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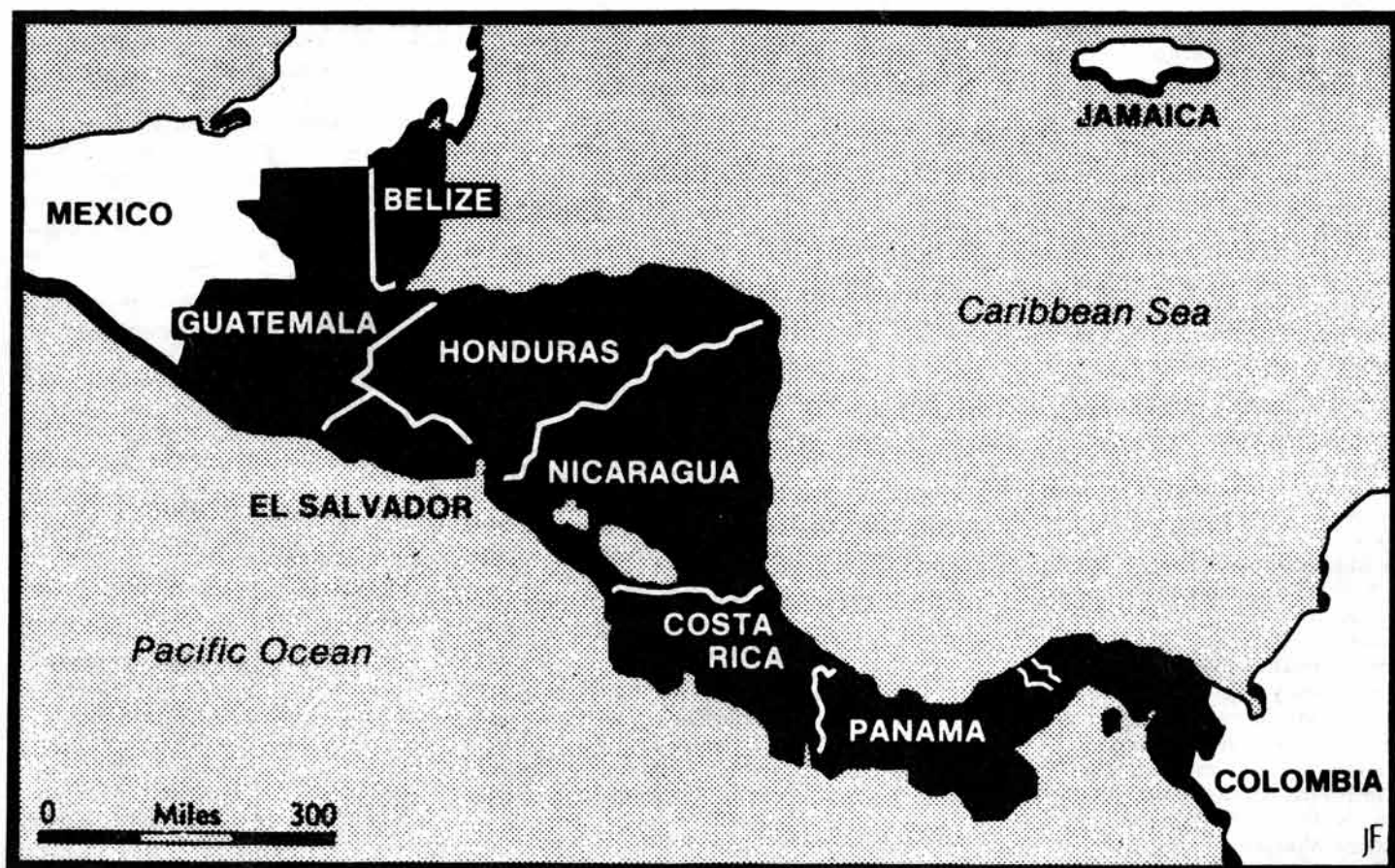
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## **CENTRAL AMERICA**

- **Rebel Offensive Shakes Salvadoran Army**
- **U.S.-Honduran Maneuvers Threaten Nicaragua**
- **20,000 in Mexico: 'U.S. Out of El Salvador!'**
- **U.S. Workers Hear Salvadoran Union Leader**



**Quebec Public Workers Call General Strike**

# Iraqi regime begs help from French and U.S. imperialism

By David Frankel

After 28 months of bitter warfare against the Iranian revolution, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's regime faces a deep crisis. As a result, Hussein has issued a now open appeal to the imperialist powers — France and the United States in particular — for help.

To give a brief review of the latest developments:

- On November 16, Hussein held a news conference in Baghdad for 15 U.S. reporters. He complained that Iraq's treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union "has not worked" during the war with Iran, and indicated that he was interested in improving ties with Washington.

- At the end of December, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz urged that diplomatic ties between Egypt and Iraq be restored "now," and offered to meet with the Egyptian foreign minister. Aziz's remarks appeared in the Cairo daily *Al Ahram*.

The Egyptian regime has been isolated in the Arab world since its recognition of Israel and its signing of the Camp David treaty, which paved the way for the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. One of Washington's prime foreign policy goals has been to end that isolation.

- Another move by Hussein came on January 2, when he released the transcript of a discussion that he had held on August 25 with Stephen Solarz, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Committee. According to the Iraqi government's text, Hussein said that in addition to a Palestinian state, "it is also necessary to have a state of security for the Israelis."

Hussein added: "No single Arab official includes in his policy now the so-called destruction of Israel. . . ."

While complaining about Washington's policy in the Mideast, Hussein told Solarz that "we find it in our interest to have an American presence if another foreign big power exists in the region."

- Even as Hussein's conversation with Solarz was being released in Baghdad, Aziz was in Paris for five days of meetings with top French officials, including President François Mitterrand. Over the past two years, 40 percent of French arms exports — aircraft, missiles, artillery, and other equipment worth \$4.1 billion — have gone to Iraq. French military officials indicated that the government was considering tripling its oil purchases from Iraq to help it pay for more arms.

- On January 7, Aziz met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Boutros Ghali in the first high-level meeting between the two governments since the signing of the Camp David accords in 1979. Aziz said he favored the "unconditional reintegration" of Egypt within the

Arab League in an interview with *Le Monde* which appeared the following day.

## 'France is our main partner'

In his *Le Monde* interview, Aziz was quite open in his appeal to the imperialists. "France," Aziz declared, "is our main partner in the political, economic, commercial, and military fields. We have identical conceptions concerning the means to assure the independence and stability of the countries of the Middle East. French firms contribute to the growth of all sectors of our economy."

Pointing to a \$460 million low-interest loan granted to Baghdad by Washington in December, Aziz said, "Our cooperation with the United States is growing in all domains."

Taken together, these political statements represent a substantial shift in the international relations of the Iraqi regime. Until 1958 Iraq was ruled by a monarchy that had been installed by the British. Under King Faisal II, Iraq's oil industry was primarily British-owned, and Iraq was the only independent Arab country to participate in a formal military alliance with the imperialist powers. As part of the Baghdad Pact agreement, the British Royal Air Force maintained a base at Habbaniyah.

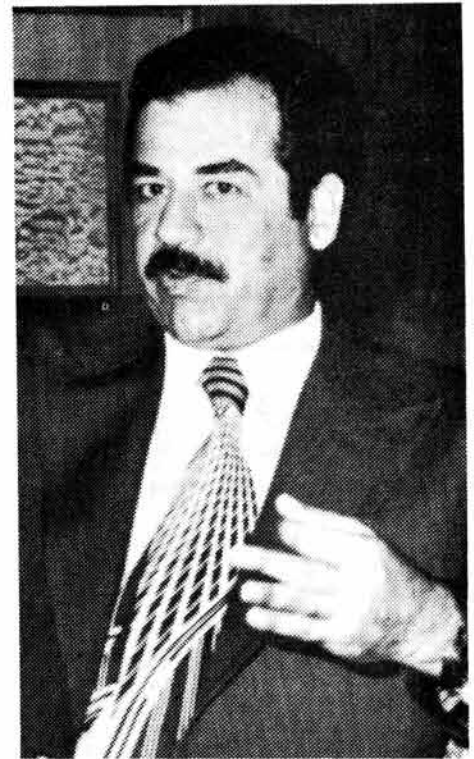
Following the overthrow of the monarchy, Iraq withdrew from the Baghdad Pact, expelled the British military, and in 1972 nationalized the Iraq Petroleum Co. Although there have been a number of military coups since 1958, all of the successive regimes have been strongly identified with Arab nationalism and have stressed the Iraqi people's desire for independence from imperialist domination.

All of these Iraqi governments have also been particularly outspoken in their opposition to Israel. Baghdad has been a member of the Steadfastness and Rejection Front since its formation — a front that has included (at various times) Libya, South Yemen, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and Syria. Intransigent opposition to the Israeli state and its policies was relatively easy for the Iraqi rulers, who share no common border with Israel. Nonetheless the Iraqi stance often helped to put pressure on those Arab regimes more amenable to imperialist demands.

Now, Hussein has reversed Baghdad's long-held position on recognition of Israel. Instead of calling for the liberation of the Mideast from imperialist domination, he says it is "in our interest to have an American presence."

## Impact of Iranian revolution

Behind the shift by Hussein is the Iranian revolution. The explosion of mass protest in Iran in 1978 that began the process of toppling the shah was a deadly threat to the capitalist



Saddam Hussein: a worried man.

dictatorship in Iraq. Hussein made his attitude to the revolution clear by expelling the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who had been living in exile in Iraq.

But Hussein, along with the U.S. ruling class, could not prevent the Iranian masses from bringing down the shah's regime. Nor did the revolution stop with the fall of the shah. The Iranian workers and peasants continued their mass mobilizations, began organizing their own committees, and made gains in the fight against imperialist domination and in their living conditions that inspired the peoples of the region.

This was the background to Hussein's invasion of Iran in September 1980, just five months after the abortive commando raid ordered by President Carter. Iran at that time was still facing a general imperialist economic boycott and threats of military attack from Washington. In opening another front against the revolution, which he did to defend the interests of his own regime, Hussein was also clearly acting in harmony with imperialist objectives.

According to the text of Hussein's conversation with Solarz, restoration of diplomatic ties with Washington, which had been broken off by the Iraqis during the 1967 Mideast War, had been under discussion within the Iraqi leadership at the time of the 1980 invasion. "The idea was frozen because we did not want our people to think that we have restored relations because we needed the U.S.," Hussein said.

Restoration of relations with Washington at that point would have been too open an admission of the reactionary character of Hussein's



war against the Iranian revolution. What has forced Hussein's regime to change its tune now is that its back is against the wall.

#### Price of Hussein's war

Although Iraqi forces have been able to hold their positions along the Iraq-Iran border in spite of a series of severe defeats during the first half of 1982, the overall impact of the war is taking its toll. According to the Red Cross some 50,000 Iraqi troops have been taken prisoner. Between 100,000 and 160,000 have been killed and wounded. As *New York Times* correspondent Drew Middleton put it after a visit to Iraq in November, "neither the Iraqi Army nor Air Force appears to have much stomach for offensive operations."

The question is, how long will they be willing to fight at all?

On the economic front, the war has also been a disaster for the Iraqi people. A wide assortment of development projects have been scrapped or scaled down. Oil exports are less than one-quarter of the prewar amount, and it will take about five years to fully repair the damage that has been done to the country's only export industry. Inflation within Iraq is now running at about 40 percent, and the war continues to cost roughly \$1 billion a month.

One sidelight of Hussein's increasingly desperate scramble for a way out of his predicament is the further confirmation of his alliance with the People's Mujahedeen Organization in Iran. The petty-bourgeois radicals in the Mujahedeen launched a terror campaign against the Iranian government in mid-1981, a course that set them against the masses of Iranian workers and peasants and led them into a de facto alliance with the counterrevolution.

#### 'Excellent relations' with Mujahedeen

Just how explicit this alliance has become was shown on January 9, when Aziz spent four hours meeting with Mujahedeen leader Masoud Rajavi.

During his interview with *Le Monde* Aziz had lauded the "excellent relations" between the Iraqi dictatorship and the Mujahedeen. Asked if the Mujahedeen receive aid from Iraq, Aziz said, "I prefer not to specify on this subject of whether or not we furnish them material aid, since it could embarrass them."

Following the January 9 meeting, Aziz and Rajavi tried to put the cat back in the bag by issuing a joint statement saying that Iraqi support to the Mujahedeen was limited to a "common political understanding." Aziz said he "would be happy" to see Rajavi in power in Iran. He then piously added, "We do not wish to meddle in Iranian domestic affairs."

At this point the Mujahedeen have been greatly weakened within Iran, but they continue to have influence in student circles and among intellectuals in the imperialist countries that Baghdad is now appealing to. Thus, Saddam Hussein is trying to identify with the Mujahedeen's "democratic opposition" to the Khomeini government in Iran in hopes of broadening support for his own regime.

Meanwhile, Hussein's appeals are being watched closely in Washington. President Reagan tried last February to remove Iraq from the list of countries that Washington has accused of supporting international terrorism. Reagan's move would have lifted sanctions against Iraq imposed by Washington in retaliation for its opposition to Israel. But the attempt was blocked in Congress by representatives who demanded greater concessions from the Iraqi regime.

In September the U.S. Commerce Department allowed the export of six jets to Iraq, including four that had been adapted for military purposes. And in December it was revealed

that the Hughes Helicopter Corp. was selling at least 60 helicopters to Iraq. Delivery of these helicopters, which will be fitted with antitank missiles, has already begun.

As U.S. officials told the *Washington Post* January 2, "there has also been a general improvement of dialogue in recent months between the United States and Iraq. . . ."

Insofar as the U.S. and French rulers succeed in strengthening the Saddam Hussein dictatorship, the biggest losers will be the Iraqi workers and peasants. And by aiding Hussein's aggression against Iran, the imperialists are committing a further crime against the working people of both Iran and Iraq. □

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# Quebec workers take on government

## Public sector unions set general strike against takebacks

By Robert Simms

[The following article appeared in the January 25 issue of *Socialist Voice*, the fortnightly newspaper reflecting the views of the Revolutionary Workers League, Canadian section of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

MONTREAL — The fightback against public sector wage controls in Canada is now centered in Quebec.

As *Socialist Voice* goes to press, some 210,000 public sector workers in Quebec are gearing up for an unlimited general strike set to begin January 26. Hospital workers, teachers, and provincial government workers, members of three separate union federations, have united into a single Common Front against their employer, the Quebec government.

As one of its final acts of 1982, the government abruptly ended all negotiations with the unions and passed Law 105. The law takes away their legal right to strike for three years, and unilaterally imposes wage cuts and working conditions to last until the end of 1985.

The Common Front has called for the strike to begin on January 26. On that date, teachers

and nonteaching educational workers are to walk out. They will be followed each day over a six-day period by the other categories of workers, including government professionals, daycare workers, nurses, legal aides, hospital workers, and others, until the entire public sector is out. Their goal is to convince the government to withdraw the legislation and resume negotiations.

### Union mobilization

Efforts are being made to build support for the strike. A central demonstration has been called for January 29 in Quebec City in front of the National Assembly, Quebec's Parliament. Leaders of the three union federations are currently touring the province to explain the aims of the strike and win support for it. The mass rallies scheduled for the major cities are open to the public. Stickers and brochures are being distributed throughout the province. Support for the strike is overwhelming in the public service.

On November 10, the Common Front staged a successful one-day general strike to protest the government's takeback offers and to demand serious negotiations. It was a convincing

demonstration of the anger and militancy of public sector workers. The teachers' federation voted 80 percent in favor of unlimited strike action in December. The other unions have not released vote totals, but have solid majorities. Support is increasing daily as the pay cuts take effect.

Daniel Allard, who works at Montreal's Notre-Dame Hospital, told *Socialist Voice* that at his hospital, "we are ready to fight to the end. Already 175 people have signed to go on buses to Quebec City, two weeks before the demonstration."

Editorialists in the business-controlled media have condemned the strike. Montreal's *Le Devoir* said January 11 that if the strike takes place, "society would slide into anarchy."

The government for its part has responded with threats of fines, an end to the union dues checkoff, and even union decertification.

The pace of union mobilization forced [Quebec] Premier René Lévesque to call union leaders into his office January 17 to see if the strike could be avoided. But Lévesque warned there would be no tampering with the basics of the law.

### Enormous takebacks

The government's decrees will cover 320,000 public sector workers, 210,000 of whom are members of unions in the Common Front.

What is the extent of the takebacks these laws impose?

- For all 320,000 workers, the law cancels a 2.8 percent wage increase they were supposed to receive December 31, 1982.

- For 200,000 workers who earn more than \$20,000, wages are cut 19.5 percent in the first three months of 1983. For the remaining 120,000 who earn less, wages are either cut between 5 and 10 percent depending on income, or maintained at current levels into 1983.

- For the 200,000 workers with higher incomes, wages for the remainder of 1983 will be cut an average of 5 percent less than present rates.

- For all public sector workers, wages in 1984 and 1985 will increase in line with the consumer price index, minus 1.5 percent each year, but increases are only added on to the slashed wage base rates.

- The decrees unilaterally reverse working conditions and job security clauses won in previous contracts. For many workers who fear mass layoffs, including teachers, these are the central issues in the conflict.

Thus, for two-thirds of public sector

## Quebec labor's vanguard role

The 1983 Common Front is not the first such Common Front of public sector workers in Quebec. Each previous union coalition has had a major impact on politics in both Quebec and Canada.

The Common Front formed for the 1972 round of negotiations left the deepest imprint on the consciousness of Quebec workers.

The Quebec government at the time, under liberal Premier Robert Bourassa, refused to negotiate seriously. The Common Front began a general strike April 11, 1972. The government crippled the strike after 11 days by passing back-to-work legislation.

When top union leaders were jailed for defying anti-strike injunctions, more than 100,000 industrial workers in Quebec's private sector joined a spontaneous walkout that lasted nine days. Radio stations were taken over by workers. In the city of Sept-Îles, the strikers took over the entire town, running it through a strike council. The mayor and police hid from view.

The government was forced to resume negotiations resulting in an eventual \$100 per week minimum wage and other big gains for Common Front members.

The next Common Front also took strike action in 1976 to win important wage gains, breaking through the cross-country wage control limits imposed at the time. The anti-strike legislation again passed by the already discredited Bourassa government deepened its unpopularity and contributed to the election of the Parti Québécois (PQ) a few months later. The PQ's election victory signalled that the Quebec independence movement, based on Quebec's working class in both public and private sectors, had become a huge factor in Canadian politics.

In 1979-80, the Common Front won big advances in wages, paid maternity leave, and job security, which stand as precedents for unions throughout Canada.

The current confrontation will also play a key role in the political thinking of Quebec's working class.



workers' sacrifices don't create jobs or im- into 1985 before they are again making the same wages as 1982. By that time, today's 10 percent inflation rate may have cut their living standards by up to 20 percent.

Federal and provincial public sector workers elsewhere in Canada face wage control programs, but nowhere have they reached such devastating proportions as in Quebec. This is the grim logic of Ottawa's 6 and 5 percent wage control program applied to Quebec.

#### Canadian imperialism's role

The recession has hit Quebec hardest; its unemployment rate is the highest for any region in Canada. Discrimination on the basis of speaking French has been practiced against Quebec's majority for decades by the English Canadian and U.S. firms that dominate the Quebec economy.

However, Québécois opposition to Quebec's status as an oppressed nation has led to 20 years of nationalist struggles, with Quebec workers winning major gains.

To maintain the federalist hold on Quebec, Ottawa would like to reverse this. And it intends to make working people bear the burden of capitalist recession.

Thus, on December 13, 1981, Prime Minister Trudeau called Quebec's public sector

workers a "new bourgeoisie." He complained that Quebec's state employees had been able "to profit from sums that should have gone to the province's industrial development" (meaning the coffers of the corporations).

A few months later, in March 1982, Ottawa cut \$1.2 billion per year in transfer payments to the provinces. These payments were used to subsidize social services. Quebec took the biggest cuts.

Quebec Premier René Lévesque cited these factors as part of the reason for his hard line. But rather than confront Ottawa and the corporations, which are totally hostile to the aspirations of the Québécois and responsible for the crisis, the Parti Québécois (PQ) is carrying out their goals and their work.

The battle that is now unfolding in Quebec will have a profound effect on future labor struggles across Canada. Governments and employers hope to deal a staggering blow to labor militancy in Quebec and thereby put a damper on labor's struggles right across the country.

That's why it's so crucial to get the truth out about this fight in English Canada and to build solidarity with it. A victory for Quebec public sector workers will mark an important advance in the overall fight against takebacks, concessions, and antiworker legislation. □

90 percent of the public sector, also face discrimination right in their own province. It comes from the control by foreign bankers and corporations of their economy. Over the years, gains won by Common Front struggles have brought about a higher standard of living for all Québécois. It has meant improved health care, schooling, and other social services, although they still remain inferior to those in most other Canadian provinces. The massive cutbacks the government wants to impose would be an important erosion of these hard-won rights.

But there's a whole other level to all of this. Only by supporting the rights of the Quebec workers can all of us begin to find a way out of the mess this country is in.

We've seen that no gains won by working people are safe today. That will remain so until the present capitalist government in Ottawa is replaced. And we don't want to be suckered into support for the Conservatives. In spite of all their blustery opposition talk — designed expressly to dupe the naïve — they'd rush just as boldly to implement Ronald Reagan-type policies.

We need a government in Ottawa that would take the side of working people, that would fight for Chrysler and public sector workers, that would make laws to protect our needs, the needs of the unemployed and poor farmers, not those of the banks, landlords, and big business.

For workers, the starting place is our unions. They have to fight against every take-back and ripoff and, equally important, they have to make sure the NDP [New Democratic Party], the workers' political party in English Canada, truly fights for our needs.

We also have to get our unions to link up with the Quebec workers in preparation for the next elections in order to present a common workers' slate across the country.

Quebec workers have shown their muscle and militancy in battles from the post office to the public service. They set the pace in actions against wage controls in 1976 and in the November 21, 1981, day of protest in Ottawa.

A fighting alliance with the Quebec workers can unseat Trudeau and bring a workers and farmers government to power. In the end, that's the only way out of the mess.

That's why support for the Quebec public sector workers is so important. It's through concrete actions of solidarity, and through fighting together against our common enemy in Ottawa, that a solid unity between Quebec and English Canadian workers can be forged.

But to get there, we have to act today.

The task of the hour is solidarity with the public sector. Our unions should hold meetings on the Common Front struggle and invite representatives of the Quebec unions to address them. We should pass resolutions like that adopted by the Vancouver postal workers. We should send supporters to the mass demonstration planned in Quebec City on January 29.

Their fight is our fight!

All out for the workers of the Quebec Common Front! □

## 'Task of the hour is solidarity'

### Big stakes in Quebec public workers' fight

[The following editorial appeared in the January 25 issue of the Canadian fortnightly newspaper *Socialist Voice*.]

\* \* \*

Quebec's Common Front struggle presents the labor movement in English Canada with a responsibility to build solidarity as never before. The stakes in the Common Front fight go to the heart of the immediate interests of trade unions and working people in every corner of the country.

What's involved?

• The Quebec unionists' fight is aimed squarely against boss and government takebacks of the hard-won gains working people have fought for over decades. The public sector workers now occupy the front lines in resisting wage control and takeback policies that governments and bosses are trying to ram through right across the land.

The federal government sets the tone for this assault in its "6 and 5" percent scam. It is the hand of the federal government that is behind the showdown in Quebec. It has slashed transfer payments to Quebec; it has deprived the province of the means to manage its economic affairs. The federal government is the driving force behind the campaign to make workers pay for the crisis.

But as the Ontario Chrysler workers learned,

workers' sacrifices don't create jobs or improve the country's disastrous economic situation. Yesterday, the Chrysler workers stood up against this robbing of the poor to make the system work for the rich. Today it's the turn of the Quebec workers.

• It's a fight for union rights. Stripped by the government of their legal means to negotiate or strike, the unions have been forced to resort to illegal strike action. They face fines and threats of other reprisals, including union decertification. Quite simply, what is at stake is the democratic right of the unions to act collectively to defend their members.

If the bargaining rights and strike muscle of 320,000 Quebec unionists are allowed to be wiped out, it will send signals to every profit-hungry boss in the land. It's a precedent workers cannot afford.

• It's an important struggle to defend women's rights. Two-thirds of the public sector workers are women. They have been in the vanguard in winning equal rights for women right across the country. Over the years, they have set precedents around higher minimum wages and paid maternity leave. Now they are fighting to keep their jobs and for on-the-job daycare.

• It's a fight for the rights of the Québécois workers. It's not just women who are discriminated against in Quebec. Québécois, who are

# Nonaligned denounce Washington

*Demand halt to U.S. campaign against Sandinistas*

**By Michael Baumann and Jane Harris**

MANAGUA — At least 100,000 people turned out to greet the Special Ministerial Session of the Nonaligned Movement, held here January 10-15 to discuss and condemn the great threat posed by U.S. imperialist intervention in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Held in Managua at the request of the Nicaraguan government, the session was only the fifth such special meeting of foreign ministers held in the 22-year history of the organization, and the first to deal solely with imperialist intervention in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The decision first, to hold the meeting at all, second, to hold it in Managua, and third, to approve *unanimously* an explicit denunciation of U.S. intervention throughout the region added up to a significant diplomatic defeat for U.S. imperialism, highlighting its growing political isolation.

Despite all of Washington's efforts, the meeting voted to "denounce the acts of aggression against Nicaragua." The foreign ministers singled out "the financing of covert actions, the use of U.S. territory and that of Nicaragua's neighbors for the training of counterrevolutionary forces, [and] the violations by U.S. ships and planes" of Nicaraguan territory.

The Nonaligned Movement represents 97 of the 157 members of the United Nations, and in particular the great majority of the so-called developing countries.

Members range from the revolutionary workers government of Cuba to the proimperialist regime in Zaïre, and even include two who are at war with each other — Iran and Iraq. What they have in common is that all are semicolonies or former colonies of imperialism. All are still kept in poverty and superexploitation by imperialist plunder or — in the case of Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea, and Yugoslavia — are still victimized by imperialist domination of the world market. And all are threatened by imperialist military power.

Also included in the movement are many of the world's liberation movements, ranging from the Palestine Liberation Organization and South West Africa People's Organisation of Namibia (full members), to the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front—Revolutionary Democratic Front of El Salvador (observers), to the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, and the American Indian Movement (invited to this gathering as special guests of the Nicaraguan government).



Fred Murphy/IP

DANIEL ORTEGA

Commander Daniel Ortega, coordinator of Nicaragua's Junta of National Reconstruction, set the tone for the conference in an opening speech that went straight to the heart of the problems faced by nations under the thumb of imperialist oppression.

"We are living through some of the most critical moments ever faced by humanity," Ortega said, pointing in particular to the U.S. arms buildup, its aggression in Central America, and its responsibility for the worsening world economic crisis.

The burden of foreign debt imposed on the semicolonial world, now standing at more than \$500 billion, is a "time bomb," he said, "whose explosion could set off a crisis of proportions never before seen in the international banking system, one whose consequences the creditor countries could not escape."

For the nonaligned countries, he said, there is only one solution: we must "renegotiate our foreign debt as a bloc" and establish that "under no conditions can repayment exceed a certain percentage of a country's exports."

Ortega blasted U.S. imperialism's use of Honduras as a military base and of Costa Rica as a political base for counterrevolutionary attacks against Nicaragua. To date, he said, more than 500 armed attacks have been mounted from Honduras, resulting in more than 400 Nicaraguan casualties.

While the meeting was in session, two technicians for Nicaragua's agrarian reform agency were killed near the Honduran border and several others were wounded as part of the U.S.-

inspired attempt to sabotage the harvest of coffee, Nicaragua's main cash crop. Also came the announcement that Costa Rican Civil Guards had located 500 counterrevolutionaries in four camps inside Costa Rica. Of these, 13 were detained.

Following Ortega's address came shorter speeches from leaders representing each of the continents of the Nonaligned Movement, and from SWAPO.

## Argentine denounces Thatcher

Notable as a demonstration of how much the conflict over the Malvinas Islands reinforced the anti-imperialist axis of the Nonaligned Movement was the warm greeting given to the speech of Argentina's foreign minister, Juan Ramón Aguirre Lanari. Aguirre Lanari received a standing ovation when he thanked the Nonaligned Movement for what he called its "historic understanding" of Argentine sovereignty over the islands and said his country owed the movement "a debt of honor we can never forget."

The Argentine representative pointed out that even as the Nonaligned Movement was holding its meeting in Managua, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was visiting the Malvinas Islands in "a new act of colonialism, arrogance, provocation, and insulting deprecation of the recently approved United Nations resolution" in favor of renewing negotiations over the islands' status.

Turning to other issues, Aguirre Lanari declared that "the Palestinian people must exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and national independence," and sharply attacked South Africa's racist policy of apartheid.

In regard to Central America, the Argentine foreign minister cited as the root of the crisis "anachronistic political and socioeconomic situations," "persistent violations of the principle of nonintervention and noninterference in the internal affairs of states," and "deformed characterizations made in the context of the worldwide struggle for power."

He thus sharply differentiated the stand of the Argentine government from that of the Cuban and Nicaraguan governments, which point to U.S. imperialism's intervention in Central America as the source of the conflict there. Argentina has had advisers in Honduras training the counterrevolutionary forces attacking Nicaraguan territory.

## Cuba strikes a blow

Officials in Washington were not happy about the fact that such a meeting was taking place in Managua. Their heavy-handed at-



tempts to influence the outcome of the conference blew up in their faces.

A special State Department representative, Susan Johnson, was sent to put the heat on participants in the meeting. Economic retaliation was threatened for votes in opposition to U.S. policy, and a confidential document was circulated outlining the kind of final statement that Washington expected its subordinates to fight for.

The U.S. position paper claimed that Washington had been "neutral" in the war over the Malvinas, that it was not trying to "overthrow" the Nicaraguan government, that the human rights situation in El Salvador was "improving," that the Reagan administration was not engaged in destabilization maneuvers against Grenada, and that there is "no U.S. 'blockade' of Cuba."

These self-serving lies, hard enough to argue for under any circumstances, received a mortal blow when the Cuban delegation obtained a copy of the U.S. document and arranged for its public circulation to the entire conference.

One of the most moving moments came on January 13, when the Vietnamese representative read a message from Pham Van Dong, president of the government that came to power after a 30-year war against French and U.S. imperialism.

"Vietnam considers as its own each victory won by the peoples of Latin America in the struggles against imperialism and colonialism," the message read.

"We, who have been the victim of imperialism's most brutal war of aggression yet, understand profoundly the sacrifice of the people of Nicaragua, Grenada, and Cuba," added Vo Dong Giang, Vietnamese Vice-minister of Foreign Affairs.

Feleke Gedle Giorgis, foreign minister of Ethiopia, told the general session that if it weren't so tragic, "it's almost enough to make you laugh when the imperialists say they won't permit another Cuba."

Maybe the U.S. rulers can't "reconcile themselves to the fact that they can no longer stop the course of history," he said, but the fact is that the Nonaligned Movement can no longer tolerate interference in its affairs.

The government of Suriname called at the general session for the strongest possible denunciation of U.S. imperialism's murderous role in Central America.

Surinamese Foreign Minister Harvey Naarendorp pointed out that the real reason for Latin America's backwardness was the "grip of imperialism" on the continent. "The big multinational corporations," he said, "sustain military regimes to prop up the capitalist system at the expense of the peoples of Latin America."

#### Iran blasts U.S. intervention

The Iranian delegation stressed its solidarity with Nicaragua and the anti-imperialist struggles throughout the region.

At a special news conference January 11,

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akhbar Velayati announced that Tehran would soon be opening an embassy in Nicaragua.

In his address to the general session January 13, Velayati denounced U.S. intervention in Latin America. "We have always supported

Nicaragua against the conspiracy of the Great Satan," he said, "[just as we have] condemned U.S. interference in El Salvador" and "support the legitimate right of Argentina to the Malvinas in the face of flagrant aggression from Great Britain." □

## Final document cites U.S. by name

MANAGUA — In a major victory against U.S. efforts to sabotage the gathering, the Nonaligned conference's final document, known as the Managua Communiqué, received unanimous approval.

Originally drafted by the Nicaraguan delegation and subjected to five days of debate and discussion, the document emerged with its main points unscathed. It amounted to a sweeping condemnation of U.S. imperialist intervention throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Three key paragraphs were subjected to the longest debate but were finally approved. They condemned different aspects of U.S. aggression against Nicaragua.

Paragraph 33 states: "The ministers denounce the acts of aggression against Nicaragua, the financing of covert actions, the use of U.S. territory and that of Nicaragua's neighbors for the training of counterrevolutionary forces, the violations by U.S. ships and planes of Nicaragua's territorial waters and air space, which have resulted in terrorist actions and acts of sabotage aimed at overthrowing the revolutionary government and which have taken a toll of more than 400 Nicaraguans dead, wounded, and kidnapped since 1980."

Paragraph 34 "specifically condemns the systematic attacks carried out against Nicaragua from the other side of its northern border [i.e., Honduras, the only country that borders Nicaragua to the north] by armed bands made up of former members of the Somoza National Guard."

And paragraph 35 condemns the economic war against Nicaragua aimed at "impeding the normal development of agricultural activities, promoting industrial decapitalization, encouraging sabotage of means of communication and production, encouraging the flight of technicians and skilled labor, and exercising pressure . . . to prevent the country from receiving the loans and assistance necessary for its development."

The document also expressed the Nonaligned Movement's support for other countries in the region battling imperialism.

• El Salvador. The conference demanded an immediate and unconditional halt to "imperialist intervention and repression in El Salvador," called particular attention to the "increasing role of the Hon-

duran army," and supported the call for negotiations among all "representative political forces." In the latter category it specifically named the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN).

• Argentina. In regard to the war over the Malvinas Islands, the nonaligned nations hailed the "firm support Latin American and other nonaligned countries have given Argentina in its efforts to resolve this controversy and prevent the consolidation of the existing colonial situation in these islands."

• Cuba. The ministers condemned the "increase in threats of military aggression against Cuba" and demanded "once again that the United States immediately and unconditionally halt its economic blockade."

• Grenada. The conference denounced the "military, political, and economic pressure the imperialists are exercising against Grenada" as well as the "economic boycott, hostile propaganda, naval maneuvers carried out near its territory, and violation of its airspace — all of which are aimed at destabilizing its government."

• Suriname. The movement expressed its support for Suriname's "efforts to consolidate its independence and sovereignty," and in a clear reference to the coup attempt and cut-off of U.S. aid in December it condemned "recent efforts to destabilize the government."

The statement also singled out the growing Israeli role in Latin America, saying:

"The ministers call attention to the utilization of Israel by the United States in its actions of intervention in Latin America. In this context, the ministers denounce the visits by Israeli functionaries to various Latin American countries which have, among other things, led to agreement on military pacts and to an increase in U.S.-Israeli intervention into the affairs of the region, exacerbating tension and the possibility of an explosion.

"The ministers are agreed that the Zionist regime, a main ally of Somoza and of fascist and racist regimes, architect of a policy aimed at elimination of the Palestinian people, reached the height of its imperialism and racism during its occupation of part of Lebanon, its acts of aggression against the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples, and its massacre of the Palestinians."

# Army shaken by rebel blows

*Officers feud as Reagan cites 'progress'*

By Fred Murphy

In late 1982 and the opening weeks of 1983 the people of El Salvador registered important gains against the dictatorship and its army. Military and economic aid from U.S. imperialism is all that is keeping the bloody regime afloat, but the Reagan administration faces growing opposition at home and abroad to its war in Central America.

The fighters of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) followed up their successful October offensive with a new drive that began January 8. Rebel forces overran a garrison at Tejutla, the third-largest town in Chalatenango Province; attacked other army positions between there and the capital; and, in Morazán Province, put the regime's troops to flight and advanced along the main highway toward the provincial capital of San Francisco Gotera.

By January 16 the FMLN had routed the army from all its positions north of the Torola River, which divides Morazán in half. The rebels also had seized towns within six miles of San Francisco Gotera on three sides of the city.

These gains came on top of earlier ones achieved since October. In the previous offensive, the FMLN forced the regime's army from more than 20 towns in Chalatenango, Morazán, and San Miguel provinces. After tactical retreats in mid-November in face of a government counteroffensive, the rebels retook much of the territory originally seized and then extended their control to a wide swath of El Salvador's easternmost province, La Unión.

In those first 70 days of fighting, 1,100 casualties (dead and wounded) were inflicted on the government forces. The rebels also seized 438 rifles, 33 other weapons, and 148,428 rounds of ammunition from the army, according to the FMLN's Radio Venceremos.

The FMLN's actions, Commander Salvador Cayetano Carpio said in early January, "are making it possible to enter into more and more decisive stages in the strategic destruction of the enemy."

## FMLN appeals to soldiers

The declining morale of the armed forces' ranks in face of the FMLN's blows is evident from the large numbers of soldiers the rebels are taking prisoner. While 278 troops were captured in the first 70 days of the October-December offensive, more than 130 were seized in just two weeks of fighting in January.

The FMLN is careful to treat its prisoners well, and follows a policy of releasing them to the International Red Cross. "These freed men are more dangerous to the army than a 120-millimeter howitzer," a specialist in psychological warfare told the *Los Angeles*

*Times* in November. "They will tell their fellow soldiers they were treated well, which will encourage more to surrender the next time they are surrounded."

Radio Venceremos has been making special appeals to the troops and officers of the Salvadoran army. "We repeat our call not to go on fighting against an army made up of the people," a January 16 broadcast said. "Lay down your arms, desert, don't go on swelling the ranks of an army that has lost the war. Officer, soldier — join your people!"

Army morale took a further blow during the second week of January when Col. Sigifredo Ochoa, a commander of Cabañas Province, rebelled against a transfer order and demanded that Defense Minister Gen. José Guillermo García resign. Ochoa and other field comman-

ders had been growing more and more frustrated at García's obvious inability to conduct an effective war against the FMLN. The rivalry was spurred by last year's press reports on the U.S. embassy's high praise for Ochoa's supposed achievements in driving the rebels out of Cabañas (the result of scorched-earth campaigns against the peasants).

Despite Ochoa's open insubordination — an offense for which all Salvadoran enlisted men know they would face summary execution — García could not mobilize the officer corps against him. The affair ended in a standoff January 13: Ochoa accepted a prestigious post at the Inter-American Defense Council in Washington while rumors spread of García's impending "retirement."

On January 17, García dispatched 4,200

## Nicaragua issues warning on massive U.S.-Honduran maneuvers

The Pentagon made known January 18 that a major new military provocation against Nicaragua will be staged in southern Honduras during the first week of February.

Joint maneuvers between the U.S. and Honduran armed forces will bring 5,000 Honduran troops to within 10 miles of the Nicaraguan border. Some 1,600 U.S. personnel will be involved, along with two U.S. Navy troop carriers, two landing craft, three U.S. Air Force communications planes, and a major deployment of U.S. Army transport vehicles and aircraft.

The exercises, of unprecedented scope, were originally to have taken place in early December but were postponed. When the maneuvers were first scheduled last October, the *Washington Post* (citing diplomats in the Honduran capital) called them "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."

Similar joint maneuvers held in Honduras last July provided the cover for shipping large quantities of war matériel to the counterrevolutionary Nicaraguan units that operate from camps in southern Honduras. During the first 19 days of 1983, these terrorist gangs murdered 29 Nicaraguan civilians, mostly youth or children, and wounded or kidnapped dozens more.

Speaking to thousands of Nicaraguans

who gathered in Managua January 19 for the funeral of 12 Sandinista soldiers killed by counterrevolutionaries the previous week, Defense Minister Humberto Ortega warned that "we must be prepared to confront the possibility of aggression at the level of an army."

"These maneuvers," Ortega continued, "constitute support not only to the Somozaists but also to . . . those in the Honduran army who see themselves as Napoleons, who think that taking on Nicaragua will be easy. But it will not be in Managua where this war ends, it will be in their own capitals."

The Sandinista daily *Barricada* took up this theme in an editorial the following day:

"What must be clear is that any aggression of broader scope against Nicaragua involving forces of other Central American armies will in fact signify the regionalization of a war whose scene will not be solely in Nicaragua. This is what we are trying to avoid, but if it is imposed on us, there should not be the slightest doubt that the people of Nicaragua and the other peoples of Central America will resist and fight until the aggressors are crushed, wherever they may be found."

Still larger maneuvers than the ones in Honduras will be held in the Panama Canal Zone February 11-17. These will involve 4,500 U.S. personnel from bases in Panama and the United States, as well as 500 Panamanian troops.



troops to Morazán in another effort to dislodge the FMLN. Six days later, Radio Venceremos reported that these army units were apparently pulling back again after encountering heavy rebel resistance. The regime's forces had been unable to penetrate into the FMLN-held half of Morazán north of the Torola River.

### 'Losing territory, losing the war'

In recent months officials of the regime and the U.S. embassy have tried to minimize the importance of the FMLN's tightening grip on wide areas of El Salvador by saying these zones are of little economic importance. But as FMLN Commander Joaquín Villalobos noted in December, "The problem of territory in the case of El Salvador is a crucial one for both sides. The country is quite small, so if the army is losing territory this is because it is losing the war."

An FMLN statement quoted in the January 6 issue of the Managua daily *Barricada* affirmed that the rebels are fighting "to achieve a true land reform that will benefit the peasant majority of our country, and for the realization of social reforms so that the country's wealth can be turned into hospitals, schools, and food for all."

"We are fighting to bring about a government of broad participation, where the presence of our people and their organizations will be the instrument for the exercise of true democracy," the statement continued.

To achieve these aims, the FMLN said, "the presence of the popular organizations is necessary, and therefore we will never lay down our weapons."

As the rebels dealt military blows to the regime in the countryside, the revolutionary forces were also making gains in the cities, where trade-union activity has begun to revive. The first strikes in more than a year occurred in a series of workplaces and government ministries in mid-November. In December, union federations belonging to the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) joined with labor groups under Christian Democratic influence to demand wage increases, a freeze on consumer prices, and the right to organize and strike.

All these advances by the Salvadoran people and their organizations, combined with the growing disarray inside the regime, point up how indispensable continued U.S. support is to the dictatorship's survival. Thus President Reagan defied all the evidence and again certified to Congress on January 21 that "the government of El Salvador has made progress" in upholding human rights. This cleared the way for \$200 million more in military and economic aid to the regime in 1983.

But U.S. working people are more opposed than ever to Washington's war in El Salvador. So strong is this anti-interventionist sentiment that the AFL-CIO labor bureaucracy has concluded that it can no longer credibly back Reagan's policy. In the past, acting through the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), the AFL-CIO official-

dom had sought to give U.S. intervention a pro-labor cover. Now, the AIFLD has announced that its director, William Doherty, will testify in Congress against Reagan's certification.

This move by the AFL-CIO bureaucracy

## Mexico protest hits U.S. policy

### January 22 demonstrations held in many countries

By Jim Cunradi  
and Andrea González

MEXICO CITY — "El Salvador listen, Mexico is with your struggle!"

"Yankees out of El Salvador!"

These chants reflected the sentiments of the 20,000 people who came out to demonstrate here January 22 against U.S. intervention in El Salvador. The action was one of many that took place internationally in response to a call by the World Front in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador. The World Front was founded in Mexico last March by representatives of religious, political, solidarity, and labor organizations from around the world.

The march to the U.S. embassy here was led off by banners of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), and the World Front. These were followed by contingents from solidarity committees, religious groups, and trade unions.

The marchers were greeted by thousands more who lined the route with FMLN flags and placards protesting U.S. intervention. Many joined the demonstration as it went by.

The rally began with a speech by Juan José Martín of the FMLN-FDR. He explained that this demonstration and those like it around the world were all part of the Salvadoran people's revolutionary struggle against imperialist domination. Inside El Salvador, Martín said, "the people and the FMLN are taking gigantic steps forward in this struggle. That is the people's response to the certification Reagan presented to Congress yesterday. The Salvadoran people's response to this certification is to redouble the struggle."

At the same time, Martín continued, the Salvadoran people seek a political solution to the conflict, a dialogue. In this they are supported by the Mexican people, the Nicaraguan people, people from around the world. "The only ones who want more death and destruction for the Salvadoran people are the Yankees," Martín declared. "The imperialists oppose peace and oppose dialogue because they want to control all of Central America."

"But we are convinced," the FMLN-FDR representative went on, "that the people of the United States themselves support us. We know we can count on the support of the American people; that in the United States itself they are demonstrating against Reagan's certification. The U.S. people are also in favor of a political solution in Central America."

Among the other speakers was Edgardo

points up the power of the international campaign being waged in defense of the Salvadoran people's struggle. It will provide new openings for U.S. opponents of intervention in Central America to take their message to the ranks of the unions.

Pérez, representing the Nicaraguan Committee in Solidarity With the Peoples, which organizes activities in Nicaragua in support of liberation struggles throughout the world. U.S. intervention, he said, could not stop "the freedom-loving peoples who are fighting for their national self-determination, their sovereignty, their economic and political independence."

The rally also heard from Sabino Hernández of the Mexican Committee in Solidarity With the Salvadoran People. The Mexican people, Hernández said, have a special responsibility to the Salvadoran revolution because they too are part of Central America. The victory of the revolution in El Salvador, he added, will assure revolutionary victory throughout Central America.

Vicente Juárez of the Mexican Committee in Solidarity With the Salvadoran People, who cochaired the rally, announced that among other countries where similar actions were taking place were France, Japan, Australia, Cuba, and Vietnam. The crowd responded with chants of "Cuba sí, Yanquis no!" and "Two, three, many Vietnams!"

The rally ended with a brief speech by cochair Jorge Martínez, also of the Mexican committee. He paid homage to the many martyrs of the Salvadoran revolution, singling out Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, the four U.S. churchwomen slain in December 1980, and Flor ("Terry") Santana, the Cuban-born solidarity activist in New York City who was assassinated there in December of last year. □

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## South African sports links hit

West Indian cricketers lured by big money

By Baxter Smith

BEQUIA, St. Vincent — Sporting contacts with South Africa have happened before and been condemned before. But this time it was different.

Rumors of a West Indian cricket tour had been floated, and denied, about a week before it was confirmed. Then, on January 11, it all appeared to be true as top West Indian cricketers were seen boarding planes to Miami, where they connected with London to Johannesburg to play there for big money.

The following day the widely listened-to Radio Antilles covered the story on its 6:45 a.m. sports broadcast. By 8:00 station programmers had elevated it to the lead story, eclipsing all international and regional news. Even the normally staid Voice of Barbados interrupted its regular broadcasting with bulletins hot off the wire. Radio Free Grenada (RFG) gave major coverage to the story.

Cricket is played chiefly in England and in some of its former colonies, particularly India, Australia, and here in the West Indies. In most countries of the world anything will generate more attention than a cricket match. But not here. In the West Indies cricket is serious business.

So it was no surprise on January 12 — all ears pinned to their radios — to hear that some of the best of West Indian professional cricket talent had been criminally lured by juicy contracts to play in racist South Africa.

Nineteen cricketers from Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and elsewhere reportedly took up the offer to tour the apartheid country. Reportedly, they will get well over US\$100,000 apiece for what may be only a six-week tour.

For the apartheid regime, this was an important coup in its efforts to break the international sports boycott against it. Because of its racist policies, almost all South African teams have been unable to participate in sports activities abroad and many countries have forbidden their teams to play in South Africa.

To drive some cracks in this boycott, the South African authorities have been willing to pay large sums of money to lure individual players to form makeshift teams. Earlier, they were successful in drawing a team of British cricketers and a team of Sri Lankan cricketers to South Africa.

Condemnations of the West Indian cricket tour came swiftly.

Hassan Howa, the president of the South African Cricket Board, a Black body, called the West Indian players "unprincipled sporting mercenaries."

In Britain, the Anti-Apartheid Movement

blasted them for having "sold their souls for Krugerrands."

In remarks broadcast over Radio Free Grenada, the Organization of African Unity's ambassador to the United Nations deplored "that our own Black brothers will, because of money, go to South Africa and be given the title of 'honorary white.' It is beyond my understanding how a Black man could degrade himself to that point."

The ambassador added, "no matter how many cricketers go over from anywhere in the world it cannot stop the movement, it cannot stop the activities of Africans for the liberation of South Africa."

President of the West Indies Cricket Board of Control Allen Ray said of the tour that "people are aware of the damage it is doing to West Indies cricket." He added that the players will not be paid to play cricket but to "form window dressing for the South African government."

Clive Lloyd, the West Indies cricket captain, said the tour will damage the fight against apartheid. He and star Viv Richards have stated that no amount of money will induce them to play in South Africa.

Bobby Clarke, the leader of the Barbados Industrial and General Workers Union, demanded that Caribbean governments take away the citizenship of the cricketers and let them seek citizenship in South Africa. He pointed out that had they been born in South

Africa, the cricketers would never have been paid so much money to play.

Because cricket is so popular in the West Indies, numerous fine players have developed. They have toured England, India, Australia, New Zealand, and it is no wonder that South Africa has sought them to tour there.

Not long ago, West Indian cricketer Alvin Kallicharran accepted an offer to play in South Africa. He was given the title of "honorary white" and can live and move wherever he pleases there.

According to the November 19 *Outlet*, published by the Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement, "black sportsmen in South Africa are horrified" about Kallicharran's chummy attitude toward apartheid. At one cricket match just before Christmas, fans taunted Kallicharran by calling him a "white man's stooge" and "racist pig."

The Grenadian *Free West Indian* on January 12 editorialized that for a price the cricketers had rejected the struggles of Black rights leaders such as "Touissaint and Garvey, of Butler and Marryshow." It charged that "the governments of the region have been extremely slow themselves to lay down clear policies for controlling the sporting links which the sportspeople of the region have with those in South Africa."

The Grenadian government has barred the cricket players who have gone to South Africa from ever playing in Grenada. It has also urged the governments of the countries the players come from to confiscate their earnings and turn them over to the African National Congress of South Africa and the South West Africa People's Organisation, which is fighting for the independence of South African-occupied Namibia. □

## South African torturers go free

Following an eight-month inquest into the death in detention of trade-union activist Neil Aggett, a government-appointed magistrate on December 21 issued a ruling exonerating the South African security police.

Despite ample evidence that the police had brutally tortured Aggett before his death on February 5, Magistrate Petrus Kotze ruled that no one could be held responsible, and that the two police officers who oversaw Aggett's "interrogation" would not be charged with culpable homicide (manslaughter), as the Aggett family lawyers had requested.

Kotze's ruling amounted to a blank check for the security police to continue their brutal treatment of political prisoners, more than 50 of whom have died in detention over the past two decades.

Aggett, a young white doctor, had been the secretary of the Food and Canning Workers Union, which is predominantly Black. He was detained in November 1981 during a police sweep against militant union and political ac-

tivists. On the morning of February 5, 1982, he was found hanging from the bars of his prison cell.

Aggett's death prompted widespread protests. Less than a week later, some 100,000 workers around the country participated in a half-hour protest strike.

During the inquest, a number of people who had been detained at the same time as Aggett testified about the tortures they had been subjected to, including prolonged solitary confinement, sleep deprivation, beatings, electric shock, and having their genitals crushed.

"I am convinced my son was tortured," Aggett's father said after the ruling. "I believe they told him if he did not give them the answers they wanted they would give him an even worse time, and that he committed suicide because he couldn't take it any more." □

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# Salvadoran unionist gets warm response

## U.S. workers welcome antiwar message

By Bill Kalman

[Alejandro Molina Lara, an exiled Salvadoran union leader, recently completed a five-week U.S. tour. His call for an end to U.S. intervention in Central America received an enthusiastic response from rank-and-file workers and from many union officials as well.

[A broad range of local unions — mine workers, steelworkers, electrical workers — supported Molina Lara's antiwar message. Local officials carried their support into key central labor councils in three states, which passed resolutions denouncing U.S. policy in El Salvador. This marks a significant departure from the prowar position taken by the labor officialdom during the Vietnam War and reflects the changing mood of working people.

[Molina Lara also appealed for solidarity in winning freedom for Salvadoran labor leaders imprisoned since August 1980. Several hundred officials and activists from 12 international unions signed a petition demanding their release. Contributions to an aid fund totaled several thousand dollars, including \$500 from three locals of the United Mine Workers and \$100 from a local of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU).

[Molina Lara took his message to a still wider audience when he addressed two national labor gatherings. In Detroit, he was a featured speaker at a conference of 750 union activists and local officials. He also spoke to local union newsletter editors at a conference organized by the Steelworkers union.

[The following article on the last week of Molina Lara's tour appeared in the January 21 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

\* \* \*

PITTSBURGH — "We're asking the American people to prevent the U.S. government from continuing its intervention in El Salvador so that our right to self-determination will be respected." That message was repeated over and over again by Alejandro Molina Lara, as the exiled labor leader from El Salvador completed his five-week tour of Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

The tour of Molina Lara, a prominent leader of the National Federation of Salvadoran Workers (FENASTRAS) and president of the Fishing Industry Union (SIP), was sponsored by the Pittsburgh Central America Mobilization Coalition (CAMC). During the last week of the tour, he spoke to electrical workers, coal miners, steelworkers, teachers, and students in an effort to enlist the support of American workers in the fight against U.S. intervention in his country.



Ginny Hildebrand/Militant

ALEJANDRO MOLINA LARA

The final week of the tour began with a successful news conference in Pittsburgh on December 13. In addition to remarks by Molina Lara opening the news conference, the CAMC distributed a written statement that called for a halt to U.S. aid to El Salvador.

This statement was signed by United Electrical Workers (UE) Local 506 in Erie, Pennsylvania; Ron Weisen, president of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 1397 in Homestead, Pennsylvania; United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Local 2300 in Kirby, Pennsylvania; the Pittsburgh Association of Priests; and Sister Patricia Mary Hefpelein, president of the Sisters of Mercy, as well as others.

That evening Molina Lara spoke before the business meeting of USWA Local 1397, which organizes U.S. Steel's sprawling Homestead Works. The work force at the Homestead plant has been decimated by layoffs and departmental shutdowns. According to Carol McAllister, a CAMC activist, Molina Lara's talk fit right in with the general theme of the union meeting, which was how to fight back against concessions and unemployment. One steelworker commented after the meeting, "It's no wonder there's no money for social security or jobs, it all goes into weapons for countries like El Salvador."

After the meeting a number of laid-off steelworkers talked to Molina Lara to get more information on the role of U.S. corporations in El Salvador.

Molina Lara spent the rest of the week in Erie and in Harrisburg. This was his second

trip to Erie, a direct result of his speaking to UE Local 506 back in November. This local organizes General Electric's huge Erie plant. The Erie electrical workers received him with such enthusiasm that they worked with other antiwar activists to make sure Molina Lara's message would reach even larger audiences.

As a result, Molina Lara went back to Erie to appear before the Central Labor Council of Erie County, where he received an overwhelmingly positive reception. After he briefly described the reasons why the Salvadoran people had been forced to take up arms, the delegates unanimously passed a resolution calling on the U.S. government to end all military and economic aid to the Salvadoran junta.

In addition the delegates voted to contribute \$100 to the ongoing work that FENASTRAS is carrying out in defending political prisoners. This was in addition to the \$100 collected in individual contributions.

Molina Lara also spoke at Gannon University in Erie at a panel discussion sponsored by the local committee against registration and the draft. The other panelists included Dr. Max Azicri, a Cuban-born professor at Edinboro State College, and James Nelson, chief steward for UE Local 506.

Nelson particularly emphasized how American workers are starting to view Washington's foreign policy. He pointed out, "Working people talk about what the future holds for them, what the economic situation will bring. They are thinking about how this fits into the whole scenery of what's going on around them. There are big changes taking place among American working people."

Molina Lara added to this by noting, "Things are getting harder for Reagan. We know that the American people will not accept another Vietnam in Central America. That's why Reagan had to tour Central and Latin America. The U.S. government wants to use the armies of these countries to destroy the beautiful revolution in Nicaragua."

In addition, Molina Lara spoke at the Behran campus of the University of Pittsburgh, to the Erie County Committee for a Nuclear Freeze, and was interviewed by the NBC television affiliate in Erie.

Molina Lara ended the final week of his tour by addressing two UMWA locals on Saturday, December 18. He spoke to coal miners at the business meeting of UMWA Local 2258 at the Emerald Mine and received a warm reception.

He also addressed members of UMWA Local 2350 at the Dowty Corporation Mine. This local had just been hit by layoffs and workers were in a militant mood. After Molina Lara

explained how Salvadoran workers were fighting the bosses there, one worker remarked, "maybe we can get Alejandro a job up here."

Just about everywhere Molina Lara's tour

went, working people received him with interest and enthusiasm. Probably the attitude of one young coal miner summed it up best when he said, "I'm glad he came over here. Now

when ever they talk about El Salvador on television I'll remember what the brother said. It's people like us fighting against the U.S. corporations." □

## El Salvador

# 'We are going to win our liberation'

## Two speeches from U.S. solidarity rally

[During the December 30–January 2 national convention of the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) in Chicago, one major topic of discussion was how to build an effective movement in the United States in solidarity with the people of El Salvador.

[Proposals were presented and discussed under the political and organizational reports given by Andrea González and Mark Weddleton on behalf of the YSA National Executive Committee. "We are proposing a sharp reorientation in our work in solidarity with the people of El Salvador towards taking initiatives to advance this work," González explained. "That is, an orientation towards the working class, towards the unions, Blacks, Chicanos — those who will make up the backbone of the fight against U.S. intervention in El Salvador and Central America."

[One of the highpoints of the convention was a rally on January 1 of nearly 1,000 in solidarity with the people of El Salvador. The rally, sponsored by the YSA, heard a broad range of speakers, including Ruggles Ferguson, a representative of the National Youth Organization of Grenada; Josefina Ellizander from Casa Nicaragua; Rafael Cancel Miranda, one of the five Puerto Rican nationalist prisoners held in U.S. jails for nearly 30 years; Vernon Bellecourt of the American Indian Movement; Muntu Matsimela of the National Black Independent Political Party; and Reja-e Busailah, a Palestinian poet and activist.

[The following are the speeches at the rally given by Juan Ramón Osegueda, a representative of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador and of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR); and Larry Seigle, a member of the Socialist Workers Party Political Committee who is responsible for coordinating the party's work in the struggle for solidarity with the people of El Salvador.

### Larry Seigle

Central America and the Caribbean are at the center of world politics. And events there are at the center of our attention tonight, and at the center of the attention of every revolutionary-minded worker throughout the world.

It is there that the battle is going on to extend the socialist revolution.

It is there that giant strides are being taken

toward resolving the question of our epoch — to bring an end to imperialist domination and an end to capitalist rule. It is there that victories are being won for our side in this battle.

And it is there that revolutionary, working-class leaderships are coming forward to lead the toilers in the struggle for political power. They are seeking ways to mobilize the exploited and the oppressed to *take the power*, to overthrow the imperialist-backed dictatorships, and to replace them with a new kind of government, a government of the workers and of the peasants, which can begin to solve the crisis facing their countries.

And it is there, in Central America and in the Caribbean, that these working-class leaderships are reaching out to their allies among working people, class-conscious militants in this country, to join in a common front to stop Washington's war and Washington's intervention in their land.

### Extension of Cuban revolution

Central America and the Caribbean are at the center of world politics because it is there that the Cuban revolution is being extended. Tonight, as we celebrate the 24th anniversary of the Cuban victory, we should remind ourselves of what it means that Cuba is no longer alone in this hemisphere.

When the Cuban revolution triumphed, the imperialists did everything they could to smash the revolution — the blockade, the Bay of Pigs, the blackmail, the sabotage, all of which failed.

But they also tried to spread the idea that the Cuban revolution would not and could not be repeated. That it was unique. They said, "We won't make the same mistake again," — as though the Cuban revolution was the result of a mistake somebody made!

The more the imperialists talked about the uniqueness of the Cuban revolution, the more you knew that what they hated and feared the most was what they knew would happen if they did not succeed in overthrowing the Cuban revolution — that it *would be* extended in this hemisphere.

That is what has happened in Grenada. That is what has happened in Nicaragua. And that is what is happening in El Salvador.

These victories are destroying the idea, which was a reactionary idea, that the Cuban

revolution was unique, an exception.

What we are seeing, and are part of tonight, in El Salvador is the battle to add another gigantic victory for the world revolution.

### Salvador struggle on rise

As we meet, we are aware that the revolutionary struggle in El Salvador is on the rise. Victories are being scored, not just in the countryside with the advances of the revolutionary armed forces, but also in the cities where the unions and other mass organizations in the urban areas are moving forward to fight for the economic demands of the Salvadoran workers and for their political demands against the repression and against the war the government is waging against the forces of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front.

The revolutionary leadership, the working-class leadership, in El Salvador knows that the solution to the crisis in El Salvador lies in doing what the Nicaraguans did, in doing what the Grenadians did, in doing what the Cubans did. They overthrew the tyranny and took the political power into their own hands and used it to defend and advance the interests of all the exploited and all the oppressed.

Our brothers and sisters, our *compañeros* in El Salvador, know that the time is critical. There is a race between the revolution in El Salvador and the imperialist-backed counter-revolution in Nicaragua.

They know that if the Sandinista government were to be overthrown, it would be a deathblow to the revolution in El Salvador. But they also know, as we do, that if the Salvadoran fighters win, it will bring a mighty force to the aid of the Nicaraguan revolution.

Our comrades in El Salvador know something else — this is where we come in. They know, as we do, what the stakes are for imperialism in Central America. They know, as we do, that the imperialists will stop at nothing that they can get away with in halting the advance of the socialist revolution in this hemisphere. They know, as we do, that what happens in the class struggle right here in this country will deeply affect the outcome of their struggle and their war to overthrow the government in El Salvador.

Because they know, as we do, that the war being waged against them by the rulers of this country is a war that is also being waged



against us here — against the working class in the United States. It is a war on two fronts. The rulers' offensive to try to stop the advance of the revolution in Central America and the Caribbean is also an offensive against our class here in this country.

They know, as we do, that the response of working people and the oppressed in this country to the attacks by the U.S. government, by the employers, is changing politics in this country and is creating for us a new political framework.

This makes possible a movement against U.S. intervention in Central America made up of workers and of working-class youth, and oriented to the organizations of working people in this country.

This movement must be oriented to the coal miners, to the auto workers, to the garment workers, to the youth of the Black community in Miami, to the women who are fighting for their rights — to all those struggling against injustice and racism and discrimination. It must be oriented to those who have the most to lose from a new Vietnam and the most to gain from doing everything we can to weaken our own imperialist government, to deal a blow to this government, which is our enemy just as it is the enemy of the peoples of Central America and the Caribbean.

That is why what is so important for us today is the fact that the working-class forces who are fighting in the leadership of the struggle in El Salvador are also fighting to break down the barriers and the obstacles, to find their way to their sisters and brothers in this country, to link up with us. They are extending a hand of working-class solidarity across the border, to join with us and with everyone in this country who wants to fight in a united movement against U.S. intervention in El Salvador and all of Central America.

### World Front of Solidarity

That is the significance of the formation of the World Front in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador, an organization that was created less than a year ago in Mexico to advance the coordination of solidarity work on an international scale. We are proud that the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance are founding members of this organization. We are committed to advance the perspective of that organization throughout this country.

I want to conclude by saying one thing to all the Salvadoran *compañeros* who are here tonight. We believe, we deeply believe, that by committing ourselves to this course of building a solidarity movement in this country, of building a movement against U.S. intervention with the energy and the enthusiasm that has been shown here tonight at this rally, that we can help to set in motion the forces that can affect the course of events in El Salvador, that can stay the hand of imperialism.

But we are not doing this simply as supporters of the Salvadoran revolution, although we are supporters of the Salvadoran revolution to



LARRY SEIGLE

the marrow of our bones. We are taking this course because this is the line along which our struggle, the class struggle in this country, must advance.

What we are fighting for, the justice that Black youth are fighting for in the streets of Miami and in Tchula, Mississippi, cannot be

## Juan Ramón Osegueda

I would like to start this evening with a moment of silence for the thousands of Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Nicaraguans who have fallen at the criminal hands of the military dictatorships and the aggression of Yankee imperialism.

In the name of the Salvadoran people and in the name of their vanguard, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front [FMLN], and the broadest expression of their mass political organizations, the Revolutionary Democratic Front [FDR], we would like to thank the Young Socialist Alliance for inviting us to be here at this solidarity rally.

### Question of everyday life

El Salvador is a question of everyday life for the average citizen of this country.

I believe there are three basic reasons for this.

First is the intervention of the government of the United States, with millions of dollars in military aid, to defend what it calls strategic U.S. interests.

The second reason is the violations of human rights in El Salvador.

In the last three years, under the model of fascist domination that imperialism has tried to impose upon us, 38,000 Salvadorans have been murdered. This is 1.3 percent of our population; the equivalent in the United States would be 4 million people.

Of our people, 1.2 million are refugees in other countries of Central America, Mexico, and the United States, as well as inside our own country. To draw a parallel, proportion-

won if the Black youth are going to be drafted and sent first to fight and die in a war against their brothers and sisters in El Salvador. The rights that women are fighting for cannot be won while remaining silent or supporting the bipartisan war policy of Washington. If the Democratic and Republican parties succeed in dragging us into a new war, it will set back the struggle to defend our standard of living, to defend our unions, to defend our democratic rights.

We take this course because only by advancing and deepening the workers' fight against imperialist war, by deepening proletarian internationalist understanding, can we hope to build the kind of movement here that can fight effectively in this country, as our brothers and sisters are fighting today in El Salvador, to bring to power here a government representing the workers and the farmers, a government that will defend and advance the interests of all the exploited and the oppressed.

A government like that here will mean bringing down the entire imperialist system. This is what we are fighting for. This is what we are pledged to do. And this is why we are marching together with our brothers and sisters in El Salvador and throughout Central America and the Caribbean.

ately the United States would have 75 million refugees.

The third reason we believe El Salvador is a daily issue here is the civil war.

I believe most of you here have quite a good understanding of how we arrived at this situation, but I'd like to make a brief summary.

The Salvadoran people have suffered several hundred years of oppression and exploitation by 14 families and their allies, the foreign oppressors, and 52 years of criminal military dictatorships. This produced the logical consequence, a desire on the part of the people to struggle for their survival. They have spent the last 48 years using peaceful methods to struggle for survival and justice.

But in 1970, the Salvadoran people began to respond with forms of organization and struggle that were qualitatively different. Eventually they were able to form what is today the FMLN and the FDR as their legitimate representatives.

The Salvadoran people are convinced that in the near future, we are going to win our liberation, our independence, social justice, democracy, and peace.

Also, the Salvadoran revolutionary movement has declared emphatically that it will be a member of the Nonaligned Movement.

### Internal level of struggle

But what is the internal level of the struggle at this moment? We can say with absolute certainty that one-eighth of the territory of our country is a liberated zone.

In these liberated zones, the people not only have political control, but they have estab-

lished people's power, people's justice, education and health systems.

Also, in 80 percent of the nation's territory, there is what we call a war of movement. This means that, according to the military plans of our vanguard, the Salvadoran people have the capacity to attack in that 80 percent of the territory.

In spite of all this people's power, the Salvadoran revolutionaries have initiated several attempts to find a negotiated solution.

They have proposed that there be a dialogue with the criminal dictatorship in power as the starting point for a transition of political power in the country.

This is because we do not want war, we do not want destruction of the people, because it is our people.

In spite of all this, the response we have received has been the traditional one.

We want to avoid the regionalization of the conflict, the Vietnamization of Central America.

But the imperialists refuse to accept the transfer of power to the people.

Because they know very well that the seizure of power by the Salvadoran people means the revolution will be vibrating with ever greater energy in all of the Americas.

And they know the revolution is coming here — soon!

In other words, the unstoppable advance of the peoples of the Americas is what we have before our eyes.

#### North American solidarity

But why is it that we want the North American people to give us their solidarity? I think that it has already been explained quite well. I'd like to express some points of view on this.

I think there's a natural belief in justice, and a desire for peace among all peoples, and the North American people are no exception.

And we, through the FMLN and the FDR, express those same desires on the part of the Salvadoran people.

Also, because it is your government that is using your money to attack our region.

And we think that if things continue to develop as they are, that it will no longer be only American money that is going to El Salvador, but also American soldiers who will be sent down there.

And finally, as Compañero Larry said, we believe the process of liberation of the Salvadoran people is also part of the process of the liberation of the North American people.

We think the main ways in which the solidarity of the American people can be expressed are the following:

To take all possible steps to demand that the U.S. government halt its intervention in Central America.

To support all the efforts and proposals for a negotiated settlement that our vanguard is putting forward.

To demand freedom for the political prisoners in El Salvador.

To protest efforts by the Reagan administra-

tion to prepare the January certification of the Salvadoran government for supposedly respecting human rights.

#### Salvadoran refugees

We also have the question of the presence of some half million Salvadoran refugees in this country, above all in California, and especially in Los Angeles.

Besides material support, they need political support, in their fight to get the U.S. government to recognize their status as political refugees in this country.

Also, in the framework of militant support, of proletarian internationalism, we believe all efforts should be made to send economic aid to

the Salvadoran people.

The Salvadoran revolution has channels established around the world through which humanitarian aid and political support can be sent. And, since 1982, the Salvadoran revolution has promoted the idea of the World Front in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador as a concrete organizational expression through which the peoples of the world can express their solidarity.

Those are, in summary, the points we would make in the name of the Salvadoran people. "¡Si Nicaragua venció, El Salvador vencerá, y Guatemala lo seguirá!" [If Nicaragua won, El Salvador will win, and Guatemala will follow!] □

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# Tom Kerry: proletarian fighter

*48 years of building the revolutionary party*

By Mary-Alice Waters

[The following article appeared in the January 28 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

\* \* \*

Tom Kerry, a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party who spent nearly 50 years of his life working to build the Socialist Workers Party and its predecessors in the United States, died of a heart attack in Los Angeles on January 8. He was 81 years old.

Kerry was born in Boston on Aug. 24, 1901, to working-class parents of English and Irish descent. Living with his mother, he grew up in what he described as an Irish ghetto in Chicago, where he first learned about socialist ideas from friends and schoolmates, many of whose parents were socialists.

One of his earliest political recollections was of going with friends to the Chicago railroad station to greet the great working-class leader Eugene V. Debs and escort him to a meeting hall. It was 1916, and Debs was campaigning for president on the Socialist Party ticket. His campaign, a rousing antiwar crusade aimed at mobilizing the working class against U.S. entry into the interimperialist slaughter in Europe, appealed to Kerry. He joined the SP youth organization, the Young People's Socialist League, about the same time for reasons he described as more social than political.

A year later he dropped out. By then the U.S. government had entered the war. Many of the formerly antiwar socialists had changed their position. Kerry was disillusioned and confused by the capitulation of so many Socialist Party members. He could not understand why socialists in many countries around the world were supporting their own capitalist governments.

Throughout the entire decade of the 1920s, Tom was not interested in or involved in politics. The one exception was his deep attraction to and the inspiration he drew from the great October 1917 revolution in Russia. He followed its development closely over the years.

Tom dropped out of high school before his senior year and in 1918 went to work, but it was several years before he was able to secure any steady employment. In 1923 he got a job with the Chicago Byproduct Coke Co., soon becoming a successful salesman, with a company car and expense account at his disposal and a big salary for those days — \$75 per week plus bonuses. It was a comfortable life, and Tom commented more than once that for him, ironically enough, the early years of the de-

pression were the most prosperous of his life.

But as with millions of others, the economic and social collapse of capitalism following the 1929 stock market crash had a cataclysmic impact on him.

He started to become interested in politics, gravitating towards the Communist Party. Always an avid reader, he cast about for materials that would explain what was happening in the world.

During the early 1930s in Chicago, Tom first came in contact with revolutionists who were being expelled from the Communist Party (CP) and various affiliated organizations for defending the Leninist policies advocated by Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky.

He came into contact with members of the Communist League of America, the organization formed in 1928 by James P. Cannon and other leaders of the CP who had been expelled for defending Leninism.

Tom was aware of the role Trotsky had played in the leadership of the Russian revolution. He could not accept the accusation that Trotsky had turned into a counterrevolutionary agent of imperialism. At the Chicago Public Library, Tom secured a copy of Trotsky's recently published autobiography, *My Life*.

"It opened my eyes to the truth about what happened in the Soviet Union," was the way Tom summed up the impact of that book on his own political evolution.

## Off to California

In 1930, through mutual acquaintances, Tom met Karolyn McLeland, recently arrived from Louisville, Kentucky, and making her way as a young working woman on her own in Chicago. They became lifelong companions and comrades. Tom introduced Karolyn to socialist ideas and, as the class struggle unfolded throughout the 1930s, together they became more and more strongly convinced of the correctness of revolutionary Marxism.

Late in 1934 Tom and Karolyn set off together for California. Soon after arriving in San Francisco they attended a meeting at which Communist Party leader Bill Dunne spoke about the recently concluded San Francisco general strike, which was led by the CP and had successfully organized the waterfront and turned San Francisco into a union town.

Outside the meeting, a group of young members of the Communist League of America (CLA) were selling the *Militant* and Karolyn bought a copy. Within a matter of days she joined the San Francisco branch of the CLA.

It took Tom a few weeks more. The decision to join a revolutionary Marxist party was an

even bigger change in his life and priorities than it was for Karolyn. But once decided, it became a life-time commitment to advancing the interests of the working class toward the goal of socialism and building a working-class party capable of leading that struggle. Around the end of December 1934, Tom joined the CLA too.

In the meantime the CLA had merged with A.J. Muste's American Workers Party to become the Workers Party.

Together with other members of the Workers Party, Tom and Karolyn participated in the labor battles that swept California in the years following the victory of the 1934 San Francisco general strike.

Karolyn worked primarily as a waitress and took part in various organizing drives.

Tom took whatever jobs he could get and was active in the unemployed movement.

## Support for farm workers

Tom was also involved in organizing support for striking farm workers who in 1935 and 1936 were waging bitter struggles to organize agriculture throughout California. As usual the cops were brutal in their attempts to bust the strikes. The Workers Party together with the left-wing forces in the Socialist Party, especially the youth in the Young Peoples Socialist League, played a particularly important role in a strike organized by the Mexican-based CUCOM, the United Confederation of Mexican Workers and Campesinos. They joined the picket lines, helped organize the relief kitchens and child-care centers, collected money to sustain the strike, found doctors and lawyers to help, and worked for the defense committees set up to aid the victims of the strike.

Experiences like these — working with the left-moving forces in the SP — led in June 1936 to the entry of the Workers Party members into the Socialist Party.

A year and a half later the Socialist Workers Party was founded. It was based on a substantially reinforced left-wing expelled from the SP for refusal to remain silent on the "disputed" issues of world politics, such as the Spanish Civil War, the French Popular Front, the Moscow Trials, and the struggle for independent labor political action.

When the Socialist Workers Party was founded, Tom was elected as a regular member of the party's leading committee, the national committee, and was reelected at every subsequent convention of the party until 1969, when he became an advisory member.

Tom's main experiences in the organized labor movement were in the maritime industry.

Between 1936 and the end of the 1940s, when the cold war witch-hunt succeeded in driving revolutionary workers off the ships and out of the maritime unions, Tom sailed from ports on both the East and West coasts; worked as a union organizer and international representative for the Seafarer's International Union; edited several union papers and opposition caucus newsletters; and took responsibility for organizing the maritime fraction of the Socialist Workers Party, composed of all members of the party who worked as seamen and belonged to one of the maritime unions.

The battle to organize maritime on an industrial union basis began with the San Francisco general strike. In the 1934 strike, the seamen won union recognition and established a union hiring hall, but it took a second hard-fought strike in 1936-37 to win a contract.

Under the pressure of the mass labor upsurge, the craft-organized unions of the American Federation of Labor proved unable to lead the struggle. Seven maritime unions came together in 1935 to form the Maritime Federation of the Pacific, a promising step toward organizing maritime workers on an industrial basis.

The leadership of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific was soon dominated by syndicalist forces led by Harry Lundeberg, head of the Sailors Union of the Pacific (SUP). The syndicalists advocated rank-and-file job action and independence of the unions from all political parties. Up until the outbreak of World War II, when they adopted a position of support to the U.S. government in the imperialist war, the syndicalists opposed the line of the Communist Party. The CP attempted to impose on the unions a line of labor peace and class compromise in the interests of maintaining the Democratic Party political coalition behind Roosevelt.

Although his opposition to the CP's pro-Roosevelt political line was often combined with more than a small element of anticommunism, Lundeberg's stance at least opened the door to a greater rank-and-file democracy and the possibility for the workers to bring their power to bear in the struggle against the bosses.

The Workers Party, which in 1936 was beginning to get some of its members into the maritime unions on the West Coast, formed a bloc with the Lundeberg leadership to advance the fight for industrial unions based on rank-and-file democracy and carrying out a class-struggle line — refusing to subordinate the interests of the workers to the needs of the bosses and their political parties.

#### **Fight for union democracy**

The Pacific Marine Firemen, Oilers, Water-tenders and Wipers (another of the unions belonging to the Maritime Federation of the Pacific) opened its books for hiring in the summer of 1937, and Tom started shipping out. He rapidly became a leader in the battle for union democracy in the Marine Firemen. When the pro-Roosevelt, CP-led forces came close to taking over the union, he helped organize a

rank-and-file opposition caucus, which soon had the open support of more than 1,500 members and won the leadership of the union in the next elections. Tom edited the caucus newsletter, the *West Coast Firemen*.

In 1938 in a bid to counter the growing strength of the CIO, especially the National Maritime Union, which had just been organized on the East Coast, the Sailors Union of the Pacific was offered a charter from the AFL to organize all seagoing personnel, fishermen, and fish cannery workers. The Seafarer's International Union (SIU), as the new union was called, began a drive to win affiliation votes from the nearly moribund locals of the various AFL fishing-industry craft unions on the west coast. Tom became an international representative for the new union, traveling up and down the West Coast to convince locals of the fish cannery workers to affiliate.

#### **Bloc with Lundeberg forces**

The bloc with the Lundeberg forces to advance the construction of democratic, class-struggle oriented unions was an important example of how the revolutionary workers' movement takes advantage of openings to work with diverse forces to advance toward a class-struggle left wing in the labor movement. But the SIU was far from being a revolutionary union like Teamsters Local 574 in Minneapolis, in which revolutionary Marxists were the dominant political force.

In the 1930s the maritime industry was still organized on strictly segregated lines. Some jobs were for Blacks and some for whites. The SUP was a white job trust, and efforts by revolutionary-minded workers to use the power of their unions to tear down racist divisions met with total resistance, not support, from the Lundeberg leadership.

Tom had many stories about the struggles he and others had with the Lundeberg leadership to try to change Jim Crow policies. For example, when he went to New York in 1939 to organize for the SIU, the majority of the union membership was Black. But the Black members were organized separately in the stewards department, with a hiring hall separate from the white sailors.

Revolutionists in the union opposed this Jim Crow setup and tried to change it. But the reactionary toleration of Jim Crow policies by the Lundeberg leadership was a towering obstacle to building a fighting union movement.

Also, as Tom himself pointed out, given the political pressures under which they were operating in this situation, he and other Trotskyists had to be constantly on guard against adapting, even in terminology, to the anticommunist prejudices of militant, syndicalist-led workers for whom there was little difference between Stalinism and communism. Tom explained that they sometimes made errors in this direction, but the party leadership would call it sharply to the fraction's attention whenever this occurred.

With the outbreak of World War II, and the pro-U.S.-imperialism position adopted by the

Lundeberg leadership, it was no longer possible for revolutionary Marxist opponents of the war to hold union positions in the SIU. Many members of the SWP continued to sail throughout the war, working within the unions to oppose the labor officialdom's prowar stand and pledge of labor peace in the interests of the war effort. Tom became the San Francisco organizer of the Socialist Workers Party.

For labor leaders who, unlike Lundeberg and the Communist Party, refused to subordinate the interests of the working class to the imperialist war, the bosses and their government had something different in store.

Eighteen leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and Teamsters Local 574 in Minneapolis were framed, convicted of violation of the notorious anticommunist Smith Act, and sentenced to prison on December 8, 1941, the day after Pearl Harbor.

When the appeals were exhausted and the 18 began serving their prison terms in 1944, Tom and Carolyn left San Francisco, on what they thought was going to be a temporary assignment, and came to New York to be part of the national leadership team at the party center.

Tom became a member of the Political Committee. He immediately pitched in on the *Militant* staff, where he wrote on a large variety of topics, but followed developments in the labor movement especially. While never formally editor of the *Militant*, he stepped in to do the job whenever necessary, and was editor during 1944.

As the war came to an end and the giant postwar labor upsurge began, Tom went back to sea, this time as a member of the East Coast-based National Maritime Union.

He remembered being on a ship in the port of Brest when the workers of France closed the country down tight with a general strike that nearly toppled the capitalist rulers of that country. The ship's captain panicked and announced that they were sailing for Rotterdam immediately because a revolution was taking place "out there."

Tom's last trips were coastal runs between New York, Baltimore, and Havana, where, despite his experience at sea and the number of ports he had visited, he was shocked at the extent of the prostitution and pornography trade organized by U.S. business interests in Havana, and the vast private beaches reserved for rich Americans.

When the Cuban revolution came along a decade later, Tom was one of its most ardent supporters. He helped to lead the fight inside the SWP against the tiny minority that was incapable of recognizing a revolution and a revolutionary leadership when it appeared right under their noses.

#### **The hard years**

The post-World War II strike wave and labor upsurge rapidly receded, giving way to the cold war, the McCarthy witch-hunt, and an extended period of relative economic prosperity and labor quiescence. It was the beginning of the most difficult period in the history of the



revolutionary workers' movement in this country. Tom's role in helping to lead the Socialist Workers Party through those years was his most outstanding contribution as a working-class leader.

As head of the national maritime fraction, he helped to lead the fight that members of the SWP and others waged within the National Maritime Union as the bureaucracy, with the help of the U.S. government, witch-hunted communists out of the union. By 1949 the battle had been lost and the Coast Guard simply revoked the sailing papers of anyone fingered as a leftist.

The early 1950s were the hardest years. The U.S. ruling class was waging its war in Korea. The witch-hunt was raging. Party membership had declined dramatically. There was no money to sustain any kind of full-time professional apparatus for the party. The national office had to be reduced to one single person, Farrell Dobbs, the party's national secretary.

As the pressures of the cold war continued to mount, the party suffered a major split in 1953. The split also divided the Fourth International, the world political organization to which the SWP would be affiliated if it were not for reactionary legislation that prohibits it.

The isolation of the party was severe.

Following the split, Tom and Karolyn left New York to help reinforce the party in Los Angeles, where Tom took the assignment of organizing the leadership of the branch.

By 1955, though, there were already harbingers of the mass Black civil rights movement that was about to come on the scene as a powerful proletarian force and transform American politics in the 1960s. There were indications that the political climate on the campuses was beginning to shift, opening up new possibilities for the recruitment of small numbers of new forces from among the youth.

To be able to take advantage of those new openings, at the end of 1955 the party asked Tom and Karolyn to come back to the party center in New York and take on full-time assignments, living on the meager resources the party was able to allocate to offset the expenses of such comrades.

Although Tom was already in his mid-50s, he did not hesitate a day. He and Karolyn immediately responded that, if the party needed it, they would gladly return.

#### **Montgomery bus boycott**

Even as they made their way back to New York driving their beat-up station wagon, the new era of the Black struggle burst upon the political scene with all its force. On December 2, 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, for refusing to give up her seat to a white man, and the historic Montgomery Bus Boycott was on — the first mass battle in the struggle that demolished Jim Crow.

Tom and Karolyn changed their route so they could stop in Montgomery on their way, bringing an eyewitness account of the struggles taking place there to meetings in New



Tom Kerry in 1977.

York. In response to the need for cars to make it possible for the boycott to continue, Tom and Karolyn donated their station wagon, which they asked Farrell Dobbs, the SWP presidential candidate in 1956, to drive to Montgomery and deliver on behalf of the SWP.

#### **Rearming the party**

By the early 1960s the political climate and prospects for building a proletarian revolutionary party had been radically transformed. The development of the mass civil rights movement and rise of Black nationalism; the victory of the Cuban revolution; the Khrushchev revelations and the Hungarian revolution; the rise of the student radicalization, which was further fueled by the beginning of opposition to the Vietnam War — all these had provided the political conditions for the party to be able to launch a new revolutionary Marxist youth organization, the Young Socialist Alliance.

Out of the youth movement especially, the Socialist Workers Party was recruiting new forces and the party was being regenerated.

But the continuity of the Marxist movement in the United States was not yet assured. To do that took another political fight in the party, one that had to be and was led by the older cadres to assure that the new forces coming into the party would be trained in the norms and traditions of a Leninist party.

The years of reaction and isolation from the mass movement had taken their toll. Simply to survive the extended period of enforced semi-sectarian existence, many of the proletarian organizational norms were of necessity loosened. Now that conditions permitted and demanded a return to a more politically homogeneous party and more disciplined, centralized functioning, it was clear that a substantial minority were opposed. They had come to prefer the loose norms forced on us by the aberrations of the 1950s and wanted to transform the party further into a discussion circle, not to return to the norms of a politically homogeneous Leninist party.

Tom became national organization secretary when he returned to New York, a responsibility

he held from 1956 to 1963. In that capacity he worked closely with National Secretary Farrell Dobbs and played an indispensable role in leading the fight against every single one of the attempts to block the party from reestablishing and applying more consistently the organizational principles on which it was founded. He helped to prepare, and implement, the 1965 resolution adopted by the party codifying its organizational norms.

From 1963 to 1970 Tom was the editor of the party's magazine, the *International Socialist Review*. And until he left the party center in 1977 to retire from central leadership responsibility, he continued to play a role in many aspects of the party's work. But there was one particular challenge during that period on which his leadership was crucial.

#### **Transition in leadership**

He played a central role in helping to make a transition in leadership to the new generation that arose out of the struggles of the 1960s and 1970s.

The challenge was a unique one in the history of the workers' movement, as few revolutionary parties have endured long enough with program and elementary revolutionary fiber intact to be confronted with such a task. But on this question too, Tom acted as a conscious working-class leader and helped organize the transition in order to maximize the equilibrium and continuity of the leadership, as well as its renewal.

To make room on the national committee for younger leaders, Tom argued for the establishment of a constitutional category of advisory members of the National Committee at the 1963 convention of the party. In 1969 he himself became an advisory member and then five years later, after it had served its purpose, he helped lead the discussion in the National Committee on the need to eliminate the advisory membership category entirely.

Tom felt strongly there was no need for any special leadership status — nor were there any special rights — for former party leaders who were no longer able to play an active, day-to-day role in the party. To the end of his days he intently followed the political activity and internal life of the SWP and YSA.

Without Tom's lead in the process of transition in party leadership, it would have been far less smooth.

Five decades of activity in the revolutionary workers' movement is a monumental achievement. Few people have that kind of staying power, which can only be born of the deepest confidence in the revolutionary capacities of the working class, and the conviction that no other life can be as rewarding.

In a speech he gave in tribute to James P. Cannon in 1974, Tom stressed that Cannon understood to the depth of his being that "without the party we are nothing; with the party we are all."

That was Tom Kerry's life conviction as well, and the most important legacy he leaves. □

## דור הניצוץ

"Spark," newspaper of the Israeli Revolutionary Communist League (Turn). Published in Tel Aviv.

"It is no longer a secret. The facts show that a majority of the Israeli public is against prolonging the Israeli stay in Lebanon. For the first time in the short history of Israel, a war of the scope of the Lebanese war is being argued and is subject to growing opposition."

That was the opening of an editorial in the January issue of *Derech Hanitzutz* entitled, "Israel Out of Lebanon!"

The editorial was reprinted in the January 7 English-language weekly edition of *Al Fajr*, a Palestinian paper published in Jerusalem.

"Today," the editorial went on, "more and more people understand that one war only results in another war, and that all [Prime Minister Menachem] Begin's and [Defense Minister Ariel] Sharon's promises have no basis whatsoever. . . ."

"Today everyone can realize that it was not the PLO that took Lebanon hostage. Lebanon had no other choice than to open its doors to its Palestinian brothers and sisters who were expelled by Zionism from their homeland. On the other hand, it is Israel that strives to turn Lebanon, with its natural resources, into a vassal state. . . ."

"The stubborn resistance of the Lebanese national forces and the freezing Lebanese winter are starting to open the eyes of hundreds of thousands of workers and youths, who were misled by Begin's racist and chauvinist rhetoric. . . ."

"Four thousand people — Arabs and Jews — who marched in Tel Aviv on December 25, demanding to get out of Lebanon, are the first to march. The Committee Against the War in Lebanon is the only public body that is consistently struggling for this simple and consistent demand. All peace-seeking forces and individuals must rally around the Committee Against the War in Lebanon and express the desire common to many, both in the Arab and in the Jewish quarters, to prevent the next war and get out of Lebanon."

## Rouge

"Red," weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International. Published in Paris.

As part of its ongoing coverage of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the December 31-January 6 issue featured on the back page an article by Michel Lequenne on a December 16-20 session of the Permanent Tribunal of the Peoples devoted to Afghanistan.

The tribunal, composed of liberal and social-democratic intellectuals, lawyers, professors, historians, a trade union official, and a member of the Swiss parliament, condemned the Soviet Union for its "violation of the inalienable rights of the Afghan people."

The tribunal claimed that it had confirmed widespread atrocities said to have been committed by the Soviet army in Afghanistan. According to Lequenne, these included the use of antipersonnel bombs, dum-dum bullets, and poison gas — although the tribunal admitted that it could not definitely prove the use of the latter.

According to the tribunal, Lequenne reported, Soviet troops had also mutilated bodies, tortured civilians and guerrilla fighters, raped women, burned crops, and systematically destroyed hospitals.

Lequenne raised no doubts about these charges, which have been circulated primarily by the right-wing guerrilla groups in Afghanistan and by the imperialist powers.

Lequenne asserted that "the authority of the tribunal in regard to the conflict in Afghanistan is strong because of previous judgments" it had made against repression in the Western Sahara, Argentina, Eritrea, the Philippines, El Salvador, East Timor, and Zaïre.

However, the tribunal said nothing about the extensive aid that Washington and other imperialist powers have been channeling to the rightist guerrilla forces in Afghanistan through the Pakistani regime. Nor did Lequenne raise this question.

In an article in the subsequent issue, dated January 7-13, Lequenne belittled the seriousness of this imperialist intervention in Afghanistan.

"Whatever they say," Lequenne argued, "the imperialist bourgeoisie is not interested in having Afghanistan become part of its zone of influence."

## INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

A fortnightly review published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

The lead article in the January 10 issue provides an eyewitness account from Nicaragua by Rolf Bergkvist and Maria Sundvall, attempting to give an overview of the situation in that country.

"War is coming; all the signs here in Nicaragua point to that," the authors write. "It might even be more correct to say that the war is already underway."

Bergkvist and Sundvall report on the increase in counterrevolutionary attacks and their toll on the country.

On top of this, "With war approaching, Nicaragua has been hard hit by the economic

crisis from which all the Central American countries are suffering."

The authors give a number of examples of this economic crisis, then comment, "The crisis also has to be seen as a threat to the FSLN's mass support. . . ."

"The revolution has brought big social improvements, literacy campaigns, schools, clinics, day-care centers. But that is easily forgotten when families cannot make ends meet, or when their breadwinners lose their jobs. And at the moment the FSLN can promise nothing but continued hard times. . . ."

"But to say that there is discontent is not the same thing as saying that the masses have lost their fighting spirit, that they no longer support the FSLN. The clearest evidence that the opposite is true can be seen in the mobilizations against the counterrevolutionaries. The members of the revolutionary guards who do voluntary night watch in every neighborhood, have increased by tens of thousands in Managua in November."

Bergkvist and Sundvall express some disquiet about certain political developments:

"Certainly, it is being said more and more often that 'socialism is the future.' But at the same time one might wonder what the model for this socialist future is. In the union headquarters, visitors are being asked to sign a letter of condolences to the Soviet brother people mourning the death of *compañero* Brezhnev. Is this uncritical hailing of the Soviet Union only diplomacy? This situation seems all the more contradictory because the Sandinistas do not at all want to build a Soviet-type society."

"It is hard for foreigners to get an impression of the discussions about the country's future that must certainly already have taken place at the top levels. And it must be difficult for the Nicaraguans too. In fact, it must be a big problem that there are so few possibilities to discuss the country's situation openly and to express justified discontent."

Bergkvist and Sundvall complain about the coverage in the Sandinista daily *Barricada*, saying that it is "often distorted and one-sided in its reporting." For example, in *Barricada*'s coverage of El Salvador, "you read only about advances by the FMLN-FDR." Together with the distorted news in the bourgeois *La Prensa*, Bergkvist and Sundvall maintain that "the Nicaraguans cannot rely very much on the news that they get."

Referring to statements by the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) calling on workers to increase production and avoid disruptive disputes with management, the authors conclude:

"Isn't there a danger that justified discontent will be shouted down with revolutionary appeals? . . ."

"On the other hand, what other way out is there? How can press censorship be relaxed in a war situation? And how can the trade unions



call for strikes when the economic crisis is so deep and there is a real need to increase production?"

## Socialist Challenge

Newspaper sponsored by the Socialist League, British section of the Fourth International. Published weekly in London.

The January 7 issue of *Socialist Challenge* includes a report by Steve Roberts on the December 18-21 national conference of the British section of the Fourth International, which voted to change its name from the International Marxist Group to the Socialist League.

More than 400 delegates and guests attended the conference.

"By a small overall majority," Roberts reported, "the conference adopted the following major points of policy:

- to campaign against the war-drive of Reagan and Thatcher; in particular through building the present movement for unilateral disarmament and supporting those fighting against imperialist intervention in Central America and the Caribbean

- to campaign for the release of all the heroic Polish fighters imprisoned by the present regime

- to build mass action around the slogan 'jobs not bombs' as the best way to kick out the Tories and gain a Labour [Party] victory

- to work in the labour movement to oppose witch-hunts and defend the progressive policies of the TUC [Trades Union Congress], Labour Party and Labour Party Young Socialists congresses being junked by the right wing leaders

- to support the fight of women in the labour movement for an effective say at all levels of the labour movement and for policies like affirmative action for jobs and a woman's right to choose

- to help build Revolution Youth, the youth organisation in solidarity with the Fourth International in Britain

- to be in favour of unity with other far left organisations in Britain which have broadly the same approach as our own, such as the Workers Socialist League

- to strengthen our links with the Fourth International and particularly with its Irish section, People's Democracy."

Roberts then quoted the reporter speaking for the outgoing Central Committee, who declared:

"The world today is dominated by the rise of world revolution and the workers struggles on the one side and the unleashing of a brutal imperialist counter-offensive against that struggle on the other. . . .

"The most advanced points of this sharpening class struggle have been the revolutionary struggles in Central America and Poland. These combine with the rise of the mass anti-nuclear-weapons movements in the imperialist

heartlands and the struggle for class independence in the semi-colonial countries to bring to the fore the unity of the world revolution in the struggle against the capitalist class and all its allies — particularly the bureaucrats of Moscow and Peking."

Within Britain, the reporter said, there is "the deepest political polarisation of the British labour movement for fifty years. . . .

"The decisive task of revolutionary Marxists is to shake off all sectarian prejudices and participate in the coming political battles. . . .

"For this new methods of work are necessary. Workers and youth today increasingly look to the Labour Party and its left wing for political solutions to the crisis of British society. For this reason a revolutionary socialist newspaper is needed within the Labour Party to give a voice and political direction to their struggles."

Roberts continued: "The attitude of the Socialist League towards the Labour Party is that it would like to be able to affiliate. . . . But it believes that in the current climate of the witch-hunt against socialists that this would be rejected by the Labour Party.

"The Socialist League therefore organises separately from the Labour Party. . . .

"The conference was . . . happy to record a rise in the proportion of its membership in such decisive unions as transport, rail, engineering, electrical and telecommunications. Over 26 percent of its members are in the industrial unions, five percent in manual unions such as NUPE and COHSE and 15 percent are looking for industrial jobs."

## Guardian

An independent radical newsweekly, published in New York.

A front page editorial in the January 5 issue announces that "the *Guardian* staff has changed its position on Kampuchea" and on the role of Vietnamese troops there.

When Vietnamese troops entered Kampuchea four years ago to oust the murderous Pol Pot regime, the *Guardian* opposed that intervention, a position that led to a split in its editorial staff.

But based on "new information and developments, as well as a reexamination of some of our initial arguments and assumptions," the *Guardian's* editors now say that a return to power by the so-called Democratic Kampuchea (DK) coalition of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge, former Prince Norodom Sihanouk, and rightist Son Sann "would represent a major gain for U.S. imperialism in Southeast Asia," and that "Vietnamese occupation is preferable to control by the DK coalition and its allies."

The editorial stresses that "the Democratic Kampuchea coalition, which includes rightists and discredited ultra-'leftists' allied with imperialism, is a potential vehicle for returning Kampuchea to imperialist domination."

The change in the *Guardian's* view of the struggle in Kampuchea is a welcome development that strengthens the forces fighting U.S.

imperialism's political and military pressures against Vietnam and Kampuchea.

The editorial acknowledges that the *Guardian* "was among the defenders of Democratic Kampuchea against charges raised in the bourgeois media prior to 1979." But it says that now "subsequent investigation by independent, respected sources has convinced us of our need to change our overall view of the period."

The editors catalog "the regime's most harmful policies."

The forced evacuation of Kampuchea's cities "caused thousands of deaths and untold hardship to the former urban residents, who were frequently persecuted in the countryside."

In addition, "forced collectivization of agriculture" coupled with "the use of coercion and terror to enforce communal living and long hours of work under hardship conditions has given 'socialism' a bad name in Kampuchea for years to come."

The "mass executions of political opposition" within the Kampuchean Communist Party "made it impossible for the regime to correct its mistakes, either internally or in relation to the conflict with Vietnam," the editorial states.

For these reasons, the *Guardian* notes, "all available accounts indicate that the Vietnamese troops (along with a token force of pro-Vietnamese Kampuchians) were welcomed by most of the Kampuchean people, despite their longstanding concern about Vietnamese domination."

"In the balance," the editors conclude, "Kampuchea was better off after the invasion, which laid the basis for a return to relative normalcy and the start of reconstruction of society."

Yet the *Guardian* worries that someday the Vietnamese presence could prove harmful to Kampuchea:

"In the long run, Kampuchea requires full independence including the right to determine the nature and extent of its ties to Vietnam. The Kampuchean people may eventually have to struggle against their stronger neighbor's tendency to dominate their affairs." Then again, eventually they may *not* have to.

Vietnamese leaders have stated time and again that they will withdraw their forces from Kampuchea as soon as the government of Heng Samrin asks them to, and as soon as the military threat from Pol Pot's foreign-backed guerrillas based in Thailand is eliminated.

Despite the *Guardian's* admonition about potential future problems, the editorial's conclusions about the present are straightforward:

"We support the call for an end to all external support for the Democratic Kampuchea coalition. This would make possible the phased withdrawal of Vietnamese troops and the establishment of a truly independent Kampuchean government."

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# 'We must preserve Palestinian unity'

## Interview with PFLP leader George Habash

[The following interview with George Habash, the General Secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), appeared in the December 31 issue of the English-language weekly edition of *Al Fajr*, a Palestinian newspaper published in Jerusalem. The interview was conducted by *Al Fajr* publisher Paul Ajlouny.]

\* \* \*

*Question. What are your perceptions and predictions for the PLO's future after Beirut?*

*Answer.* First of all, I must confess that leaving Beirut has put us in a very new situation, which is both difficult and complicated. But I hope that the momentum of the battle of Beirut will enable us to find the proper answers for the complicated questions we are facing. This is what we are aiming and working for, because we believe that the battle of Beirut is a victory for us.

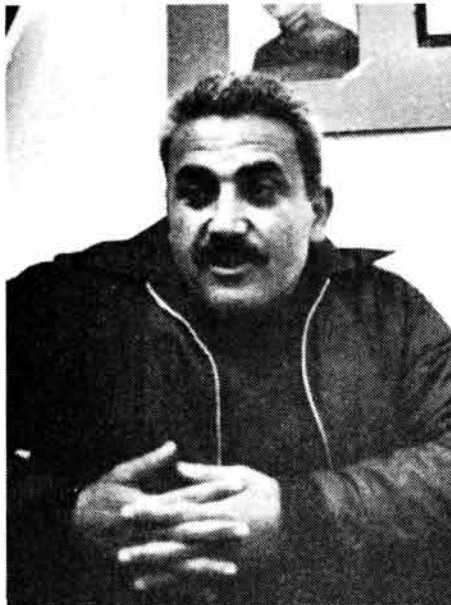
The reactionary Arab states are trying to convince the leadership of the PLO that the only way remaining open for us is the American way. For this reason our first task at the present time is to maintain Palestinian unity in spite of all these reactionary attempts. We must preserve Palestinian unity on a national basis, in accordance with the resolutions of the Palestinian National Council.

Of course, besides this, we are facing the problem of how to continue our military struggle against Zionism, for in spite of all our gains on the world level, Israel continues to this very day to say a total "no" to our national aims, a total "no" to a Palestinian state. I myself do not think we can attain our national aims — by this I mean the Palestinian state — without more military struggle.

*Q. Since your interpretation is that we must fight the Zionist state, and that in order to reach the Zionist state, we have to get rid of the reactionary Arab regimes, which comes first, the chicken or the egg?*

*A.* Both. We Palestinians have to continue fighting, but we must know that our military struggle will not make a real change in the balance of forces unless our revolution is able to depend on a new Arab world. By this I mean progressive and patriotic Arab regimes that fully support our revolution and our military struggle. I hope we will reach this situation one day.

*Q. You are in Syria, you are not free to criticize this regime, because you're living under it . . . Palestinians living in Jordan are*



PFLP leader Habash.

*not free to react, etc. . . . All are afraid of the shadow, i.e., the Arab host government. Have you resolved this question? Does it have to be resolved? Or can you continue to work with these limitations?*

*A.* Regarding the first part of the question, we were always working in a difficult situation regarding the Arab world. I won't go back historically, but since 1965, since the beginning of the Revolution, we have been working in difficulties. That is why I think we will be able to work in spite of the new difficult situation. Liberating your country is a matter of struggle, it's not an easy job; we have to fight. Regarding our situation in Syria, of course, we do not expect to have the same situation as in Lebanon . . .

*Q. Freedom of movement will not be the same?*

*A.* Of course, and the whole situation will not be the same, but do not forget that we have many things in common with the Syrian regime. It is against Camp David, against the unfair U.S. imperialist solution of the Middle East crisis. I must take into consideration that this regime is against Camp David. This is the main point.

*Q. You were jailed by this regime at one time?*

*A.* Yes.

*Q. I saw you on TV with the president, do you see any contradictions there?*

*A.* When you deal with politics, things change. Actually, our relations with this regime started after we had taken a common stand regarding [now assassinated Egyptian President Anwar] Sadat's regime and Camp David, and after we found ourselves in the same position regarding the Zionist plan for Lebanon. These were the two major points that brought us to common ground.

*Q. You would try to find the positive aspects of the regime and work with them, ignoring all the negative aspects?*

*A.* Exactly . . . Don't forget that we, the Palestinians, must see things from all aspects. Don't forget that there were Syrian soldiers, Syrian army, fighting side-by-side with us. It's not to our benefit to forget this. On the contrary, it's to the benefit of the Palestinian cause to stress this, and to widen the common ground between the Syrian regime and the Palestinian Revolution. That is why we are working at the present moment on a number of tasks, chiefly Palestinian unity and as task number two, strengthening relations with the Syrian regime — two main tasks.

*Q. Would you focus on your second task at the expense of the first?*

*A.* We are trying our very best, and we will succeed one day, to keep these two tasks from being contradictory. Why should they be in contradiction? If we take what happened in Lebanon, Zionist policy and aims, and if we think scientifically, they should not be in contradiction.

*Q. I ask because [PLO Chairman Yassir] Arafat was in Jordan, and Jordan oppressed the Palestinians. Do you see any contradiction with Arafat meeting the king vs. these two elements — Palestinian unity and working with, in this case, the Jordanian regime?*

*A.* Again I stress, we are working for the best relations with comrade Arafat, and for the optimal level of Palestinian unity. But at the same time, we are totally, and I stress totally, against any special relations with the Jordanian regime. We know the Jordanian regime very, very well — from 1952 until 1982, and especially in September 1970.

*Q. The Syrians crushed the Palestinians in the civil war in Lebanon. One case might be more extreme than the other.*



A. Much more!

*Q. But they both fall within the same confines. You oppose special relations with Jordan; are you against special relations with Syria?*

A. There is a big difference. [U.S. President Ronald] Reagan's plan aims at finding a solution for the Palestinian question through the Jordanian regime. Any special relations between the PLO and the Jordanian regime will enable Reagan to say to Saudi Arabia and other reactionary Arab powers: All right, I have taken into consideration what you want regarding the PLO. There is no such plan regarding Syria.

*Q. There's a movement afoot for establishing a Palestinian entity in the areas that were controlled by Jordan and Egypt. Are you in favor of such an endeavor? If not, what mode of action would you pursue?*

A. There is a big difference between such words as "Palestinian entity," etc., etc., and saying: a fully independent Palestinian state. We are a full-fledged nation. We have the full right to be independent in a full-fledged state. Let the world and your readers know this very well. We are not after "autonomy," a Palestinian "entity," or any such vague notion. We leave these terms to Reagan. We are after a Palestinian state. The battles in Beirut proved that we have a right to regard ourselves as a full-fledged nation.

*Q. Does this mean a full Palestinian state in all of Palestine?*

A. At the present time, the resolutions of the Palestinian National Council emphasize an independent Palestinian state on the area that we can liberate, that we can seize from the hands of Zionism.

*Q. You are in favor of that?*

A. Yes, as part of the PLO, and in accordance with the decisions of the Palestinian National Council, we are at present fighting for a fully independent Palestinian state on any part of Palestine that is liberated. But as long as Zionism continues, it's hard to envision a lasting peace. Zionism means occupation and colonization of Palestinian and Arab land; it means oppression against our people. This summer's invasion of Lebanon is the most recent affirmation of Zionist aggression and expansion. As long as these injustices prevail, it is natural for our people to continue resisting, to continue struggling for comprehensive freedom.

When I speak of Zionism, I'm not talking about Jews, because what happened inside Palestine during our battles in Beirut made a clear distinction between Judaism and Zionism. There were democratic Jews with us, while Zionism was against us. We will have no problem living with the Jews in Palestine. We will know the democratic way to organize our-

selves. There will be no problem after we get rid of Zionism.

*Q. Obviously, you did not heed [Libyan leader Muammar] Qaddafi's advice (about committing suicide in Beirut). What did you think of his statement and what was your reply?*

A. To be frank, we must take into consideration that Qaddafi was addressing us because he really wanted us to fight our best. Personally, I did not misunderstand his purposes. He is national, pro-Palestinian. He wants total victory for the Palestinian cause. I take these points into consideration, when you ask me to evaluate what he said.

I must also say that the people who were living the battle of Beirut know very well that the PLO leadership and all our fighters did their very best. Also, the way the people of Lebanon said good-bye to us showed how well we fought. The way we were received here in Syria, in Democratic Yemen, in all the Arab world, shows that the Arab people know that the Palestinians, the PLO, the leadership and the fighters — did their best.

*Q. You would accept his statement in view*

## Jamaican economic crisis worsens

When the proimperialist government of Edward Seaga came into office in late 1980, it promised to bring economic "deliverance" to Jamaica. But in the more than two years since then, its policy of following dictates from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank has only worsened Jamaica's economic plight and the conditions of its working people.

"The prime minister is attempting to cover up the fact that the gravest economic crisis which Jamaica has faced is a direct result of the Seaga government's blind obedience to the IMF/World Bank policy . . ." declared Trevor Munroe, the general secretary of the Workers Party of Jamaica (WPI), at a January 7 news conference. The WPI, which identifies itself as Marxist, is the largest party in Jamaica to the left of Michael Manley's People's National Party.

"Instead of abandoning this pro-IMF course," Munroe continued, "the government is going ever deeper into the trap of debt, deregulation and devaluation which have never solved Jamaica's problems in the past and is going to lead to further economic ruin for nearly all classes of Jamaicans except a tiny minority of merchants and financiers."

Although the government claims that the "average" unemployment rate for 1982 was 25.3 percent, Munroe estimated that it was actually around 28.4 percent by the end of the year. He cited errors in the way the government arrived at its figures and based his estimate on general trends in the country's economy.

*of your understanding of the man, not on the words themselves?*

A. Exactly.

*Q. Do you think the Arab regimes would allow a democratic Palestinian state to be established?*

A. Before talking about the type of state, one must take into consideration that many Arab states are against a Palestinian state, period. Even if it were to be a dictatorship, they are opposed. Reagan has said this many times and it was not denied. Even before Reagan, [ex-U.S. President Jimmy] Carter said that he had often met with Arab leaders and nobody spoke with him about a Palestinian state. Not only this, in a recent press conference Reagan said that Israel and the other neighboring states are afraid of such a state. So it's very natural for these regimes to be against a truly democratic Palestinian state. However, it's not a matter of whether they like it or not. It's a matter of the aims we are fighting for and our actual ability to achieve these aims.

\* \* \*

I would like to conclude with a salute to our people in occupied Palestine. □

"The fact of the matter is," Munroe said, "that no figures can obscure the real experience of the Jamaican people, particularly the women and youths, that unemployment has increased and that IMF policies of the JLP [Seaga's Jamaica Labour Party] have moved us from the frying pan into the fire."

So far, the Seaga government has been borrowing from foreign banks and governments at twice the rate of the previous Manley government, boosting Jamaica's total foreign debt to US\$1.4 billion. Because of this, the debt repayments that Jamaica must now make exceed its foreign exchange earnings. Its ratio of debt to export earnings is one of the highest in the world.

Seaga's financial policies, Munroe said, have led to a growth of the black market and an effective devaluation of the Jamaican dollar.

These measures, plus the Seaga government's attempts to follow the austerity policies dictated by the IMF, will lead to a higher inflation rate, further unemployment, and "an overall cut in the standard of living of our working people," Munroe said.

Jamaica's economic crisis, he continued, is not primarily a result of the decline in earnings from bauxite and alumina sales, as Seaga claims, but a consequence of the government's "stubbornness in putting payments to international capitalist bankers above all else," failure to pursue opportunities for more favorable trade agreements with workers states, and an increase in imports of luxury consumer items. □

# Evolution of a revolutionary vanguard

## *History and views of the four groups in the URNG*

By Michael Baumann

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Outside Central America little is known of the four revolutionary organizations that in February 1982 announced they had united in a coalition aimed at the military overthrow of the Guatemalan dictatorship.

This is despite the fact that they and their predecessors have operated for 21 years, are active in nearly three-fourths of the country, and have deep popular support, particularly among the Indian peasant majority.

A rare glimpse into the history and views of the four groups that today make up the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG) was recently provided by Marta Harnecker. An exiled Chilean journalist based in Havana, Harnecker has previously conducted extensive interviews for the Cuban and other Latin American press with leaders of the Sandinista National Liberation Front of Nicaragua (FSLN) and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front of El Salvador.

The interviews of URNG leaders were published as a special pull-out feature in the October 4, 5, and 6 issues of the independent, pro-revolutionary Managua daily *El Nuevo Diario*, as well as in the October 19, 20, 21, and 25 issues of the Havana daily *Juventud Rebelde*. They cover a range of topics under a single main theme: What lessons have been learned in 21 years of struggle against the imperialist-backed regime?

All the organizations are of the view that there is no peaceful road to bring down the dictatorship, and that participation in armed struggle is an essential component of building a revolutionary party in Guatemala today.

They have also reached agreement on a revolutionary democratic programmatic statement calling for nationalizations, land reform, equality for Indians, and defense of national sovereignty against imperialism.\*

They have had different experiences and draw different conclusions on the question of how to combine political and military work. Their discussion with Harnecker on this topic is a discussion among revolutionaries, sharing what they have learned, often at a high price.

### Where they come from

A little background will help in providing familiarity with some of the references in the interviews, and with the origins of the four

groups — Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA), Rebel Armed Forces (FAR), Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP), and Guatemalan Party of Labor — Leadership Nucleus (PGT-Leadership Nucleus).

We can begin with the "October Revolution" of 1944 in which armed students and nationalist sectors of the petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie joined junior officers in a successful overthrow of the Ubico dictatorship. This opened up a ten-year period of democratic and limited anti-imperialist reforms, brought to a close by a CIA-organized coup in 1954 that overthrew the elected government of Jacobo Arbenz.

Following several years of bloody repression, a small group of army officers led an unsuccessful attempt at a military uprising in 1960. Two survivors, Marco Antonio Yon Sosa and Luís Turcios Lima, headed to the mountains of Petén province in the northeast to start guerrilla operations.

The following year the PGT (the name of the Communist Party in Guatemala) declared its support for armed struggle and launched a rural guerrilla front that was smashed before it got off the ground. One of the few survivors was Gaspar Ilom, who is today head of ORPA.

In 1962 the PGT founded the FAR, more or less as the armed wing of the party. Three fronts were established, one made up of PGT members, one led by rebel army officers from the failed uprising, and one made up of student (mostly PGT) youth.

Under the impact of heavy blows from government forces, a series of splits and new organizations emerged.

In 1965 the FAR split. The army officer front left; the student front disintegrated. The following year the remainder of the FAR split from the PGT, taking with it most of the party's youth.

In 1967 discussions began in exile among some former FAR members seeking to critically assess their previous experience. Out of these discussions emerged the founding nucleus of the EGP.

In 1972 the first contingent of the EGP entered Guatemala. That same year a split by FAR cadres in the western region resulted in the formation of ORPA.

Wrought by internal dissent, the PGT itself split in 1978. A majority favoring armed struggle came to be called the PGT (Leadership Nucleus). The minority is known as the PGT (Carlos González) after its new general secretary.

Steps toward unity were initiated in 1979 by

the EGP, FAR, and PGT (Leadership Nucleus). ORPA entered the unity discussions the following year, and all four groups publicly announced the formation of the URNG February 8, 1982.

### ORPA — Guerrilla movement based on Indian peasants

Gaspar Ilom is the sole survivor of some 20 founding members of the ORPA. In what is to date his only public interview, he described to Harnecker the steps by which ORPA has come to organize large, predominantly Indian, peasant forces in the strategic agro-export region of western Guatemala.

A university student in 1960, Ilom took part as a civilian in the attempted military uprising by young officers. The following year he left the university for good, joining the PGT's first attempt to initiate a rural guerrilla front. One of the few who survived, he paid for the experience with two years in prison and several years of forced exile.

He returned to Guatemala in 1969 to take part in a revival of armed struggle projected by the PGT-initiated FAR. After landing on the Pacific coast, however, he was unable to make contact with the FAR forces that were supposed to arrange his travel to remote Petén province to the east. He ended up making western Guatemala his base of operations.

Three years of preparatory work resulted in the formation of ORPA in 1972, followed by an eight year process of building the organization in total clandestinity.

Western Guatemala is a coffee-producing region that accounts for most of Guatemala's wealth. It had never been viewed as an area particularly suited to guerrilla activity. ORPA was the first organization, Ilom explained, to conceive of how this "strategic region" could serve as the base of social support for a guerrilla movement (the majority Indian population), and at the same time provide suitable military conditions (a combination of rugged terrain and excellent roads, too important economically to block off for large-scale army operations).

As early as 1971, he said, "we understood this was the spinal column of the country," offering access to the Indian population in the interior and to the entire population along the coast. "We tried to carry out our work as clandestinely as possible. This took enormous pains. All mobilizations and 95% of our marches were carried out at night so that no one would detect us. We believed we had something very important in our hands and that

\*For a translation of major excerpts from the final section of the URNG's founding document, see *Intercontinental Press*, March 8, 1982, p. 184.



if we emerged prematurely the enemy could initiate counterinsurgency operations" that ORPA was neither prepared to confront nor protect the population from.

How was it possible to keep your existence secret from the army? Harnecker asked.

During ORPA's eight years of clandestinity, Ilom answered, "we must have come into personal contact with no fewer than 5,000 people, without a single betrayal or report to the government. Of course we never let anyone pass without hearing the revolutionary message," but the real reason was that "these people believed in us and supported us."

He added: "It may be a little risky to say something like this, but I think it also had to do with historic expectations that had been kept alive by oral tradition among the Indians." Again and again, in different provinces, "we were told that the grandfather of a grandfather had said that one day men who were going to liberate the people would come down from the mountains."

"I think this has to be interpreted as an element of the tradition, the memory, the hope of a people, subjected to colonization, who created their own legends, their own expectations, to survive this situation."

"How else can you explain that as far back as 1971 or 1975 they were capable of seeing that we might be a perspective? You had to be a visionary to believe in these eight to fifteen men, hungry, miserable, clothed in rags, dependent for their lives on what the people would give them to eat, some already with tuberculosis, armed with the most various weapons, including some real antiques, who talked about liberation, carrying out a war, and organizing the people. And yet those people believed in us and supported us."

Not surprising for a group so totally based on military operations in the countryside, ORPA has done little political work in the cities. Hit hard by government repression in Guatemala City in 1981, its major activity today remains the actions of its guerrilla columns in the west.

#### **FAR — From countryside back to cities**

Pablo Monsanto, 36, has been a guerrilla since the age of 17 and for the last 11 years commander in chief of the Rebel Armed Forces. He explained to Harnecker that while the FAR had originated as the armed wing of the PGT, it had split from the PGT in 1966 and "has today a very different conception of what kind of organization is needed to carry out an armed struggle for power."

The FAR has learned from experience, he said, that "the problem is not one of political-military organizations, it is one of the political-military struggle. In the field of organization you have to have both a military organization and a political organization. You can't mix the two up, although they complement and combine with each other. This is what gives the struggle its political-military character — but the organization itself cannot be political-military."

### **Further step toward unity**

The faction of the Guatemalan Labor Party (PGT) that has remained outside the Guatemala National Revolutionary Union (URNG) has now declared its willingness to join that revolutionary front.

A news bulletin issued from Mexico by the Guatemala Information and Analysis Service December 16 quoted PGT leader Carlos Cáceres as saying: "The PGT has now carried through its practical incorporation into the revolutionary people's war, as shown by numerous and important [armed] operations. . . ."

Cáceres added that all other roads to change have been closed and that unity is indispensable for the overthrow of the dictatorship.

"Why? Because the military decisions must be made by the military cadres and the political decisions must be made by the political leadership. The general secretary of a party doesn't have to be a military cadre, but such a leader does have to be fully conscious of what war is, of what a victory or defeat in battle can mean from a political point of view, as well as what a political error can mean from the point of view of the military situation."

Returning to the point from another angle, he stressed the close connection between political work among the masses and military success in the field.

"When you study the military classics," he said, "you see clearly that an army that cannot count on the support of the population, that has no social base, that has no base of support, is an army easily defeated. Because always, always — this is one of the laws of warfare — logistics is one of the weakest links of an army. . . ."

"This is true for a guerrilla army as well. A guerrilla army without food, without people who will aid, protect, and provide information to it, is an army defeated in advance. And you can only assure this type of aid by organizing the masses. Not military organization but political organization of the masses, seeking to give them consciousness that they must support armed struggle and this military force, that this is the guarantee of their victory, that it is the guarantee of attaining revolutionary objectives."

"This is the work of the party. And I think the Vietnamese have given a great lesson here. They mobilized the entire people for war, mobilized the entire masses. And Ho Chi Minh was not a military man; Giap was the great strategist. And not all members of the Communist Party Central Committee were military men either. The problem is not a military problem but a political problem — a problem of how you conceive the revolutionary struggle, the taking of power, the defeat of the enemy, the methods to be used, and how to mobilize

the masses to achieve these objectives. This is the work of the party.

"The point is not to militarize the entire party . . . but rather that the party base all its work around strengthening military work, which is a different question. Why? Because military work is not just a question of arms, uniforms, and combatants; it is a more complex, global problem of creating social bases for this army, for these guerrilla columns."

In the 1960s, Monsanto said, the FAR was nearly wiped out because half its supplies had to come from the cities. Today that is no longer the case. The peasants of Petén province provide the FAR "with beans, tortillas, whatever we need. We have a political organization that mobilizes collective production for war. . . . This is part of the support of the people, part of the economic cost of war. They can't give us money but they can share with us what they produce, invest their labor power in support of the war. It's also possible to mobilize the masses for tasks of war such as sabotage, where arms aren't needed. The Vietnamese, for example, mobilized thousands of men to tear up whole roads in a single night, with picks and hoes."

In line with these views, Monsanto explained, the FAR began in the 1970s to send some of its military cadre back into the cities.

We had learned from experience, he said, "that in and of itself the example set by guerrillas was not enough" to enable the masses to reach the level of consciousness "that only armed struggle could lead to victory, to taking power."

At that time, the guerrilla movement had suffered crushing defeats, the mass movement in the cities could barely be said to exist. So "we had to begin a new process of seeking to radicalize the mass struggle."

Had we not done this, "had there not been such a rise in the mass movement in the last eight or ten years, the guerrilla movement that exists in Guatemala today would have neither the same magnitude nor characteristics it has."

Despite major blows from the government, the FAR has remained in the cities. "We cannot abandon this work; it is our political line," Monsanto told Harnecker. "We believe the masses must participate in the political process, and that not all the masses are going to participate in military questions. It is false to think we are going to arm the entire population of Guatemala, that the entire population is going to participate in the war arms in hand."

Our aim, he summed up, is to "prepare the masses for insurrectional situations, partial or total." At the same time, "we are convinced they will not launch an insurrection until they can count on a military force capable of neutralizing the enemy's repressive forces. Once the enemy's (military) forces are partially defeated, then the masses will rise and take power."

Significant progress has been made, Monsanto concluded. Government repression hasn't produced the same results it did 15 or 20 years ago. "In the decade of the 1960s the first

thing the enemy did was wipe out the guerrillas, then it crushed the existing mass organizations. Today it has had no success whatsoever against the guerrillas. We have had losses, but minimal. Why? Because today there is a generalization of guerrilla struggle. At this moment there are guerrillas in more than half of the country, we can say there is guerrilla activity in three-fourths of the country."

#### EGP — 'Bring the whole country to a boil'

The Guerrilla Army of the Poor agrees that revolutionary war in Guatemala cannot be conceived of without the massive participation of the population. Described by Harnecker as one of the armed organizations with the strongest mass work in the country, the EGP emerged out of discussions among exiled FAR members in the late 1960s. Its founding members entered Guatemala in 1972, carried out lengthy preparatory work, and began large-scale armed actions only in the late 1970s.

Rolando Morán, the EGP's commander in chief, began political activity as a member of the PGT, later of the FAR. He told Harnecker the EGP quickly learned after reentering the country that merely setting up a small guerrilla "foco" was not "going to set off a chain reaction." We knew this in theory, he said, "it was part of our old documents going all the way back to the early 1970s." But the EGP had to learn in practice that seizing power meant more than creating a military arm, that at the same time we had to organize an entire political structure and its mass base."

The masses must participate "politically" in the war, Morán said. This means "incorporating all the instruments of struggle that are characteristic of the masses, incorporating their demands but joining to them a political content of struggle for power."

To advance this process under the specific conditions of Guatemala's underdevelopment and dictatorial rule, the EGP has given priority to work with the minority of politically advanced workers.

"In our opinion," Morán said, "this is the sector that will fundamentally make up what we call revolutionary organizations of the masses. A certain degree of discipline is accepted by this advanced sector; they understand and assimilate it. Also accepted are certain forms of organization, different from the free and open norms of labor, trade-union, and cooperative organizations.

"This advanced sector is also prepared to accept the need to confront the repression in a direct manner, through self-defense, struggles, and so forth. It will accept a degree of preparation and practice of clandestine and semiclandestine methods. And all of this can be carried out without prejudicing their readiness, their decision, their conviction that they have to fight as well for immediate and general economic demands of their class or sector. They do not abandon the struggle for immediate demands. On the other hand, they will not automatically join the vanguard either."



The great advantage of focusing on this layer of advanced workers, the EGP believes, is that it allows combining clandestine methods and contact with the masses.

"Their roots in the masses are so deep that these worker activists can carry out their work of agitation, organization, and education in their own work centers and broad organizations, with assurance that their clandestinity will not be uncovered. At issue here is not the individual and isolated work of a clandestine revolutionary organization inside the masses but rather the work by an entire sector of the masses carrying out activity of an organizational and political nature — definitely revolutionary but tightly linked to the immediate interests of the bulk of the masses. And the masses do not see this work as something foreign to them but rather as part of and in protection of their own interests."

This concept of mass work, Morán said, is the product of "experience and the accumulated lessons of failure."

"We are no longer talking about getting together a grouping in a union that can carry an election, gain control over the union leadership, and then think it has succeeded in bringing the union under its influence. For us it is not the leadership that is of fundamental importance, it is the ranks — and among them the most advanced sectors."

Political work along these lines has already produced results, Morán told Harnecker. "By developing our mass work we not only broadened and enriched the potential source of combatants and cadres for the military forces . . . but also made it possible to carry out tasks of war that do not correspond to those of the regular military forces . . . enabling them to better fulfill their role as full-time combatants. This is what has happened with the Indians, whose incorporation into the revolution is now definitive. There are tens of thousands of Indians in our regions of activity who have joined in the campaigns of the EGP, fully aware that they are our campaigns."

Following an initial stage of implantation and a second stage of armed propaganda, the EGP has now moved to what it views as a third stage — the effort to spread guerrilla warfare throughout the entire country.

"This generalization of guerrilla warfare seeks to bring the whole country to a boil," Morán said, "developing the guerrilla method

of fighting the enemy to massive levels throughout the country — without reaching the point of insurrection but of generalizing the mentality of fighting against a superior enemy."

The EGP does not believe this stage in and of itself will be sufficient to destroy the dictatorship's military power, above all in view of the fact that military intervention by the United States is "inevitable."

To take power, a fourth stage is envisioned — fighting to hold on to territory and control over sections of the population. This will mean, Morán said, "creating liberated areas of territory, local governments, laying the foundation for the new state, beginning in outlying areas."

The EGP does not believe it or any of the other revolutionary organizations has yet reached this level. "We cannot consider a zone to be liberated until we have complete political, economic, and military control over it. An area in which we have the possibility of remaining permanently militarily but in which we don't hold in our hands local governmental or economic power . . . cannot yet be considered a liberated area. . . ."

Morán concluded the interview by pointing to the importance of the process of unity under way among the main revolutionary organizations.

"In the first place, from the outset it will produce an acceleration of the entire process of war. Secondly, a strengthening of all the organizations as a whole, and of each one in particular, both in a political as well as in a military sense. . . ." It will help "create a vanguard much more complete, homogeneous, objective, and responsive to the needs of the Guatemalan reality.

"No guerrilla movement in and of itself can be the effective vanguard of our people."

#### PGT (Leadership Nucleus) — Trying to regain lost ground

"Some of us are convinced, on the basis of objective facts, that between 1968 and 1980 various favorable opportunities existed to make genuinely qualitative leaps in our positions in struggle — opportunities we weren't able to take advantage of for lack of unity."

Mario Sánchez, leader of the PGT (Leadership Nucleus), told Harnecker it hadn't been easy to come to this point of view, and that his organization had been part of the problem.

"We have to recognize," he said, "that some of the Communist parties on our continent have remained somewhat behind the revolutionary processes in our countries, a process that has followed an extremely dynamic course. We have virtually ceased being the vanguard, although we continue to claim that we are. But each day our respective peoples question this statement more. . . . We have to take this into account even if it is painful to do so, and we have to rectify it both in theory and in practice. This will improve, not hurt, our image, despite what some people may think."

The process of unity that is under way must



be consolidated, Sánchez said. "It has given rise to great hopes for a change in the situation that will finally end the population's terrible suffering." Helping to press unity forward "is the understanding that each organization is acquiring on its own, in life, in struggle, that it is not easy to conquer the enemy in an individual manner."

As for the preparedness of the Latin American CPs to enter armed struggle, Sánchez acknowledged a number of difficulties. "We have to bring the structures of the party up to the level of the condition of war that exists in our country." This is not easy because "there already exists a definite fundamental pattern . . . and it is difficult for many members to understand that we have to make a turn and convert the party, as we are now doing, into a political-military organization." This means "a fundamental transformation of the party into something we are not used to."

Sánchez added that Jorge Schafik Handal, head of the Salvadoran Communist Party, is grappling with the same problem. (For a recent article by Schafik Handal on this topic, see *Intercontinental Press*, November 15, 1982.)

On a practical level the PGT (Leadership Nucleus) has concluded that it is incorrect to maintain a military committee outside the Political Committee. "We are trying to avoid the error that was committed when the FAR was established as the 'armed wing' of the party. Today the party itself is the organ of Communists for revolutionary armed struggle. The Political Committee is at the same time the Political-Military Committee. In it are the political and military cadres each and every one of us tries to be. The Central Committee, or Leadership Nucleus as we call it, is at the same time the military general staff of the party. Here are joined together the political and military cadres, but all of us try to be well versed in both political-ideological questions and military affairs."

Turning to a major error the party made in the past, Sánchez described the impact of the PGT's failure to foresee the scope of U.S. intervention to overthrow Arbenz in 1954.

"The party was not prepared to effectively confront U.S. intervention," he told Harnecker, "nor to pass over to clandestine forms of struggle. Talking about it wasn't the same thing as carrying it out in practice. . . . Incredible as it may seem in retrospect, we didn't foresee the defeat." The PGT found itself driven underground, but without so much as a hidden mimeo machine, clandestine apparatus, or even money to buy food for anyone — at a time when the enemy was carrying out tremendous repression, amounting to as many as 3,000 deaths."

The PGT's difficulties were compounded by its "slowness in adapting itself to the new conditions, to the dynamic of revolutionary struggle that took on an irreversible form in our country 21 years ago. . . . I mean armed struggle, which, given the specific conditions in our country, has become the sole path to revolution in Guatemala." □

## Nicaragua

# Interview with Tomás Borge

*'Reagan wants to destroy us, but doesn't know how'*

[The following is the full text of an interview with Tomás Borge, FSLN minister of the interior, published in the December 19–20 issue of *Le Monde*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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MANAGUA — Tomás Borge, 52, is one of the nine commanders who make up the leadership of the Sandinista Front, as well as one of the historic leaders of the revolution. Minister of the interior since the fall of Somoza in July 1979, he leads the fight against supporters of the old regime and against those who have gone over to the camp of the "counterrevolution." We asked him about the military situation in his country.

*Question. Do you think the Americans are going to attack?*

*Answer.* I don't think so. Nor do I think the Hondurans are going to send their army in against us. They have too much to lose. In face of our people, who would be motivated by fighting to defend their own territory, they would have to send into combat peasants who wouldn't know why they were fighting in a country that wasn't theirs.

*Q. And the joint military maneuvers by the United States and Honduras?*

A. That was to make an impression on us. And also undoubtedly to misdirect our atten-

tion, to make us think the aggression would come from that area.

*Q. How many Somozaists are there under arms?*

A. Five thousand in Honduras and another thousand based in our territory.

*Q. If the 5,000 invade, what will happen?*

A. We will send 200,000 men against them, and there will be no more border.

*Q. What is Reagan up to, in your opinion?*

A. He wants to destroy us, but doesn't know how. So he tries a little of everything. What he doesn't understand is that we are accustomed to danger, and that danger stimulates us. It also enables us to mobilize our population. In their desire to get rid of our revolution, the Americans may set fire to all of Central America. In the end they will be the losers, because the peoples will shake off their tyrants and regain their dignity.

*Q. Is Reagan trying to radicalize you?*

A. If that's true, he has understood nothing of our revolution. Whatever he does, we will be neither more nor less radical. We don't talk about political pluralism and a mixed economy to please the Americans. This is our program, and we will continue it no matter what policy Reagan follows.

*Q. Pluralism means elections. What elections?*

A. We don't know yet. We are studying the electoral systems of other countries to come up with elections suited to the realities of our country.

*Q. Does your conception of pluralism include the possibility of the opposition coming to power?*

A. To be frank with you, I don't think they will find circumstances permitting that.

*Q. Why have the Miskito Indians revolted against you?*

A. When the revolution came to the Atlantic Coast, it knew nothing of the Indians. It had no knowledge of ethnology. It made blunders, using methods that were at times over-hasty. The Miskitos rebelled; some of them took up arms against us. We were forced to repress them. It was neither in the nature nor in the intentions of the revolution to repress them, but we had to do it. □



Michael Baumann/IP

Borge speaking at 1982 May Day rally.

# Speech by Cuban leader Jesús Montané

## *Revolutionary perspectives in Latin America and the Caribbean*

[The following speech was presented in April 1982 at the opening of the International Theoretical Conference on the revolutionary processes in Latin America and the Caribbean. Jesús Montané Oropesa is an alternate member of the Political Bureau of the Cuban Communist Party's Central Committee. The conference also heard major presentations from Antonio Díaz-Ruiz Soto, head of the Department of Internal Education of the Cuban Communist Party's Central Committee, and Manuel Piñero, also a member of the Central Committee of the Cuban CP. The text of Montané's speech is taken from No. 84 of *Tricontinental*, the bimonthly put out by the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America.]

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Two years ago, we met here in Havana for a valuable exchange of views on the class structure in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Subsequently, there was an important conference in Berlin, capital of the German Democratic Republic, on the subject, "The Common Struggle of the Labor Movement and the National Liberation Movement Against Imperialism and for Social Progress." That meeting, sponsored by the German Socialist Unity Party and *World Marxist Review*, paid considerable attention to the traits of the Latin American revolutionary process.

Now, also sponsored by our international theoretical publication and once again with the hospitality gladly provided by our Communist Party of Cuba, we are taking up another topic of great political and ideological relevance: "The General and Specific Traits of the Revolutionary Processes in Latin America and the Caribbean."

This is an indication of the growing, well-deserved attention which the world communist

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### **This continent is about to give birth to a revolution that will lead to socialism . . .**

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and revolutionary movement is giving to the processes of people's struggle in this hemisphere.

In the past, people all over the world who were concerned with the creative development of Marxism-Leninism and the continuous enrichment of revolutionary theory and practice watched, thought about and expressed their solidarity with Cuba and its unique experience. Today these lands of Latin America and the Caribbean offer a much broader universe of so-

cial change, of which Cuba is now, fortunately, only a part. Those who are struggling all over the world find in them a living laboratory full of varied situations. We believe that some of the most important conclusions for the contemporary revolutionary movement can be drawn from an analysis of the events taking place in this part of the world.

Unquestionably, Latin America as a whole — especially Central America and the Caribbean — has entered the present decade with an upsurge in the anti-imperialist people's movement for freedom.

This explains the interest with which you, the representatives of 31 parties and liberation movements, are participating in this gathering.

It is not by chance that we are engaging in this discussion at the foot of a seething volcano in one of the most troubled areas of today's world. Here is where three of the youngest revolutions are being strengthened in the heat of the struggle. And here also the insurgent peoples are waging heroic battles to win their right to a new and independent life. This meeting is not a luxury; it is a necessity. It is not alien to the struggle being waged in these lands; it is a part of that struggle. Reflecting on our experiences, striving to understand the general trends from our day-to-day experiences; drawing conclusions from the things we have done right and our mistakes; analyzing ideas frankly and in a militant way, with the utmost scientific rigor; and trying to predict and grasp the future are also a form of struggle. A basic one for that matter. Our classical theorists were absolutely right when they said that nothing is more practical than a good theory.

We welcome the presence of all the prestigious parties and revolutionary organizations which are present here. The fine response that the vanguard detachments of the working class and the Latin American and Caribbean peoples as a whole gave to the call for this gathering is well known.

It is only fair that we make special mention of the presence here of delegates from Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. They have given our meeting — along with the defense of their countries and the revolutionary struggle for freedom — the importance it deserves.

Likewise, we should note the presence of a delegation from Grenada, which will surely discuss that Revolution's experience and exemplary role in the Caribbean basin.

The Cuban participants in this gathering will give a detailed presentation of their views on the subject under discussion.

We don't, however, want to limit ourselves in this opening speech just to welcoming you fraternally. We also feel it is our duty to refer

to some of the key questions that you will be considering in the next few days.

According to the agenda, we will be discussing the general and specific traits of the revolutionary processes in Latin America and the Caribbean, so the first thing we should do is to note that events here confirm the classical theory of the communist movement. That is, each country will advance toward socialism in keeping with its specific historical conditions, but also in line with the universal laws confirmed by the experiences of other countries that have already carried out this process since 1917. Events here also confirm the validity of the thesis that, in our epoch — the epoch of the general crisis of capitalism and proletarian revolutions — the national liberation struggles and the class struggles of the labor movement and all the struggles against the oligarchies,

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### **As always, those who learn from others and think for themselves will lead the struggle . . .**

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fascists and monopolies merge into a single current whose strategic direction is — and can only be — socialism.

The Latin American and Caribbean revolutions have three essential ingredients: what is individual and unique, stemming from the history, struggle and specific conditions of each country; the particular, expressing what the peoples in this area and epoch share in common; and the universal, reflecting what is linked to the general laws and principles of the world revolutionary process.

Latin America and the Caribbean are a mosaic that defies schemata and superficial simplifications. Some nations here — the vast majority of the countries freed from the Spanish and Portuguese yoke — have been independent for more than 150 years. Others — many small, sparsely populated states in the Caribbean basin — freed themselves from the anachronistic domination of the colonialist metropolises only in recent years. Our area also includes some colonial enclaves. The most blatant case is that of Puerto Rico — a Latin American and Caribbean nation because of its historic roots, language and culture — that has been victimized by yankee imperialism since 1898 and is now threatened with final annexation by the United States. This part of the world includes vast countries with large populations and relatively highly developed capitalist economies that have even reached the stage of monopolies and finance capital. However, it also includes



countries floundering in abject poverty, backwardness and underdevelopment. In some states, the institutions of bourgeois representative democracy have been preserved with some degree of stability; in others, a substantial number, the exploiters have abandoned or never even offered any pretense of constitutional legality in enforcing their brutal dictatorships. Bolivia is an outstanding example of the latter. It has averaged more than one military coup d'état every year since gaining independence. There are oil-producing countries, whose exorbitant revenues can't hide the cracks in their deformed socioeconomic structures, and there are non-oil-producing countries, most of which are being crushed between imperialism's international finance system and the high cost of energy. And finally, on this continent there are socialist and revolutionary countries — that truly exercise their sovereignty and can thumb their noses at the empire's dictates — and capitalist countries ruled by oligarchs and sell-outs, always rushing abjectly to carry out Washington's slightest whim.

This part of the world has continued, in recent years, to feel the impact of spiraling economic crisis which seems to have no limits. The phenomena which have disrupted the world economy for the last 10 years or so have had even more violent and more widespread repercussions in these countries. This situation has given rise to an increase in the concentration and internationalization of production and capital, raised the levels of economic exploitation and further impoverished the vast majority of the peoples in the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

In these conditions, the unsolvable contradiction between U.S. imperialism and the interests of the rest of the countries in the Americas has become more obvious.

The United States can't provide either the markets for the articles that the nations in the area could produce independently or the financing for their industrial development. The past years have shown that the only thing Latin America and the Caribbean can expect from imperialism is continued dependency on the yankee transnationals, a subordinate position in the new international division of labor imposed by the United States and other highly developed capitalist countries — and, thus,

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**We are witnessing an inseparable merger of the class and national struggles, a unique combination of the fight for democracy and for socialism . . .**

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subjection to the hegemony of big monopoly and finance capital — the permanent deformation of their economies and the perpetuation of the intolerable structure thanks to which an oligarchic minority gets more than 80 percent of what is left of the national income after the for-



Salvadoran liberation fighters — part of new upsurge in Latin American revolution.

eign exploiters taken their cut.

The days when the United States could fool the countries of the hemisphere with reformist promises are gone for good. The era of the much-touted "economic miracles" has been left behind. More than 20 years have passed since the launching of the so-called Alliance for Progress. That program — conceived by the most farsighted imperialist rulers in recent decades, during an upsurge in the U.S. economy — was a total failure. What, then, can the countries south of the Rio Bravo expect — if anybody really expects anything now, when the United States is faced with serious economic problems and the administration of the country is in the hands of an intellectually mediocre and politically ultrareactionary group? Marx said that history repeats itself two times — once as tragedy and once as farce. This is precisely the relationship between Kennedy's fleeting 1961 plan and Reagan's ridiculous neocolonial plan for Central America and the Caribbean in 1982.

The Latin American countries' foreign debt, which was a little over \$21.5 billion in 1970, has multiplied eleven-fold and is now a chilling \$240 billion.

It's not news anymore that a Latin American or Caribbean country has to use 40, 50, or 60 percent of its exports to meet its interest payments and amortize its debt, only to receive new credits at ever-higher interest rates and shorter terms of payment.

Inflation is wiping out our countries' economies and undermining the worker's precarious standard of living. About 50 percent of the region's work force is un- or underemployed. Our terms of exchange with the capitalist metropolises continue to deteriorate each year. Food production is stagnating or decreasing. Control by the transnational corporations ensures the survival of agrarian structures based

on large landholdings and semifeudal conditions. Housing, education, medical care, social security and other problems are being exacerbated, causing increasingly desperate and impossible living conditions for the urban and rural working masses.

A few years ago, there was talk of development formulas and programs to promote local capitalism in some of the main countries in the region, but now all these ideas have been frustrated by the system of imperialist domination. Now, we are witnessing a return to laissez-faire economic formulas advocated by the imperialist government and its transnational corporations. The Chilean case clearly shows that this will lead to our countries' complete dependency on foreign capital, the extreme concentration and centralization of the national wealth in the hands of that capital and the large oligarchic groups associated with it, the perpetuation of economic underdevelopment and the most ruthless exploitation of the workers ever heard of in the history of this continent.

In short, this amounts to dependent Latin American and Caribbean capital's tacit recognition of its historic inability to overcome economic backwardness, change structures and come up with even a minimum solution of the tremendous problems that face the peoples in this area.

The underlying economic problems in Latin America and the Caribbean are so serious and their prospects so bleak that we are led to conclude that the contradictions will continue to sharpen and eventually call for a revolutionary solution.

The internationalization of the economy has reached such depths and the link between the big imperialist corporations and the dependent oligarchies has become so strong that the process of change — if it is to be a genuine one — must be both anti-imperialist and anti-oligar-

chic, questioning the very bases of the capitalist regime.

The present crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean is not just an economic one. It is also a crisis of the entire system of imperialist domination, of obsolete agrarian structures, of the entire fabric of dependent capitalism. It is a global crisis encompassing all spheres of society, manifested most clearly in the field of politics, as well as in ideology and culture in general.

These criteria, comrades, strengthen our conviction that this continent is about to give birth to a revolution that will lead to socialism and, as compañero Fidel Castro said recently, it will be as difficult to prevent as the labor of a pregnant whale.

However, we aren't guilty of heedless optimism, nor do we ignore the difficulties we must overcome in carrying out a process that amounts to liquidating U.S. imperialism. We

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**Whether something is revolutionary or not isn't determined by whether it is armed or unarmed, violent or nonviolent, illegal or legal . . .**

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know that it will necessarily be a long, rough, complex process that will fill an entire historic epoch.

How these future revolutions will develop, what traits they will have and what routes the vanguard forces and peoples will take to carry out their mission of attaining and consolidating power and effecting the decisive transformations of their respective societies cannot be predicted but will be determined at every juncture by the revolutionary movements and their leaders.

It is true that the Latin American and Caribbean revolutionary movement has been significantly enriched during the last 25 years, and this heritage contains useful lessons of great value which no fighter in our countries can ignore.

Notwithstanding, we believe that nothing could be less Marxist than to elevate today's revolutionary experiences into prescriptions for all future situations.

We are sure of one thing, however: the advance of the peoples' processes on this continent and the development of their potential will be largely dependent on the subjective factor — the ability of the revolutionary vanguards and their leaders. The importance of this ideological element is steadily increasing. As always, those who learn from others and think for themselves will lead the struggle. Those who do not lack determination and courage will deserve to be in the vanguard. Those who demonstrate the ability to judge situations, mobilize the people, win them over, advance along the path of unity, select the most effective methods of struggle for every stage

and carry out a correct strategy by means of equally correct tactical measures will deserve to be leaders.

We are aware that, in one way or another, sooner or later, the Latin American and Caribbean revolutionary processes will be directed toward the great historic goal of socialism.

It shouldn't be inferred, however, that socialism should be the immediate goal in all of our countries' political and revolutionary struggles or that they should be based on the proclamation of this aim.

What is the order of the day on this continent is the broadest possible anti-imperialist, anti-fascist, anti-oligarchic, democratic, people's battle.

Patriotism, anti-imperialism and the struggle for sovereignty and true national independence are dominant traits of the people's movement in Latin America and the Caribbean.

On this continent, we are witnessing an inseparable merger of the class and national struggles, a unique combination of the fight for democracy and for socialism, the fight for anti-imperialist liberation together with urban and rural workers' actions against capitalist exploitation. This innovative combination is, of course, reflected in the strategies and tactics of many parties and organizations on the left.

Every people on this continent will reach socialism by rooting that goal in its history and that of Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole, because that is the only way to solve the complex structural problems which underdevelopment has piled up in our societies. There will be different processes, and each will have its own traits and make original contributions to the international revolutionary experience. The processes of national liberation and the construction of socialism in this area will not be governed by rigid patterns or standards. However, as Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations in the region have pointed out, the triumph of any genuine revolution and its advance toward socialism will only be feasible to the extent that the universal laws and features which govern this process are observed within the framework of the specific conditions.

Socialism is reached in a conscious manner, but our wishes, our desires can't replace objective reality. We must advance toward this goal

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**Latin American revolutionaries are part of the world, and everything that happens in it affects us directly . . .**

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by stages, in the course of which every people and revolution will find the proper scenario to apply creativeness, political intelligence and the ability to understand and use the unique national traits of every process.

One of the most significant traits of the present Latin American people's movement is the

interweaving of the democratic and revolutionary struggles.

On our continent the struggles for national liberation and the democratization of political life, the satisfaction of economic demands benefiting the vast majority of the people, the defeat of the ultraright repressive regimes and respect for human life and dignity open ample possibilities for joint work and alliances with other democratic forces without implying the abandonment of ideological struggle. This, in turn, makes each process distinctive.

The countries in our region present a picture that ranges from sharpened class conflict between the people and their oppressors to peaceful, institutionalized forms of political struggle where there are no immediate prospects for a revolutionary situation.

This shows that we mustn't fall into puerile generalizations. Whether something is revolutionary or not isn't determined by whether it is armed or unarmed, violent or nonviolent, ille-

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**Our fate is bound up with that of socialism and all the revolutionary and progressive countries . . .**

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gal or legal, insurgent action or mass struggle; anything that can and must be done in order to advance toward our ultimate objective, anything that will lead us to determine events and not trail along after them, is revolutionary.

Ever since Cuba changed the history of this hemisphere 23 years ago, the imperialists have done everything they could, not only to destroy it, but to show that it was a unique phenomenon, an anomaly that would never be repeated.

That reactionary philosophy was destroyed by the victories of the revolutions in Grenada and Nicaragua.

The unstoppable drive of the people's struggles in El Salvador, Guatemala and other countries on this continent shows that there will be a follow-up to Grenada and Nicaragua, as well.

Guatemala in 1954, Cuba in 1959, Chile in 1973 and Grenada and Nicaragua in 1979 show each in their way that the key element in every revolution — in the past, present and always — is the solution of the problem of power.

The decisive importance of unity among all the revolutionary forces and the unity of their leadership in the struggle to win and consolidate the people's victory was evidenced first in our country and then, with exceptional eloquence, in the struggles of the Central American peoples.

The lessons gained from the strategic alliance between Marxist-Leninists and Christians are some of the most profound, interesting and promising aspects that we can and should analyze.

Likewise, the importance of an intelligent policy that draws in the patriotic sectors that



may exist in the army, intellectuals of various persuasions, the middle strata and even segments of the bourgeoisie has been confirmed in practice. It has been proved that, without undermining our firm stand and convictions, we can work with Social Democratic organizations to achieve our common goals and even make progress in winning over rank-and-file members of Christian Democratic parties, in spite of the generally reactionary course followed by their bureaucratic leaderships. There are experiences that call for a more flexible, Leninist and creative position, removed from all forms of doctrinairism and sectarianism — which have nothing in common with life, its concrete problems and its real demands.

The conditions of the people's struggle on this continent and its general and specific traits are linked to more than just the conditions prevailing in the region as a whole and in each country individually. They are also related closely to yankee imperialism's policies in each stage.

We believe that current events confirm this. We are confronting a powerful enemy. We do not fear it, but we shouldn't underestimate it either. The situation in our countries isn't exempt from the dangers and problems unfolding on a world scale.

Latin American revolutionaries are part of the world, and everything that happens in it affects us directly. The yankee administration has pressured its NATO allies to adopt huge military budgets, unleashed an unprecedented arms race, revived the brutal language of the cold war and prepared to deploy 572 intermediate-range missiles in Europe, just a few minutes from the main cities and industrial centers

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## **We neither want nor seek tension and war . . .**

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in the Soviet Union and the other European socialist countries; these threats to world peace affect all of us, and this imperialist policy should be rejected in no uncertain terms. We are internationalists. We will not hide our heads in the sand like ostriches. Our fate is bound up with that of socialism and all the revolutionary and progressive countries. We will share it, aware that our unity and solidarity should be expressed at their highest and firmest levels.

The present U.S. administration has complicated the world situation with its policy of force, its arms race, its attempts to blackmail and gain military superiority over the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community. It has fanned the flames of tension in various trouble spots in the world. It has complicated matters in Latin America and the Caribbean with its determination to stop at nothing to prevent the victories of the revolutions in El Salvador and Guatemala; to crush the Nicaraguan Sandinista and Grenadian Revolutions; to bolster, even more, its alliances with the most repulsive, ultraright regimes on this continent.

The Reagan administration wants to make the insurgency in Central America a decisive test of strength, in which, according to its theoreticians, the United States will regain the credibility it has lost in the eyes of its European allies and the rest of the world, showing its political strength *vis à vis* the Soviet Union and thus gaining a favorable position for any future negotiation.

Experience shows that every position that our peoples win must be wrested from our enemies, and this must be done in spite of the ma-

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## **Our desire to find political solutions shows our sense of responsibility, restraint and firmness, but we will never negotiate our revolution or the people's right to revolution . . .**

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neuvens and actions of yankee imperialism.

But precisely because of this, we can't always advance as quickly as we would wish. We must keep national as well as international factors in mind. Sometimes we can advance more rapidly. At other times, in order to advance more quickly in strategic terms, we must be slower and more cautious in the short term.

The most basic sense of responsibility for the future of our peoples and all humanity demands that together with our resolve and undeniable solidarity with the people's revolutionary movement, we should be ready to negotiate; to ease tensions; and to search for democratic, peaceful, just solutions to the crisis situation affecting our area today. These positions are in no way contradictory or exclusive.

On this score, dear compañeros, we should keep in mind our country's support for Mexican President José López Portillo's clear and constructive proposals providing mechanisms for negotiation that could lead to an easing of tension in the area.

In this regard, the positions taken by compañero Fidel Castro are well-known, and we need not repeat them here.

The Nicaraguan and Salvadoran compañeros have expressed their support for these positions.

The reasons for this attitude are clear to Cuba and its Central American and Caribbean sisters and brothers. On principle, we neither want nor seek tension and war. To the contrary, we seek peace as the only sensible alternative to make headway in solving the problems affecting our peoples — that understandably alarm responsible people all over the world. Our desire to find political solutions shows our sense of responsibility, restraint and firmness, but we will never negotiate our Revolution or the people's right to revolution.

Recently, our country — which is one of the main targets of the U.S. government's aggressive policy — was forced to take measures to

strengthen its defense capacity. As part of these measures, we have created the Territorial Troop Militia, whose ranks now include 500,000 men and women prepared and organized to provide important support for our Revolutionary Armed Forces in case of an aggression. We have taken the necessary steps to deal with either a total blockade or an air war of destruction, or a direct attack by U.S. troops. We have worked hard to provide our people with the greatest degree of security, to guarantee continued production under any situation and to increase our country's military strength to the utmost so the imperialists will have to think seriously before taking any action against our country.

As Fidel said in the recent 4th Congress of the Union of Young Communists, we are prepared for anything — to fight or to discuss; to confront the most violent attacks or to find political, negotiated solutions to problems — and will work hard for peace, which our people, the rest of Central American and Caribbean peoples and all the peoples of the world want.

Compañeros, these are some of the criteria and ideas that we wanted to share with you here.

We are sure that this conference, initiated here today, will be successful and reflect the maturity, seriousness and desire for unity of the parties and organizations represented here.

We expect that deep feelings of solidarity will shine forth here once again, to link all revolutionaries and progressive people throughout the world with their Latin American and Caribbean sisters and brothers — especially the Nicaraguan and Grenadian peoples, threatened by aggression, and those of El Salvador and Guatemala, the victims of terror and interference with which the yankees seek to crush the people's liberation struggles.

May this be, and I'm sure it will be, one of the best, most worthy tributes we can pay in Cuba, nearly 15 years after the heroic death in battle of an unequalled champion of revolutionary Marxist-Leninist thought and one of the greatest, purest and most inspiring exponents of the militant spirit of proletarian internationalism: Ernesto Che Guevara, the Heroic Guerrilla. □

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# Three keys to revolutionary victory

*Speech by Cuban leader Manuel Piñero*

[The following are extracts from the speech by Cuban Communist Party central committee member Manuel Piñero at the April 1982 International Theoretical Conference on the revolutionary processes in Latin America and the Caribbean. The extracts from Piñero's speech are from the magazine *Cuestión*, published by Uruguayan exiles in Sweden. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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The experiences of the victorious revolutions and of the many processes that are developing on this continent confirm the general criteria formulated by Compañero Fidel Castro regarding the three ingredients decisive to successfully reaching the revolutionary triumph: unity, the masses, and arms.

It is useful to examine the specific value of each one of these factors separately.

Life shows that it is not enough to proclaim the need for unity in order to advance toward achieving it. It is precisely in this manner that the real maturity of a vanguard and its full commitment to the cause of its people is tested. Individual passions, sectarian deviations, and other limitations must bow before the collective interests of the masses.

The process of building unity encompasses all the motor forces of the revolution and the allied democratic sectors. But its vital nerve center is the solid unity of the vanguard. The truth is that when the different detachments of the left succeed in cementing unity in action, have a consistent strategy, and put forward common tactics and struggles, the mass of the people — who are instinctively for solidarity among themselves — increase this unity, to the point of making it virtually irreversible. And the broader the scope of the forces — national and international — taking part in the struggle against the immediate enemy, the greater is the imperative of the unity of the vanguard.

At this point in Latin American and Caribbean revolutionary history, this means objectively recognizing that in the majority of our countries, other left parties and organizations have grown up alongside the experienced Communist parties. These organizations have won in struggle the respect of their peoples, and many times also represent exemplary detachments in leading the people along the road of their final liberation. Therefore, the unity of these parties and organizations amongst themselves, and their unity with the Communist parties, is the primary guarantee for advancing the democratic, popular, and anti-imperialist revolutions in our continent.

It is necessary to realistically understand the

processes of unity, and to avoid taking artificial steps that later turn out to be counterproductive. It is indispensable, at the same time, to make sure that the nonsectarian spirit of effective collaboration spreads through all levels of the parties and organizations, bearing in mind that many times in real life, the various groups carry out their activities in geographical spaces and social sectors that turn out in the long run to be complementary to the development of the revolution overall.

In those countries where military dictatorships rule, the field of unity broadens. It embraces even sectors interested solely in the destruction of the repressive, fascist-like structures, and in the return to bourgeois democratic constitutional norms. In those cases the ground is even more fertile for the creation of antidictatorial democratic fronts, but on the condition that the revolutionary parties and organizations succeed in consolidating the leadership nucleus in such fronts.

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## The proletarian revolution in Latin America and the Caribbean is at the same time a people's revolution . . .

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We must emphasize this idea: the proletarian revolution in Latin America and the Caribbean is at the same time a people's revolution. This being the case, in order to take power and keep it, the working class needs to weave close political, ideological, and military ties with the rest of the masses. The unity of the working class and its allies must be pushed strongly through a mass policy, because that unity will not arise spontaneously from common economic interests, nor from the propagandistic invocation of those interests.

Certainly, the potential for people's unity exists in the economic basis of the system. But the process that leads to this unity in the political and ideological fields depends on the action of the vanguards; this action, and not some economic predestination, is the responsible practice for achievement of democratic and revolutionary unity.

Today in various countries of the region the problem of unity is the principal obstacle to the advance of the revolution. This being plainly true, there is evidence that it also represents a spur for overcoming the harmful tendency toward the division of the left in some of our countries. Every step forward in unity is a step forward on the road of the revolution.

Inertia, delay, or deviation from the united road is a gift from the revolutionary movement to the enemy.

It is common knowledge that the best form of advancing unity is through collaboration in concrete struggles. This direct relationship between the development of the revolutionary processes and the levels of unity of the vanguards is right now being demonstrated in El Salvador, Guatemala and in the other countries of Central America. There, the Sandinista triumph reaffirmed, among other important questions, the crucial value of the unity of the vanguard as the nucleus providing cohesion and orientation to the antidictatorial, democratic, anti-imperialist, and revolutionary forces as a whole.

The unity of the revolutionary movement inside the borders of a country also has repercussions in making a contribution to the broader unity on a continental and world scale. In regard to our region, the historic and economic factors, the confrontation with a similar enemy, and the political interrelation of our societies fosters an identity in proposals and reciprocal solidarity of the left. But here too, these elements are potential, and by themselves they cannot move forward the effective collaboration of the revolutionary forces in action.

There has to be an individual and collective will that demonstrates in action the proclaimed Latin Americanism and internationalism. There are many examples of solidarity and they are well-known. We Latin American and Caribbean revolutionaries have offered convincing demonstrations of our understanding of internationalism. However, internationalism is of such importance for achieving the triumph of national revolutions in one or another historic moment, and the role of concrete solidarity toward one or another process is so complex and dynamic, that we must still ask ourselves how far we have to go to advance and perfect the collaboration between all the revolutionary parties and organizations of the area.

Sometimes, although certainly here it does not occur to the same degree as in other regions, there are confusions or deviations regarding the necessary and healthy independence that parties and movements of the left have the right and the duty to preserve.

Real sovereignty of these parties and movements, however, far from excluding it, presupposes the need to join collectively to confront common international problems and to collaborate in support of the revolutionary processes that most need solidarity at a given moment.



Finally, together with united work, it is indispensable to give special emphasis to activity to take advantage of the contradictions within the ruling classes in each country and those that arise on an interimperialist scale or between the ruling classes of countries in the region.

Let us now briefly focus on the role of the masses. The incorporation of the masses into the revolution is the sole motor force capable of guaranteeing the achievement of power and its subsequent preservation. But as we know, it is not enough to call on the working class and the rest of the people to overthrow bourgeois power and then have the masses respond to that call. Lenin taught us, and life confirms, that propaganda and agitation are not sufficient by themselves to make the people understand rev-

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### **Today in various countries of the region the problem of unity is the principal obstacle to the advance of the revolution . . .**

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olutionary activity and involve themselves in it. "For this, the political experience of the masses themselves is needed," Lenin asserted. And he concluded: "This is the fundamental law of the great revolutions."

The problem of the vanguards, then, is to contribute to these experiences of the masses, to help them develop their revolutionary energies through the most fitting channels at each stage of the development of the class struggle. But we know that this cannot be derived from the desires and final aspirations of the revolutionary movement.

Subjectivism can lead to substituting the vanguard for the role of the masses or to precipitating decisive actions of the masses, which should be held for opportune moments. Just as bad, subjectivism can also lead to postponing certain actions again and again, using the subterfuge that the masses are not adequately prepared to move toward the conquest of power.

There are no recipes or general formulas to resolve this fundamental question — the incorporation of the masses into the tasks of their revolution. Nevertheless, there are experiences that are useful to consider. For example the revolutions in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada show specifically that the program of the struggle against the dictatorship and for democracy has the greatest possibilities to mobilize the broad masses of the people and other allied political forces.

We think that under present conditions in the majority of our countries, the decisive thing is not to stress the final or long-term objectives of the struggle, but rather the most unifying slogans linked directly to the circumstances that most strangle the life of the people, both in the socioeconomic and the political realm.

Focusing the central activity of the masses on achievement of their antidictatorial, democratic aspirations, and on the solution of their most pressing human problems (jobs, health, education, among others), increases the possibility of their acting. With this comes an increase in the revolutionary movement's potential in the struggle to achieve power and initiate the democratic and anti-imperialist phase of the revolution.

The third and ultimate factor — along with unity and the masses — that in our opinion guarantees the triumph of genuine revolutions is the consistent and opportune use of arms. This does not represent a dogma, but rather results from the system of domination that exists in the majority of the Latin American and Caribbean countries. It would be grave voluntarism to try to sketch out a single continental strategy for such a geographically extensive span of national societies, enriched by their own historic struggles and sociological peculiarities. But at the same time, there are certain principles of every revolution, which if we forgot them would reveal a lack of will.

Weapons are indispensable to secure the victory of any liberating revolution in the continent, and, even more important, to preserve its continuity and achieve its full realization.

Certainly in some countries where there are regimes of the far right — nearly always military dictatorships of a fascist cut — the use of forms of armed struggle or the consistent preparation of the vanguard for their use is a virtually inescapable imperative.

In other countries, where democratic norms of life predominate and the vanguards have constitutional channels for carrying out their activity, the role of arms will be shaped not by their inopportune use but rather by psychological preparation and the creation of the consciousness in all militants that — at some point, in some form — the military confrontation will be indispensable, even though it would not be valid under existing circumstances. What is involved, therefore, is to create an attitude in all revolutionaries, and to move forward as much as possible in the revolutionary military preparation of the militant cadres.

Furthermore, at the moment when political conditions demand the selection of the armed road, that decision must not be subordinated to the survival of some democratic forms, which would compromise the strategic actions of the revolutionary and people's movement.

And, finally, in the daily events of the class struggle, one must tenaciously forge the conditions that will help to advance along the road to the conquest of power. This conquest of power, in one or another variant, and with its national modalities, has always been due to the creation and development of its own military force. On occasion, of course, false dichotomies have been put forward that counterpose armed and nonarmed forms of struggle. . . . In our opinion, the revolutionary content of any form of struggle is measured by its results, that is, by the advance or retreat it

implies for the final objectives of the popular masses.

We all are in agreement that the leadership capacity of the vanguards rests in their multitudes preparation to utilize all forms of struggle, permitting them to articulate energetic and opportune responses to the diverse twists and turns that the class confrontation imposes. In that respect, the experiences of various revolutionary processes in the area show that a division between the political and military functions (particularly when determined and popular use of arms is required) gives rise to a mutilation of both functions. Therefore only a politico-military strategy and its corresponding implementation in practice provides the vanguards with the flexibility to undertake a new form of principal struggle in accordance with the stage and conjuncture of each national process.

At times the necessary use of arms is incorrectly identified with the mechanical application of one or another experience of armed struggle. Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada, the only three revolutions that have triumphed in our America, have the common stamp of arms. But at the same time, along with specific common bases (especially in the cases of Cuba and Nicaragua), they show differences in military tactics employed, in the forms of popular insurrection. . . .

In this aspect, as in the others, the revolutions of our continent will be diverse; each one of them will have its own characteristics and will offer new contributions to the world rev-

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### **The incorporation of the masses into the revolution is the sole motor force capable of guaranteeing the achievement of power and its preservation . . .**

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olutionary accumulation. There won't be schemas capable of guiding the processes of national liberation and the construction of socialism in American lands. Each people will make their revolution and will reach socialism by taking nourishment from the roots of their own national, Latin American, and Caribbean history. And this will not be a contradiction, because every real social revolution is always also a daughter of the universal laws discovered by Marx, Engels, and Lenin.

In that sense, our Commander in Chief Fidel Castro asserted:

"Modern revolutionaries owe the immense treasure of their ideas to the theoreticians of scientific socialism: Marx, Engels, and Lenin. We can assert with absolute conviction that without them our people would not have been able to achieve such a colossal leap in the history of their social and political development. But even with them we would not have been able to achieve it without the fruitful seed and the limitless heroism that Martí, Maceo,

Gómez, Agramonte, Céspedes and such giants of our national history planted in our people and in our spirits.

"That is how the real Revolution was made

in Cuba, starting out from its special characteristics, its own traditions of struggle, and the consistent application of principles that are universal." □

## Suriname

# Imperialists try to topple regime

## *U.S. officials expelled for 'destabilizing activities'*

**By Ernest Harsch**

The U.S. and Dutch imperialists are trying to topple the government of Suriname, a former Dutch colony of 400,000 people on the northern coast of South America.

On January 6, the Surinamese authorities ordered the expulsion of two officials of the U.S. embassy, accusing them of "destabilizing activities" for their role in backing an antigovernment strike in November.

In the Netherlands, where many Surinamese live, a Council for the Liberation of Suriname, composed of former government officials, has been established to overthrow the Surinamese government.

The imperialist campaign against Suriname is being carried out under the guise of opposing human rights abuses.

### **U.S. and Dutch aid cut off**

Following reports that more than a dozen antigovernment figures were killed in Suriname December 8, the Dutch government immediately announced that it was suspending all further economic aid to the country, amounting to nearly \$1 billion slated for Suriname over the next 15 years.

On December 17, Washington did likewise, halting \$1.5 million in military and economic assistance that it was providing. Lane Kirkland, head of the U.S. AFL-CIO labor federation, backed up Washington's move, condemning the killings as "an insult to civilized people."

Although the imperialists have been using the killings as a justification for the aid cutoffs, their hostility to the Surinamese government is in fact a reaction to its anti-imperialist actions.

In February 1980, a group of noncommissioned officers seized power in Suriname, overthrowing the corrupt and proimperialist regime of Henck Arron. Although different political currents were reflected in the ruling National Military Council (NMC) and the new government often followed contradictory policies, it took a number of progressive measures that aroused the concern of the imperialists in Washington and the Hague.

It nationalized several enterprises, including the Dutch-owned power company. It pressed for more favorable trade and economic assistance agreements with the Netherlands. It took some modest steps to improve the living conditions of working people and to create new jobs.

Some members of the NMC sought to encourage mass mobilizations.

By late 1981, key members of the NMC began to move toward closer ties with Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada, and to condemn U.S. policies toward the Caribbean, although this was opposed by some of the bourgeois cabinet ministers.

During a visit to Grenada in May, Lt. Col. Desi Bouterse, the most influential figure in the Surinamese government, blasted Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative as "not based on the basic needs of the people." He denounced U.S. military maneuvers in the region and came out in support of Argentina in its conflict with London and Washington over the Malvinas Islands.

In October, Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop visited Suriname at Bouterse's invitation.

Alarmed by such growing Surinamese contacts with the revolutionary leaderships in the Caribbean, the U.S. and Dutch governments — with the support of business circles and other proimperialist forces within Suriname — have been seeking to bring down the NMC. Several imperialist-backed coup attempts were carried out, the most recent in March 1982.

This effort reached a new stage in late October and early November. The right-wing leadership of the Moederbond, one of the largest trade-union federations in the country, called a one-day general strike November 2, to protest Bishop's visit and to demand that the NMC step down. It succeeded in shutting down the airport and crippling public transport, as well as electricity, water, and other utilities. Thousands participated in antigovernment street demonstrations.

On the day of the strike, the Surinamese Association of Trade and Industry issued a statement condemning the government's policies and supporting the strike.

The Moederbond leader, Cyril Daal, was briefly arrested. After his release, he ordered some of the strikes to continue for several days longer and declared that he would not oppose a new coup.

This challenge to the NMC is very serious. Suriname, one of the world's leading exporters of bauxite, remains dominated by imperialist economic interests. Despite the political upheavals that have taken place since the NMC came to power, the capitalist state apparatus

has not been destroyed and bourgeois figures continue to hold key positions in the government itself.

At the same time, the level of organization of the working people remains rather weak. While there were some sizable anti-imperialist mobilizations in 1980 and 1981, the NMC has not recently sought to answer the rightist threat by adequately mobilizing the population. This has further emboldened the proimperialist forces.

In an interview in the January 7 *Le Monde*, Bouterse admitted that the old bourgeois parties "are able to mobilize more people than we are." But, he added, "our militants are more conscious. They know why they are struggling and are ready to fight for the revolution."

This was evident to an extent during the November 2 strike. The country's various leftist organizations and parties rallied to the government's side. Members of the National Women's Organization, National Youth Organization, local "people's committees," and other groups mobilized to reopen some of the public facilities that had been shut down. Moreover, the country's three other union federations, as well as the Federation of Poor Peasants, dissociated themselves from the Moederbond's strike call.

### **Opposition leaders killed**

A month after this strike, on December 7, the government arrested Daal and a number of other opposition figures, charging that they were involved in a new plot to overthrow the government. Bouterse charged that the coup plans were backed by Suriname's "rich economic elite."

According to the U.S. and Dutch governments, many of those who were arrested were executed the following day, including Daal, two former government ministers, the rector of the University of Suriname, and the director and two reporters of an opposition radio station. The Surinamese government claimed that they were shot while attempting to escape.

The cutoff of U.S. and Dutch economic aid to Suriname, however, has nothing to do with protesting human rights violations, as the U.S. economic sanctions against Cuba and Nicaragua and Washington's backing for the bloody Salvadoran regime show.

Its aim is to bring down the Surinamese government and impose a new one that will follow imperialist dictates. □

