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United States

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The Militant

Middle East

Reagan Demands Concessions From PLO and Arab Regimes

Pentagon Prepares New Escalation in Central America

Special Feature

Women's Liberation in Nicaragua — Speech by Commander Tomás Borge



Jane Harris/IP

Reagan pressures PLO and Arab regimes for concessions

By David Frankel

For the past three months, the Middle East has been the scene of the most intensive diplomatic activity since the conclusion of the Camp David accords between Israel and Egypt in 1978-79. Half a dozen top U.S. envoys have been shuttling back and forth between Arab capitals and Israel. Arab delegations have come to Washington in the wake of the Arab summit conference in Fez, Morocco. Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yassir Arafat met with Jordan's King Hussein for four days, and a meeting of the Palestine National Council is widely forecast.

At the center of this diplomatic activity is the plan proposed by President Reagan on September 1. On the face of it, Reagan's proposal calls for Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which would be linked to Jordan in some kind of federation. In return for giving up the occupied territories, Israel would gain recognition from the Arab states and a peace treaty.

But as is so often the case when it comes to diplomacy, what is really involved is something completely different from the formal proposal that the newspaper reports are dwelling on.

Goal of U.S. diplomacy

All Middle East diplomacy, from the point of view of the U.S. rulers, has one fundamental goal — to get the Arabs to capitulate to Washington's economic and political domination of the region. The military blows struck by its staunch ally Israel in its invasion of Lebanon have provided an opportunity for Washington to try to further divide the Arab world and to force political concessions from Arab governments and the PLO.

Reagan's immediate goal is to get additional Arab governments — Jordan in particular — to join Egypt in recognizing the Israeli colonial settler-state. He also hopes to split the PLO.

Reagan's September 1 plan is the bait that the U.S. rulers are holding out in their diplomatic con game. Far from seeking an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, as claimed by Reagan, Washington is *opposed* to any such withdrawal.

Over the past 15 years, the occupied territories have been largely integrated into the Israeli economy. They provide one-third of Israel's water, its second-largest export market after the United States, a pool of superexploited labor for Israeli industry and agriculture, and a key arena for the investment of surplus capital.

If Israel were forced to give up its colonial possessions, it would be a blow that would put the very existence of the Israeli state in ques-

tion. It would certainly make it impossible for Israel to play the same role that it does now as imperialism's main bulwark against revolution in the Middle East.

The U.S. ruling class is well aware of all this. It has not been building new military bases in the region and tooling up its Rapid Deployment Force for the past five years only to toss aside its strongest and most secure bastion against the Arab masses.

Imperialists must lie

But Washington cannot stand before the peoples of the world and bluntly declare its real intentions. The imperialists were not able to do that even in the heyday of the British empire. They have to talk about the search for peace, about the right of self-determination, about justice, while they carry out their crimes.

In the case of the Middle East, this diplomatic course is especially important for Washington. While Israel's invasion of Lebanon resulted in a heavy military defeat for the Palestinian people and for the anti-imperialist struggle in the Middle East as a whole, the PLO's political standing was not destroyed.

On the contrary, the heroic resistance put up by the PLO enhanced its prestige and won it new support among the Palestinians inside Israel and in the occupied territories. The Palestinian cause gained recognition and sympathy throughout the world. This is the price that the U.S. and Israeli imperialists paid for their bloody aggression in Lebanon. It is this that Washington seeks to counter with the Reagan plan.

While holding out the mirage of an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories after years of negotiations, the Reagan plan demands immediate political concessions from the PLO and the Arab governments.

- It calls for the Arab governments to rescind their recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and to give Jordan's King Hussein a mandate to negotiate for the Palestinians.

- It demands that the Arab governments formally recognize the legitimacy of the Israeli state — that is, that they accept as irreversible the dispossession and expulsion of the Palestinian people, and that they drop their formal support for the PLO's demand for the right of the refugees to return and live together with the Jewish population of Israel in a united Palestine.

- Finally, the Reagan plan is aimed at putting maximum pressure on the PLO to retreat from its intransigent struggle for Palestinian self-determination. This pressure is not being exerted just on the diplomatic front.

In Lebanon, for example, tens of thousands

of Palestinians have been left homeless by Israel's aggression. More are now being victimized by the Phalangist-dominated government, which is threatening massive expulsions of the Palestinian population.

"The pressures building up on the Palestinians in Lebanon may force Mr. Arafat to take President Reagan's peace plan more seriously than expected," *New York Times* reporter Thomas Friedman hopefully suggested October 10.

"With the fate of some 500,000 Palestinians in Lebanon hanging in the balance," Friedman continued, "Mr. Arafat may no longer be allowed the luxury of radicalism."

The Jordanian regime is also turning the screws. Reporting from Amman in an October 14 dispatch, Friedman said of the talks between Arafat and King Hussein: "The King is said to have explained to Mr. Arafat that the hour of decision is upon him: either he signals the Americans in an unambiguous fashion that he is ready to conditionally accept Israel within its pre-1967 boundaries and accept some kind of linkage with Jordan, or the game is up."

Despite such pressures, Arafat refused to issue any such statement recognizing Israel at the Amman conference. But this has not stopped the campaign by the imperialist media to sow divisions within the PLO. Ever since the September 6-9 Arab summit conference in Fez, the imperialist media has been trumpeting the theme that the PLO leadership has decided to align itself with Washington and to seek a deal in keeping with that perspective.

How media distorts truth

A particularly clear example of the media scam was a front-page article in the October 13 *New York Times* headlined, "Arafat Now Sees Positive Aspects In Reagan Plan." But the content of what Arafat said, as explained in the body of the article, was the opposite. It was to reject the Reagan plan "because it did not provide for an independent Palestinian state."

Arafat, according to the article, declared that the Reagan proposal "completely neglected the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and an independent state." Moreover, "he also said the Reagan plan was insufficient because it did not recognize the P.L.O. as 'the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.'"

After blasting the specific proposals in the Reagan plan, Arafat added the diplomatic formula that "at the same time I can see some positive elements." He declined to elaborate on what these were.

The line of an Arafat sellout was also pushed in the October 16 issue of the British *Economist*. Arafat and King Hussein, the financial weekly claimed, "are working in unison and talking, more or less, the same language." According to the *Economist*, Arafat has already given up the perspective of an independent Palestinian state and is just trying to figure out how to win majority support for this position within the PLO.

But the only evidence for such charges are

the claims of the imperialist media, and anybody who takes such claims for good coin is a fool. The fact is that at the talks with King Hussein in Amman, Arafat refused to endorse the federation proposal in the Reagan plan and refused to endorse the idea of Hussein negotiating on behalf of the Palestinians.

James Clarity reported in the October 17 *New York Times* that Arafat "neither espoused, nor denigrated, the federation idea. He reportedly said it would be possible only after the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, and would require the approval of the Palestine National Council, the organization's parliament in exile."

Why bother with diplomacy?

If the PLO leadership is not retreating from its commitment to the Palestinian struggle, why does it bother to address diplomatic initiatives such as the Reagan plan? Why doesn't it reject them out of hand, refuse to meet with representatives of Arab governments, and refuse to accept any diplomatic statement that falls short of the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine?

Such a stance would be irresponsible and self-defeating. U.S. imperialism, with a lot more military power than is available to the PLO, does not turn its back on the diplomatic arena, and for good reason.

Because of its heroic battle in Lebanon, the PLO gained a hearing from millions of people around the world and convinced many that the Palestinians have justice on their side. With the Reagan plan, Washington is pretending that it is addressing the Palestinian issue and seeking a just solution. It is using the diplomatic arena to try to reverse the gains won by the PLO in world public opinion.

Such initiatives by Washington cannot be ignored, or merely denounced. Millions believe that the Reagan plan may be a genuine peace proposal. Even within the Arab countries there is confusion about Washington's real intentions and about the possibility of a negotiated settlement that would resolve the conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

Through its diplomacy, the PLO leadership seeks to advance the Palestinian cause among the Arab masses and the masses on a world scale. It also seeks to gain time to deal with the difficult situation that it now faces, and to gain concessions from the Arab regimes. On the eve of Arafat's meeting with King Hussein, for example, Hussein announced an amnesty for hundreds of PLO fighters who were accused of committing "crimes against state security" during the 1970 civil war in Jordan.

A historical precedent

There is nothing new about the diplomatic battle that is going on right now. During the negotiations that followed the October 1973 war, the mass media was filled with speculation about divisions within the PLO. The "moderate" Arafat was counterposed to the "militant," "rejectionist" wing.

At that time the Palestine National Council

responded to the negotiations by adopting a position in favor of the establishment of a Palestinian state in any part of Palestine that Israel was forced to withdraw from. This position was seen as a step toward the PLO's overall goal of a democratic, secular Palestine. It was never counterposed to this goal, except by those who charged that the PLO leadership was abandoning the struggle for Palestinian self-determination and moving toward a deal with Washington. History has refuted that

charge, but it is now surfacing once again as a result of the latest events.

Of course, there are real differences within the PLO, which is a mass organization that reflects the different political views within the Palestinian population as a whole. But the fact is that the imperialists have never been successful in their attempts to force the PLO to capitulate. Washington's failure in this is the biggest single stumbling block to the success of its diplomacy in the Middle East. □

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Reagan takes new steps to escalate war

Nicaraguan leader warns of December invasion plan

By Fred Murphy

Behind a diplomatic smokescreen designed to portray one of its main victims — Nicaragua — as the criminal, Washington is stepping up its war in Central America.

The U.S. imperialists are intervening militarily to try to halt and reverse the upsurge of anti-imperialist struggle that is sweeping the region. They cannot stand aside and allow the consolidation of the socialist revolution in Nicaragua. Nor can they allow the Salvadoran and Guatemalan peoples to succeed in their fight to bring workers and farmers governments to power in those countries, in emulation of the revolution in Nicaragua.

It is this open clash over who will rule — the workers and peasants, or the capitalists and landlords tied to imperialism — that is at the root of the mounting warfare across Central America.

- In Nicaragua, battles take place almost daily between the Sandinista People's Army and militia and the U.S.-armed bands of counterrevolutionaries sheltered by the regime in neighboring Honduras. Washington plans a major new provocation for December, when military maneuvers of unprecedented scope will be held by the U.S. and Honduran armies along the Nicaraguan border.

- In El Salvador, despite government claims that the rebels were in their "death throes," the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) has mounted one of the largest military offensives yet in three years of civil war. The regime's U.S.-trained battalions have failed to turn the tide.

- In Guatemala the presence of U.S. military advisers — still formally barred by U.S. law — has just come to light. A Green Beret captain interviewed in Guatemala by the *Washington Post* "said he is authorized to teach cadets there 'anything our army has,' and his subjects include training in ambushes, surveillance, combat arms, artillery, armor, patrolling, demolition and helicopter assault tactics" (*Washington Post*, October 21). Such tactics are being applied on a wide scale in the Ríos Montt dictatorship's slaughter of Indian peasants. At least 2,600 have died since March, according to an Amnesty International report released October 11.

- Costa Rica is now the scene of another U.S.-backed military buildup. U.S. advisers and \$2 million in equipment are on the way to spur the conversion of Costa Rica's Civil Guard into a regular army. Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries have also been operating out of Costa Rica.

Washington's counteroffensive in Central

America has focused more and more on Nicaragua, where the revolutionary process is most advanced. The launching pad for the U.S. operations aimed at toppling the Sandinista government is Honduras, which has a pliable proimperialist regime and a long, sparsely populated border with Nicaragua.

For at least a year the Central Intelligence Agency has been arming and training a force of Nicaraguan exiles in camps in southern Honduras. Since July these counterrevolutionary troops — mostly ex-National Guardsmen of the Somoza regime or Miskitu Indians hoodwinked by their leaders into fleeing Nicaragua — have been crossing the border in large units armed with sophisticated weaponry. A *Washington Post* columnist recently termed this "a slow-motion Bay of Pigs invasion" of Nicaragua.

The step-up in counterrevolutionary attacks in July coincided with U.S.-Honduran military maneuvers near the border. The latter served as cover for the shipment of large quantities of supplies and matériel to the exile camps, and for Washington's massive buildup of the Honduran army's own forces. U.S. military aid to Honduras has increased by at least 700 percent over the last three years.

Unprecedented military exercises

A further escalation in the military pressure on Nicaragua from Honduras is now being readied. "A joint U.S.-Honduran military exercise of unprecedented scale is being planned here with the aim of intimidating Nicaragua's revolutionary government," a dispatch from the Honduran capital, Tegucigalpa, to the October 17 *Washington Post* reported.

Diplomatic and government sources in Tegucigalpa told *Post* correspondent Christopher Dickey that the maneuvers would involve "a substantial feint near the border to convince the Sandinistas — as one official put it — 'that they will be finished' if they do not bend to the general line adopted by Washington and Honduras."

As a senior Honduran officer bluntly put it to the *New York Times* in July, "We can't have a socialist government" in Nicaragua. "It's them or us."

The *Post* article reported "growing concern" in Tegucigalpa diplomatic circles that the December maneuvers "could accidentally touch off a real war" between Honduras and Nicaragua.

But there seems to be little that is accidental about it. Washington would like nothing better than to provoke just such a conflict, charge Nicaragua with aggression, and use that as the

pretext for massive intervention against the Sandinista revolution.

Commander Daniel Ortega, coordinator of Nicaragua's Junta of National Reconstruction, told the EFE news agency October 23 that his government had received a series of "reports that coincide in pointing to the month of December as the date fixed by the United States for mobilizing counterrevolutionary forces in a massive way against the Nicaraguan revolution." EFE reported in Managua that "official U.S. spokesmen refused to comment" on Ortega's statement.

'Kick in the teeth for Reagan'

The Reagan administration has been campaigning for months around the theme that Nicaragua's defense preparations constitute an "unwarranted military buildup" and a threat to Nicaragua's regional neighbors.

But Washington's propaganda drive took a big blow October 19 when a two-thirds majority in the UN General Assembly voted to place Nicaragua on the Security Council.

This acknowledgment of the Nicaraguan revolution's international prestige was correctly termed "a kick in the teeth for the Reagan administration" by Nicaraguan leader Tomás Borge. Tens of thousands of Nicaraguans took to the streets to celebrate the diplomatic victory.

Nicaragua has also received diplomatic support against Reagan's threats from presidents José López Portillo of Mexico and Luis Herrera Campíns of Venezuela. The two heads of state appealed to Reagan in a September 7 letter for the "exploration of ways that remain open to halt the current worrying escalation, the increase of tensions and the dangerous expectations as to the outcome of the crisis" along the Honduran-Nicaraguan border.

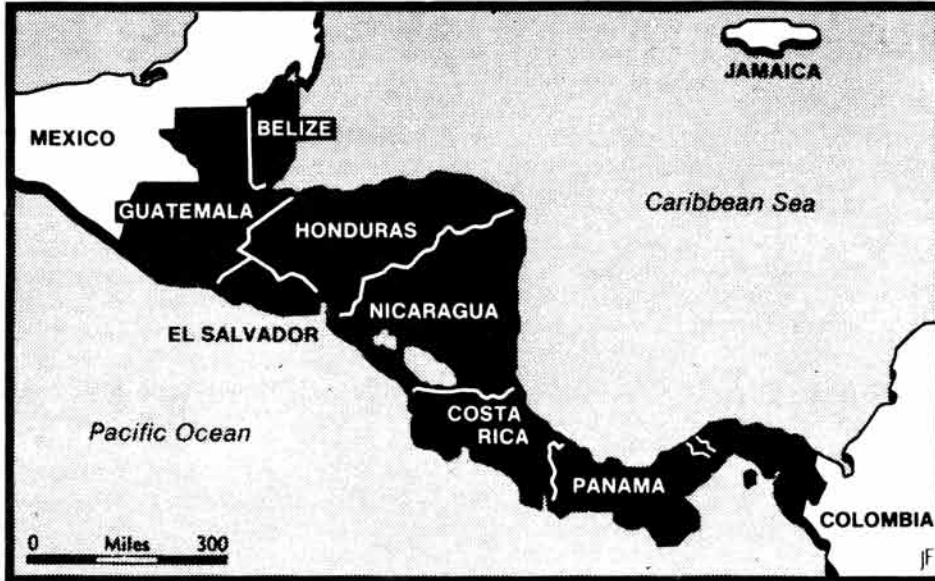
In particular, the two presidents called on Reagan to "halt the support, organization, and maintenance of Somozaist ex-Guardsmen" on Honduran territory.

Venezuelan President Herrera's role in the joint appeal reflected his government's recent shift away from earlier close association with Reagan's Central America policy. Herrera attended the third-anniversary celebration of the Nicaraguan revolution in July, and in August warned Reagan that "the epoch of armed interventions must be a closed chapter in the unfortunate history of Latin America." The Venezuelan government has also joined the Movement of Nonaligned Countries and moved to improve diplomatic ties with Cuba.

Similar appeals for talks were sent by López Portillo and Herrera to President Roberto

Suazo Córdova of Honduras and to Commander Daniel Ortega, coordinator of Nicaragua's Junta of National Reconstruction.

Ortega responded within two days, reiterating Nicaragua's longstanding readiness to hold talks with the Honduran government. After 10 days, Suazo Córdova replied by suggesting that Mexico and Venezuela would do better to press Nicaragua "to restore its original commitments to the international community." The Honduran government, he protested, had already "shown more than enough patience and prudence in face of repeated provocations" from Nicaragua.



Reagan held off any reply until the State Department could put together a so-called Forum for Peace and Democracy in San José, Costa Rica, the first week of October. In attendance were foreign ministers from Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador, Jamaica, Colombia, and Belize; observers from Panama and the Dominican Republic; and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Thomas Enders.

Nicaragua was pointedly not invited to the forum.

Enders used the occasion to blast the Sandinistas for "fomenting violence in Honduras and Costa Rica." He said Nicaragua had become the region's most pressing problem because "a recalcitrant group of Marxist-Leninist ideologues . . . has created the largest military force in Central American history, which is a danger for its neighbors." In Nicaragua, Enders said, "it is necessary to find a way to prevent the greater and greater concentration of power and militarization and the growing repression against citizens."

At Enders's behest, the foreign ministers adopted a call for a "verifiable and reciprocal" regional accord to bar the importation of weapons and the use of foreign military advisers. This, at a time when the Pentagon is pour-

ing arms and advisers into El Salvador and Honduras, has begun to do likewise in Costa Rica, and is pressing the U.S. Congress to legalize the same for Guatemala!

Once the San José meeting was over, the White House released Reagan's letter to the Mexican and Venezuelan presidents, in which he alleged "great interest" in their "very constructive" proposals. The letter affirmed Reagan's support for the decisions Enders had orchestrated at San José.

López Portillo and Herrera persisted, trying to organize a meeting between Ortega and Suazo Córdova in Caracas on October 13.

Again Ortega communicated Nicaragua's readiness to attend, but the meeting fell through when Suazo Córdova refused to participate.

The flat rejection of talks by the Honduran regime is a further ominous sign that it — and its masters in Washington — are dead set on escalating their aggression against Nicaragua.

Rebel offensive in El Salvador

The Reagan administration is also under pressure to step up its intervention in Central America because its plans for defeating the revolution in El Salvador have not borne fruit. Days after Salvadoran Defense Minister Gen. José Guillermo García crowed to reporters that the FMLN was in its "death throes," rebel units of up to 700 guerrillas seized five towns in Morazán and Chalatenango provinces.

The coordinated FMLN offensive began October 10. At Perquín, in Morazán, an entire company of government troops was routed, with all 124 soldiers either killed or captured. In Chalatenango, the FMLN occupied Las Vueltas and El Júcaro and held off a counterattack by 2,000 government troops.

FMLN commando units also carried out the first actions in the capital itself in several months, and guerrilla forces succeeded in blockading the main east-west highways in

many spots. In Usulután Province, the seaport of El Triunfo was reportedly sealed off by FMLN units on October 16.

The FMLN's October offensive underscored its continued strength, mobility, and popular support.

As of October 22, according to the *New York Times*, "leftist guerrillas continued to hold several villages in the northern and eastern sections of the country, and there was no sign that the Government planned any immediate major efforts to remove them."

Washington's margin for maneuver in El Salvador is further reduced owing to renewed conflicts inside the regime and the armed forces hierarchy. In September the government tried to prosecute two military officers for the death-squad-type slayings of agrarian reform chief José Rodolfo Viera and two U.S. advisers in a San Salvador hotel in January 1981. These supporters of the regime were rubbed out by ultrarightists who are opposed to even the semblance of land reform.

Despite ample evidence, two judges threw out the case. The accused officers had been singled out on national television as "my colleagues and my friends" by Constituent Assembly President Maj. Roberto D'Aubuisson (widely considered the chief of the death squads).

The Reagan administration has been pressing for prosecution in the case as a means of demonstrating to congressional critics that it is concerned over human-rights violations in El Salvador. But as the *Washington Post* noted October 10, the case "could become so unwieldy it could threaten the whole shaky structure in El Salvador."

FDR leaders seized

Of course, the January 1981 killings pale in comparison with the unabated murders and kidnappings carried out by the death squads on a daily basis. On October 8 the Christian Legal Aid Society — an arm of the Salvadoran Catholic Church — announced that 474 civilians had been killed in the month of September by "the army and right-wing paramilitary organizations."

A major operation of this sort was carried out in mid-October. Five leading members of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) were kidnapped in San Salvador, as were five trade-union leaders. The abductions were reminiscent of the seizure and subsequent murder of six FDR leaders in November 1980.

Another FDR leader, Saúl Villalta, was arrested by the Treasury Police in August. His whereabouts are unknown, as are those of the 10 militants seized in October.

The continued savagery and repression by the Salvadoran regime complicates Reagan's efforts to gain support for continued military aid in Congress. The *New York Times* cautioned in a September 25 editorial that giving the Salvadoran butchers a free hand did not look very good in light of the outcry over the recent massacres in Beirut. □

Workers defeat dictatorship

Miners spearhead upsurge against military rule, austerity

By Fred Murphy

The workers and peasants of Bolivia have forced an end to the corrupt military dictatorship that had ruled the country for more than two years following a brutal coup in July 1980.

In face of a massive upsurge spearheaded by militant tin miners, the ruling generals beat a hasty retreat and turned power over on October 10 to a civilian regime headed by ex-President Hernán Siles Zuazo. The national Congress elected in June 1980 but forcibly dissolved by the military coup was reinstated.

The dictatorship had been on the defensive for months as popular resistance mounted against austerity measures imposed at the behest of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Economic crisis

Bolivia is one of a growing number of Latin America countries that face a desperate economic situation due to declining income from exported raw materials, rising prices for foodstuffs and manufactured goods imported from the imperialist countries, massive foreign debts, and growing difficulties in obtaining further credit from the big international banks and lending institutions.

The world-market price of tin, Bolivia's main export, has dropped precipitously in recent years, while income from oil and natural-gas exports has also declined. Exacerbating the country's difficulties has been the corruption rampant among the ruling military officers, who have siphoned off vast sums from the state budget for their own enrichment.

The crisis became acute in August 1981, when Bolivia's foreign-currency reserves dropped to zero and the central bank's checks began to bounce. Gen. Luis García Meza — who led the 1980 coup — was replaced as president by Gen. Celso Torrelio, and the regime went to the IMF for an emergency loan. That agency, which serves as a financial cop for the big imperialist banks, demanded that the military rulers devalue the Bolivian peso, slash government subsidies on basic consumer goods, and hike fuel taxes.

The first attempt to implement these measures came last February. It was immediately met with a wave of strikes in the mines, factories, and banks. The workers' response showed that the dictatorship had failed to destroy the country's powerful labor movement.

General strikes

The Bolivian Workers Federation (COB) had managed to reorganize in a clandestine fashion following the killings, arrests, and ex-



Gen. Luis García Meza led 1980 coup.

pulsions from the country that many of its activists suffered after the 1980 coup. From underground, the COB called a general strike to demand the February measures be revoked. On March 28 and 29, the country was paralyzed. In Cochabamba, the third-largest city, 10,000 workers took to the streets on March 26. Six were killed when paramilitary groups attacked the demonstration.

The March actions were the beginning of a sustained mass upsurge. As another COB-called general strike was under way in late May, General Torrelio conceded a general amnesty for political exiles and restored funds confiscated from the unions. The COB regained its legal status.

Torrelio was sacked by the military high command in July and replaced with Gen. Guido Vildoso, who pledged to restore constitutional rule, hold elections in April 1983, and respect trade-union rights.

But the COB responded to Vildoso's installation with a one-hour protest strike and declared that the new president deserved "not the slightest confidence" from the Bolivian people. The COB and its main component, the tin miners federation (FSTMB)¹, announced that the labor movement would remain in a

1. Trade-Union Federation of Mine Workers of Bolivia.

"state of emergency" in preparation for further actions against the regime and its austerity measures.

Meanwhile, many private capitalists were becoming exasperated with the military's inability to stabilize the economy or keep the labor movement under control. The widespread corruption was harming the interests of sections of the ruling class itself. Many top generals and colonels were openly tied to the lucrative drug trade, which was booming while the rest of the economy was in collapse. (Cocaine actually became Bolivia's top export under the dictatorship, bringing in upwards of \$1.5 billion a year for the generals and their cronies.)

Capitalists vs. generals

The capitalists were especially alarmed at the military's discredit and its disarray in face of mounting social protest. "If God himself came down and you dressed him in an army uniform, the people would not accept him," a construction executive told the *New York Times* in early August.

"Even business men who long believed that only military dictatorships could run Bolivia now think a civilian government is essential," *Times* correspondent Warren Hoge reported August 9. "'Only a government with public backing can take the measures that have to be taken and still survive,' a mining executive said."

With this perspective in mind, two of the main bourgeois parties and the Confederation of Private Businessmen began pressing for restoration of the Congress elected in 1980, in which the country's more conservative civilian political forces would hold a majority.

The COB opposed that scheme and demanded that new elections be held immediately. Similar demands were advanced by the Democratic and Popular Unity (UDP), a bloc composed of the Communist Party, the Left Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNRI), and the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR).²

The UDP's 1980 presidential candidate,

2. The MNRI is a bourgeois-nationalist formation that arose from a split in the original MNR, which led the 1952 revolution in Bolivia. That uprising destroyed the old army and led to nationalization of the tin mines and an extensive land reform. The other major MNR faction, led by ex-President Victor Paz Estenssoro, stands to the right of the MNRI and is called the Historic Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNRH). The MIR began as a radical petty-bourgeois grouping but has moved to the right in recent years. It is affiliated to the Socialist International and is often referred to as social democratic.

MNRI leader Hernán Siles Zuazo, had won a plurality in that year's elections (as well as in earlier 1978 and 1979 votes that were also thwarted by coups or coup threats). In pressing for replacing the dictatorship with the 1980 Congress, the ruling-class forces were also ready to accept Siles as president in the hope that his reformist coalition would be able to impose austerity on the masses.

The military hierarchy was sharply divided. So-called institutionalists who supported such a scheme had already attempted several coups. Other sections of the brass were worried that a civilian regime might try to curtail the drug trade and punish the most corrupt officers. The regime was growing more and more shaky. It was in no position to enforce the IMF's program or to confront the rising discontent head-on.

Miners take the lead

The mass upsurge accelerated in late August. On the 26th, the FSTMB launched a 48-hour strike in the tin mines, which was joined by the office staff of the state mining corporation. Days later, workers at the biggest mine, Huanuni, began an indefinite strike. Peasant organizations began blocking highways in the countryside to demand better agricultural prices. On September 6, the industrial workers of Cochabamba convened a "people's assembly" there and called a citywide general strike, declaring that the shutdown would last until military rule was ended. In subsequent days, strikes also took place among communications workers, printers and journalists, teachers, and bank employees.

By September 13, general strikes were under way in the southern provinces of Tarija, Potosí, and Chuquisaca. The Cochabamba strike was extended to the entire province. Peasant roadblocks became widespread.

The COB's national leadership called for "Marches Against Hunger" to be held in La Paz (the capital) and other major cities on September 15. Pressure was building for a nationwide general strike to bring down the dictatorship.

On September 15, more than 100,000 marchers poured into the streets of La Paz. Many demanded that the COB call a general strike. Speaking to the crowd, Filemón Escobar, an FSTMB leader from the Catavi-Siglo XX mine — long a bastion of working-class militancy — announced that miners there had decided on an all-out strike and were calling on all Bolivian workers to join them.

While national leaders of the COB had been arguing against such a move and urging that only a 48-hour work stoppage be held, it was clear from the popular mood at the September 15 marches that the movement was threatening to go beyond the union officialdom. Six of Bolivia's nine provinces were already on strike. On September 16, the COB Executive Committee acceded to the Catavi-Siglo XX miners' demand and called for a full-scale general strike to begin immediately.

Bolivia was paralyzed. Airports were

closed, ground transport ceased, factories and offices were shut down. The military high command held a meeting, and, before the strike was 48 hours old, announced that General Vildoso would step down as soon as the 1980 Congress could convene and elect a new president.

Siles Zuazo's government

Siles Zuazo was voted in by the Congress on October 5 and returned from exile three days later. Welcomed by one of the largest rallies in Bolivian history, Siles promised to "construct a democracy with absolute liberty," "dismantle corruption" within 100 days, and take economic measures to aid the poorest sectors of society. He told the military that while he sought "reconciliation of the armed forces with the Bolivian people," he would reject "any condition, any imposition coming from military chiefs who, dragging their institution through the mud, gave it an image that does not correspond to the ideals of the people."

Upon taking office, Siles sacked the top commanders of the armed forces and replaced them with some of the "institutionalist" officers who had led earlier attempts to restore civilian rule. Two Communist Party leaders were appointed to head the labor and mining ministries, and an Aymará Indian was named minister of agriculture.

Siles also restored diplomatic relations with Nicaragua — broken after the July 1980 coup — and invited Nicaraguan junta member Sergio Ramírez and Cuban Vice-president Carlos Rafael Rodríguez to his inauguration.

COB leader proposes program

The new UDP regime enjoys considerable popular support. But it also faces formidable problems. Bolivia is in default on some \$250 million in payments on its \$3.8 billion foreign debt and must pay \$540 million by the end of the year. Inflation stands at 200 percent or more and is rising. The IMF and imperialist governments and banks are demanding that the long-delayed austerity measures be put into effect.

Siles's aim is to get the workers movement to accept the call for "sacrifice and sobriety" he made in his inaugural speech. That is why leaders of the CP — which has a considerable base in the COB — were appointed to key posts. But the workers did not defeat the military regime only to have civilian rulers impose the same harsh economic policies.

The workers' mood was reflected in the COB's response to Siles's offer to include direct representatives of the union federation in his government. COB Executive Secretary Juan Lechín declined and called instead for a cabinet made up of more than half workers' representatives. Lechín declared that "the only way the COB would accept co-government would be on the basis of an economic program of liberation, that is, an anti-imperialist one without any ties to the International Monetary Fund."

To solve the crisis, Lechín said, the govern-

ment should declare a moratorium on foreign-debt payments, sell off Bolivia's gold reserves, cut military spending by 50 percent, impose strict currency controls, and take steps to improve workers' economic conditions.

Class-struggle demands

In August, the tin miners federation held its 19th national congress and also called for a debt moratorium. The congress adopted an "anti-imperialist and antioligarchic program" that included demands for nationalization of the banking system and a state monopoly on foreign trade. The strikes the FSTMB and COB led in August and September demanded not only an end to the dictatorship, but also an adequate minimum wage and a sliding scale of wages to offset the effects of inflation.

Such demands reflect the high level of consciousness already achieved by big sections of the Bolivian proletariat and its allies. In coming months the Bolivian workers and peasants will face the attempts of imperialism — and the Siles government — to make them bear the costs of capitalism's worldwide crisis. They are unlikely to take such attacks lying down. Meanwhile, they have already scored a major victory and set an inspiring example for their sisters and brothers under the military boot in Chile, Argentina, and other Latin American countries. □

Cuba frees rightist bomber

Following his release from a Cuban prison, Armando Valladares, the convicted counter-revolutionary terrorist who was often described in the capitalist press as the "poet in a wheelchair," walked off a jet in Paris on October 22. Cuban authorities had noted all along that Valladares was not paralyzed or confined to a wheelchair.

The incarceration of Valladares has been used for years to try to smear the Cuban revolution. With his release — eight years before the expiration of his original sentence for terrorist activities — opponents of the Cuban revolution must now cook up a new "political prisoner" to moan over.

Valladares is regularly described in the imperialist press reports as a former supporter of the revolution, a student leader jailed for criticizing Fidel Castro, and a noted poet.

But Valladares was not jailed for criticisms of Castro or for his poems, which he only began writing in prison. He was convicted of planting bombs in public places. When arrested, he was in possession of dynamite, other explosives, and weapons.

Until the revolution, Valladares had been a member of dictator Batista's police force, not a student leader.

For more on the Valladares case, see *Intercontinental Press*, July 13, 1981, p. 734.

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New attack on rights of Québécois

Meaning of court decision on Law 101

By Michel Prairie

[On September 9 a Canadian court ruled that parts of Quebec's Law 101 are in violation of the "Charter of Rights" in the new constitution pushed through by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. Law 101 was passed in 1977 by Quebec's nationalist Parti Québécois (PQ) government. It was designed to protect the rights of the oppressed Québécois nation, and to preserve its language and cultural heritage. The following article appeared in the October 11 issue of the Canadian biweekly newspaper *Socialist Voice*, which reflects the views of the Revolutionary Workers League, the Canadian section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

MONTREAL — In an historic decision, Judge Jules Deschênes has established the supremacy of Trudeau's new constitution over Quebec's Law 101 with respect to the lan-

guage of education in Quebec.

This judgment is a frontal attack on the Quebec nation. It shows the determination of the Canadian ruling class to wrest from Quebec the economic, political, and linguistic gains it has made over the past twenty years.

The Deschênes judgment is first and foremost a direct attack on Quebec's right to self-determination.

This decision confirms Quebec's loss of its exclusive jurisdiction over the language of education. That's a direct consequence of Trudeau's unilateral patriation of the constitution last fall.

In losing this fight, the Quebec nation loses control over a vital tool for its survival. For decades, the school system has been one of the principal mechanisms for the assimilation of immigrants to Quebec into the English-speaking community. At the end of the 1960s, it became evident that francophones risked becom-

ing a minority in Quebec over the long term if nothing was done to halt this process. Since the adoption of Law 101 in 1977, all newcomers to Quebec send their children to French schools.

By opening the doors of English schools in Quebec to a much larger number of students, Trudeau's constitution directly attacks these measures codified in Law 101 and designed to protect the French language.

The measures for the protection and promotion of French contained in Law 101 can be summed up in four points:

- French to be the nearly exclusive language of the legislature and courts.
- All public notices (signs, billboards, etc.) must be in French.
- French to be the language of work for all businesses employing more than 50 workers.
- All students who come to Quebec after 1977 must attend French schools.

Now, with the Deschênes decision, Ottawa

What Law 101 does

During the 1960s, hundreds of thousands of Québécois mobilized to demand that access to English schools be limited in Quebec. The most important struggles on this question took place in 1968-69. The union federations supported these struggles and the demands raised.

It was the very survival of the Quebec nation that was at stake in these battles.

The federal censuses of 1961 and 1971 showed that 70 percent of immigrants who came to Quebec were being assimilated into the English community, even though it represented no more than one-tenth of the population of the province. This flowed from the fact that speaking English is a factor in social advancement here in Quebec. In 1961, anglophones in Quebec earned on average 35 percent more than francophones.

If this tendency for immigrants to assimilate into the anglophone community were maintained, the francophones of Quebec risked becoming a minority in their own province over time.

Why was the demand to limit access to English schools raised? It's because the school system had become one of the principal tools for the anglicization of new arrivals to Quebec in the years following

World War II. In 1962-63, 74.7 percent of the children of immigrants enrolled with the Montreal Catholic School Board (CECM) chose English as the language of instruction. And in 1972-73, 61.18 percent of the students enrolled in the CECM's English schools did not have English as their mother tongue.

Since 1977, Law 101 has channeled all new immigrants of school age to French schools, while maintaining the English school system for English-speaking residents. This measure has begun to reverse the historical tendency for the children of immigrants and even the children of francophones to become assimilated into the anglophone community by means of the English school system.

In 1976-77, 81.7 percent of students who had neither English nor French as their mother tongue were enrolled in English schools. By 1979-80, this percentage had fallen to 67.3 percent.

By 1980, three years after Law 101 was first applied, the English school system had been reduced to 14.7 percent of the school population in Quebec. This drop finally started to correspond to the fact that people with English as their mother tongue represented no more than 11.1 percent of Quebec's population by this time.

It's this mechanism — which protected the French-speaking people of Quebec from assimilation and from becoming a minority within Quebec — that the Deschênes decision has just taken from them.

The Deschênes decision adds nothing to the rights of francophone minorities located outside Quebec. *It is a judgment with a single purpose.*

All that it does is to guarantee the privileges of Quebec's anglophone community, which hasn't lost its more-favored status in spite of Law 101. In 1980 for example, the average income of Quebec's anglophones was still 19 percent higher than that of francophones.

And the only way to guarantee the privileges of the anglophone community is to attack certain of the key protective measures taken by the oppressed francophone majority to assure its survival. That's what the Deschênes decision does.

This ruling aims at forcing Quebec to apply the Trudeau government's new charter of rights. It puts into question not only Quebec's right to legislate its own policy on language of education, but also, in the last analysis, Quebec's very survival as a nation. The Deschênes decision must not be allowed to stand.

— M.P.

has declared two of these four main sections null and void. In 1978 the Supreme Court ruled that making French the language of the courts and legislature was unconstitutional.

What will be left of Law 101 after the Deschênes decision? Other parts of the law are already being contested in court, in particular the sections dealing with French-only signs and with language tests for non-francophone professionals.

Ottawa is openly out to gut Law 101. For Canadian imperialism it is the most hated symbol of Quebec's struggle for its emancipation over the past 20 years.

In order to enforce their answer to the present crisis in this country, the powerful Canadian banks and corporations had to first break the resistance and combativity of the Québécois and turn back the gains they had made. That's the meaning of the new constitution. And that's why the attack against Quebec is so violent today.

A racist and reactionary campaign

But there is more. With the court decision, a reactionary and often racist campaign has been unleashed against the Quebec government and the Québécois in general.

- There's the launching of a racist press campaign in the English media in Quebec and the rest of Canada. Here the accusations of "totalitarianism" made against the Parti Québécois government in the Deschênes decision are serving as the basis for wild charges that the Québécois are guilty of fascism and genocide against the anglophones of Quebec. The charges often originate at the highest level, for example from [Minister of Justice and Attorney General] Jean Chrétien.

- The anglophone school boards in the Montreal region have decided to defy the elected PQ government by opening their doors immediately to the students affected by the judgment, in spite of the decision of Quebec to appeal it. This method of proceeding is illegal. In the case of an appeal, the disputed law remains in force. This step by the school boards constitutes an act of open civil disobedience against the Quebec government.

- The anglophone community has begun to actively mobilize against the plans for reform of the education system put forward by Education Minister Camille Laurin. Anglophones oppose the plan because it would limit their control over the network of English schools.

- Finally, slogans like "Fuck Bill 101" have begun to appear on walls in Montreal, including some in the francophone sections in the east end of the city.

This campaign has a very precise goal: to promote an atmosphere that will encourage the bosses and anglophone community to lash out against the Québécois. At the same time, this reactionary campaign is meant to disorient and demoralize the Québécois.

Only a massive counter-mobilization can prevent such an outcome. That is a considerable challenge, to which the PQ and the unions must respond today. □

Poland

Workers protest ban on union

Regime's attempt to finish Solidarity runs into trouble

By Will Reissner

The Polish regime banned the Solidarity labor union and the Rural Solidarity farmers organization on October 8, hoping this move would end the struggle by Polish working people for their own, democratically run, mass organizations, and for genuine control over Poland's economy, society, and government.

But events quickly showed that the Polish working class — although hit hard by 10 months of martial law — has not been broken.

The banning of Solidarity was met with strikes and street demonstrations in a number of factories and cities. These were spontaneous actions, carried out by angry workers who were unwilling to wait for the November 10 protest set by Solidarity's underground National Coordinating Committee (TKK).

When workers entered the Lenin Shipyards in Gdansk on October 11 — the first working day after Solidarity was banned — they proceeded to their stations but refused to work.

The strike at the Lenin Shipyards was one of eight in the Baltic coast cities of Gdansk, Gdynia, and Sopot on that day. The strikers were demanding an end to the ban on Solidarity, the lifting of martial law, and the release of all political prisoners.

Polish authorities moved quickly to isolate the region and break the strikes, fearing a repetition of the leading role the Baltic coast workers played in the 1980 struggles that culminated in the formation and legal recognition of Solidarity.

At least 148 people were arrested in Gdansk on October 11 and 12 as police broke up crowds gathering at the shipyard gates. Hundreds of workers in the yard were fired.

Telephone lines and other means of communication between Gdansk and the rest of Poland were cut off for days to prevent news of the protests from spreading.

On October 12, the second day of the strike, the Polish military government placed the shipyards under military discipline, making strikers subject to summary courts-martial and long prison sentences if they refused orders to return to work.

The militarization of the workforce succeeded in ending the strike, and work resumed on October 13.

But the day that strike ended, new protests broke out in southern Poland. In Nowa Huta, near Krakow, about 3,000 workers at the Lenin steelworks, the country's largest enterprise, attempted a protest march from the factory to the center of town. Riot police used tear gas to break up the march and one young demonstrator, Bogdan Wlosik, died after being shot by a plainclothes policeman. □

Wlosik's funeral on October 20 attracted 10,000 people, many carrying banners proclaiming "Solidarity lives," and the event turned into a demonstration in support of the banned trade union.

In three days of protests in Nowa Huta, at least 135 people were arrested.

Police in Wroclaw broke up a crowd of hundreds of Solidarity supporters on October 13 as they attempted to demonstrate outside the banned union's former headquarters in that city. Police arrested about 175 protesters.

More than 600 of the most experienced leaders of Solidarity are still interned in the regime's jails and camps, and thousands of others have been sentenced to prison on frame-up charges. But the leaders who remain at large have called for a nationwide four-hour strike November 10, the second anniversary of Solidarity's legal recognition.

Although the Polish bureaucracy banned Solidarity, it has had little success in building support for the housebroken official unions it hopes to erect in Solidarity's place.

Under the law banning Solidarity, new unions will begin functioning on January 1, 1983, but only under severe restrictions.

The Polish bureaucracy is adamant that the new unions not function like Solidarity, which demanded that the workers organizations have a direct say on political and social questions affecting society as a whole.

In Poland the major means of production — the factories, mines, mills, and shipyards — are nationalized. Capitalism has been abolished, but political power and decision-making are monopolized by a bureaucratic caste whose privileges depend on preventing the working class from determining how the economy and society should be run.

But the bureaucracy is having a hard time trying to lay to rest the challenge to its rule. Few workers are joining the official unions established to take Solidarity's place. The Warsaw daily *Zycie Warszawy* admitted that the news media have contained "often false reports" about the enthusiasm of the workers for the new unions.

Reports in the Polish press on new members signed up by the unions reveal how isolated these bodies are. The official news Agency PAP reported that in the initial response at the Nowa Huta steel mill, which has nearly 40,000 workers, 13 people had joined the new union. PAP also reported that 90 workers had signed up for the new union at the giant Ursus tractor factory in Warsaw. At the Lenin Shipyards in Gdansk, only 3 percent of the workers said they would join the official union. □



Under Suharto's bloody boot

Reagan praises Indonesian dictatorship

By Ernest Harsch

Since Indonesian troops first invaded the former Portuguese colony of East Timor in late 1975, some 200,000 Timorese have died, massacred by Indonesian troops or killed by famine.

Out of an estimated population of some 650,000 before the invasion, Catholic church officials in East Timor calculate that only 425,000 are still alive.

But the U.S. government — a firm supporter of the repressive Indonesian regime — would like to sweep evidence of this massive bloodletting under the rug.

When Indonesian President Suharto visited Washington October 12, he was feted at the White House and toasted by Reagan. The U.S. president paid tribute to Suharto's "responsible" leadership and declared that Washington "regards Indonesia as an important force for peace, stability and progress."

Washington is currently supplying the Suharto regime with \$40 million in U.S. military assistance and has pledged \$100 million in other aid for the coming year. Negotiations for the sale of advanced air and naval equipment are now under way.

'Quiet diplomacy'

This show of support for the Suharto regime comes at a time of renewed international criticism of the Indonesian role in East Timor, as more evidence surfaces of its barbaric occupation of the territory.

Attempting to explain away the Reagan administration's refusal to criticize the Indonesian regime's butchery, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs John Holdridge

declared the same day as Suharto's arrival in Washington that the White House prefers what it calls "quiet diplomacy."

It was similar "quiet diplomacy" that helped pave the way for the 1975 invasion in the first place.

Following the overthrow of the Caetano dictatorship in Portugal in 1974, a strong movement for independence arose in East Timor, which had been a Portuguese colony for 450 years. The independence movement was led by Fretilin (Revolutionary Front for the Independence of East Timor).

The Indonesian regime and its backers in Washington feared the emergence of an independent East Timor under the leadership of Fretilin, which had wide popular support and was actively organizing the Timorese people into trade unions, women's organizations, students' associations, and other mass bodies.

From West Timor, which was already under Indonesian rule, the Indonesian regime sought to prevent Fretilin from coming to power. Throughout the second half of 1975, Indonesian troops regularly carried out raids across the border into East Timor.

On Nov. 28, 1975, Fretilin declared East Timor's independence from Portugal. A little more than a week later, on December 6, President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger visited Jakarta for talks with Suharto. A few hours after they left, on December 7, Indonesian troops invaded East Timor.

A Fretilin representative charged at the time that "Dr. Kissinger knew of the invasion and gave it his encouragement." A White House press spokesperson admitted that Ford and

Kissinger had, in fact, discussed the situation in East Timor with Suharto.

The Australian imperialists, who have major economic and political interests in Indonesia and the rest of the region, also gave a green light to the invasion. An Australian newspaper, the *National Times*, revealed a week after it began that officials of both the previous Labor Party government and the then Liberal-National Country Party coalition government had "communicated private assurances to the Indonesians . . . that no objections would be forthcoming to even direct intervention."

Mass slaughter

With this U.S. and Australian backing, Suharto's forces attempted to exterminate the independence movement — and along with it much of the Timorese population.

Up to 100,000 Timorese were slaughtered during the first months of the Indonesian occupation. The territory was cut off from the outside world, and the Suharto regime proclaimed it part of Indonesia.

But this massive killing did not break the resistance. Fretilin leaders and members who escaped the initial massacres fled into the mountains and organized a guerrilla campaign against the occupation forces.

To try to crush this resistance, the Indonesian army launched a series of offensives. In an interview in the August 2 Paris fortnightly *Afrique-Asie*, Mari Alkatiri, a member of Fretilin's Central Committee, charged that the Indonesian forces were using U.S.-supplied F-5E and Skyhawk A-4 fighter bombers and Bronco-Rockwell counterinsurgency planes. They were also using napalm, defoliants, and white phosphorus bombs, he said.

In a bid to physically isolate the Fretilin fighters from their civilian supporters, Indonesian forces have driven hundreds of thousands of peasants from their fields and into 150 so-called resettlement centers, which are patterned after Washington's "strategic hamlet" program in South Vietnam during the U.S. war there.

'A land beset by hunger'

These Indonesian military campaigns totally disrupted agriculture. As a result, a massive famine swept the territory between 1978 and 1980, leading to many more deaths.

In May 1982, Rod Nordland, a reporter for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, became one of the few foreign journalists allowed into East Timor. His extensive report provided considerable evidence of continued near-famine conditions and of the Indonesian authorities' brutality against the civilian population.

"East Timor . . . is a land beset by widespread malnutrition and hunger," Nordland reported May 28. "This year's grain harvest was a dismal failure; now, even as many Timorese suffer through longstanding food shortages, they face a new wave of famine, the second in five years."

One reason for the failure of the harvest, Nordland revealed, was the Indonesian Army's launching last year of "Operation Security," a massive campaign aimed at wiping out the Fretilin guerrillas. Most males over the age of 13 were conscripted for this effort, making it impossible to plant crops before the onset of the rainy season in September. During the operation, according to a top church official in East Timor, at least 1,000 civilians were killed.

Even in Dili, the capital of East Timor, Nordland found that "severe malnutrition is widespread and apparent." To counter the denials of Indonesian officials that famine conditions exist in East Timor, Nordland secretly weighed and measured 22 children in Dili. Of that number, 18 were found to be "chronically malnourished," according to standards used by the World Health Organization.

On top of this Indonesian policy of death by starvation, Nordland found that "Indonesian rule has been characterized by fear and marred by accusations of torture and widespread abuse of civilians by soldiers. There are virtually no civil liberties. Peasants are told to whom they must sell their coffee and at what price. No one may leave his village or hometown without permission."

Thousands of political prisoners are being held, Nordland reported, many of them simply because they are related to a Fretilin fighter. He visited Atauro Island, 15 miles north of Dili, where many of these prisoners are being held in crowded barracks with little food or medical care.

Despite the Indonesian regime's overwhelming military superiority, the Fretilin forces are continuing to fight on. In his inter-

view, Fretilin leader Alkatiri noted that Fretilin guerrilla units had stepped up their attacks against Indonesian positions in January and February of this year, taking an army barracks in Laga. In March, he said, some 200 Fretilin fighters attacked a military instruction center in Laleia and other Indonesian positions in Viqueque and Lospalos.

The continuing war in East Timor, Alkatiri noted, had produced dissension within the Indonesian army. He said that Fretilin had contact with some Indonesian officers. He also pointed to the revival of nationalist struggles in other parts of the Indonesian archipelago.

Alkatiri lashed out at Washington's extensive backing for the Indonesian dictatorship, declaring, "Suharto relies on the United States to remain in power, and Reagan uses Suharto to carry out his strategic policies in this part of the Pacific." □

Grenada

How revolution affects rural areas

Agriculture plays central role in island's life

By Baxter Smith

GOUYAVE — Church steeples and orange buildings in this western seashore village give it a sleepy look when seen from afar during a trip from St. George's along the twisting coastal road.

Upon one's arrival, workers at a boxing plant can be seen packaging bananas for overseas shipment. Wispy curls of mace age in the sun on villagers' porches. Pungent and sweet odors of drying cocoa and nutmeg punctuate the air. Along the beach, the hammering and sawing of boatbuilders can sometimes be heard, and fishermen have nets propped up to dry.

Perhaps no other place better captures the scents and sounds of this small "spice island" in the Caribbean.

And, perhaps, no other place better captures the sights of this spice island's revolution:

Modest but newly renovated wooden houses stand out, evidence of the Housing Repair Program. A banner strung across main street urges "those who have no work" to come to a meeting of the unemployed. Daubed on the walls outside the nutmeg processing plant are warnings: "Counters behave!" and "Down with CIA trade unions." A painted billboard near the boxing plant depicts a fisherwoman and declares: "Women committed to economic construction."

Gouyave is the political pulse of St. John's Parish and is in the center of agriculture on the western side of the island.

There is one large estate here and many people are small- or medium-sized farmers. There are two agricultural cooperatives and

two fishing cooperatives. There are active branches of the Productive Farmers Union (PFU) and the Agricultural and General Workers Union (AGWU).

Intercontinental Press gleaned this from interviews with leaders of the New Jewel Movement and others in learning about life in Grenada's various parishes and how the programs of the revolution are working.

By U.S. or West European standards, Gre-

nadians as a whole are poor. While there are a few families in each of the parishes living in elaborate and comfortable surroundings, there are many more — including in the capital city of St. George's — that are in houses without electricity or running water. But there is not the type of grinding poverty and its accompanying despair that exists in some Black communities in the United States.

Agriculture is the backbone of the economy. There are an estimated 10,000 full- or part-



New elementary school under construction in St. David's.

time farmers. Four thousand more are agricultural workers. And there are about 1,500 jobs in agriculture off the field. This adds up to just about 50 percent of the total working population.

In contrast to some Caribbean countries, there is no stark difference between urban and rural areas of life in Grenada. St. George's has less than 10,000 of the 110,000 people on the island. No shantytowns have grown up around the capital, and there is no core urban proletariat — to speak of — that has known only life in the city for decades. This differs from Jamaica, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and countries in the Eastern Caribbean such as Martinique or Trinidad.

Unlike as in some countries in the region, there has been no problem here of families or youth swarming into the capital from the countryside in search of elusive, better-paying jobs and finding instead only slums.

But that does not mean that the government here has not had problems in helping youth understand the importance of agriculture and farm work. Only about one-fifth of all farmers are under 30.

'Colonial education'

Edrick Adams, a leader of the NJM in St. Patrick's Parish, explained the reasons for some of the difficulties.

He places a lot of the blame on the colonial outlook of the education system that has existed.

"The schools in Grenada have never taught agricultural science or methods," Adams said. "They taught you to want to be a doctor or a lawyer or to want to work in an office."

Over the generations, farm parents have sacrificed so their children could "get a better job" than farm work. Due to a lack of modern technology and the consequent necessity of demanding physical labor, farm work has come to be seen by some as dreaded and lowly.

"But this is beginning to change," Adams said. The revolutionary government has begun several agricultural, agriculture-related, and livestock training schools.

St Patrick is the northernmost parish on the island.

"Nearly everybody here has an acre, a half acre, or a quarter acre of land," according to Adams. As a result, there are numerous small farmers. But many people supplement their income by performing other labor, such as carpentry, masonry, or teaching.

There are over 200 members in the St. Patrick's PFU, which is on an organizing drive. According to a spokesperson, it has run into some resistance from farmers who still need to be convinced that it differs from the old farmers' union that existed under former dictator Eric Gairy.

Although the new bus system has helped a lot, lack of adequate transportation is still a major problem in St. Patrick's and other parishes. When transportation is late or fails to

materialize, this sometimes discourages people from participating in various programs. This was one of the problems in the first stage of the Centre for Popular Education's literacy program. Lack of transportation at night also keeps people from attending zonal or parish council meetings.

Cheryl Williams, St. Patrick's coordinator of the National Women's Organization, reports that the body is going strongly there. There are 22 NWO groups in the parish. She said their programs come directly from the national offices of the NWO in St. George's. She cited a shortage of daycare as a problem that keeps women from participating in programs such as the militia.

Almost half of all women in the parish, Williams said, belong to the NWO. She hopes that through recruitment efforts this figure will be 70 percent by the end of November.

Unionization

Eric Noel, coordinator of mass mobilization in southeastern St. David's Parish, says that union organization there has gotten a big boost as workers realize that the programs of the revolution benefit them. Half of all teachers are

unionized and 90 percent of agricultural workers belong to AGWU.

In contrast to the small number of estates in St. John's and St. Patrick's parishes, there are six large estates — three privately owned and three state-owned — in St. David's.

There are more than 20 groups of the National Youth Organization there, and Noel said that "a considerable number of youth have returned to the land."

Free primary health care came to St. David's last year. Noel says that council meetings often discuss "world events, like the Falklands or Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative" in addition to problems of water or power shortages or proposed new programs.

The large number of agricultural workers in St. David's provides the backbone for the revolution because "they get the most benefits from it."

Among the most active groups in St. David's, according to Noel, are the Young Pioneers. "They are very serious," he said. When grown-ups show up late for meetings or mess up in other ways they occasionally get straightened out by revolutionaries half their size and age. □

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Socialists offer program to fight for jobs

Nearly 20 million workers unemployed

By Ernest Harsch

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

* * *

What many people have already known for some time became official on October 8: American working people are victims of double-digit unemployment.

That very same day, the New York Stock Exchange went wild. More than 123 million shares were traded, the fifth-heaviest buying activity on record.

So while millions of workers are pounding the pavement looking for jobs or agonizing over which bills to ignore, there are some people who obviously have lots of money to throw around. Some of them are the same ones, in fact, who are closing down unprofitable plants across the country.

With the announcement that the official unemployment rate had climbed to 10.1 percent, both Democratic and Republican Party candidates were quick to blame each other, their eyes fixed on the November 2 congressional elections.

President Reagan placed the responsibility for much of the unemployment at the feet of the Carter administration. Democratic Party officials, on the other hand, have focused their fire exclusively on the Reagan administration's economic policies.

While the attacks of the Democrats have been heavy on campaign rhetoric, they are light on any concrete proposals for how to fight unemployment. At best, they suggest band-aid programs that would do little to bring down the astronomical unemployment figures, even if they were implemented.

That is not surprising. Neither the Democratic nor Republican Party has an answer to the job losses that are disrupting the lives of millions of working people in this country, because *both* parties reflect the interests of the very same class of employers that is responsible for the scourge of unemployment.

Misery for millions

While the big-business politicians are scrambling to get into office — or to stay there — unemployment has become a day-to-day reality for most working families in this country. For those who have not already lost their jobs, the threat of layoffs or plant closings has dimmed their hopes for the future and for that of their children.

The official unemployment figure of 11,260,000 jobless workers in the United States — while serious in its own right — vast-

ly understates the actual number of unemployed.

This figure does not include the 1.6 million workers who have been without jobs for so long that they have given up actively looking. And it does not include the 6.6 million who are partially unemployed.

If taken together with the 10.1 percent counted by the Labor Department, these unemployed workers would raise the overall unemployment rate to more than 17.5 percent — nearly 20 million workers. In absolute numbers, that would be as many workers without full-time jobs as during the Great Depression.

Because of the turnover in the ranks of unemployed *one out of every four* workers has been unemployed for some period during the past year.

As always, this unemployment has hit the weakest and least organized sectors of the workforce the hardest. Official unemployment among women who maintain families is 12.4 percent, while for women in their teens it is more than 23 percent. Latinos suffer from an official unemployment rate of nearly 15 percent, while for Blacks it is more than 20 percent. Nearly half of all Black teenagers are unemployed.

Reduced benefits

Social benefits and services that cushioned the effects of job losses for many workers in the past are now being whittled down.

State and federal unemployment benefits have been significantly cut. Workers in many states are no longer able to get the 13 weeks of supplementary benefits that they were previously eligible for after their 26 weeks of state benefits had run out. The benefits for some 60 percent of all unemployed workers have now run out.

Moreover, the amounts of the benefits are becoming more and more meager. In July, the average unemployment check was \$114.60, just 42 percent of the average weekly wage of \$269.98. Forty years ago, the proportion of unemployment compensation to average wages in most states was 60, 70, or 80 percent.

On top of this, Social Security and disability benefits have been attacked. Food stamp and school lunch programs have been slashed. Budget cuts are driving up rents in federally subsidized housing. Public transportation costs are rising, and in many cities service has been sharply curtailed.

Even workers who have been at the same job for years, and have felt a certain amount of job security, now have to pore over the want ads,

wondering how on earth they will make ends meet.

Because of the cuts in federal education loans, their children are forced to discontinue college or to give up hope of ever going. With workers unable to keep up payments, cars, furniture, and other things bought on time are repossessed. With home mortgage foreclosures running at the highest level since the 1930s, some 750,000 homeowners are expected to lose their homes.

According to a study by Johns Hopkins University, the number of suicides in the United States increases by 4.1 percent for every percentage rise in the jobless rate.

What causes unemployment?

The employers and their government in Washington try to blame unemployment on high oil prices, Japanese imports, immigrant workers — on everything but the way the capitalist economic system functions.

The fact is that in a system based on production for private profit, unemployment is a regular structural feature. The employers deliberately use the constant threat of joblessness to pit workers against each other, making it easier to depress wages and impose speedup.

With the increase in automation — which the bosses use to boost their profits rather than to benefit workers — this level of structural unemployment has been steadily rising.

In the past, "full employment" used to be defined by the government as around 4 percent unemployment. In a speech in Ohio on October 4, Reagan casually remarked, "maybe . . . the normal unemployment rate . . . instead of being that 4 percent . . . might be 6 or 6.5 percent."

In addition to such "normal" unemployment, joblessness increases during periods of capitalist economic crisis. The deeper the downturn, the greater unemployment is.

As part of their scramble for profits, companies seek to beat out their competitors by expanding, automating, and throwing huge quantities of goods onto the market, in an unplanned and anarchic fashion. Since the purchasing power of the majority of people cannot keep up, the markets become glutted at a certain point. That means the companies cannot sell their goods and make a maximum profit by operating at full capacity.

Their answer: begin laying off workers. That reduces buying power even further. More goods are unsold. More workers are laid off. A chain reaction sets in.

To maintain the profit levels of the employ-

ers, workers are forced to sacrifice with their jobs.

The fight for jobs

Many workers are searching for answers to the problem of mounting unemployment. They are waging battles and skirmishes against layoffs.

Such battles result in some victories and some losses. They are an essential part of the process by which the working class is organizing itself, gaining experience, and thinking out what needs to be done.

But the answer to unemployment cannot be found on the level of the individual plant, nor even in a single industry. Unemployment affects the working class as a whole, as a class. It is rooted in the private ownership of production and the drive of the employers to maximize their profits. This system is supported by government at every level.

In contrast to the empty promises and fake solutions put forward by the Democrats and Republicans, the Socialist Workers Party, through its election campaigns, is presenting a concrete program for fighting joblessness. The SWP is running more than 60 candidates in 26 states across the country.

These candidates are putting forward the following proposals:

- To begin with, the jobless must receive full unemployment compensation at union wages, for the entire time that they are unemployed. This will also prevent the bosses from using the threat of unemployment to drive down wages and push through speedup.

- A crash program of public works should be launched to put all the unemployed to work on socially useful projects: building schools, low-rent housing, medical facilities, child-care centers, modern transit systems, parks and recreation centers, and so on. Special priority should be put on projects that would help eliminate the particularly depressed conditions in the Black and Latino communities.

The billions of dollars needed for this — as well as for full unemployment compensation — is available. It could be raised by transferring the gigantic sums that are spent on the war budget to create jobs. It could be raised by shifting the burden of taxation from the working people who produce all wealth to the super rich who profit from our labor.

- The workweek should be shortened with no cut in weekly take-home pay. This would make it possible to spread out the available work to all who need jobs. Preferential consideration should be given to hiring Blacks, Latinos, and women, who have been hardest hit by unemployment.

The employers will claim they cannot afford to shorten the workweek with no cut in pay. They said the same thing when the legal workweek was 60 hours. Corporate ledgers should be opened to allow the workers to inspect the company's finances.

The bosses and their political representatives — the Democrats and Republicans — will howl that such proposals are "unrealistic."

What they really mean is that their profits would be hurt. And the government in Washington operates from the standpoint that what is good for big business is good for the country.

Working people cannot accept that. If the government of big business refuses to implement such proposals for ending unemployment, it should be replaced.

Workers and farmers in this country need their own government. They need a government that will defend their interests and those of all the oppressed and exploited.

Chrysler contract voted down

Auto workers reject collaboration with bosses

By Jon Olmsted

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

* * *

DETROIT — By a whopping two-to-one majority, Chrysler workers are rejecting the proposed contract with Chrysler. Voting began October 6 and will be completed October 14.

Workers are outraged at being offered a contract that gives them close to nothing. "Three times was enough," was how one worker put it.

Since 1979 Chrysler workers have been forced to accept three rounds of major concessions. They have gone through the bitter experience of union-management collaboration that was supposed to save their jobs. From the local plant level to United Auto Workers President Douglas Fraser's decision to join Chrysler's board of directors, the strategy of collaboration has been carried out.

UAW and Chrysler officials reached agreement on the proposed contract September 16. Voting was delayed for three weeks to allow time for a hard sell from company executives, the media, and top union officials. It scarcely affected the vote. The fact that the UAW's Chrysler bargaining council accepted the agreement by a very close vote showed that it was in trouble from the beginning.

The widest margins in the local voting were at the Warren Stamping plant in Detroit, where the vote to reject was 1,559 to 323; and Twinsburg, Ohio, where the vote to reject was 2,316 to 315. At the big Jefferson Avenue Assembly plant in Detroit, where the sell was particularly heavy, the workers voted it down 3,129 to 1,787.

Chrysler workers were hit with heavy attacks as management attempted to make them an example for all workers. Since Chrysler claimed it was on the verge of bankruptcy in 1979 and demanded that the workers help bail them out, workers have lost an estimated \$1.06 billion in wages and benefits. Today those still working make \$2.68 an hour less

To fight for such a government, working people also need their own political organization, a party of labor that can take on the political monopoly of the two employers' parties.

A labor party, based on the trade unions, can put forward a real working-class program for creating jobs, and wage a concerted fight for its implementation.

To the millions now standing on the unemployment lines and the millions of others wondering if they will have a job tomorrow, this prospect is not only a realistic one, but a crying necessity. □

than General Motors and Ford workers.

They were promised that if they collaborated with the company and made concessions in work rules and wages, their jobs would be saved. Then when Chrysler was again making profits they would be able to regain parity with Ford and GM workers.

In 1979, Chrysler employed 76,000 workers. Today there are approximately 45,000. Thirty thousand jobs have been lost since the "job-saving" concessions, and eight more plants have been shut down.

The company's attitude towards parity was summed up by Chrysler Vice-president Thomas Miner: "Whether the union likes it or not, Chrysler will never pay General Motors- and Ford-type wages."

Why contract was rejected

The primary reason workers voted no was that after three years of giving management a helping hand, the only thing they were offered was more stringent work rules and a phony cost-of-living (COLA) formula geared to Chrysler's profits. No immediate wage increase was offered.

The new COLA formula will give them 16 cents an hour in December, their first raise in three years. The provision that would give workers an \$80 bonus if Chrysler should post a profit in any quarter, is viewed as a joke by many. As one worker at Eldon Avenue Gear and Axle in Detroit put it, "Who will look at the company's books and what books will the company show?"

Another sore point for the workers is the proposed new absentee program that enables the company to discipline workers after five absences in a six-month period and ultimately fire them. Provisions also allow them to discharge workers who have been out sick more often than the company feels they should.

Bilal Melik, a Detroit Chrysler worker, said this was his main reason for voting no. "It takes away our human dignity," he said.

The large size of the rejection came as a shock to top UAW officials. After the first big locals turned it down, President Fraser's lame

reply was, "At first I was hopeful, now I'm doubtful, and tomorrow I'll probably be hopeless."

This is the first time in history a contract that was recommended by the UAW's bargaining committee has been rejected by the membership.

Sitting on \$1 billion

Fraser is blaming Chrysler President Lee Iacocca for the vote; not because the company is trying to force this contract on its workers, but because Iacocca is not doing a good enough job of crying poverty. Prior to the contract, Chrysler posted \$107 million profit in the second quarter. Iacocca openly boasted that the company now sits on over \$1 billion in cash.

The idea that concessions can save your job is losing ground. The declining buying power of workers combined with massive unemploy-

ment — 17 percent in Michigan — makes the crisis in auto even worse. As one Chrysler worker put it: "We are building cars we can't afford to buy." Sales are now at their lowest per capita since the depression of the 1930s.

One of the biggest gainers from the billion dollars lost by Chrysler workers is the banks. Last year alone, Chrysler paid out over \$400 million in interest payments to the banks.

Faced with the choice of another period of union-management collaboration or company bankruptcy, many are now saying let it go down.

Elizabeth Ziers, an assembly worker at Ford's huge River Rouge plant, reports that her co-workers are cheering about the Chrysler vote.

The demand now being raised by Chrysler workers is to return to the bargaining table to fight for a decent contract. If no progress is made they will then discuss a strike. □

campaign — was the last straw. After midnight, on September 23, the mine was shut down. The members of Local 2095 had had enough.

The walkout lasted 24 hours. Such strikes are considered illegal by the operators and the courts.

Local 2095 went back to work confident that they had made their point and that Hovland would get his job back at his grievance hearing.

The hearing took place September 27. An official from Old Ben, Frank Burlingham, came down from the company's headquarters in Meadowlands, Pennsylvania, to oversee the hearing. At the end of it he announced that the company would push the case to arbitration. Burlingham then tried to use Hovland's beliefs as justification for the suspension.

"Mr. Currey," Burlingham piously asked the foreman, "are you a Christian gentleman?"

"Yes sir," Currey answered.

"And you, Mr. Hovland?" Burlingham asked.

Hovland replied, "I'm not religious."

Burlingham closed the hearing.

That night the miners closed Kitt No.1 again.

The mine was closed down for two days. In an attempt to intimidate the strikers, supervisors and management personnel tried to mine coal. They were not able to keep the equipment running.

The miners used the time to gather together the full picture of company harassment. At midnight on September 29 they went back to work again.

Their adversary met them with a show of force — six police cars patrolled the mine entrance.

The next day, Burlingham and other com-

Coal miners defend their union

Strikes win back socialist's job

By John Studer

PHILIPPI, West Virginia — A victory has been won in an ongoing battle taking place here between Old Ben Coal, a subsidiary of Standard Oil of Ohio (SOHIO), and 600 members of United Mine Workers Local 2095 at Kitt No.1 mine.

This running battle came to a head when Old Ben framed up and "suspended with intent to discharge" miner Bill Hovland. Hovland has worked in the mine since January 1981. He is currently on the ballot as Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in West Virginia.

After two walkouts by the miners, the union won Hovland's job back on October 4.

Over the last year, miners at Kitt No.1 have been subjected to a deepening company campaign to worsen working conditions, slash safety in the mine, and to victimize union activists.

This has come as part of a national drive by the mine operators to break the union. They have shifted production to western nonunion mines. They have tried to force takeback contracts on the union in the last two negotiating sessions — each time forcing lengthy and hard fought strikes. They are taking advantage of the recession, layoffs, and the threat of further layoffs to enforce new work rules and gut safety protection.

At Kitt, foremen have carried out "search and fire" missions, seeking to dismiss miners on the flimsiest of pretexts. Union activists have been special targets of the company's attempted victimizations, including members of Local 2095's mine safety committee.

On September 22, when Hovland came to work on the night shift, he was assigned to watch and clean around a belt head in an isolated area of the mine. Toward the end of the

shift, foreman Ken Currey sneaked into the area, hoping to find an excuse to fire Hovland. When it became clear he could not find an excuse, he invented a frame-up. He took Hovland out of the mine and suspended him for "insubordination."

The accusations of one boss, with no witnesses, have never been enough to fire a miner. Miners have always known that such a precedent would be a deadly threat to the union.

The company's attempt to violate this principle — on top of their months-long antiunion



Selling the socialist press at Kitt No. 1 mine.

Jane Fisher/Militant

pany officials agreed to meet with the miners. Union leaders presented the case against Old Ben's harassment campaign. They protested police being called to the mine, saying miners should not have to work under the barrel of a gun. They demanded an end to all attempts to fire miners based on the charges of a single foreman. They insisted Hovland be reinstated.

Over the weekend, further negotiations were held, and the company finally had to take Hovland back.

The company figured it could victimize Hovland without a big protest because of his

socialist views. They miscalculated. Everyone saw that the attack on Hovland was aimed at the union.

At the same time, miners recognize they are locked in a deadly serious, ongoing war. The seriousness of Old Ben's challenge to Local 2095 was driven home October 4, the same day Hovland went back to work.

Bill Boyd, like two members of the union safety committee, has been singled out for company harassment because of his union activity. He is also the treasurer of Hovland's campaign committee. He was taken out of the

mine and charged with sleeping during his dinner break. The union fought for Boyd, presenting evidence that the attempt to fire him was part of the company's campaign of harassment.

At an October 14 hearing, Boyd was suspended for 20 days without pay. "Even though I got a 20-day suspension out of the whole deal," Boyd said, "a suspension I don't deserve — the fact that SOHIO didn't get away with their attempt to fire me is a victory for our local."

Two battles have been won, but the war goes on.

Australia

Why women need job guarantees

Increased unemployment discriminates against women workers

By Rosemary McCann

[The following article appeared in the October 5 issue of the Australian socialist weekly *Direct Action*.]

* * *

The growing numerical weight of women in the Australian workforce over several decades was the underlying factor behind the spread of women's liberation ideas in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The result of these developments is that today more and more women believe that they have a *right* to a job and that their work and income is no less important than that of a man's. This, combined with the large number of families headed by women and the fact that the high cost of living has in most cases necessitated the two-income family, has severely undermined the myth that "a woman's place is in the home."

As the Australian economy enters a severe recession, the concept of full employment is now being shrugged even further aside by leaders of the capitalist parties, as well as Labor leaders such as Bob Hawke and Bill Hayden, as a utopian dream.

Moreover, working people are being *blamed* for the economic crisis and told they must shoulder the burden of the crisis by accepting lower wages, higher unemployment, and worsening living conditions.

There can be no doubt that the current recession is being, and increasingly will be, seized upon by the employing class as a means of reversing many of the economic and social gains won by women over the past period.

Women are going to be among those hardest hit by this recession. This is because, despite the past gains in employment women have made, downturns in this exploitative society's business cycle always serve to hurt most those



sectors that are already comparatively worse off.

Increasingly women are going to be the last hired and the first fired. Already this is being felt in the retrenchments and job losses sweeping many industries and white-collar areas.

Statistics prove discrimination

Women are destined to be the first to go because in the main they are the ones who have the least seniority and fewest skills.

Women suffer an official unemployment rate of 9.1 per cent compared with a rate of 5.1 per cent for men.

However, the real level of women's unemployment today is certainly much greater

than the official statistics show. First, much of women's unemployment is hidden because of the big proportion of the female labor force that is working in part-time jobs, particularly in the service industries.

Of all employed women, fully 35.5 per cent work part time, according to the latest figures available. Of married women in the workforce, 44.5 per cent work part time.

Secondly, hundreds of thousands of women, especially married women, have been discouraged altogether from looking for jobs. Bureau of Statistics figures issued in August estimated that there are 659,500 "hidden unemployed" — a figure that would bring the real level of unemployed to well above 1 million. Significantly, 529,300 of the hidden unemployed are women.

The August statistics also showed that of these 659,500 people, more than 77,400 have given up seeking employment. According to the bureau, 57,200, or 74 per cent, of those "discouraged" from seeking work are married women.

Other statistics also reveal the gross discrimination faced by women in the area of employment. For example, women make up almost two-thirds of those on pensions or benefits.

In the area of wages, the 1981 Budget papers showed that while 90 per cent of men earn less than \$30,000 a year, 90 per cent of women earn less than \$15,000! Figures also show that the gap has widened in the past year.

One factor in addition to part-time work that has caused this growing disparity between the wage levels of the male and female workforce is the fact that many women are concentrated in the industries — retail stores, clothing, footwear, and textiles — that have not benefited from the wage increases won by most workers following the collapse of indexation last year.

One very important aspect of the economic

boom period of the 1950s and 1960s and the rise of the feminist movement in the 1970s was that women won jobs in traditionally "male" areas.

Most women today look with pride and admiration at women steelworkers, truck and train drivers, pilots, electrical fitters, miners, and so on. These sisters are rightly viewed as a vanguard who have taken a tremendous step forward for women's equality and dealt big blows to the myth of female inferiority.

Affirmative action

Precisely because many of these women have only won the right to work in these areas in recent years, they are concentrated in low-seniority positions. So in this period of growing job losses and retrenchments, the employers will take advantage of this situation to try to sweep women out of industry and destroy all the job opportunities women have won in these areas.

This is true in other areas as well. The new Westpac Bank announced on October 1 that it would give definite preference in employment to men.

These gains made by women in employment must be protected. Only affirmative action policies, such as union demands that the ratio of women employed in each workplace be maintained, or that the seniority of women be backdated (either for a specific period or to when they first applied for the job) in compensation for past discrimination, can preserve women's hard-won gains.

By itself, the fight for affirmative action would be inadequate to protect the jobs of women. Such policies are useful only as a partial solution to job discrimination within the broader context of a united labor-movement fight back against all the lay-offs.

However, it would be wrong to counterpose the fight to stop lay-offs with the fight against sexist discrimination. They should go hand in hand.

Some would argue that giving special consideration to women means *accepting* that some lay-offs have to occur. But this stance ignores one simple fact: So long as the labor movement has not mustered the power to win jobs for all — and in most areas the bureaucratic, do-nothing union leaderships have not been prepared even to fight the lay-offs — there *will* be lay-offs.

This is one reason decent general retrenchment agreements have to be fought for and won. (The other is that an expensive retrenchment agreement makes employers think twice before starting sackings.) Opposing discriminatory sackings against women — or other oppressed sections of the workforce — by insisting on certain procedures in lay-offs should be seen in the same light.

Moreover, only fighting *before* lay-offs occur for amendments to the principle of strict seniority and other guarantees can reduce lay-offs that would be based on nothing else than sexist discrimination.

One such fight being taken up to protect the

gains of women is the campaign by militant steelworkers at Australian Iron and Steel in Port Kembla and the BHP steelworks in Newcastle.

Over the past two years, due largely to a broadly supported Jobs for Women campaign, hundreds of women won the right to work in the steelworks. However, in the context of the massive lay-offs foreshadowed by BHP, most of these women will be among the first to lose their jobs if the principle of strict seniority is adhered to.

For this reason, militant steelworkers who have mounted a campaign against BHP's job-slashing plans are also raising the demand that the existing ratio of women employed in the steelworks be strictly maintained.

The prospects for winning the ranks of unions to struggle to protect the job gains of women have never been better. The ideas of the women's liberation movement, and the reality of working side by side with women on the job, has had a profound impact on the consciousness and attitudes of male unionists.

South Africa: ANC prisoners face death

The African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa is appealing for an urgent worldwide campaign of immediate action to save the lives of three ANC members facing execution by the racist South African government.

The Moroka Three — Thelle Simon Mogoerane, 23; Jerry Semano Mosololi, 25; and Marcus Thabo Motaung, 27 — were sentenced to death by a South African court in August. They have petitioned the president of South Africa for clemency and are now on death row awaiting his decision.

Similar worldwide protest campaigns were successful in two other cases involving ANC members. The Pretoria Three had their November 1980 death sentences commuted to prison terms in June 1982, and the Treason Trial Three, sentenced to death in August 1981, recently had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment.

According to the ANC's appeal, the organization "is gravely concerned that unless urgent actions and measures are taken, the State President will confirm the sentences and the regime will proceed with their immediate execution."

The ANC is calling on people to write protest letters against the death sentences of Mogoerane, Mosololi, and Motaung to South African State President Marais Viljoen and to Prime Minister Pieter Botha, Union Building, Pretoria, South Africa.

The organization also calls on people to "undertake all possible actions with the objective of saving the lives of these three young patriots of our country" and "to make the racist regime feel the indignation of the international community at these murderous actions by intensifying the campaign for mandatory and comprehensive sanctions."

In the United States, the ANC points out, there is an especially urgent need for demon-

The idea that unions must and should fight for the interests of all the oppressed and exploited is more and more accepted today.

Of course, in turning to their unions as an instrument to defend all workers, working people are finding that their bureaucratic leaderships see the role of the unions somewhat differently.

Today most of these leaderships are busy negotiating with their counterparts in the ALP [Australian Labor Party], a social contract, or prices and incomes policy, and not organizing industrial action to stop lay-offs and in support of claims around better wages and shorter hours — let alone launching a genuine fight around any other social or political issues.

But these misleaders do not equal the unions. However blunted the officials attempt to make them, the unions do have the social power to defend workers' rights.

Fighting for the right to full employment in this period will be a big task. It will require the united strength of all sections of the working class. □

strations and protests because of the Reagan administration's increasingly close ties with the racist government of South Africa. On October 21, the U.S. delegation to the United Nations cast one of only three votes against a successful General Assembly motion calling on the International Monetary Fund to reject South Africa's request for a \$1.1 billion loan.

The Moroka Three are members of the Spear of the Nation, the ANC's guerrilla organization, and were accused of participating in attacks on police stations at Orlando, Moroka, and Wonderboompoort, in which four policemen were killed and others injured.

All three were also alleged to have undergone military training outside South Africa between 1976 and 1978 and to have carried out attacks inside South Africa between 1979 and 1981.

On August 6, 1982, the three ANC members were found guilty of treason and sentenced to death. During the final days of the trial, the defendants entered the courtroom singing nationalist songs and with clenched fists raised.

Lawyers for the accused charged that police tortured Mosololi and Mogoerane after their arrest.

Mosololi was nearly suffocated when a wet plastic bag was placed over his head and he was bitten by police dogs, while Mogoerane had been subjected to electric shocks and was suspended from a wooden pole inserted between his legs and arms while being interrogated.

The ANC, noting the success of the two previous campaigns to save the lives of ANC members, stated its "deep gratitude to all men and women, youth and students, and many others who contributed, in many and varied ways" to that campaign and urged them to do the same for the Moroka Three. □

Women's liberation in Nicaragua

Speech by Commander Tomás Borge

[The following speech by Commander Tomás Borge Martínez, Nicaraguan minister of the interior and a leader of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), was delivered in León September 29, marking the fifth anniversary of the women's movement in Nicaragua.]

[The rally was attended by 2,000 women, including leaders of the Association of Nicaraguan Women—Luisa Amanda Espinoza (AMNLAE). Thousands more who were unable to enter stood outside. Borge's speech, in keeping with the wide interest in the themes it touched upon, was broadcast live on national radio and reprinted in full in the Managua daily *Barricada* October 4.]

[The translation from *Barricada* and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Commander Tomás Borge: How do you feel? Is it too hot in here?

AMNLAE women and general public: No!

Borge: You're not bothered by the crowded room and by the heat?

AMNLAE women: No! Dirección Nacional, orden!¹

Borge: With all the heat and revolutionary enthusiasm of Nicaraguan women, it's imperialism that should be worried. (Applause and slogans) Because in the hearts of Nicaraguan women there's more than heat — there's fire! (Applause and slogans) I believe that first we should greet the invited compañeras — the compañera representing Venezuela, Minister for Women's Affairs Mercedes Pulido; the compañera representing Cuba, the general secretary of the Federation of Cuban Women [FMC], Dora Carcaño; a group of women representing Chile, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic; and the ambassador of our sister republic of Bulgaria. (Applause and slogans)

Dear compañeras, in the world of today, profound changes are taking place. New offspring of history are being born in the midst of grief, anguish, and heroic splendor. Social revolution is the order of the day in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Central America is being rocked with social earthquakes. Poor people of all latitudes are demanding — each time more vigorously — profound transformations in the old and rotting structures of class exploitation and imperialist domination.

And in Nicaragua, land of volcanoes and lion cubs, we are winning national liberation through the Sandinista revolution.

Therefore it's normal, absolutely logical that we now speak of a new

Working women were oppressed and exploited as both workers and as women . . .

revolution — that is, a revolution of women (applause), a revolution that will complete the process of national liberation.

Many of those women who participate in this revolution live far away from here. Thousands of compañeras couldn't get into this room.

We don't want to make a criticism of anyone, but it seems there was an underestimation of the capacity for struggle and the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses.

The revolutionary masses have fresh enthusiasm. We couldn't program the presence of 2,000 women here, because something like that cannot be decreed. In fact, thousands of women came who unfortunately could not enter this room.

Let this experience teach us to have more confidence in the masses!

1. Literally, "National Directorate, give the order!" This popular chant, heard at most demonstrations and mass meetings, has the sense of "We're ready to take action. Just give the word!"

(Applause) And above all to understand that our sisters are full of revolutionary spirit and patriotic enthusiasm. (Applause)

We would like to extend a special greeting to the compañera representing the fraternal people of El Salvador, compañera Ana María.

(AMNLAE women shout: "Revolution or death, El Salvador will win!")

At the head of our revolution, I think it would be correct to say, are the mothers of our martyrs, these dear old women we have here in front of our eyes. (Applause)

Inside the revolution, we must understand what should be the position in the social organism of women who forged with their blood the Nicaraguan people. Now it's a question of bringing together the mechanisms that will unleash all the energies and capacities of women so that they become full members of the new society with full rights.

The woman question is nothing more than an aspect of social reality in its totality. The definitive answer to the liberation of women can

Even before the state of slavery existed, women were slaves . . .

emerge only with the total resolution of the class contradictions, of the social diseases that originate in a society like ours — politically liberated but with the rope of economic dependence still around our neck.

Nevertheless, we must have patience to deal with the woman question in an independent and concrete manner.

We have to talk about what the position of women was before and after the revolutionary victory, and what the position of women will be in the beautiful future we are going to build. We must also — however briefly — talk about women in the context of the historical development of humanity.

If we read ancient books, we come to know how great the painful discrimination against women has been. In slave society, as in feudal and capitalist society, the working classes were exploited and oppressed.

Women — all women in general — were oppressed, but working women were oppressed and exploited both as workers and as women.

The workers became fully conscious that they were victims of exploitation. Women, too, became conscious of their exploitation as workers but it was a much slower, more complicated process that led them to realize their degree of oppression as women.

Woman was the first enslaved human being on earth. Even before the state of slavery existed, women were slaves.

As you know, dependence and social oppression is based on the economic dependency of the oppressed with respect to the oppressor. Woman was economically dependent on man even before class exploitation arose.

Given this reality, some muddle-headed ideologues have advanced the Philistine sexual philosophy that woman is a dependent being by nature. These ideologues resemble — as two drops of water resemble each other — those who hold the thesis that the difference between rich and poor always has existed and always will because it falls in the natural order of things.

Experience, however, has demonstrated that relations between the sexes are transformed, like relations between classes, in the process of transforming the means of production and the means of distribution of that which is produced.

Naturally — and this confirms the relationship between sex and the economy in the context of social development, which we don't have time to elaborate on right now — there were epochs when the woman



Rachel Field

International Women's Day demonstration in Managua on March 8, 1982. Sign says, "In face of imperialist threats, women are ready to defend the Sandinista people's revolution."

fulfilled the principal role inside the family, under what was called the matriarchy.

But what's important here and what we want to emphasize is that what has predominated is the dominance and the oppression of man over woman.

In ancient times, women completely lacked rights, and today in many places lack rights, and still in Nicaragua women have not won — not even remotely — all their rights. Women were bought for their property just as you buy an object.

Other things were imposed on women, such as strict chastity and a barbaric prohibition of sexual pleasure, while men had the right to live in the same house with several women.

If on their wedding night the man believed or simply suspected that the woman had previously lost her virginity, he had the right not only to repudiate her, but also to kill her. In the past — this was in the past. I should add, although it seems ridiculous, that there still are those who think they have the right to repudiate a woman for these reasons — today, in the present epoch.

According to the fifth book of Moses in the Bible, a man had the right to repudiate the woman he had recently married even if it was just because she caused him displeasure.

In some societies women were destined to take on the heaviest tasks, treated virtually like draft animals — sometimes with less consideration than a house pet.

Within the family, the birth of a girl was considered a reason for mourning while the birth of a boy was cause for rejoicing and celebrating.

In the Middle Ages there was a certain fashion of romanticism and chivalry toward women, riddled with discrimination as brutal as the use of a chastity belt. Wandering gentlemen left their women in chastity belts and put them in convents for reasons of family honor and many times for economic reasons.

Capitalist society came, under the banner of "equality and brotherhood," to reinforce discrimination against women, fundamentally in the economic arena. The possibility opened, in this stage of development, for women's participation in productive work. The bourgeoisie was interested in enlarging the labor market, so as to have a larger army of unemployed and less pressure for higher wages.

This explains the presence of women in the textile centers, where they began to be exploited as workers and as cheaper manual labor than men.

In modern capitalist society, even when women participate or are allowed to participate in production, there are still strong reminders of the brutal discrimination women suffered in former societies.

Doesn't it really amount to selling a woman, when she marries a rich man without feelings playing any role? What is the act of a landowner or a bourgeois capitalist when he takes a woman worker who is under his domination, under circumstances of nothing more than a self-cen-

From the point of view of daily exertion, women remain fundamentally in the same conditions as in the past . . .

tered and brutal impulse to possess her, followed immediately by repudiation and repugnance? Isn't a fruit of this inheritance also the masculine pretension that still remains in our underdeveloped countries — countries that have inherited the values of feudal Spain — for the insistence on a woman's virginity at the time of marriage?

The very existence of prostitution — a fact that covers the great cities of the capitalist world — is a direct result of economic discrimination against women, who, to survive and feed their children, are forced to sell their bodies as if they were merchandise.

Today, in the hypocritical world of the bourgeoisie, where the cruel and insulting luxury of the rich exists side by side with the misery, hunger, and nakedness of the dispossessed, women don't just occupy, as I said, a totally secondary place; they are also the object of the most offensive and humiliating exhibitions. They are placed in shop windows so the client can choose which one pleases him the most, as if they were suits of clothes, bottles of whiskey, or slices of ham.

In capitalist society, therefore, bourgeois man gives thanks to the gods, just as the Greek philosopher Plato did, for not having been born a woman, although he also surely thanks God for his ability to insult, sell, exploit, or buy women.

Our people suffered colonial and semicolonial slavery. Slavery gave rise to heroic campaigns of combat in which women not only shared the general suffering of the people and their struggles, but also had to take

on the difficult tasks of family reproduction and the constant anguish of knowing that the lives of their children were threatened under the terror of tyranny.

Before the revolutionary triumph, the incorporation of women in productive work was minimal. The great majority of women were condemned to slavery in the home. When women could sell their labor power, in addition to fulfilling their obligations on the job, they had to fulfill their duties in the home to assure the upbringing of their children. All of this in a regime of political oppression and misery imposed by a dependent capitalist society. And subjected, on the other hand, to exploitation by man — the male of the species — who placed on the woman's shoulders the fundamental weight of household chores, thereby endlessly prolonging her working day.

Did this end with the triumph of the Sandinista People's Revolution? We ask ourselves.

The triumph of the Sandinista People's Revolution eliminated terror and opened the way for the process of national liberation, initiating at the same time economic and social transformations that represented a qualitative advance in the conquest of freedom and development.

It can't be said, therefore, that the situation of women in Nicaragua has in no way changed.

The entire society seized its future and women gained the right, taking into account their varied and even spectacular participation in the revolutionary struggle, to participate in an active manner in the process of national transformation.

Nevertheless, all of us have to honestly admit that we haven't confronted the struggle for women's liberation with the same courage and decisiveness.

Independently of the fact that women, in this stage, continue to bear the main responsibility for reproduction and the care of children, the burden of housework and discrimination still relentlessly weighs down upon them.

From the point of view of daily exertion, women remain fundamentally in the same conditions as in the past.

Of course, behind this objective reality there is an economic basis. Workers' living conditions continue to be difficult and incompatible with the political will of the revolution. For reasons that are well-known

Are we going to wait until economic development and social transformation have reached their culmination before we begin to think out the woman question? . . .

to you and because barely three years have passed [since the revolution], it has not been possible to meet legitimate expectations for improvement in workers' general living conditions.

This explains why many times women are still compelled to do work that pays no wages, that is not taken account of anywhere, that is not credited toward social security.

Independently of the fact that women often receive the help of men, the truth is that the customs and level of development of our society impose this superexertion on women. And it is in this sense that women are not only exploited — they're superexploited. They are exploited in their workplaces, if they work. They are exploited by lower wages and exploited in the home. That is, they are triply exploited.

What can be done to eliminate this dramatic plight of women?

There is no other alternative except to change the basic economic structure of society. There is no alternative but to develop an economy that guarantees the satisfaction of the fundamental needs of our people. There is no alternative but to create a productive apparatus whose rationale is not individual profit, but rather satisfaction of the demands of the entire society, the demands of the workers — whose rationale is to reaffirm and emphasize the potential of man and woman to live together socially as human beings.

This process of change *compañeras*, is complicated, difficult, and will take place over time. But are we going to wait until economic de-

velopment and social transformation have reached their culmination before we begin to think out the woman question? This would certainly be an inconsistency.

But how can we begin to conceive of women's liberation right now with all the existing limitations?

We took, as we said, the first step, which was national liberation. Now we must take concrete steps to legally guarantee in daily practice full equality between the sexes. (Applause)

Men and women had the right and the duty to fight — to participate in the revolutionary struggle. Women played an outstanding role in the guerrilla struggle, in the clandestine struggle, in self-denial, in sacrifice, and in dedication.

It's no accident that here in León the leaders of the military detachments were women (applause) — among this constellation of women leaders, Dora María Téllez, Vicky Herrera, María Lourdes Jirón, and



Michael Baumann/IP

Ana Isabel Morales² are distinguished, among others.

In others parts of the country there were compañeras whose work stood out, even above that of many men — like Mónica Baltodano, Doris Tijerino, Gladys Báez, Olga Avilés, and Eleonora Rocha.³ (Applause) Women who have certainly continued to distinguish themselves in revolutionary activity.

Right here, on the very soil of León, Luisa Amanda Espinoza shed her blood, and the last guerrilla song of Arlen Siu was heard.⁴

In addition, it was right here that the internationalism of the Mexican compañera Aracelly Pérez ended with the sacrifice of her life alongside the Nicaraguan Idania Fernández. (Applause)

Somewhere in the mountains was stilled the heart of Claudia Chamorro, who had yearned for a child up until the final moment. And today the revolution has made her dreams a reality in the Claudia Chamorro Child Development Center. Claudia Chamorro now has 150 children there — many more than the child she was not able to bear.

Women, because of their courage and consciousness, have reclaimed and continue to reclaim their role in Nicaraguan history. Women make up 22 percent of the FSLN. Of all the positions of political leadership in the FSLN, in the regions and provinces, women hold 37 percent. In intermediary leadership positions and the supporting apparatuses, the figure is 24.6 percent. In the Ministry of the Interior, nearly 21 percent of those who work with us are women. (Applause)

At the governmental leadership level, there are a range of compañeras with high-level responsibilities, like Commander Mónica Baltodano and [Minister of Health] Lea Guido. Four compañeras are vice-ministers. Women are also represented in the Supreme Court and in the Council of State.

However, of the 51 representatives in the Council of State only 7 are women, and women have more right to be represented in the Council of State than simply by the 7 they have there. (Applause) This situation is perhaps a reflection of an insufficient participation in the mass organizations present in that body, represented in the Council of State.

On the level of political leadership, there can be no doubt about the creative participation of compañeras like Dora María Téllez, Vicky Herrera, and Glenda Monterrey [AMNLAE's general secretary], among others.

Today, you learned through the newspapers of the naming of compañera Lea Guido as president of the Pan-American Health Organization. Compañera Lea is the first woman to be named president of this institution in its 80 years of existence. We understand this was done by acclamation, which is an acknowledgment of the important participation of women in our revolutionary process.

2. Dora María Téllez was one of the leaders of the Sandinista takeover of the National Palace in Managua in 1978, which secured the release of more than 50 political prisoners. Today she holds the rank of guerrilla commander and is political secretary of the FSLN's Managua leadership committee.

Leticia (Vicky) Herrera was a member of the FSLN commando squad that occupied Somozaist José "Chema" Castillo's house in December 1974, securing the release of a number of political prisoners. Today a guerrilla commander, she is national secretary of the Sandinista Defense Committees.

Both María Lourdes Jirón and Ana Isabel Morales were members of the FSLN general staff on the western front during the war against Somoza. Today Jirón works in the FSLN's Department of International Relations and Morales works in the Ministry of the Interior.

3. Mónica Baltodano commanded the FSLN forces that took the city of Granada during the 1979 insurrection. Today a guerrilla commander, she is overall coordinator of the FSLN's regional committees.

Doris Tijerino, a longtime leader of the FSLN, is today president of AMNLAE and works in the Ministry of the Interior.

Gladys Báez was a *compesina* when she joined the FSLN in the 1960s. She fought on the western front in the war against Somoza and today is a member of the regional government committee in the León area.

Olga Avilés and Eleonora Rocha participated in the 1974 takeover of the Castillo house and today works in the Ministry of the Interior.

4. Luisa Amanda Espinoza was the first woman member of the FSLN to die fighting. She was killed by the National Guard in León in 1970.

Arlen Siu, a student activist in León when she joined the FSLN, was killed by the National Guard in 1975.

In spite of all this — in spite of all the cases mentioned, right now women are not yet massively incorporated into the governmental and political tasks of the revolution.

Let us take a look at a few facts concerning Nicaraguan women. Women workers constitute 40.5 percent of the workforce in the country. This means that 183,448 women work outside the home. At first glance, this seems like a very high proportion and could bring us to the conclusion that women's participation in production is very significant. Yet, if we analyze the type of work women carry out, we see that a high percentage of these women are really underemployed, and that another large

Now we must take concrete steps to legally guarantee in daily practice full equality between the sexes . . .

layer is employed in domestic service — work that is not productive and that will have to be regulated and limited in the future.

What reflects the difficult situation of women is that 83 percent of women who work also carry on their shoulders the weight of economically maintaining their household, raising the children, and doing the household chores. Eighty-three percent — that's barbaric! (Applause)

This indicates to us — in a certain sense — a high degree of family instability and the carefree attitude of irresponsibility many men assume toward a couple's relationship, to say nothing of toward the children. We are all, men and women alike, obligated to be responsible in our love relationships and to be responsible in our family obligations.

The law Glenda [Monterrey] referred to, the Law on Nurture,⁵ states that men who father children have to pay their children's upkeep. This is what the Law on Nurture is about! (Applause) As we once said to the women — referring, however, to the men — he who wants to go to heaven will have to pay for it! (Shouts, laughter, applause)

And as for those men who do not comply with the Law on Nurture — the Sandinista Front and the National Directorate will respond in full force, and the Ministry of the Interior is right here to take the necessary measures. (Applause)

I see that the men aren't applauding with much enthusiasm (laughter) and some aren't even applauding (more laughter) and over there I see some who look downright worried. (The audience shouts, "Dirección Nacional! Ordene!") And concerning this there will be no exceptions, no matter who is involved. (Ovation)

How can we fail to seriously consider the equality of women if we are to be elementally just to their struggle, their sacrifice, and their heroism? How can we not guarantee their participation in social life, in work, and in the political leadership of the country? How can we not guarantee that a woman can be both a mother and a worker, both a mother and a student, both a mother and an artist, both a mother and a political leader, both fulfill all the tasks the revolution demands of her and at the same time fulfill the beautiful work of a self-sacrificing, capable, and loving mother?

A concrete answer to these questions will be possible only to the extent that the individual tasks of women are socialized. It is society that has to provide the necessary daycare centers, laundries, people's restaurants, and other services that will, in effect, free women from household work. This is not easy.

So far, the revolution has only been able to build 20 CDIs [child-care centers] — obviously an insufficient number. The problem is that the cost of construction, equipment, and maintenance is very high. With all the economic difficulties that are holding our country back, it's impossible for us to move forward to the massive creation of these centers. And yet we must do it — not only to enable women to dedicate themselves to productive, social, and cultural tasks, but also to assure that the

5. The draft of a law, currently under discussion in the mass organizations, stipulating parental (including divorced, separated, and unmarried fathers) responsibility toward children, as well as children's responsibility toward their parent. Nurture, a social concept in the draft law, includes not just food but also education, shelter, and clothing.

overall education of our children is as rich as possible.

How can we do it? How can we overcome this contradiction between the possible and the necessary?

We must look for audacious answers, I believe — answers based not so much on purely budgetary considerations but on the initiative, organization, and strength of the masses. Here AMNLAE should be the leading force and catalyst of these initiatives, fundamentally in coordination with the CDSs [Sandinista Defense Committees]. (Applause and slogans)

This is possible in a revolutionary society. There is no task that wouldn't be possible for the revolutionary masses and there is no task that wouldn't be possible for Nicaraguan women. (Applause)

However difficult a task may be, the challenges that are being put forward now can hardly be compared with what Nicaraguan women faced and conquered in the past when they were capable of participating in the trenches with rifles in hand.

On the other hand, the revolution must guarantee equal pay for men and women and at the same time open the doors of production to women's participation in new fields of development — in industry as well as in agriculture.

We have already taken the first steps to guarantee this equal participation. To assure the effectiveness of the principle, "equal pay for equal work," we enacted decrees 573 and 583 for the rural sector. These decrees for the first time established norms governing agricultural labor in coffee and cotton, and provided that everyone above 14 years of age, man or woman, will be paid directly. Because before the victory, only the head of the household received the wages for the family — the young ones and women were not treated as real workers.

But the important thing is that we watch over the execution of laws the revolution has created to guarantee equality between men and women.

That's why we are going to enthusiastically support AMNLAE's creation of a legal aid office. We were talking with Doris [Tijerino] a moment ago about the possibility of giving them a lawyer who is a very important cadre in the Ministry of the Interior. If the AMNLAE compañeras accept him, we will gladly offer him to head up this office.

Many women will have to come to this office to lay out their problems, above all after the Law on Nurture takes effect. (Applause)

We are going to redouble our efforts, but to achieve all these objectives, it's essential to involve the entire society. And it's good to emphasize that this struggle will mainly benefit — who? Who will it benefit the most?

(AMNLAE women shout, "The women!")

There is no task that wouldn't be possible for the revolutionary masses and there is no task that wouldn't be possible for Nicaraguan women . . .

The women. The men too, but men are full of prejudice and bad habits from the past. Don't pay much attention to us! (Applause. The women shout, "At all costs, we will fulfill our duty to the country!")

At whatever cost we will also fulfill our obligation to women! (Ovation)

Just as workers gained consciousness of the exploitation they suffered and of their vanguard role in the revolution, women must also gain full consciousness of the discrimination they are still subjected to and of their role in the revolutionary struggle. We said that women were triply exploited, which means that women should be revolutionary in three different dimensions, seeking a single objective — the total liberation of our society.

It's good to remember, however, that economic development by itself will not accomplish the liberation of women, nor will simply the organization of women be sufficient.

We have to struggle against the habits, customs, and prejudices of men and women. We have to embark upon a difficult and prolonged ideological struggle — a struggle that equally benefits men and women.

Men must overcome a multitude of prejudices. We know *compañeros* who are revolutionaries in the street, in their workplaces, in their militia battalions — everywhere — but they're feudal *señores*, feudal lords in the home. (Applause. Borge points to a group of men.) Those men over there say that's exactly right. We've already started something!

These *compañeros* and all of us inside our homes must — we must — convert ourselves into *compañeros* of the women, into teachers and students of women — sharing political education with them, sharing in

We have to struggle against the habits, customs, and prejudices of men and women. We have to embark upon a difficult and prolonged ideological struggle . . .

whatever means possible the housework (applause), love and care of the children, and love and defense of the revolution. (Applause)

Equality between men and women shouldn't go in the direction of diminishing respect toward women. Courtesy isn't an attribute of the exploiting classes. Chivalry isn't the private property of the bourgeoisie. We should create a new courtesy and a new revolutionary chivalry — Sandinista courtesy and chivalry of man unto woman. (Applause)

Woman is physically weaker than man, but is as intelligent as man (applause), and from the moral viewpoint — in my personal opinion — is better than man. (Applause) And just as it's the woman who helps us in the difficult hours, we too should offer our support and share not only the happy moments but the difficult ones as well — searching for answers at the time of the most intimate contradictions.

Nor does equality mean lack of gallantry. We have to create Sandinista gallantry (applause), full of good taste, tenderness, and respect toward women; recognizing as well their undeniable merits, their courage in every test, their tenacity and heroism that was demonstrated and continues to be demonstrated in defense of the country.

How could we not raise as a symbol for new generations of Nicaraguan women the possessor of that famous smile, Brenda Rocha?⁶ (Applause)

The constitution of AMNLAE, which was born out of AMPRONAC,⁷ is a conquest of women that could only have been produced in a revolution. It's important to remember that the Association of Nicaraguan Women—Luisa Amanda Espinoza emerged from AMPRONAC in the final stage of the revolutionary armed struggle. Before this other groups were formed that didn't succeed, for reasons connected with the development of the revolutionary movement, in attracting a great number of women.

Right now, if we consider the path traveled by AMNLAE from the moment of its founding, it's evident that the self-sacrificing activity of the *compañeras* has achieved quantitative advances, and in some aspects qualitative advances. With respect to the present tasks, and above all regarding the State of Emergency,⁸ women's participation has noticeably increased. The work of the Committees of Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs in denouncing the enemy's crimes and plans of aggression against Nicaragua has been outstanding.

However, in the militias, for example, the presence of women varies geographically. In Managua, women are 14 percent of the militia members, but in places like León, their participation is very low. León ranks

6. A 15-year-old militia member, Brenda Rocha was the sole survivor of an attack by counterrevolutionaries July 25 in central Zelaya Province. She was seriously wounded in the attack, and her right arm later had to be amputated. A photo of her smiling as she recovered in the hospital has become a national symbol of determination to defend the revolution.

7. Association of Women Confronting the National Problem — the "national problem" being understood by everybody to be Somoza. Predecessor of AMNLAE.

8. A state of emergency was declared in Nicaragua March 15, 1982, at the beginning of the substantial increase in U.S.-inspired terrorist attacks.

12th in the incorporation of women into the militia, after having been first in the revolutionary struggle in combat against the dictatorship. It's a contradiction that perhaps they will explain to me later.

The participation of women has been important in the People's Health Campaigns.⁹ In relation to organizational tasks, we can see a greater stability in leadership cadres, a greater coordination among the various mass organizations, and an advance in the consolidation of the Provincial Executive Committees — and therefore in overseeing the carrying out of tasks in the provinces.

In the field of propaganda, work has advanced to the point of achieving a better definition in the propaganda directed at the rank and file — resulting in better organization.

The planning of campaigns has been more effective — for example around the Continental Meeting of Women¹⁰ and the third anniversary [of the revolution]. The publication of a bulletin was a decisive step toward enriching consciousness about the woman question.

In the field of international relations, it's correct to single out AMNLAE's participation in the Continental Meeting of Women as marking a considerable advance in establishing relations with different political and women's groups worldwide.

It would be an error, however, if we considered these accomplishments satisfactory. The revolution demands that we confront with dedication the deficiencies that limit the development of AMNLAE. The links between the leadership of the association and the ranks are not sufficient. At times general lines of action are put forward without being followed by specific concrete tasks. Adequate forms and mechanisms to assure the active participation of women in the work of the association do not exist.

All this results at times in improvisation and amateurish work habits.

Of course this is not just AMNLAE's problem but a problem of all the mass organizations and forms a part of the process of development of our revolution.

But our revolutionary society has to begin from a fundamental premise — the active, conscious, and permanent participation of each man and woman not only in aspects solely concerned with daily life but also in determining the course of our revolution.

If the masses participate in their workplaces, in their neighborhoods, in their schools, and in their organizations, then this revolution will advance toward a revolutionary society where the dignity of man will be counterposed to the alienation of man.

AMNLAE, for example, should promote the massive participation of women. Events such as the discussion in the Council of State over fam-

AMNLAE should encourage women to play an active role in the economic, political, and social transformation of the country . . .

ily code legislation should serve as a source of greater discussion for women in each workplace and neighborhood. This is not to say that men should not discuss this as well, but here we are stressing that AMNLAE should, through massive campaigns, using every available means of communication, promote a discussion among women.

Are women discussing the Law on Nurture?

(AMNLAE leader) "Yes."

Have you already discussed the Law on Nurture?

(Some AMNLAE women) "Yes."

All of you?

(The majority of AMNLAE women) "No!"

No, no — not all women. All women must discuss the Law on Nur-

. Preventive health-care campaigns — such as polio vaccination, distribution of malaria pills, and neighborhood cleanups — organized and led by the mass organizations.

). An international peace conference of women leaders from 67 countries, held Managua on March 24–26, 1982.



Michael Baumann/IPS

Campeñas at land distribution ceremony in Boaco Province.

ture and laws dealing with women.

And we must take into account that analyzing this concrete problem means not only gaining knowledge of one particular aspect, such as legislation, but advancing the process of women's politization as a whole.

If we don't do this our men and women will not be able to carry the process of liberation to its completion.

Right now AMNLAE should be more a great movement than an organization — a great movement that encourages the participation of women in the various mass organizations, in the CDSs, in the Sandinista Youth, in the ATC [Rural Workers Association], in the CST [Sandinista Workers Federation] — and that at the same time groups women together in their common bond, which is their status as women.

The central task of AMNLAE should be the integration of all women into the revolution, without distinction. It should be a broad and democratic movement that mobilizes women from the various social sectors, so as to provide a channel for their political, social, economic, and cultural demands and to integrate them as a supporting force in the tasks of the Sandinista People's Revolution.

AMNLAE should become a broad propagandistic, educational, and agitational movement that encourages women to play an active role in the economic, political, and social transformations of the country.

The peasant woman, for example, is a peasant and as such has specific demands. But she is also a woman — just like the woman worker, the woman militia member, the woman who is a housewife, the woman student, the professional woman, and so forth.

Being clear on this dual role is key to the development of AMNLAE.

Another immediate task of AMNLAE, we believe, is to deepen the analysis of the status of the Nicaraguan woman, to fight to massively incorporate women in productive work, to reclaim women's right to participate more fully in production, to participate more fully in leading the government, the mass organizations, and the Sandinista National Liberation Front. (Applause) And to make sure that in scholarship awards, a

considerable number are given to women, which in large measure is already happening.

The task of organized women should be — in our opinion — massive involvement, in many different ways, in defense of the revolution. This includes daily defense of the revolution against provocateurs who frequently spread their counterrevolutionary filth in buses, in the supermarkets, and in the streets without getting what they deserve — a dignified and energetic response. We think that women should head up this fight against provocateurs in buses, in supermarkets, and everywhere else. (Applause)

When we see that humble children of our people are continuing to die in defense of the country we know it can't be done any other way.

Barely two days ago in the community of Musawás, 14 kilometers from Bonanza, there was a new confrontation in which counterrevolutionaries killed four and wounded several others.

From our side, compañero Jaime Sanders, a Sumo Indian from the Atlantic Coast and a member of State Security, fell, in addition to compañeros Jesús Isidro González, Noel Cruz, and Nery Noé García Ruiz — all of whom were from Battalion 80-15 of Masaya and Monimbó.

However, we know how to defend ourselves. Since May we've dealt heavy blows to the enemy, wiping out several counterrevolutionary bands whose only reason for existence was assassination, sabotage, and terrorism.

- In Río Blanco and Bocana de Paiwás, 100 counterrevolutionaries were killed.
- In the Seven Benk region, 90 counterrevolutionaries were killed.
- In Tasbapauni, Bluefields, 6 were killed.
- In Punta Gorda, another 6 counterrevolutionaries.
- A group of 4 involved in the attack on San Francisco del Norte were killed.
- In Moradón, Quilalí, 3 counterrevolutionaries.
- In El Limón valley, 4 counterrevolutionaries from Honduras were killed.

And while we've been talking here, we received a message informing us that near where our four comrades were murdered, 20 more counterrevolutionaries were killed. (Ovation and slogans)

In this same time period, from May to September, we've captured 76

We are not going to consider anyone a revolutionary who is not ready to fight the oppression of women . . .

members of the counterrevolutionary bands, which in addition to the number killed gives us a total of 337, plus 20 — a total of 357.

Arms of various types have also been recovered, as well as radio transmitters, plastic explosives, freeze-dried food rations — items surely not bought in a supermarket in Tegucigalpa, but delivered by special agencies of the U.S. CIA. We also captured seven pounds of marijuana — which gives us an indication that these people not only carry the arms that imperialism gives them, but also its vices and defects.

Compañeras: We in the Ministry of the Interior have suffered tragic losses for accidental reasons,¹¹ as you all know. We have decided to bring in a man from the west — and besides being from the west he's from Nicaragua, as he is one of the most distinguished guerrilla commanders, one of the bravest combatants we had during the six or seven years in the mountains: Guerrilla Commander David Blanco, as head of the Ministry of the Interior for this region. (Applause. Women shout, "Un sólo ejército!"¹²)

11. In August, 19 persons — including a number of State Security personnel — were killed when a military plane crashed after takeoff at Managua Airport. Lack of replacement parts, because of the imperialist economic blockade, has resulted in a number of military aircraft accidents in recent months.

12. Literally, "One single army!" A slogan heard at virtually every demonstration, it conveys the sense that the entire population is united with the army in defense of the revolution.



Jane Harris/IP

Member of Managua sewing collective organized by AMNLAE.

Compañeras: Our National Directorate salutes Nicaraguan women with profound respect and affection. We can assure you we are not going to consider anyone a revolutionary who is not ready to fight the oppression of women. (Applause) We would not be Sandinistas if in the new society we did not make women an essential pillar of this new society. (Applause) If we are revolutionaries, even if we are men, we should be with AMNLAE. (Ovation)

From Conchita Alday and Blanca Aráuz¹³ to Luisa Amanda Espinoza, women have blazed a path of fire and tenderness that has given life and color to this revolution. Nicaraguan women have not only given the country the fruit of their bellies but also their enthusiasm and courage — selflessly, without limitations.

A revolution with these women is a revolution that will not be defeated by anyone — that will march invincibly into new dawns. (Applause)

It's important that the imperialists know, that the National Guard murderers know, that the nation's traitors know, that in Nicaragua they will be confronted not only by men but by the women as well. (Applause) And these women! Women that leave the fragrance of flowers for the fragrance of gunpowder — women who are as fertile in their wombs as they are in revolutionary consciousness.

Imperialists and members of the bourgeoisie: you will have to confront this sweet rampart of granite. (Applause)

Bourgeoisie and traitors: Here are our women, sisters of Arlen and Claudia and Luisa Amanda (applause and slogans), here are the sisters of Luisa Amanda standing up in tenderness and heroism, with their hands caressing the delicate skin of their children, with their eyes open and watching, with their fingers on the triggers of their guns and on their lips the war cry of the men and women of this land. Let the Yankee imperialists hear this cry in all its magnitude — this cry that the bourgeoisie should listen to as well — the cry of "Free Homeland . . ."

(The people shout) ". . . or Death!"

(Ovation and slogans)

13. Conchita Alday, fought with Sandino to drive out U.S. Marines.

Blanca Arauz, companion and collaborator of Sandino. Her skill as a telegraph operator facilitated communication among his forces and with supporters abroad.