty is to stop this military adventure.

Its purpose is to shore up Britain's declining world military and colonial role.

Michael Foot and Denis Healey's suggestion that a strong navy is an alternative to Trident is an outrage. This adventure will strengthen all warmongers. The whole purpose of the present drive over the Falklands is to create better political conditions in Britain for closer Tory collaboration with Reagan and U.S. imperialism.

The awful jingoistic stance struck by the Labour leadership is a lasting disgrace.

The British Navy is hated by those fighting for freedom the world over. It should be immediately and unconditionally withdrawn into British territorial waters.

The Tories have no interest in freedom and their navy will not protect it. They have backed the repressive Argentinian junta to the hilt.

Their contempt for democracy is even more obvious now that they have chosen Chilean support for their military adventure against Argentina. Only three weeks ago, the Tories were privy to a U.S.-inspired plot for an Argentinian invasion of revolutionary Nicaragua.

Socialists cannot reduce the matter to a choice between Thatcher and Argentinian dictator [Leopoldo] Galtieri. The political character of the Argentinian government cannot determine our decision. The real choice is between the rapacious claims of a still powerful British imperialism wanting to hang onto its imperialist role and colonial possessions, and the just claims of a dominated country — claims raised by Argentinian governments of all shades for 130

years.

Historically and economically the Falklands Islands — the Malvinas — are an Argentinian possession. The present 1,700 islanders were settled there as part of Britain's colonial occupation. They have no right to the territory against the rights of the Argentinians. They should be given the choice of coming under Argentinian jurisdiction, of coming back to Britain or moving to any other place which will grant them settlement — with full financial compensation from the British government.

The interests of the Islanders will never be served by support for a false and unjust claim to British sovereignty over the territory of the Malvinas and the mineral wealth in the waters that surround them.

They have been duped by a government which has followed the dictates of an oil lobby bent on private greed at the expense of all else.

Imperialist military action cannot be supported as some way of defeating the hated Argentinian junta. On the contrary, such military action provides the one justification that the junta claims in front of the Argentinian masses recently in rebellion against it. Our confidence and support is extended to the Argentinian labour movement to bring this junta down.

Part of our solidarity with the Argentinian trades union federation, the CGT [General Confederation of Labor], is the demand that the Tories open the doors which they closed in 1979 to those fleeing the junta's murderous repression.

The political stakes in this crisis are extremely high. Already Lord Carrington has been forced to resign, and Thatcher has stated determination to use military force against the Argentinians in a desperate bid to shore up her shaky government. A determined opposition by the Labour leadership could bring her down.

The present course of Labour's leaders will fan the flames of right wing hysteria and compromise Labour in a reactionary military adventure.

their own dictator, but European, American and Japanese capitalists off their backs," Freeman wrote.

"This is what lies behind the passion and fury with which they demand 'Malvinas Argentinas.'"

In reply to the *Militant* and others in Britain with similar "neutralist" positions, *Socialist Challenge* stressed that it was not a question of "supporting either government. It is the claims of peoples and nations: one an oppressor nation, the other an oppressed one. Socialists cannot remain neutral in such a conflict as they would in one between two imperialist powers. It is necessary for British workers to break from imperialist claims for as Marx said 'a nation which oppresses another will not itself be free.'

"A victory for Argentina could perhaps shore up [General] Galtieri in the short run. But this is not the whole story. Any Argentinian success will help undermine the hold of the regime. The mass mobilisations and the anti-imperialist demands they have promoted will have a tendency to cut across the pro-imperialist stance of the junta."

The same issue of *Socialist Challenge* ran excerpts from two articles by Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky touching on just this kind of question. One dealt with a hypothetical example of a conflict between Britain and the rightist Vargas dictatorship in Brazil in the 1930s, and the other with the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, which at that time was ruled by Emperor Haile Selassie.

Socialist Challenge editor Brian Grogan, in an introduction to the excerpts, explained that Trotsky "argued that in any conflict between an imperialist country like Britain and a dependent one, like Argentina, socialists always took the side of the dependent country whatever its form of government.

"His starting point was the impact of such a conflict in world politics. For him a defeat for the imperialist power would stimulate and strengthen the struggle of all oppressed peoples and weaken the ability of imperialism to keep them down."

Rafael Runco, a political exile who spent five years in prison in Argentina before coming to Britain, spoke at a *Socialist Challenge* forum April 19. He also made this distinction between the Argentine government and the conflict between the Argentine nation and imperialism.

"Of course, the recovery of the Malvinas was supported by the whole population," Runco said. "Over 200,000 people demonstrated in support of the occupation of the islands in Buenos Aires. But what lies behind such actions?

"We deny that they constitute support for the regime and its overall policies. Behind the demonstration was primarily the anti-imperialist feelings of the Argentinian people.

"The dictatorship is the result of imperialist domination in Latin America."

Socialist Challenge also took up the argument raised by the Thatcher government and



Britain is an oppressor nation. Its armed forces "are a world police force for the multinationals and banks."

some Labour Party leaders that the central issue was the right of the settlers on the Malvinas Islands to remain under British jurisdiction.

"The Falkland Islanders have every right to remain British if that is what they desire. They have every right to settle in Britain — something presently denied them by the Tory immigration laws. But equally they also ought to consider living under Argentinian jurisdiction — alongside the 20,000 British residents already in Argentina.

"But they cannot claim the Falkland territories as British. These islands were taken from the Argentinians by force and have been claimed by the Argentinians ever since.

"The Islanders are a settler population inseparably linked to the attempts by imperialism to deny Argentinian sovereignty. We have to defend their human and democratic rights but it is a falsehood to grant them national rights."

Labour Party course

One of the biggest obstacles in the fight against Thatcher's aggression has been the response of the Labour Party leadership, which generally lined up with the Tories.

Some left-wing Labour Party figures, however, spoke out against the sending of the British fleet and criticized the statements made by Healey, Michael Foot, and others supporting Thatcher. *Socialist Challenge* published interviews with them and excerpts from some of their statements.

But even these left-wing Labour Party leaders do not have a clear position on the Malvinas. Labour MP Reg Race, who spoke at a *Socialist Challenge* meeting, declared, "This is not an easy issue for the labour movement. On the one hand there has been military aggression by a fascist government, but on the other hand we should not go to war with Argentina

to defend a sovereignty that is at best dubious and at worst nonexistent."

Socialist Challenge commented in an editorial that "when MPs such as Reg Race are prepared to oppose the war effort, in any way whatsoever, we should recognise that this *does* open the way to building a movement against Thatcher's war and welcome it with open arms: despite differences which no one hides. Furthermore *without* fighting to commit Labour's leaders to act, a labour movement response cannot be built."

The conflict over the Malvinas, *Socialist Challenge* pointed out, is inextricably linked to the class struggle in Britain itself. "We will never defeat them at home unless they are defeated abroad," it wrote.

Changing the Labour Party's position will be an important part of this struggle. An article by Alan Freeman on the Labour Party's history of support for British imperialist interests concluded:

"Everyone who fights for a Labour government to carry out socialist policies should fight to reverse Labour's traditional commitment to empire by demanding

• No nukes, no navy. Bring the ships back.

• End Britain's world military role: British forces out of Ireland, Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Belize and all other overseas possessions. Withdrawal from all involvement in NATO and SEATO.

• End Britain's neocolonial role: no reserve role for the pound, wind up the Commonwealth and Sterling Area. Disclose and nationalise all foreign assets held by British investors, hand them to the governments of the countries in which the assets are, and organise international trade union struggle for worker control of the multinationals.

• Support for anti-imperialist struggles the world over." □

A drive through the countryside

Fighting along roads, in main towns

By Lars Palmgren

SAN FRANCISCO GOTERA — It was no surprise that the young officer was upset. He was supposed to escort 31 big tank trucks from San Salvador to San Miguel, in the southeastern part of the country, where no gasoline had been available for several days.

The convoy had been traveling on the Pan-American Highway. From San Salvador to San Vicente everything had gone fine. But suddenly they could not go any farther. On the other side of the hill, about 100 meters away, barricades set up by the guerrillas made further progress impossible.

The guerrillas were in good position, on both sides of the road. The two small tanks and four truckloads of soldiers accompanying the convoy couldn't do anything. Not even the warplanes overhead, diving with machine guns ablaze, succeeded in driving the guerrillas out.

"Turn around," the young officer shouted. "We've got to get out of here."

To us he explained in an irritated voice that he was not there to fight, just to escort the truck convoy. One of his soldiers had been killed. The others looked very tired. They had been stuck there for almost 10 hours.

"We're going to look for another way to get through," the captain said.

But there is only one other road to San Miguel, the highway along the coast, and the trucks cannot get through that way either. At the Lempa River, where the guerrillas blew up the Puente de Oro Bridge in October of last year, the barricades start again.

They might get a couple of kilometers on the other side of the river, but then they would have to come back. Heavy telephone poles have been cut down and laid in a zigzag pattern across the road.

And if the trucks were able to get by the barricades and the telephone poles, they would find trenches a meter wide and a meter deep. The only possibility would be to drive along the side of the road, which is impossible for vehicles the size of the tank trucks.

'The enemy is the rich'

Small posters hang from the trees along the road. Their message is directed to the troops. "Soldier, the enemy is the rich and the well-paid officers, not the fighting people. Turn your arms against the real enemy, not against those who are your brothers."

The coastal road, like the Pan-American Highway, is in the hands of the guerrillas.

There are soldiers along it but they can't do anything. They stopped us twice as we drove down the road in a private car. The first time they asked for water. The second time one of



Member of U.S.-trained Atlacatl Brigade. Despite help from Washington, it is clear that Salvadoran regime is on defensive in most areas of country.

the soldiers said, in an upset voice, "*Los muchachos*" ("the kids," as the guerrillas are popularly called) — no, I mean *los subversivos* (the subversives) — have taken positions just 100 meters away. We have to have reinforcements to hold our position. Can't you tell that to the captain at the Lempa River headquarters?"

They themselves didn't have a radio and couldn't contact their base.

We explained that we couldn't do anything since we were heading in the opposite direction, toward Usulután. The soldier's face grew even more concerned. The guerrillas had taken positions on both sides of them. As we drove past the guerrillas, they waved and cried out for us to tell the soldiers they were waiting for them.

Fighting in Usulután

The war has moved down from the mountains in the last few months, and not only to the main roads but also to the towns that are connected by them.

In Usulután, the front line of the fighting

was only three blocks from the plaza in the center of town, where the army has its headquarters. Once in a while a Red Cross vehicle crossed the plaza to a small hospital on the other side.

Although the struggle was being fought in the middle of the town, few people apart from the soldiers showed any real fear. Many women stood in doorways, looking toward where the fighting was going on. Several of the small shops were open; people dropped in to get something to drink and exchange comments on the situation with their neighbors.

Were the *muchachos* just trying to show their military strength or were they going to take over the town? That was what people were discussing. It was the sixth time recently that the guerrillas had almost taken over the town.

The people of Usulután seemed to be waiting for the final takeover. But from the information they had heard on the radio, that the *muchachos* were not attacking San Miguel at the same time, they drew the conclusion that this would not be the final turnover either. And they were right.

When the *muchachos* were only one block away from the plaza they had to draw back.

San Francisco Gotera

The road between San Miguel and San Francisco Gotera is not like the coastal road and Pan-American Highway, filled with barricades and ditches. But it reflects the war anyway.

For a couple of hundred meters on both sides of the road the landscape has been totally burned. The brush and small trees that were there before have been transformed into a moon-like landscape of black and brown. It was the army that did this, and the objective was clear.

If the road between San Francisco Gotera and San Miguel is not kept open, San Francisco Gotera will be totally isolated, making it an easy target for the guerrillas. And if San Francisco Gotera is lost, then the whole of Morazán province is lost.

The remains of 11 burned-out cars, which had served as barricades along the road during the previous week's fighting, show that neither the scorched landscape nor the machine-gun nests that can be seen here and there in the hills have been able to guarantee the military total control over the road.

San Francisco Gotera has changed. The town that previously was a quiet village has been transformed into a military bastion. All buildings of any importance have been turned into barracks. Units of the U.S.-trained Atlacatl Brigade are now stationed here. Its symbol — a skull and two crossed bayonets — is now posted over the entrance to the main headquarters in the plaza.

The massive military presence has left its mark. Prostitution has increased as has the number of bars. Some people have bettered their economic situation, like the woman in the kiosk outside the main military headquarters, for example. She was recently able to buy a

new refrigerator thanks to the increase in business from the soldiers.

The refugees

The opposite of those who have been able to profit from the influx of soldiers are the refugees. They too, like the rest of the population, are deeply polarized.

The privileged refugees live near the entrance to the town. These are the ones who support the junta and the military, and now get support from the government. They live in three barracks, and many of them have been given civilian jobs with the armed forces.

But they are a minority. Most of the refugees live in shacks constructed of paper, scraps of wood, and the ever-present plastic, which traps the sun's heat and turns the dwellings into ovens.

The refugees near the entrance, the privileged ones, all describe the guerrillas as ban-

ditions. Most of the other refugees, when asked what they think, turn away without answering.

Some of the refugees speak, despite the presence of the soldiers. Don Adolfo, for example. He is one of the oldest refugees, and he feels that life is running out on him anyhow. His story is the usual one. The other refugees standing around us now and then nod in agreement.

"It was the security forces who took away our homes," he said. "They told us that if we didn't obey them, they would kill us the next day."

"Why?"

"I don't know. So far as I know there is no crime in living in your own house.

"They burnt the corn and the house. Everything, they burnt. And they killed one of my boys. He was 25. They killed him." □

Grenada

Rally hails progress on airport

Project 40 percent complete despite U.S. obstruction

By Baxter Smith

POINT SALINES — Whirling dervishes of dust and blasts of sand, kicked up by tradewinds racing across the Atlantic from Africa, are a constant feature on this dry, cactus and thornbush tip of Grenada. The low hills here contrast with the rain forests of the Grand Étang mountain range in the center of the island.

Scores of stories in the capitalist media — one as recent as the April 12 *U.S. News & World Report* — claim that Grand Étang and Point Salines are becoming the sites for hostile missiles aimed at neighboring islands, a Cuban air force base, and a Soviet submarine base.

The several thousand Grenadians who rallied here at the airport site April 19 do not believe such stories.

They realize that the new airport will make possible convenient and nonstop travel between Grenada and faraway countries. They realize the benefits that will accrue in increased trade when jets can finally land on this island.

"This is an airport that all of our people want," Prime Minister Maurice Bishop told the rally that marked the groundbreaking for the airport terminal.

The airport, which is about 40 percent completed, was one of the earliest ideas proposed by the new government that came to power following the March 13, 1979, revolution.

"The very first government that we approached" for funding for the airport, Bishop explained, was the United States. He recalled a meeting he had with Frank Ortiz, then U.S. ambassador to the region.

According to Bishop, "the reaction of the American government right from the start was one of amusement." Ortiz told the Grenadians that the airport idea was too elaborate, and he cynically offered them \$5,000 for the project.

Later, in a meeting with Fidel Castro at a conference of the Nonaligned Movement, the Grenadians again raised the idea of airport funding.

Bishop recalled Castro telling them that Cuba could not offer night landing equipment, or navigation equipment, or oil, because Cuba is poor and short of those resources and technologies. But it could offer them cement, building materials, and construction workers.

Bishop recalled Castro saying, "if you want that for your country, then Cuba is more than willing to give it."

Today, there are scores of Cubans helping Grenadians to build the airport.

And no funding has come from the United States. Instead, Bishop pointed out, "massive support has come from the Middle Eastern countries," and from countries in Western Europe.

Venezuela, Grenada's neighbor to the south, donated thousands of barrels of oil to the project.

The role of Washington during all of this, Bishop said, has been to "spread a lot of lies." The prime minister described how U.S. diplomats fanned out in Europe to discourage funding for the project.

When completed, Bishop acknowledged, the airport will be a "permanent symbol and permanent testimony" to the "internationalist spirit of the people of revolutionary Cuba." □

Grenada marks Bay of Pigs anniversary

ST. GEORGE'S — Playa Girón, Cuba. After this April 16-18 weekend, Grenadians have learned why the words Playa Girón stand for much more to the Cuban people than merely the name of a beach.

They have learned why Playa Girón, or Bay of Pigs, is a daily word in the Cuban vocabulary, why it is permanently written in the history books of the Cuban people's struggles for justice.

It is the place, as Cubans proudly put it, where on Cuban soil U.S. imperialism was first defeated in the Americas.

This weekend marked the 21st anniversary of that defeat. And here in free Grenada, the anniversary was marked by three indoor rallies April 16 by the People's Revolutionary Army.

Cuban Lieutenant Colonel Richard Wilson told the St. George's rally how the United States had been thwarted in its efforts to militarily turn back the Cuban revolution with a mercenary army.

Although the revolution was young, the Cuban commander explained, Washington misunderstood the depth of support the revolutionary process had among Cuban toilers. Just 72 hours after the mercenaries landed, defenders of the young revolution had repulsed them completely.

Prime Minister Maurice Bishop warned that U.S. President Ronald Reagan is trying to use any means, including military ones, to stop the revolutionary process unfolding in the Caribbean and Central America today, just as his predecessor, President John Kennedy, attempted to do in 1961.

According to Bishop, Kennedy used a "carrot and stick" program. The prime minister compared Kennedy's Alliance for Progress — a promise of billions of dollars in aid to the Caribbean and Latin America — to Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI).

"The Alliance for Progress was the carrot," Bishop said, "and the stick came one month later at Playa Girón."

Reagan is also using the carrot and stick. His CBI plan, of which \$10 million dollars is slated for the eastern Caribbean — or \$20 per person — is the carrot. And the stick, Bishop said, is the U.S. war in El Salvador, its attacks on Nicaragua, and its continuing threats against Cuba and Grenada.

— B.S.

Issues facing new antiwar movement

'Understanding of who is responsible for war is necessary'

By Allen Myers

[The following article appeared in the April 21 issue of the Australian socialist weekly *Direct Action*.]

* * *

Three weeks ago [April 3-7], Australia experienced the largest antiwar demonstrations since the days of the Vietnam War. In cities around the country, a total of more than 100,000 marched to demand nuclear disarmament and to oppose the threat of war [See *Intercontinental Press*, May 3, 1982, p. 373].

This event clearly indicates that there is a vast potential for building a movement that can be effective in turning back the war danger.

Large numbers of marchers showed that they were very much aware of specific dangers of war, not merely expressing a vague desire for peace.

This was reflected in the large numbers who carried placards demanding that the US stay out of El Salvador or calling for removal of the US bases in this country. At the Sydney rally, the largest applause for author Patrick White greeted his demand for closing the US bases; when he tried to place equal blame for the war drive upon the Soviet Union, there was silence.

Organizers' views

In this respect, the marchers were far clearer about the aims of the demonstrations than were

the organisers.

The April protests were initiated by a loose coalition calling itself Australians for Nuclear Disarmament. A dominant role in setting the policies of AND was held by Labor Party [ALP] parliamentarians and forces associated with the Association for International Co-operation and Disarmament [AICD] (In Victoria, called the Congress for International Co-operation and Disarmament).

These two groupings set as a conscious policy the avoiding of specific demands opposing the drive towards war. Thus they vetoed suggestions that the official slogans of the demonstrations demand a closing of the US bases, or oppose the Sinai force, or oppose US intervention in Central America. The official slogans were simply "for peace" or "against nuclear war" — with no suggestion of any of the concrete measures needed to attain these praiseworthy goals.

The argument most commonly advanced to justify such vague and evasive slogans runs something like this: "Ordinary people" would be scared off by demands that are "too radical"; the antiwar movement has to be broad, but specific demands would narrow it.

The demonstrations themselves showed how false this argument is. The only thing narrow about the marches was the views of the organisers, which excluded from the official slogans demands that were obviously very popular with the marchers.

But there is something more important involved here than the question of how many people can be mobilised to demonstrate for this demand or that slogan. The real question is whether the antiwar movement is going to be able to reduce the danger of war.

"No nuclear war" is a fine sentiment — but it's only a sentiment. To *do* something about the danger of nuclear war, you have to know who creates the danger and the best way to fight them.

A look at the actual history of wars in this century, and the record of the "arms race," make it clear that the threat of war comes from imperialism, which is driven to expand the areas it dominates economically and to oppose revolutions wherever they occur.

The most powerful and dangerous of the imperialist countries is the United States. It is the US government that today is threatening military intervention in Central America and launching a major build-up of nuclear and conventional military forces.

But Australian capitalism is also imperialist. It operates as a partner of the US. That's why there are US bases, why there are Australian troops in the Sinai, why [Prime Minister Malcolm] Fraser supports Reagan's policy in El Salvador, why the Australian government is spending hundreds of millions to buy an aircraft carrier.

If the antiwar movement is going to be effective, it has to focus its opposition on the



April 4 demonstration in Melbourne. Participants were more militant than organizers.

Direct Action

source of the war danger: imperialism. Here in Australia, we of course have to direct our fire at Australian imperialism as well as that of the US.

Attempts to "broaden" the movement by obscuring imperialism's responsibility for war might at some point mean additional people coming along to a rally or a demonstration. But a "broadening" based upon confusion about who the enemy is weakens the antiwar movement instead of strengthening it.

Disarmament

A clear understanding of who is responsible for war is necessary to chart a strategy for achieving disarmament.

The ALP/AICD forces in AND prefer a strategy of supporting negotiations for mutual disarmament in the United Nations or other forums. This is, at best, a strategy for wasting energy.

Support for mutual disarmament by antiwar forces actually makes it easier for the imperialists to continue their preparations for war. It's easy for Reagan to claim that he, too, is for mutual disarmament and, behind a facade of lies about Soviet "superiority" in weapons, to go on building up the US arsenal.

The antiwar movement should take a clear stand in favor of disarming the imperialists, not the countries the imperialists are preparing to attack. It would be criminal to call on Nicaragua to disarm, threatened as it is by US invasion. And it would be equally wrong for the antiwar movement to call on the Soviet Union to disarm "mutually" with imperialism.

The task of an antiwar movement in an imperialist country like Australia is not to tell imperialism's intended victims to disarm. Its task is to disarm the imperialists, beginning at home.

Australia is not militarily threatened by anyone. The demand of the Australian antiwar movement should be for the total disarmament of Australian imperialism: *no* military expenditure; *no* troops overseas; *no* standing army; *no* military bases of the US or any other imperialist power.

Of course, an Australian government that ruled in the interests of workers and farmers would have to be prepared to defend itself against imperialism — just as the Nicaraguans are forced to defend themselves today.

But the armaments of the present Australian state exist solely for aggressive purposes — to protect and advance the interests of Australian imperialism. And this situation isn't changed by the election of a Labor government: The ALP, like the Liberals, represents the interests of Australian imperialism instead of the interests of workers and farmers.

'Realism'

Opponents of the perspective of disarming Australian imperialism usually claim that it is not "realistic." What they really mean is that such demands won't be supported by Labor parliamentarians.

But if the antiwar movement can accomplish

only what ALP parliamentarians are presently willing to lend their names to, then it's not very realistic to have an antiwar movement in the first place. [Opposition leader William] Hayden and the Parliamentary Labor Party are *in favor* of US bases; they have even tried to cover up their military role.

The parliamentary Labor Party is not leading the antiwar movement, but dragging it back. The surest way to move the Labor leaders to a better position is for the antiwar movement to move ahead on a correct path, dragging the unwilling "leaders" along behind.

(This is what actually happened during the Vietnam War. Figures such as [former Labor

Party Prime Minister Gough] Whitlam initially *supported* the war but changed their position when the growth of a powerful antiwar movement convinced them the issue could help win elections.)

The thousands who marched in the April demonstrations are only the first layer of the millions of Australians who are worried by the threat of war and who will be willing to act if they are convinced that they can do something effective against the war danger. The antiwar movement should aim to mobilise these millions by showing them a realistic road to peace: the disarmament of the imperialist warmakers. □

Ireland

The case of Sean McKenna

One year after death of Bobby Sands, fight continues

By Will Reissner

One year ago, on May 5, 1981, Bobby Sands died in a British prison in Northern Ireland at the end of a 65-day hunger strike. Nine more young Irish freedom fighters lost their lives in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh jail before the fasts ended on October 3.

But for Sean McKenna, who took part in an earlier hunger strike, the agony continues. More than 16 months after his fast ended, McKenna remains in a prison hospital, a shadow of his former self.

McKenna was one of seven hunger strikers who took part in a fast from October to December 1980, demanding that nationalist prisoners in British jails be allowed to wear their own clothing, receive more visits and mail, be eligible for time off their sentences for good behavior, and be exempted from prison work.

After 53 days without food, McKenna lapsed into a coma. The following day, however, the British authorities granted the demands of the hunger strikers and the fast ended. Later the authorities reneged on this agreement, prompting the renewed hunger strike that took the lives of Sands and his comrades.

When the British yielded, McKenna was taken to the intensive care unit of a hospital in Belfast, where he was fed intravenously for several days.

But his ordeal took a lasting toll on McKenna's health. His mother described his current state in the April 1 *An Phoblacht*, an Irish republican weekly newspaper.

"His eyesight, which was badly affected due to protein deficiency during the hunger-strike, is almost totally gone. He has difficulty balancing himself and has to hold on to something. He cannot stand for any length of time and most of the time is totally incoherent, not knowing who is visiting him or what they are talking about."

She added that "sometimes when you go up you think to yourself, he's improving a little, but then on the next visit he won't even recognize you and can't follow the conversation."

McKenna is scheduled to remain in jail into the 21st century. His mother fears that he will never recover in prison, where he is receiving little treatment. "I am resigned in my own mind," said Brigid McKenna, "to the fact that it will take a long, long time for Sean to even begin to make any recovery. If he doesn't receive proper medical attention soon, not just vitamin injections, then I fear he will rapidly deteriorate. It is only a matter of time."

Sean McKenna was only 17 years old when the British military began interning Irish nationalists without trial on August 9, 1971. Sean and his father were both interned without charges on the first day, and Sean was not released until February 1975.

Thirteen months later, he was again picked up by the British army and charged with "attempted murder" in connection with assaults on British army and police posts.

Held without bail for 14 months, McKenna was convicted by a special juryless court in 1977 and sentenced to 25 years in prison. Since his internment at age 17, Sean has spent only 13 months in freedom.

While on his hunger strike, McKenna wrote an open appeal to the youth of Ireland, explaining the protest. "We here on protest were youths like yourselves when we came into prison," he wrote. "We believed then, and today believe more strongly, in our political convictions, and now we face death for those same principles and shall die if called on to do so."

In recent years, British authorities have been forced to grant "compassionate releases" to three Irish republican prisoners, all women, whose health had seriously deteriorated. Sean McKenna deserves a similar release. □

Protests hit Reagan visit

U.S. president complains about 'virus of Marxism'

By Baxter Smith

ST. GEORGE'S — Warmth is what U.S. President Ronald Reagan probably remembers most about his April 7-11 visit to Jamaica and Barbados: warm approval from the five heads of state who feted him, and warm disapproval from protesters and opponents of his policies.

The officially stated purpose of the visit was to vacation and explain details of the proposed \$350 million Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) aid plan. But the real intention became clear when Reagan immediately launched verbal attacks on Cuba and Grenada.

He described Cuba as being on the "road to serfdom," and Grenada as spreading the "virus of Marxism" in the region. Both, he said, are lacking in democracy.

His own CBI, Reagan contrasted as "a serious and long-term commitment to make available to [Caribbean states] more of the free enterprise system's dynamic potential that has served the people of my own country so well."

Bishop not invited

Not all heads of Caribbean states were invited to meet with Reagan. Grenada Prime Minister Maurice Bishop was not allowed and neither was St. Lucia Prime Minister Michael Pilgrim.

Pilgrim was installed in January and is serving until the May 3 national elections. Reagan could not meet with him, it was argued, because this might be construed as implied endorsement of Pilgrim's popular Progressive Labour Party. This argument skirts Washington's actual endorsement of the right-wing United Workers Party in the St. Lucia elections.

Newspaper and radio commentators in Jamaica condemned the exclusion of the parliamentary opposition, Michael Manley's People's National Party (PNP), from Reagan events.

While in Jamaica, Reagan announced a proposal for \$150 million additional aid to that country, over and above the \$50 million already set aside for it in the CBI.

While Jamaica Prime Minister Edward Seaga labeled the CBI as "a window of opportunity for hard-pressed Caribbean countries," Trevor Munroe, general secretary of the Workers Party of Jamaica, denounced the plan as "essentially a military device aimed at further imperialist penetration and repression of the peoples of the region."

Manley's PNP described the CBI as "divisive, warlike, dangerous, and retrograde in its view of the region."

In Barbados, the Committee of Concerned Barbadians Against Reagan's Visit picketed outside the U.S. embassy. The group hit the

Barbados government for permitting Reagan's visit in light of Washington's aggression against El Salvador and Nicaragua, its intervention in Guatemala and Honduras, and its attempts to destabilize the governments in Cuba and Grenada.

Norman Faria reported from Bridgetown, Barbados, in the April 10 issue of the Grenadian weekly *Free West Indian* that the committee, a coalition of community groups, political organizations, and prominent individuals, also singled out "The shameful support by the Reagan administration for the illegal and undemocratic South African government," and the U.S. arms buildup.

The Barbados committee noted that U.S. workers, and especially oppressed minorities in the United States, are "catching hell" under Reagan's economic program, and it condemned the activities of the CIA in the region.

U.S. demands 'visible change in policies'

In a reply to criticism of Grenada's exclusion from the CBI, a Reagan spokesperson said in Barbados that Grenada could be included but it would "require a rather visible indication of change in the policies and change in the pattern of their behavior."

The St. Lucia Workers Revolutionary Movement (WRM) labeled this advice "outright blackmail." In a statement read over Radio Free Grenada, the WRM solidarized itself with the Grenada revolution and against Reagan's attacks.

Other solidarity statements read over Radio Free Grenada came from the Movement for National Liberation in Barbados, the United People's Movement in St. Vincent, and the

People's Progressive Party of Guyana.

Reagan's lies and claims about the lack of democracy here were answered by Prime Minister Bishop in a speech marking the opening of the refurbished headquarters of the Seamen's and Waterfront Workers Union.

"We want to say to Reagan here and now," Bishop said, "that the kind of democracy that he speaks of and the kind of democracy that he practices — we in Grenada are not in the least bit interested in that kind of democracy."

Whose democracy?

"A democracy which fires ten million workers, because that is the number of workers that are out of work today in the United States. A democracy which in one blow fires 14,000 air traffic controllers and then moves to decertify their union.

"A democracy which cuts the social benefits to the poorest people and the poorest workers in the United States. A democracy which closes down hospitals and closes down schools, a democracy which cuts back on Medicare; a democracy which cuts back on food stamps for the poor.

"A democracy which removes housing subsidies, a democracy which cuts farmers' subsidies. A democracy which is aimed at removing all of the rights which the workers and the poor of the United States from the time of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's presidency have fought for, have struggled for, and have gained over these last 40 years. That brand and version of democracy is not a democracy that we are interested in."

Bishop continued: "When [Reagan] speaks of democracy and uses this so-called democracy to attack the people of the United States in order to spend \$214 billion dollars on defense and arms, we say that kind of democracy is no democracy at all. When they speak of democracy under which they can steal taxpayers' money in the United States in order to prop up their rich friends, then we do not regard that as democracy." □



Protest against Reagan visit outside U.S. embassy in Barbados.

Free West Indian

Report from a Miskitu village

How Sandinistas have responded to challenge of Atlantic Coast

By Cathy Gander

WASMINONA — This village in northeastern Nicaragua is one of five that have become the new home for 8,500 Miskitu Indians who were moved here by the Sandinista government early this year.

Residents say they regret leaving behind their ancestral lands and their belongings, but are relieved to be away from the northern border where terrorist gangs from Honduras raped, killed, and kidnapped villagers. Meanwhile, far from the calm of Wasminona, an international propaganda war rages over the relocation of the Miskitus.

History of Miskitus

The history of the Atlantic Coast, very distinct from the rest of Nicaragua, is crucial in understanding the decision to move the Miskitus.

The Miskitu Indians fiercely repelled the brutal attempts by the Spanish to colonize the Atlantic Coast and unite the country, yet they accepted the less harsh indirect rule of the British.

The Miskitus' loyalty was purchased with trading goods by the British, who imposed puppet Miskitu "kings" and gave the Miskitus arms which enabled them to dominate other Indian groups. In return, the British gained a monopoly over the natural resources of the Atlantic Coast.

Then, a century ago, U.S. timber, mining, and fishing companies began to develop close ties with residents of the eastern half of the country, known as the province of Zelaya.

By the 1930s U.S.-based churches, primarily the Moravian church, were able to exert great ideological and political influence. Religious leaders, doctors, and teachers came from the United States, as did most books. The sole radio station heard in Zelaya broadcast only in English.

As a result, people in Zelaya became further alienated from the "Spanish" government in the far more densely populated western half of the country. The lack of trading relations between villages, geographical isolation, and cultural and linguistic differences between the communities facilitated the rise of a series of local political strongmen.

Zelayans escaped the most brutal forms of the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza, and did not participate by and large in the civil war which overthrew him.

The victorious Sandinistas tried to create a legitimate political representative for the indigenous people, called MISURASATA. The local strongmen who quickly assumed the leadership defended their personal interests

rather than representing all Miskitus or other ethnic groups.

Steadman Fagoth, who the Miskitus had elected as head of their organization, made all the benefits the Sandinistas brought to Zelaya appear to stem from his personal power. He began to plan the secession of Zelaya from the rest of the country.

After admitting charges that he had been a Somoza agent while attending the university, Fagoth and many of his followers fled to Honduras, establishing a base there for anti-Sandinista activities.

Miskitu villagers were told by Honduran-based radio broadcasts, by armed contingents of former Somoza guardsmen, and by Miskitus already under Fagoth's influence to resist the so-called Communist takeover of Nicaragua that would claim their land, their autonomy and their religion.

U.S. destabilization plan

The Reagan administration strategy called for the manipulation of the Miskitu and Spanish population in the isolated Atlantic Coast as a weapon against the Sandinista government. It sought to create separatist sentiment to serve as a justification for U.S.-backed intervention.

In March 1982, the *Washington Post* reported details of the CIA's plan to destabilize Nicaragua by funding Somozaist bands in Honduras and financing acts of sabotage within Nicaragua, such as blowing up bridges, hydroelectric plants, and key industries.

The \$19 million plan also included the use of foreign military advisers to train an initial force of 500 Latin American mercenaries in Honduras, and another 1,000 troops largely drawn from the forces of Latin American regimes hostile to Nicaragua, such as Argentina, Honduras, and Venezuela. The CIA plan also called for the channeling of funds to religious and political opponents of the Sandinistas inside Nicaragua.

Sandinista policy toward Indians

Clyde and Vernon Bellecourt, who recently headed a delegation to Nicaragua from the International Indian Treaty Council and the American Indian Movement, visited the Atlantic Coast in December 1981, accompanied by Commander Lumberto Campbell, a Creole native of Bluefields.

The delegation concluded its month-long visit by expressing its solidarity with the people and the Sandinista-led government of Nicaragua. It condemned U.S. attempts to destabilize Nicaragua, and commended the Sandinistas for the positive steps taken on behalf of the indigenous communities.

The initiatives of the Sandinista government in the native Indian communities "go qualitatively beyond any other indigenous policies in the Americas," according to Dr. Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz, professor of Native American studies and history at California State University. Dr. Ortiz has acted as an adviser on international indigenous rights to numerous UN bodies.

The 1980-81 countrywide literacy campaign was conducted on the Atlantic Coast in the native languages, which were given equal status with Spanish. The Ministry of Culture has proposed to the Organization of American States that an indigenous university be set up in Nicaragua.

The Sandinistas also issued in August 1981 a comprehensive declaration of principles covering the Atlantic Coast indigenous communities. The declaration entrenched the right to ownership of traditional lands, guaranteed equal political and economic participation by the indigenous people, and ensured the preservation of their culture.

Events leading to the relocation

The violence against the Miskitu villages along the Río Coco stepped up drastically in November and December of 1981. Gangs from Honduras conducted terrorist raids, raping and kidnapping villagers and killing a total of 60 civilians and Sandinista soldiers. The Sandinista Popular Army compiled a detailed record of the atrocities committed in this "Red Christmas" campaign, so named by the anti-Sandinista forces for the blood it would shed.

The bands from the exile camps were made up of an unlikely alliance of ex-National Guard members, Miskitus from both sides of the border trained by the Guards, and the exiled leaders of MISURASATA. These forces were armed and aided by the governments of the United States, Argentina, and Honduras.

Evidence of Honduran army involvement was established late last year when Fagoth was injured in the crash of a plane that was also carrying senior Honduran army officials.

Clergymen from the Moravian church served as advisers and played a role in helping to convince elements of the Miskitu population to throw their lot in with the Honduran-based exiles. Details of the plan came to light following the arrest of several collaborators, including former Moravian pastor Efraim Wilson.

The opposition force planned to use the territory under its control as a beachhead for a full-scale invasion of Nicaragua. The CIA-funded alliance hoped to establish a provisional government and planned to seek diplomatic recognition and further financial assistance

from the U.S. government and its right-wing Latin American allies.

With the plans well under way by December 1981, the quality of life of the Miskitus in the area of the Río Coco was seriously threatened by constant ambushes and thefts of crops, livestock, and goods. Villagers hid in the mountains to avoid being forced to fight against their own people and some families fled across the river to Honduras to escape the invading bands.

The invaders finally cut off the Río Coco, the area's vital artery of transportation, supply, and communications. Food and medicine became very scarce.

The situation made the Miskitus' traditional way of life no longer viable, since they had always moved freely across a river they regarded as part of one Miskitu kingdom, not a border between two countries.

Nicaraguan government moves

The Sandinistas decided they had to move swiftly. The government imposed a blackout on news from the Atlantic Coast.

Recognizing that the path of any future invasion would be from the northeast, the Sandinistas decided to create a security zone from the Río Coco to the site of the new settlements, 60 kilometers to the south. With only six hours' notice, the Sandinistas began to move 8,500 people to the new settlements. Another 7,000 chose to cross the river into Honduras.

The Miskitus who went to Honduras met with living conditions worse than those they had left behind, and many then were used as new fodder for the Somozaist plan.

Those who went to the new villages further inland in Nicaragua had to leave behind most of their belongings and domestic animals, because the relocation required a few days' walk. The villages abandoned near the Río Coco were burned to prevent their use as camps by the anti-Sandinista forces.

'In Wasminona we are safe'

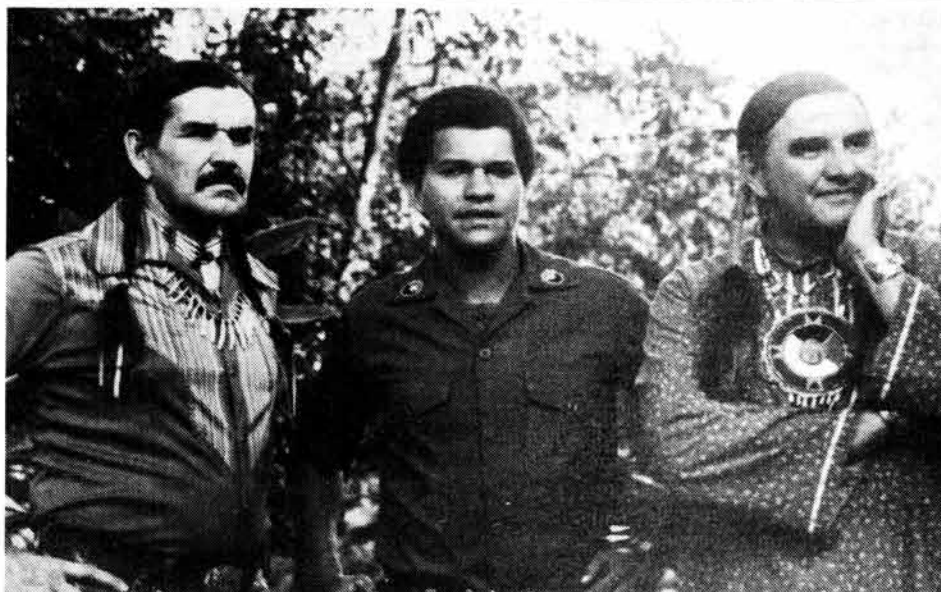
Among the 1,690 residents of Wasminona, one of the five new villages under construction, there are many people who regret leaving their ancestral lands, but acknowledge that the villages represent a brighter future for them.

Reyna Escobar, a Miskitu woman in her 40s, explains that her family was torn apart by the "Red Christmas" campaign. She has had no news of her husband since he was taken captive by former members of Somoza's National Guard. Her mother and sisters are in Honduras, and she is now alone with her children.

"The hardest thing is that my family is split up, and I have never been without them," says Escobar. "They must come from Honduras to be here with me."

The new villages have been constructed to respect the family groupings in the old settlements and the Sandinista government has encouraged Miskitus in Honduras to reunite with their families in Nicaragua.

Juan López, a young Miskitu farmer, says



Dick Bancroft

Clyde Bellecourt of the American Indian Movement, Commander Lumberto Campbell, and Vernon Bellecourt of the International Indian Treaty Council during December 1981 tour.

Miskitus were persecuted by gangs from Honduras, who ordered the Miskitus to stop working in the fields and do the bidding of the invaders.

"I didn't stop working, because I had children to feed," says López. "They came looking for me one night to slit my throat, but they did not get me because I was at a friend's house."

López explains how many men chose to hide in the mountains so they would not be carried to Honduras to fight, or to be killed. "No one could rest easy . . . if we had not moved, we would no longer be alive. In Wasminona we are safe, we are free."

The Miskitus regret they had to leave all their belongings behind. People apologize for looking shabby, but note they have no other clothes. Women lack the pots necessary to cook with and men do not have enough machetes and tools to clear and plant the land.

The provisional housing is still spartan, with dirt floors, plastic roofs, sack hammocks and crude wooden tables.

Development plan

Hector Sevilla, the director of the Wasminona project, says a community plan has been completed by a team of experts.

Although the move was precipitated by the attacks upon the Miskitus along the Río Coco, the new site had been under study by the government team since late 1980. The team had concluded that the intolerable living conditions along the Río Coco could not be improved to a reasonable standard of living.

Annual flooding destroyed crops, there was little arable land, and the area was so isolated that it was virtually impossible to provide medical care, education, and social services. A high rate of infant mortality and disease resulted from the lack of potable water and the use of

contaminated river water.

The site for the new villages was chosen for its geographical and ecological resemblance to the traditional lands along the Río Coco. The government will spend \$2.2 million to build close to 2,000 wooden dwellings with thatched roofs. The houses will be larger than most of the houses in the former settlements, and each will be surrounded by a large garden space.

For the first time in their history, the Miskitus will receive clear title to agricultural lands, which will be cooperatively owned and managed. Each family will also receive title to its own house and lot.

The government has set a goal of self-sufficiency in basic grain production by 1983. Until that goal is reached, a total of \$5 million will be spent to guarantee three nutritious meals a day for all.

The villages' population will be restricted to ensure full employment for all Miskitus, in agriculture, fishing and hunting, construction of dwellings and access roads, timber-felling, etc.

In slightly more than two months, the Sandinista government has made significant advances in the social conditions of the Miskitus in Wasminona, despite the material limitations of being an underdeveloped country.

While along the Río Coco medical attention was very scarce and the nearest hospital several days' journey by boat, doctors and nurses are resident in the new villages. Information campaigns and immunizations against polio, measles, tetanus, diphtheria, and malaria are under way. An ambulance is available to take cases of serious illness to the hospital in Rosita, just half an hour from Wasminona.

The old settlements had neither an ambulance nor medical care. The new highway just completed by the Sandinistas linking the Atlantic to the Pacific is the first major road to

connect the Miskitu settlements to the rest of Nicaragua.

In the school that community members are building, 10 teachers are giving classes in Miskitu, to more than 500 young students. Adult education classes are held in the evenings.

Jerónimo Ralf, an elder of the community and the village story-teller, explains: "We were taught to read and write Miskitu in the crusade last year. One is never too old to keep learning."

The Moravian and Catholic churches conduct regular services and have played an activist role in the development of the community. The village has been planned to conform to the Atlantic Coast tradition of placing the most important churches in the center of town.

Seen from the hilltop, Wasminona is both serene and busy. Colorful banners in Spanish and Miskitu stand out against black and blue plastic roofs. Clotheslines flutter with a bright array of garments, and smoke from wood fires curls up from the shacks.

A group of children laugh excitedly as they are given rides up and down a steep slope on the first Jeep some have ever seen.

Men and boys hammer furiously as they build the new clinic, and in the distance machete-wielding agricultural workers are clearing the fields. Girls and women bathe and wash clothes on the stones of one of the rivers.

Fagoth's role exposed

The Reagan administration and its allies, already embarked upon a campaign to destabilize Nicaragua and discredit the Sandinistas internationally, was initially able to make use of the presence of an isolated indigenous population on the Nicaraguan border with Honduras.

MISURASATA was set up to give the Miskitus political representation in the national legislative body, the Council of State. But the Sandinista's lack of knowledge and experience in dealing with the indigenous population permitted the organization to be dominated by the anti-Sandinista supporters of Steadman Fagoth.

Fagoth was able to undermine the Miskitus' link with the Sandinista government. Acting as an agent for the U.S. campaign, he accused the Sandinistas of massacring 250 Miskitus in Honduran territory and described the new settlements to the foreign press as "concentration camps."

Fagoth presented no proof for his allegations. His domination of the Miskitus, based on his personal charisma and his familiarity with Miskitu culture, fell apart after his role as a local agent for Washington was exposed.

An elderly Miskitu woman in Wasminona said that the Miskitus had believed Fagoth would make good on all his promises.

"He seemed honest, to truly care about his people. Now we know he lied to us . . . he used us for his own power." The woman said that Miskitus in Nicaragua now regard Fagoth as a traitor to his people.

For their part, the Reagan administration and the imperialist media have charged the

Nicaraguan government with carrying out a campaign of brutal repression against the Miskitu people.

After his visit to the new villages, Ruben Berrios, president of the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP), accused the CIA of spreading false rumors about the massacre of Miskitus by the Sandinistas.

A spokesperson for the Honduran government categorically denied the allegations of Fagoth, made most recently in Washington this March, that a massacre of Miskitus by the Sandinistas took place on Honduran territory.

Delegations to the new Miskitu villages from legal, religious, human rights, and Indian organizations have uniformly praised the Sandinista government for its approach to the indigenous population. The harshest critics are those who have not visited the villages.

A returning delegation of 15 Christian groups spoke at a Managua news conference March 15 of the contrast between the "imperialist lies" and the concrete proof of improvements in health care, education and general quality of life in the new Miskitu settlements. Complete freedom of religious worship exists there, they noted.

"This [trip to the Miskitu villages] gives us proof to mobilize Christians of the world so that they can halt the negative forces which threaten Nicaragua," said Sergio Denis García

of the Christian organization at the Polytechnic University in Managua.

U.S. Congressman Tom Harkin said his visit to the settlement project in late February helped him understand the necessity for the move. Harkin declared himself impressed with the treatment accorded the Miskitus, noting that although many were sad to leave their traditional lands, they appeared to be grateful for the actions and attitude of the Sandinista government.

Accompanying Harkin to the new villages was Sixto Ulloa of CEPAD, an interdenominational group of 38 religious organizations. Reverend Ulloa was in the United States while Fagoth was there, and concluded:

"The disinformation, the lies that Fagoth took and the Reagan administration reproduced came crashing to the ground. In the places Fagoth visited he gave the impression of being a violent and imprudent man, controlled by the U.S. State Department."

The Sandinista government faces considerable obstacles in incorporating the indigenous population into a revolution in which the Miskitus and other groups played little role. But in a short time, the Sandinistas have made significant gains in helping the Miskitus to establish a self-sufficient way of life that is likely to withstand any further disruptive efforts by the U.S. government or the Honduran-based anti-Sandinista forces it is backing. □

Seathlo and Loate sentenced in South Africa

Khotso Seathlo, a prominent Black youth leader, was sentenced to 10 years in prison by a South African court March 11. Convicted with him was Masabata Mary Loate, who received a five-year term.

Both were convicted for their active opposition to the apartheid system under the draconian Terrorism Act, which outlaws a broad range of political activities. Specifically, they were accused of spreading the aims of the South African Youth Revolutionary Council (SAYRCO) — of which Seathlo was president at the time of his arrest — and of recruiting members to the organization.

Seathlo first came to prominence in 1976, when he emerged as a leader of the massive youth rebellions in Soweto and other Black townships. He was forced to flee the country in early 1977 to avoid arrest. Loate was not so lucky; she was detained for a year and a half.

Seathlo continued his activities against the white supremacist regime from exile and helped found the SAYRCO. Occasionally he traveled clandestinely back into South Africa. It was on one of these trips that he was arrested with Loate in June 1981.

When Seathlo finally came to trial in December, he was brought into the courtroom in leg irons. During the trial, evidence surfaced that Loate had also been mistreated by her jailers, and her mother filed a suit against the minister of police to halt the assaults against her.

Five other Black activists were also jailed

for their refusal to testify against the two defendants. They were Thami Mazwai, the editor of the Black-run *Sowetan* newspaper; Thabo Ndabeni, the national organizer of the Azanian People's Organisation; Cutter Seleka, the president of the Azanian National Youth Unity; and Solomzi Alex Selane and Steven Siphon Somacele. All five were sentenced to 18 months in prison.

As soon as the judge in the case sentenced Seathlo on March 11, the 25-year-old activist was promptly rearrested by the police, indicating that he may be brought to trial yet again on other charges. □



Susan Ellis Miltant

KHOTSO SEATHLO

Two reports from Kampuchea

The role of women in rebuilding a shattered country

By Diane Wang

During the Pol Pot regime's reign of terror from 1975 to 1979, as many as 3 million of Kampuchea's 7 million people died or were executed. Consequently, women comprise as much as two-thirds of the population in some areas and at least 55 percent of the overall population. Tens of thousands of widows are struggling to raise families with four or five children.

Chanthou Boua, a Kampuchean, returned to her country in 1980 to work with an international aid agency for eight months. After another visit in 1981 she compiled her report on the role of women in rebuilding Kampuchea. The report is not only a graphic description of women's plight, but a summary of the progress made in the country and the complex, material problems faced over the last three years.

Despite their large majority in the population, women have not assumed a leading role in the reconstruction. Boua explains this as due in part to the "lack of a forceful policy of promoting women" but points out the more significant factors involved:

There is the trained modesty among Khmer women which has its roots many centuries back. There is also, of course, the widespread chauvinism of Khmer men. Besides these strong traditional pressures, the traumas of the Pol Pot period have deeply alienated many women from society. Now, much more frequently than before, one can hear women saying that they hate being alive or that they live just for the sake of their children. Suicide attempts by women have become more frequent than by men, especially amongst those who have lost husbands, children or other family members. . . . The experience of the Pol Pot period somehow seems to have affected women *more* than men (although fewer of the latter survived), and it takes women longer to recover and to realize that they could make a valuable contribution to the rebuilding of society.

The biggest factor holding back women, which Boua describes, is the country's poverty. Struggling back from the edge of famine, putting an economy back together piece by piece, Kampuchea has lacked resources for the



Women insurgents celebrating capture of Phnom Penh from Pol Pot forces in 1979.

child-care centers and training that women need.

Women in agriculture and trade

The majority of women, as the majority of the Kampuchean people, are engaged in agricultural production. For many this means work from 4 or 5 a.m. until sunset, with an evening of cooking and household chores. Harsh as this seems, the working hours are much shorter now than under Pol Pot. And today people have more food than the near-starvation rations allowed then, when one can of rice fed 5 to 10 people.

The government has organized villagers into solidarity groups of 5 to 20 families to ensure that work animals, tools, and manpower are equitably distributed. Boua reports that peasants initially were suspicious of these solidarity groups. But after the success of the 1980 harvest most accepted the system.

In addition, peasants are allowed private plots where they grow food to supplement the family's supply or to sell on the market.

In the cities nearly all the market people are women, selling vegetables, noodles, rice porridge, or other goods. The women line the streets, sitting for long days, often with their children alongside. Boua reports:

There are some unfortunate days, when they cannot sell any of their goods, so life is very unstable for them. . . . Many of them complain about the lack of opportunities to earn a living any other way. They cannot get a job with the government because they lack certain skills or because they cannot interrupt

their business activities (and therefore their income) for the two or three month period required for training. Traders and market women who have no husband or relatives to help must continue with this small-scale business to earn meagre daily sums of money to bring up their children.

Some women who had hidden jewelry or gold from Pol Pot had enough capital to go into larger-scale business. But to obtain the consumer goods they sell, these women risk the trip to the Thai border, since that is one source, aside from Vietnam, for pots, sarongs, tobacco, fabric, sandals, etc.

Education a big challenge

Women who work for the government have the advantage of free housing, access to rations at fixed prices, and regular hours on a six-day workweek, but they receive low salaries. To become nurses, teachers, office workers or factory workers, women take one- to three-month training courses. These include material on the history, political philosophy, and government of Kampuchea.

Government officials also spend two or three days in political study every three or four months. Some evenings are given to political education after work, also.

The shortage of men has meant a new reliance on women. Boua writes that "in the factories women have assumed many jobs — including the heaviest and hardest — which were formerly reserved for men. Women are found working at every level of factory production, except in management where they are still conspicuously absent. Women who have no one to mind their children are allowed to bring them to the factory."

Education is one of the main challenges facing the country. The system organized by the French colonial rulers never served Kampuchea's needs. What schools did exist were destroyed during the years of war and Pol Pot.

Yet, despite the lack of the most basic materials, the schools started to reopen almost spontaneously in the first weeks after the overthrow of the Pol Pot regime in early 1979. From the beginning there was a spirit of seeking a fresh start in education, with the aim of building a new school system more attuned to Cambodian needs. At the same time the government has proclaimed the goal of expanding education into a democratic and comprehensive system embracing all people, including children, the elderly, ethnic minorities and the inhabitants of remote areas previously unprovided with schools.

Several of the reforms will benefit women, Boua suggests. The shortening of the educational cycle from 13 to 10 years and the inclusion of more vocational courses will hopefully encourage more families to allow female children to complete school.

"Women in Today's Cambodia," by Chanthou Boua, *New Left Review*, no. 131, January-February, 1982.

Kampuchea 1981: Eyewitness Reports, by Nguyen Khac Vien and Françoise Corréze, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi. Available from the Committee in Solidarity with Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos, 135 West 4th Street, New York, New York 10012.

Because so many of the skilled and technical workers died under Pol Pot, vocational training is a priority. Part-time courses and full-time programs lasting one month to one year are organized. Some students are sent to Vietnam or other Comecon nations to train.

Literacy campaign and health care

The highest educational priority is literacy. Adult education classes have been launched in villages throughout Kampuchea. More than 200,000 people have enrolled in classes lasting one or two hours, three or four evenings a week. Boua reports that 70 percent are female and 40 percent are over the age of 20.

In the field of medical care, Boua explains that contraception hardly exists in Kampuchea, and abortions are both dangerous and expensive.

On the other hand, Boua reports, "Official maternity care is both inexpensive and relatively egalitarian. Government officials are given two months maternity leave with pay and in Phnom Penh, for example, are allowed to enter a special maternity hospital where they are only charged 50 riels [1 riel = US\$0.25] for delivery and hospitalization. Although ordinary people must go to regular hospitals, they receive more or less the same service for free. This is true everywhere in Cambodia."

Boua concludes that women in Kampuchea face a paradoxical situation. "Women have been victimized by the consequences of the Pol Pot regime. Instead of being given special help even more is being demanded of them; especially of the younger, mature generation between twenty-five and forty. Yet none would exchange the pains of life today for the solution imposed by the Pol Pot regime itself from 1975 to 1979."

Issue of Vietnam's role

In an introduction to Chanthou Boua's article, the editors of *New Left Review* note that, "Perhaps the issue which has caused sharpest dissent has been the Vietnamese intervention [in Kampuchea] itself." The editors assert, however, that "the weight of evidence in Indochina points to the conclusion that the bulk of the Cambodian people welcomed the Vietnamese overthrow of Pol Pot. . . . To condemn the actual Vietnamese invasion of 1979 conflicts with what appears to be the reaction of most Cambodians themselves."

One example of the close relationship growing between Vietnam and Kampuchea since 1979 is *Kampuchea 1981: Eyewitness Reports* put out by the Foreign Languages Publishing House in Hanoi. This progress report on Kampuchea's recovery includes both discussions with Kampuchean and statistical information.

Among other things, *Eyewitness Reports* describes how the new government in Kampuchea had to carefully approach agrarian policy:

The village production groups set up in 1979 consisted of 40 to 50 families at first but by 1980 they had shrunk to only 10 to 15 households. This was due both to new national policies and a spontaneous readjustment from the grass-roots. Indeed it is im-

possible to manage large groups when most cadres do not know how to keep accounts. The agricultural production groups were formed as the peasants returned to their villages, in order to help one another out, and also as a national policy to lay the basis for future socialist development. The decrees issued in August 1980 wisely reserve an adequate plot of land for each individual family.

The booklet also documents the slow industrial recovery, reporting estimates that it will require several years of sustained effort and aid to reach the level of industrialization Kampuchea had in 1969, the last year of peace before

Trotskyist writer speaks in Havana

[Vincent Placolý, a member of the Socialist Revolution Group (GRS), the Antilles section of the Fourth International, served in January as a member of the jury that awards the literary prizes of Casa de las Americas, the Cuban publishing house.

[Placolý is the author of several novels published in France. The following extracts from the speech he gave when the jury presented its report appeared in the April 1 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a fortnightly review published under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

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"We are still suffering the effects of the balkanization of our world by the old colonial powers, effects that are aggravated today by the well-known policy of the U.S. to divide the peoples in order to establish its rule. But there are also other reasons for this, especially in the French-speaking Antilles.

"Many of our young are abandoning French for Creole, which they consider more suited to our culture. This is a problem that the Casa de las Americas will face in the near future, I think; the problem of including works in Creole in this competition.

"Moreover, the idea of a specific Latin-American civilization, even though it is catching on in the heads of some of our intellectuals, is still very embryonic. In this respect, I have to note, not without some bitterness, that writers such as Aimé Césaire, who enjoys a great authority in our country, are not turning the attention of our young intellectuals towards the Americas, because they remain too attached to the virtues of European thought.

"I think that it would be very positive to promote the development of friendship societies with Cuba, like the one that already exists in Martinique, not only in the Antilles themselves but also in France and Canada, where there are large communities of French-speaking people of Antillian origin.

"Secondly, and I think that this is the most important point, I am convinced that Europe, and especially France, does not yet have a clear idea of our importance (I am speaking about Latin America and the Caribbean) in the formation of modern thought. . . . It would take me an hour to list the major Latin Amer-

U.S. aggression began in 1970.

"In the fields of agriculture and handicraft production, one can rely on private initiative," the report explains, "and the authorities are wise enough to encourage it. As far as industrial development is concerned, the State will have to take on the entire production process since no private firm has survived the catastrophe.

"More than in any other country, the State will play a crucial role in economic and social development." □

ican works that have never been translated into French. Think, if it were not for the courage and intelligence of a publisher like François Maspero, a work like Carlos Mariátegui's *Seven Essays* would have remained unknown to my generation.

"I should also mention the basic writings of José Martí, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, *Episodes of Revolutionary War*. . . .

"Comrade Retamar talked yesterday about books that have been able to exercise a political influence on a whole generation. To convince you of the importance of translations, do you know the book that most deeply influenced my generation, the generation of 1946. Far more than *West Indies LMDT* by Nicolás Guillén, far more than *El reino de este mundo* by Alejo Carpentier, it was the French translation of *Bertillon 166* by José Soler Puig, who got the Casa de las Americas Prize in 1960." □

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Christian Democratic youth in dilemma

Illusions in regime and party leaders fade

By Lars Palmgren

SAN SALVADOR — The guards at the Christian Democratic Party's main headquarters here were dressed almost like guerrillas — jeans, T-shirts, and caps pulled down over the eyes.

They were very careful in investigating identification and bags before slowly opening the doors and allowing visitors to enter, one at a time.

In front of the headquarters, beside the gate, there used to be a poster proclaiming "First Peaceful Revolution in Latin America." Now it has been moved into the office.

Inside, four young people — Jorge, Arturo, Ana, and Jaramillo — were cleaning a mimeograph machine. They had just run off a leaflet, headlined "Duarte, our president." It was to be distributed at a meeting the Christian Democrats were to hold the next day at Liberty Park to discuss the "elections" that had just been held.

At a news conference the day before, the Christian Democrats had declared that if their party was cheated of its place in the government, "it will open the door to civil war because people will feel frustrated. They will feel that they have no other alternative but to take up arms."

In that case, said Julio Adolfo Rey Prendes, the party's general secretary, "may God save the country."

A 'good solution'?

Both the news conference and the rally scheduled for two days later seemed to be an attempt to better the party's negotiating position toward ARENA (Roberto D'Aubuisson's ultrarightist Nationalist Republican Alliance) and the four other recognized opposition parties.

But to Jorge, Arturo, Ana, and Jaramillo, the party leaders' words and the meeting in Liberty Park meant something more than just a negotiating position.

"If there is no good solution in the short term, there will be a civil war," Ana said.

"What do you mean by a 'good solution'?"

Silence. Then an exchange of glances. Jorge started to explain:

"You know what ARENA stands for, don't you? Do you know that they killed 600 of our members in the last two years? Do you know that D'Aubuisson is the leader of the death squads? You've heard that, haven't you?"

"Do you know that he may well have been the one who was responsible for the death of Monsignor Romero" two years ago?"

"There are those who even say it was he who fired the shots," Jaramillo said.

"Of course, something like this can never be proved," Jorge continued, "but what is clear is that D'Aubuisson and ARENA represent everything that is contrary to our policy."

"So does a 'good solution' mean ARENA must be excluded from the government?"

"Definitely," Jorge answered. "The only ones we feel anything in common with are the guerrillas of the FDR [Revolutionary Democratic Front]. They fight with the wrong weapons, but in some ways they want the same things we do."

"Do you know anyone who is a member of the guerrillas?"

They all nodded. "Quite a few," Jaramillo answered.

"Then you would rather have negotiations with the FDR-FMLN [Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front]?"

"Yes, that would probably be the best."

A surprising conversation

We began our conversation inside the party headquarters, continued it in the street, and then went to a small cafe. The whole time none of the four lowered their voices to conceal what we were talking about.

"I think that unless there is a good solution, and quickly, many will go up into the mountains. Because people are tired of waiting," Jorge said.

It was a surprising conversation. These members of the Christian Democratic Youth believed that ARENA and the death squads — not the guerrillas — were responsible for the murder of all the Christian Democrats who have been killed.

They talked about the extent to which ARENA had infiltrated the armed forces. They had hope in the Christian Democratic Party and they believed in the reforms the party said it stood for. Their political thinking is based on a Christian philosophy of justice, and they think that ARENA and the other parties do not share that philosophy, but that perhaps the guerrillas of the FDR-FMLN do.

"Do you believe the Christian Democrats can form a government that would exclude ARENA?"

"There is no other possibility," Jorge answered.

But there was no tone of victory in their voices. They didn't say anything that showed they believed that would really be possible. Nothing in their way of speaking expressed anything other than skepticism, than simply waiting for a new situation to be defined.

The meeting in Liberty Park the next day did not strengthen their hopes for a Christian Democratic-dominated government. It was at

most about 2,500 people, many of them brought in chartered buses from other cities.

Not an uplifting experience

But it wasn't only the small size of the meeting that was a disappointment to them. What their leaders actually had to say was hardly an uplifting experience either.

They maintained a tough tone. They presented Duarte as the real president of El Salvador, and continued to argue that "social peace" would be endangered if their party were excluded from the government.

But two other things seemed to have an even greater impact on the youth. First, the refusal of the Christian Democratic leaders to admit the real situation at the meeting.

"Here we are hundreds of thousands of Salvadorans, together," one speaker said.

"This is the biggest demonstration in the history of San Salvador," another declared.

And so they continued, although anyone present needed do no more than turn around to see that it was a lie.

"Isn't it a sign of political weakness for the leaders to be forced to lie in such a shameless way?" I asked.

Jorge nodded his head slightly, but said nothing.

A second thing that made Jorge sigh profoundly was the way Duarte ended his speech. He spoke about Moses. He had done that before, and now he did it again. He told the whole story from the Bible, and what everyone was supposed to understand was that it is Duarte who is Moses.

"All that is needed is to believe in God and believe in your leaders," Duarte said. "That was the way the people of Israel confronted hunger, thirst, and sufferings of all kinds. They believed in God and they believed in their leaders. If we do the same, we will get to the promised land."

Duarte then raised his arms, his eyes gazing far away. It was a pathetic image.

Jorge sighed and shook his head once again. Neither he nor his friends wanted to talk after the meeting.

They gathered up their green plastic flags. Jaramillo picked up his bullhorn, which he had used to try to lead some chants during the meeting. They walked together back to the party headquarters.

Would they discuss the future that night? I had a feeling they would. □

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