

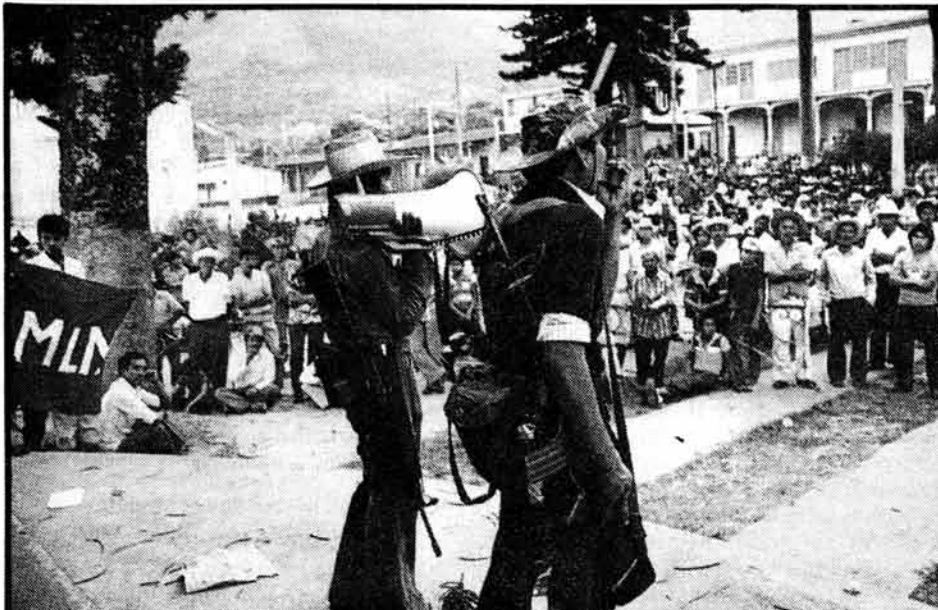
INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

combined
with **inprecor**

Vol. 21, No. 3

February 14, 1983

USA \$1.25 UK 50p



FMLN rebels hold rally after capturing city of Berlín.

El Salvador

Revolutionary War Enters New Stage

General Strike in Quebec

Public Workers Fight to Defend Union Rights



March in Quebec City January 29 protests government union-busting.

Will Reissner/IP

Behind missiles fight in Europe

By David Frankel

President Reagan proposed the biggest "peacetime" military budget in U.S. history January 31. He urged Congress to increase war spending from \$209 billion to \$239 billion — a leap of 14.4 percent in a single year.

At the same time, the U.S. rulers are demanding that their imperialist allies take over more of the burden of policing the world for big business. Secretary of State George Shultz, who arrived in Tokyo January 30, is twisting arms there, demanding that the Japanese ruling class increase its military spending. Also on January 30, Vice-president George Bush arrived in Western Europe with the same message.

From the viewpoint of the imperialist rulers, the need is urgent. Central America is aflame with revolution. New governments are leading the transition to socialism in Nicaragua and the Caribbean island of Grenada. Massive struggles of the oppressed in the Middle East and southern Africa continue to challenge imperialist domination in those regions, while in Southeast Asia all attempts to strangle the Vietnamese revolution have failed.

The capitalists are well aware that the worldwide economic crisis will inevitably provoke further revolutionary upsurges. Behind the massive military buildup being carried out by Reagan is the necessity for imperialism to fight new counterrevolutionary wars like the one in Vietnam.

Fight over new missiles

Roughly 90 percent of U.S. military spending is earmarked for conventional weapons and military units whose primary function is for use in places like the Middle East or Central America. The Pentagon's program for a 600-ship navy, the Rapid Deployment Force, and the B-1 bomber all fall into this category.

The billions earmarked for nuclear arms also fit in with the plans for war against the colonial revolution. Israel's invasion of Lebanon, South Africa's attacks on Angola and Mozambique, and Washington's undeclared war in Central America are all carried out under the protection of U.S. nuclear weapons.

It is in this context that a major political battle has developed in Western Europe over the NATO plan to deploy 572 new nuclear missiles aimed at the Soviet Union. Huge demonstrations over the past year and a half have repeatedly protested the new U.S. missiles. With installation of the missiles scheduled to begin before the end of 1983, the issue has become a central one in West Germany, Britain, the Netherlands, and Belgium.

Resistance to the missiles in particular and the imperialist militarization drive in general has been heightened by the economic crisis. Working people in the imperialist countries are

facing the kind of attacks that have not been seen since the 1930s. Tens of millions are out of work. Homes and farms are being lost. Wages and social programs are being cut. But the capitalist rulers demand that human needs be sacrificed on the altar of increased military spending.

In West Germany, Chancellor Helmut Kohl is running scared in the parliamentary elections set for March 6. Kohl's rightist government, which replaced a coalition led by the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) in September, is pledged to take a total of 204 missiles.

Although the SPD backed the missile deployment while it was in office, the issue deeply divided the party. Now that the SPD is in opposition, it is making effective use of the arms issue against Kohl.

"Two-thirds of the West Germans who responded to the latest surveys were against the missiles," R. Gerald Livingstone reported in the January 28 *New York Times*.

Of the 204 missiles slated for West Germany, 108 are Pershing II missiles that would be deployed only there. The Pershings are capable of delivering nuclear warheads deep inside the Soviet Union in no more than six minutes. The cruise missiles, which NATO plans to deploy in Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Italy, as well as West Germany, are much slower. They are designed to avoid detection by skimming the ground at a height of 50 to 200 feet.

British unions call protest

In Britain, annual Labour Party conferences since 1979 have voted against the missile program and in favor of unilateral British nuclear disarmament. Britain's labor federation, the Trades Union Congress, has now taken the same position. The Labour Party and TUC have jointly called for a mass demonstration in August to mark the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Opposition also runs deep in Belgium and the Netherlands, each of which are to take 48 cruise missiles under the NATO plan. Some 400,000 people demonstrated against the missiles in Amsterdam in November 1981.

The imperialists have a big stake in this fight. Ever since the first atomic bombs were dropped in August 1945 at President Truman's order, Washington has used its nuclear might as a club against anti-imperialist struggles around the world, and against Soviet attempts to aid those struggles.

As *Newsweek* magazine noted in its January 31 issue, the 112 cruise missiles "intended for Sicily would be of more use in attacking the Middle East than the Soviet Union." U.S. military pressure against the Soviet Union, however, is very real.

The Soviet Union has been the victim of two major imperialist invasions since the October 1917 revolution. It is still encircled by imperialist military bases and — since the end of World War II — with nuclear weapons. This continues to impose a very heavy economic burden on the Soviet workers state.

The size of the Soviet economy is only about 55 percent that of the U.S. economy, making it necessary for the Soviet Union to spend a higher percentage of its production to match Washington's military outlays. The imbalance is even greater when the Western European imperialists are added into the equation. They far outweigh the Eastern European workers states in economic and military power.

Furthermore, although all arms spending is wasteful from the point of view of human needs, it is among the most profitable forms of business for the imperialist corporations. The working class pays for the weapons through taxes. In the case of the Soviet economy, the burden also falls on the working class, but no sector of society is enriched by military spending.

By exerting military and economic pressure on the workers states, the U.S. rulers and their NATO allies try to minimize the aid that those states provide to countries and peoples attempting to throw off the imperialist yoke.

But no less important is the imperialist political offensive that goes along with the military and economic pressure on the workers states.

Washington needs 'Soviet threat'

It is politically impossible for the U.S. ruling class to state its real reasons for fighting wars like the one it fought in Vietnam. Working people are not willing to lay down their lives for the profits of the big banks and corporations.

Washington's rationale for maintaining half a million troops and some 2,500 military installations around the world is that these are necessary to contain "Soviet expansionism." Thus, U.S. policymakers talk about independent countries of all kinds, from Cuba to Ethiopia, from Syria to Angola, as "proxies" for the Soviet Union. The same argument is used in regard to revolutionary struggles such as the one in El Salvador today.

But the policies of capitalist militarism and austerity are running into greater and greater resistance both at home and abroad. The scope and intensity of the opposition to the missiles has created a big problem for the ruling classes in West Germany, Britain, and the Netherlands in particular.

After the first round of massive protests against the missiles in the autumn of 1981, Reagan tried to defuse the opposition movement by proposing his so-called zero option plan. Reagan demanded that the USSR dismantle all of its intermediate-range missiles in the European part of the Soviet Union. In return NATO would not deploy its 572 new missiles. This, according to Reagan, would mean the complete elimination of intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe.

Left out of Reagan's count were 162 French and British missiles pointed at the USSR.

Yuri Andropov, the new Soviet leader, offered December 21 to cut the number of intermediate-range missiles maintained by the USSR in Europe from more than 600 to 162, to match the British and French figure. Andropov's proposal for stopping deployment of the new NATO missiles was favorably received by activists in the antimissile movement in Europe. This is putting pressure on government officials in Western Europe to propose a compromise with the USSR.

Franz Josef Strauss, representing the right wing of West Germany's main bourgeois party, called Reagan's zero option proposal "unreachable and absurd." Even Margaret Thatcher, previously Reagan's staunchest supporter, has begun to hedge her support for the zero option. Speaking in Parliament January 18, Thatcher said, "One hopes to achieve the zero option, but in the absence of that, we must achieve balanced numbers."

There was a different reaction in Washington. According to *Washington Post* columnist Mary McGrory, "the White House rejected [Andropov's offer] as 'propaganda' even before it was officially received."

But some ruling-class figures complained about this stance. Paul Warnke, Washington's chief negotiator in the strategic arms limitation talks during 1977 and 1978, was one. He pointed out in the January 26 *New York Times* that for the zero option to be acceptable to the Soviet government, "they must be willing to ignore Britain's and France's intermediate-range nuclear forces, our F-11K fighter-bombers stationed in the United Kingdom, our Sixth Fleet aircraft that carry nuclear weapons, the Poseidon missiles assigned to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization defense, and the proposed deployment of sea-launched cruise missiles on attack submarines and surface ships."

Nevertheless, as the new round of negotiations on intermediate-range missiles opened up in Geneva on January 27, Reagan was still insisting on his zero option plan.

Mitterrand's reactionary role

A particularly despicable role in the missile debate in Europe has been played by French President François Mitterrand. Mitterrand's social-democratic government, which includes the French Communist Party as well, has repeatedly urged deployment of the missiles.

Opening up the new year, Mitterrand announced that French nuclear forces would be strengthened. Speaking on the topic of the Geneva talks two days later, Mitterrand declared, "We will not reduce by a single missile," adding, "that's not even worth dreaming."

Carrying his reactionary campaign to West Germany January 20, Mitterrand — to loud applause from the right-wing Christian Democratic deputies — urged the Bundestag to act with "determination and solidarity" in face of

the pressures against deployment of the missiles.

And on January 28, French Defense Minister Charles Hernu pointedly presided over a public ceremony inaugurating nine new nuclear missiles.

Reagan, meanwhile, has been trying to get his own counteroffensive off the ground. In October, he warned that Soviet agents were "manipulating" opponents of the nuclear buildup; in November he insisted there was "plenty of evidence" that foreign agents were involved in fanning the protests against his policy; and in December he reiterated his charges that there is "participation in the peace movement by the Soviets."

When his red-baiting failed to work, Reagan declared, "The answer is public relations," and

set up a \$65 million "information campaign" to help sell his zero option.

Because the issue of the missiles has caused so much trouble for the European rulers, and because of deep opposition to Reagan's course among working people in the United States as well, the question has become a point of debate within the U.S. ruling class and an issue in the partisan debate leading up to the 1984 presidential election campaign.

Nevertheless, Reagan's Democratic Party critics, who were in control in 1979 when the decision to place the new missiles in Western Europe was made, have also voted for his increases in military spending and his cuts in social programs. Despite the talk about peace, there is no letup in the war against working people at home and abroad. □

IN THIS ISSUE

Closing news date: February 7, 1983

CANADA	68	General strike in Quebec — by Will Reissner
	69	Call for labor party gets good response — by Will Reissner
KAMPUCHEA	70	Rightist guerrillas dealt a blow — by Will Reissner
EL SALVADOR	71	New stage in revolutionary war — by Fred Murphy
	72	Organizing international solidarity — Interview with leader of World Front
NICARAGUA	75	50,000 protest U.S. threat — by Jane Harris
	75	Heavy cost of war on border — by Michael Baumann
	77	Landlords and rents on way out — by Michael Baumann
NAMIBIA	78	South Africans suffer setback — by Ernest Harsch
NIGERIA	79	Foreign workers scapegoated — by Ernest Harsch
USA	80	The fight against foreclosures
CUBA	81	New economic plan approved — by Robert Mance
COLOMBIA	82	Amnesty victory spurs struggles — by Fred Murphy
GRENADA	86	Revolution's next step forward — by Sue Hagen
PERU	88	Army terror in countryside — by Fred Murphy
NEWS ANALYSIS	66	Behind fight over NATO missiles in Europe — by David Frankel

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

Editor: Steve Clark.
Contributing Editors: Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, Ernest Mandel, George Novack.
Managing Editor: David Frankel.
Editorial Staff: Sue Hagen, Ernest Harsch, Fred Murphy, Will Reissner.
Business Manager: Sandi Sherman.

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

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

To Subscribe: For one-year subscriptions in the U.S. or Canada send US\$25.00. Subscription correspondence should be addressed to: Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Telephone: (212) 929-6933.

For airmail subscriptions to Britain, Ireland, and continental Europe send US\$35.00 for one year; US\$17.50 for six months. Write for subscription rates to all other countries.

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

We prefer payment in bank drafts or postal checks payable in U.S. dollars because of the charges involved in clearing personal checks drawn on other currencies. However, personal checks will be accepted, with an additional 5 percent added for clearing charges.

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

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

General strike in Quebec

Public workers respond to savage attack

By Will Reissner

QUEBEC CITY — In the midst of an illegal general strike, 40,000 Quebec trade unionists from the public sector staged a high-spirited, militant march to the National Assembly, Quebec's provincial parliament, January 29.

The demonstration and rally, one of the largest in Quebec City's history, was called to protest provincial decree laws that have cut public employees' wages by up to 20 percent and have gutted trade union rights, including the right to strike until 1985.

The marchers also called on Quebec's Prime Minister René Lévesque of the ruling Parti Québécois (PQ) to reopen negotiations with the Common Front. The Front is made up of three union federations representing about 250,000 of the provincial government's 325,000 employees.

The composition of the crowd reflected the makeup of Quebec's public service workers, 90 percent of whom are French-speaking and two-thirds of whom are women. "No to discrimination — defend the rights of women" was one of the main slogans at the demonstration.

Ignoring temperatures well below freezing, the trade unionists danced through the streets singing militant union songs to traditional folk tunes.

One song asked: "Where are the special laws against the big bankers who close the factories, throwing people into the streets?"

The songs, blasted out through 40,000-watt speakers and taken up by tens of thousands of demonstrators, were so infectious that some of the police surrounding the National Assembly forgot themselves and began dancing in place. The previous day, police in a number of cities had broken through picket lines and arrested strikers.

Bitter, difficult fight

The high spirits of the massive crowd did not, however, mean that participants were oblivious to the bitter, difficult fight they face to defend their living standards and their unions from the fierce attack being leveled by Lévesque and the PQ government.

The front-page headline in the January 29 Montreal daily *La Presse* bluntly stated the government's position: "Facing the Illegal Strike, Quebec Will Be Merciless."

Moreover, the newspapers reported the four-month and two-month jail sentences handed down the previous day to five leaders of Montreal's transit union who had led a 23-hour illegal strike last November. The transit union was also fined \$50,000.

The Common Front walkout began January

26 when teachers in the junior colleges left their posts. Each subsequent day, new contingents of public service workers joined the strike.

By the day of the rally, about 110,000 primary and secondary school teachers, daycare workers, and civil servants had already joined the picket lines.

The rally came at a decisive point in the general strike. On January 31, the Monday after the demonstration, tens of thousands of hospital workers were scheduled to walk out.

The Lévesque government waged a huge campaign to break the unity of the Common Front and prevent the hospital workers from joining the strike. Lévesque warned that if the

health-care workers walked out, special legislation of "unprecedented severity" would be rushed through Quebec's parliament within 24 hours.

Stiff fines

Even under existing legislation, every individual striker faces fines of \$25 to \$100 per day. Union leaders face penalties of \$1,000 to \$10,000 per day, and the unions themselves can be fined \$5,000 to \$50,000 per day while the strike goes on.

Quebec unions have a tradition of paying the fines members incur during strikes. But this takes a heavy toll on union finances. Following a one-day hospital strike last November 10, for example, one Common Front union paid fines totaling some \$4 million.

The PQ government warned that if the hospital workers joined the strike, special legislation would be rushed through mandating:

- Elimination of automatic checkoff of union dues and an end to the practice of giving workers leaves to conduct union business;
- Upon a return to work, forfeiture of one

Morale high as strikers hang tough

The morale of striking teachers and government workers remains high as Quebec's public sector strike enters its third week.

The walkout began January 26 when teachers at junior colleges left their posts. On subsequent days elementary and secondary school teachers, civil servants, and other provincial workers joined the strike.

On January 31, workers at about 60 percent of Quebec's hospitals walked off the job. Quebec Prime Minister René Lévesque had warned that if the hospitals were shut down, he would call a special session of the provincial parliament to rush through additional decree laws to crush the hospital unions.

That evening, the hospital union's negotiating committee voted 18 to 15 to suspend the strike, pending approval of the government's latest offer by the union's federal council.

Yves Lessard, head of the hospital union, acknowledged that "the agreement is hardly wonderful since the decrees remain in place." But, he told the negotiating committee, the proposed settlement ameliorated some of the worst attacks on working conditions.

When the 800-member federal council met on February 2, it rejected that settlement by a 72 percent vote and recommended a new vote by the union's locals to resume the strike. That vote will take place on February 8.

The council's objection to the settlement focused on the fact that it avoided the key question — the existence of the decree laws

that threaten to destroy the public sector unions.

In an attempt to influence the vote on whether to resume the strike in the hospitals, Prime Minister Lévesque went on television February 4 to warn that if the teachers and hospital workers were not on the job by the end of the following week, he would convene a special session of Quebec's parliament to pass even harsher legislation.

Lévesque also warned that his government would begin to suspend and fire striking civil service workers unless they return to work by February 7.

Picket lines by teachers and civil service workers remain strong, however. On the day of Lévesque's television appearance, a mass picket line of up to 1,000 workers closed a key provincial government office building in Quebec City, despite the Lévesque government's vow to keep it open.

In a number of locations, government workers have fought pitched battles with police trying to break the picket lines and escort scabs to work.

The firmness of the teachers and civil service workers and the threat of a resumption of the hospital strike has forced the Lévesque government to soften its stance on bargaining. When the strike began, Lévesque vowed there would be no negotiations until the walkouts ended. Now, however, Lévesque says the government is willing to negotiate an end to the general strike.

— W.R.

additional day's pay for every day a worker was on strike;

- Loss of seniority and job security rights after three days of a strike, opening the way to mass dismissals.

The threat of dismissal is a potent weapon in the Lévesque government's antiunion arsenal, since at least 15 percent of Quebec's work force is already unemployed.

One young woman active in her community health-care center's union grievance committee told the *Intercontinental Press* that her center's administrator had called in the union executive committee members to warn them that if the strike took place, all would permanently lose their jobs.

She noted, however, that 72 percent of her coworkers had voted to strike, feeling they had no choice. "The situation we face," she added, "can be understood from the fact that whereas before we always struck for a wage increase, we are now on strike demanding a wage freeze as against the government's huge cuts in our pay."

Big media campaign

The Parti Québécois government has also waged a huge media campaign to try to turn public opinion against the general strike. Each day for a week, every daily newspaper has carried at least two full-page advertisements by the Quebec government defending its refusal to negotiate with the workers. Similar commercials have also flooded the airwaves.

In addition, the news and editorial columns of the newspapers have been filled with items designed to inflame public opinion against the hospital workers.

Yves Bérubé, a member of the PQ cabinet, warned hospital workers that their actions could lead to a permanent ban on strikes in the health-care field. "I find it unbelievable," said Bérubé, "that the union federations have not yet understood that the right to strike is a symbolic right that should not be exercised."

The Common Front has responded by pointing out that only through gains won in three major Common Front strikes since 1972 have health-care standards and educational levels for French-speaking residents of Quebec begun to approach those of English Canada. If the PQ's massive cuts go through, the unions note, the gap will again grow wider.

PQ leaders have also tried to pit unemployed workers against the strikers. PQ member of parliament Robert Dean, former Quebec director of the United Auto Workers, stated that he could not understand the "union consciousness" of public workers who would strike when there are 475,000 unemployed in Quebec.

The executive committee of the PQ unanimously endorsed the government's policy, which it described as "taking back the wages of its employees in order to use them in the battle against unemployment." The committee added that public sector wages "should be subordinated to the objective of creating jobs."

There is growing public recognition, how-

ever, that public sector wages are not the cause of Quebec's economic crisis, and that money saved by drastic wage cuts will not go to create jobs.

The real source of Quebec's financial crisis was illustrated in a loan prospectus issued recently by provincially owned Hydro-Quebec. The report outlined for international bankers the government's progress in cutting public service wages and expenditures.

Columnist Normand Girard wrote in the January 29 *Le Journal de Montréal* that the loan prospectus "proves that international high finance is responsible for the crisis situation Quebec is in."

The journalist added: "the bankers on Bay Street in Toronto and on Wall Street in New York have the Lévesque government by the throat." This explains, Girard wrote, "the government's rigidity against the Common Front and its persistent refusal to . . . return to the bargaining table."

Representatives of international banks told the Lévesque government back in 1981 that it would have to cut its budget deficit to below \$3 billion if it were to continue to receive loans, even at higher interest rates.

As a result, the PQ government pushed through a new 1981 budget raising taxes by \$1.2 billion. Under further pressure from the banks, in early 1982 the Lévesque cabinet pushed through new taxes and decree laws cutting pensions and wages for public sector workers.

Columnist Girard argued that the report to the banks by Hydro-Quebec on the progress made in cutting public sector wages "shows that the government of Quebec finds itself in the same situation as certain Third World countries where the World Bank sits in the finance minister's chair."

Rank-and-file PQ members

The PQ's increasingly clear role as a transmission belt of Canadian and U.S. imperialist financial pressures against Quebec is a bitter

disappointment to tens of thousands of rank-and-file workers and PQ members, who had expected the PQ to govern the province in their interests and to carry out a struggle for Quebec's independence.

The bitterness displayed in placards and chants directed at Lévesque by the demonstrators on January 29, many of whom had voted for the PQ in the last election, indicates disillusionment with the PQ's inability to build a society where Quebec's workers and farmers, not the international banks, control their destiny.

The hostility toward the PQ forced the cancellation of its national council meeting, which had been scheduled to take place in Quebec City at the same time as the January 29 mass demonstration. The party leadership acknowledged that dozens of resolutions condemning the government's attitude toward public service workers had been submitted before the cancellation.

PQ Vice-president Sylvain Simard also acknowledged that 60 percent of the PQ national council members are themselves public sector workers.

Quebec teachers federation leader Yvon Charbonneau, a key figure in the Common Front, reminded the audience at the January 29 rally that the Parti Québécois had risen to power on the shoulders of the powerful Québécois nationalist surge of the 1960s and the enormous growth in the trade union movement in the 1970s.

Despite this base, Charbonneau stated, the PQ government went "on its knees" to negotiate "our future" with the federal government in Ottawa while "refusing to negotiate with us."

Quebec's working class is going through an extremely difficult period of attacks. It is fighting back and learning lessons. On January 29, many handwritten placards reflected this process. They contained the words "I will remember this," a takeoff on Quebec's national slogan, found on its license plates, "I remember." □

Call for labor party gets good response

By Will Reissner

MONTREAL — Members of the Ligue Ouvrière Révolutionnaire (LOR — Revolutionary Workers League), the Canadian section of the Fourth International, reported a growing receptivity toward the idea of independent working-class political action at the January 29 Common Front demonstration in Quebec City.

LOR members sold 592 copies of their French-language newspaper *Lutte Ouvrière* at the demonstration. Another 108 were sold at strike picket lines and at factory gates. Most were sold on the basis of a front-page article discussing the importance to workers of the question: who runs the government?

Pointing to the recent record of the Parti Québécois government, the *Lutte Ouvrière* article noted that "the great hopes born out of the

PQ's victory in 1976 have turned to disappointment and anger due to this government's anti-working-class actions."

The article quotes extensively from a publication of the National Trade Union Confederation (CSN), which described the PQ government as bankrupt in its defense both of Quebec's rights as an oppressed nation and in the economic and social arenas. In recent months the CSN has repeatedly called for the present government's resignation.

But, say authors Joe Young and Samantha Young, "calling for the resignation of the PQ government today, without proposing a working-class alternative, simply leaves the road open to the Quebec Liberal Party, the direct agent of the federal government in Quebec."

The CSN's position — that it does not back

political parties, but rather fights governments that attack the workers — is like saying that we should protect our heads when the bosses wield their clubs, but we should not try to take their clubs away, *Lutte Ouvrière* argues.

"Why not put an end to this vicious cycle by launching our own political party, a party that would be controlled by us, the workers, with the goal of taking governmental power?" the socialists ask.

They cite a resolution by the Montreal transit union on organizing a discussion of a labor party in Quebec. They also quote Canadian Union of Postal Workers leader Jean-Claude Parrot, who stated, "I used to believe in confrontation with politicians. We must go

further than that. There must be a political party of workers that defends the whole laboring population."

The authors of the *Lutte Ouvrière* article add that the unions in the Common Front "represent a considerable force that would be completely capable of setting up the instrument we need, a workers party controlled by the unions."

The article concludes that "discussing the question of workers political action is one of

the most urgent tasks of the workers movement."

Lutte Ouvrière salespeople reported that they had many long and thoughtful discussions of this question with people at the Quebec City demonstration and on picket lines.

Normally *Lutte Ouvrière* is published every other week. But the LOR decided to publish a special issue during the Common Front struggle, which means that the newspaper will appear three weeks in a row. □

Unions in English Canada express solidarity

MONTREAL — In three previous Common Front struggles in Quebec since 1972, public service workers have set the pace that has been followed by other unions in Quebec itself and in English Canada. For that reason, there has been keen interest among many English Canadian unionists in the present Common Front struggle.

That interest was demonstrated in messages to the January 29 rally. Louis Laberge, head of the Quebec Labor Federation (FTQ), reported to demonstrators that dozens of messages of support had been received from unions in English Canada.

Robert White, Canadian director of the United Auto Workers, sent a telegram to Laberge pledging his solidarity. "Whether it is Chrysler workers in Windsor, municipal employees in Toronto, or hospital personnel in Montreal, we all confront the same insecurity, the same deterioration of our living standards, the same enemies," White explained.

Dennis McDermott, head of the 2.3 million-member Canadian Labor Congress (CLC), which represents 300,000 Quebec workers through the FTQ, threw his support behind the Common Front.

"I used to have sympathy toward that [Parti Québécois] government — it was a breath of change," McDermott stated. "But this is outrageous — a great shock to see the PQ out-Torying the Tories and out-Liberalizing the Liberals."

The CLC leader added that through its heavy-handed treatment of 325,000 public service workers, the Quebec government was encouraging private industry employers to seek concessions from their employees as well.

The January 29 rally also heard solidarity greetings from the 400 participants at an Ontario New Democratic Party Women's Committee Conference. The NDP is the labor party based on the trade unions in Canada.

Kampuchea

Rightist guerrillas dealt a blow

In response to attacks from Thailand

By Will Reissner

Vietnamese and Kampuchean troops dealt a heavy blow to rightist guerrillas in Kampuchea on January 31, occupying and burning a major guerrilla base located along Kampuchea's border with Thailand.

The Nong Chan camp, barely one mile from the Thai border, had been the base for 2,000 guerrillas of the Khmer People's National Liberation Front, a group headed by former Prime Minister Son Sann.

Most of the rightist guerrillas and their supporters were forced to retreat back across the border into Thailand, from which they have received their supplies for four years.

The victory at Nong Chan comes at a time when Thailand has been stepping up its direct military actions against Kampuchea and Laos.

In recent weeks, according to the Hanoi daily *Nhan Dan*, Thai military forces have repeatedly attacked Kampuchea and Laos from the air, sea, and land. On January 17, for example, Thai gunboats and shore batteries opened fire on the Laotian capital of Vientiane, which lies on the Mekong River, the boundary between the two countries. The shelling caused several casualties and extensive damage to a number of buildings in the Laotian capital.

The Thai attacks are part of the international campaign organized by Washington against the revolutions in Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea.

• On the diplomatic front, the legitimate government of Kampuchea has been denied its rightful seat in the United Nations. Instead, the butchers responsible for the deaths of several million Kampucheans under the Khmer Rouge regime have maintained the UN seat, even though they were driven from power four years ago by Kampuchean freedom fighters with decisive military aid from Vietnamese troops.

• Washington is carrying out an economic blockade against Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea, attempting to prevent the three Indochinese countries from obtaining desperately needed loans, food and development

aid, and trade agreements.

• Along with the diplomatic and economic war against the revolutions in Indochina, Washington is keeping up the military pressure. Attacks by Thai forces are accompanied by support for counterrevolutionary guerrillas based along the Kampuchean border. Arms for the rightist forces are funneled through the Thai military, which also provides air and naval cover for their operations.

Under the cover of "relief work," agencies financed by Washington have provided food, housing, supplies, and medical care for the counterrevolutionary guerrillas based in Thailand.

Thailand has also been the jumping-off point for U.S.-organized raids against Laos. Using the hoax that there could still be U.S. servicemen held prisoner in Southeast Asia, the Pentagon has sent raiding parties into Laos.

The Pentagon claims that one such raid, mounted in 1981, was motivated by an aerial reconnaissance photograph taken over Laos that purported to show figures casting longer shadows than would be expected from Asians. Needless to say, no U.S. prisoners were discovered.

More recently, on November 27 a raiding party made up of four Americans under the command of former U.S. Special Forces Lt. Col. James Gritz, and more than a dozen Laotian mercenaries, crossed the Mekong River from Thailand into Laos. There they engaged in a gun battle with members of the Laotian people's militia.

In the fight, three of the raiders were wounded and one was killed. One American, Dominic Zappone, was captured and later released. □

You won't miss a single issue if you subscribe.

New stage in revolutionary war

U.S. congressman admits, 'Our side is not winning'

By Fred Murphy

The wounding of a U.S. military adviser in El Salvador February 2 underscored the growing tendency toward more direct intervention by Washington against the people of that country.

The admission by the U.S. embassy in San Salvador that the wounded GI was on an "operational" rather than a training mission bolstered earlier charges by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) that U.S. advisers are now directing government counterinsurgency drives in the field.

It also came as the Reagan administration announced plans to more than triple military aid to El Salvador — from \$26.3 million to \$86.3 million — in the current fiscal year. And, as the February 6 *Washington Post* reported, "senior administration officials also are pressing for an increase in U.S. military planners and trainers, particularly at the departmental and brigade levels."

U.S. intervention in El Salvador is being stepped up because a new stage has opened in the war against the dictatorship there. Since mid-October, the FMLN has conducted a sustained military offensive. In the course of this drive, the rebels have:

- Withstood repeated efforts by up to 6,000 government troops to dislodge them from towns and villages they have occupied in the northern halves of Chalatenango, Morazán, and La Unión provinces.

- Extended their military operations to the economically key province of Usulután. Between January 31 and February 2 they were able to seize and hold the province's second-largest city, Berlín, where they organized political rallies of up to 1,500 townspeople.

- Attacked military posts in the Salvadoran capital itself, including the main San Carlos infantry barracks. These blows point to a more active role by the urban masses in the military struggle.

- Gained control over lengthy portions of the country's major highways, thus cutting off the eastern half of the country to land transport.

- Captured large quantities of ammunition, military gear, and weapons, including heavy artillery pieces.

- Taken prisoner hundreds of soldiers and officers, a sure sign of growing demoralization inside the dictatorship's army. Up to 10 percent of these prisoners are reported to be joining the revolutionary units; the rest are released promptly to the International Red Cross.

Civilian population bombed

The January 31 victory by 500 rebels at Ber-

lín in Usulután Province highlighted the fact that the U.S.-backed regime is losing the war and is growing desperate.

With a population of 35,000, Berlín is the largest city yet taken by the rebels. It lies in El Salvador's most important cotton-growing region. The regime's forces had been depleted there when thousands of troops were dispatched to Morazán for a futile attack on one of the FMLN's major strongholds.

As the rebel fighters advanced on Berlín from surrounding towns they had already taken, U.S.-supplied jets with U.S.-trained pilots launched rockets and bombs into the center of the city. Five square blocks were laid waste and dozens of civilians were killed — a scene reminiscent of the tyrant Somoza's tactics during his final days in Nicaragua.

The aim of the bombardment was to terrorize and disperse the civilian population of Berlín. Nonetheless, hundreds turned out to welcome the rebel columns and attend the FMLN's rallies. When the FMLN units withdrew in an orderly fashion February 2, they were accompanied by hundreds of the city's youth who had signed up to fight the dictatorship.

The rebel victories are straining further the already shaky regime in San Salvador. Rival factions in the Constituent Assembly have begun trading death threats and have launched armed attacks on each other's deputies and headquarters. Defense Minister Gen. José Guillermo García is under increasing fire for his failure to register gains against the FMLN.

'Certification is a farce'

The FMLN's victories have begun to be felt in Washington, the source of the Salvadoran dictatorship's funds, weaponry, and guidance.

After President Reagan officially certified that "the government of El Salvador has made progress" in curbing human-rights violations, State Department Latin America chief Thomas Enders faced sharp questioning from congressional committees.

"Certification is a farce," Senator Christopher Dodd told Enders February 2. "We've spent \$748 million there in three years, we're approaching one billion dollars, and what do we have to show for it?"

"It should be clear to anyone who reads the newspapers that our side is not winning this war," Rep. Michael Barnes told Enders at another hearing two days later. "Our current policy . . . makes a guerrilla victory almost inevitable."

Enders scarcely attempted to defend his own policy, and instead blamed his underlings in the Salvadoran high command.

"The army failed to react vigorously with

the right tactics in October and November," Enders told the Senate panel. "They . . . have left themselves open to attack in the central province of Usulután."

Pentagon aide Nestor Sanchez complained to the Senators that because of congressional criticism, the Salvadoran rulers were "confused, totally confused." Washington's credibility, Sanchez lamented, "is very, very low."

On February 4, 81 members of the U.S. House of Representatives introduced a bill to declare Reagan's certification "null and void" and suspend military aid to El Salvador.

The recriminations in Congress not only reflect the blows U.S. imperialism is taking in El Salvador. Equally important, they point up the rising sentiment among U.S. working people against further intervention in Central America. This is being fueled not only by exposures of the CIA's role in anti-Nicaraguan terror and the brutality of the Salvadoran regime, but also by the social crisis inside the United States and the beginnings of a labor fightback against the employers' attacks.

Working-class opposition to intervention has begun to make an impact even at the highest levels of the U.S. trade-union bureaucracy. Three top officers of AFL-CIO unions — Douglas Fraser of the Auto Workers, William Winpisinger of the Machinists, and Jack Sheinkman of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers — dispatched a letter to Sen. Charles Percy January 19 calling for "the termination of all military aid to El Salvador."

Sheinkman's signature was particularly noteworthy in that the bureaucracy of his union has long been among the staunchest defenders of a reactionary, proimperialist foreign policy line in the AFL-CIO.

The Reagan administration has its back to the wall in El Salvador. Preventing a rebel victory will require greatly stepped-up intervention, even including the use of U.S. GIs. But the political price the U.S. rulers would have to pay for such a step is rising rapidly. Meanwhile, as Congressman Barnes complained, "the administration has no policy except to keep the war going."

The revolutionary forces are determined to meet this challenge. "We did not start this war, it was forced on us by the oligarchy and the armed forces," Commander Fermán Cienfuegos said in late January.

Nonetheless, Cienfuegos went on, "the tide of war is quickly rising in our favor. Even the enormous amounts of North American armaments sent to El Salvador's elected dictators cannot contain us." □

Intercontinental Press

will give you a week by week analysis of the most important world events.

Subscribe now!

410 West Street
New York, N.Y. 10014

Organizing international solidarity

Interview with leader of World Front

The following interview with Andrés Fábregas, executive secretary of the World Front in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador, was obtained in Mexico City following the demonstration of 20,000 people there called by the World Front on January 22. The interview was obtained in Spanish by Andrea González, correspondent for the U.S. socialist biweekly *Perspectiva Mundial*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Question. What is the World Front in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador?

Answer. In order to explain what the World Front is, we need to refer back to some earlier developments that led up to its formation.

In 1980, when the Revolutionary Coordinating Committee of the Masses (CRM) was set up in El Salvador as the first body that unified all the mass organizations in struggle against the dictatorship, there was also a qualitative step forward in the solidarity movement. It was now possible to point to the CRM as a united vanguard of the Salvadoran people.

In mid-1981, an international gathering of solidarity committees was held in Mexico City. A great many committees from throughout the world sent representatives to this meeting. I think some 42 committees responded to the call.

Committees even came from as far away as Australia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, and France, as well as the United States. Practically all the countries in Latin America sent delegations.

That First International Gathering of Committees in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador was a success. From that meeting came the idea of setting up a broader coordinating committee for international solidarity.

Moreover, the fact that the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) had been founded was very important. Later, the alliance between the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) and the FMLN also inspired solidarity throughout the world.

The first international gathering ratified the principles of solidarity work. These are: unity, unconditional solidarity, and recognition of the FMLN-FDR as not only the vanguard of the process, but also the sole legitimate representative of the Salvadoran people. These principles were widely publicized, and coordinated actions were held for the first time. All this brought together social and political elements that pointed toward something still more ambitious.

The composition of those who attended the

first international gathering was quite important. There were the active solidarity forces, but there were also many political currents, a really broad spectrum. From that experience we became convinced that it was indeed possible to do solidarity work in a broad way, that this principle should be encouraged and respected by the solidarity movement. This means that everyone belongs in the movement of solidarity so long as they accept these basic political principles: that the FMLN-FDR is the sole legitimate representative of the Salvadoran people, unconditional solidarity, and united solidarity.

By 1982 the situation had matured. The FMLN-FDR refined a plan that was broadly discussed with solidarity committees. The plan was to build a world front in solidarity with the Salvadoran people that could bring together

the worldwide movement of *the peoples* with the Salvadoran people. This is quite important: the World Front is not a formation for doing diplomatic work, but rather the body that brings together the solidarity of the peoples at the international level.

The conclusion we came to was that specialized organizations of solidarity with the Salvadoran people were not the only ones that should be in this front, but rather that it should be as broad as possible. It should include all political forces that were willing to back unconditionally the struggle of the people of El Salvador. In that sense, this is an experience that is practically unheard of in solidarity movements with peoples in struggle.

At the end of March 1982, the assembly to launch the World Front in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador was held in Mexico. A

Worldwide actions on January 22

Thousands of Cubans marched January 22 in response to the call of the World Front in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador for international actions against U.S. intervention.

The demonstrations were held all over Cuba, municipality by municipality, organized through the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs). The CDRs are the fundamental organizational units of the revolution, carrying out tasks ranging from defense to serving, for example, as the base of the militias and People's Power — the system of workers democracy in Cuba.

The demonstrations involved people from all the Cuban mass organizations. In addition, people from Africa, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Puerto Rico who are living in Cuba joined in, bearing their own national flags.

Demonstrators chanted, "We are armed in order to conquer peace" and carried banners and placards with slogans supporting the people of El Salvador and Nicaragua. They stood in the rain to hear representatives of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) speak.

The Cubans were not the only ones who came out to show their solidarity with the people of El Salvador. In Hanoi, there was a demonstration of Vietnamese January 22, and there were rallies the same day in Nicaragua's major cities.

Actions were also organized in Panama,

Venezuela, Peru, France, Holland, Switzerland, and Spain. In Australia, 10,000 marched. Protests also took place in Tijuana, Mexico; and San Ysidro, California, at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Twenty thousand marched in Mexico City. The action, organized by the Mexican Committee in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador, was an example of the kind of broad movement that can be built against U.S. intervention.

Participating in the Mexico City action were contingents from unions representing nuclear power workers, telephone workers, teachers, and construction workers. There were neighborhood contingents, high school contingents, and contingents of women's coalitions. Hondurans and Guatemalans joined the demonstration, as well as North Americans living in Mexico City.

Demonstrators saw themselves as defending not only the people of El Salvador, but Cuba and Nicaragua as well. Among the most popular chants were "If Nicaragua won, El Salvador will win!"; "Cuba sí, yanqui no!"; and "Che, we remember: one, two, three Vietnams!"

These and other chants interrupted speakers from El Salvador, Mexico, and Nicaragua when they explained that the imperialist threat anywhere in the region threatens the entire region.

— Andrea González

great many political forces and organizations attended. It was really an impressive gathering.

There were all kinds of forces represented. Without fear of exaggerating, I would say that all the political forces active today on the international scene were represented there. From that assembly came the principles that govern the World Front that I spoke of earlier.

So what is the World Front?

It is a coordinating body for the solidarity movement at the international level. It is not the political leadership of the solidarity movement, because that is in the hands of the compañeros of the FMLN-FDR themselves. But it is a very important body for coordinating all solidarity work.

It is a body where all the political forces that are willing to lend solidarity to the people of El Salvador come together.

It is a body that fully respects the autonomy of each force that belongs to it. But at the same time, it is the expression of the fact that it is indeed possible for the solidarity movement to be united, that international coordination of this movement is possible.

To make such coordination effective, a team of people was set up with the responsibility to coordinate the work of the World Front. This team has two levels — first, the broad team formed by the Standing Bureau of the World Front. This is made up of 18 figures who have been very much involved in solidarity with the Salvadoran people. The other level is the Executive Secretariat, which has the concrete task of ensuring that the decisions made by the World Front are respected and that the front's plans of action are carried out. It also sees that the news bulletin of the World Front comes out more or less regularly.

Gains in solidarity movement

Q. What gains have been made by the international solidarity movement?

A. The World Front is itself a gain for the solidarity movement.

If one looks at the composition of the World Front, one is surprised by the breadth of the forces that belong to it — forces that in other situations have never come to agreement. Forces that are even antagonistic come together in the World Front as an expression of the will of the peoples to oppose the imperialist system.

Religious figures come together in the World Front — not just Catholics but a broad range of religions. All kinds of political forces from all existing spectrums come together in the front (except for fascist forces and pro-imperialist forces, of course). Revolutionary forces of all kinds come together with democratic forces in the World Front. That is a big step forward.

Second, the existence of the World Front has made it possible to move forward in coordinating pressure on governments to get them to take a position against U.S. imperialist aggression.

Inside the United States, the World Front is becoming known. We are convinced that a broad range of forces in the United States will join the World Front and build it once they know what it is and what its aims are.

In Mexico, the World Front has been fundamental for revitalizing the solidarity movement. The Mexican Committee in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador, which is the most important such body in Mexico, together with the National Standing Forum in Solidarity With the Salvadoran Revolution, belong to the World Front. These organizations have been strengthened since the formation of the World Front.

Finally, a clear example of the potential of the World Front and of the progress it represents, is the level of coordination that was achieved in the January 22 demonstrations that just took place. There were marches and rallies in many places throughout the world.

One other important thing was demonstrated — the international solidarity movement has great sympathy for the people of the United States. We think this was expressed concretely in the border caravan organized by the Mexican Committee in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador in response to the call of the World Front. The caravan met up at the border with groups of people from the United States, and a joint rally was held.

For us, that is very important. It should be clear to the American people that the solidarity movement has great sympathy for their struggles. And that is another step forward, because it has educated our peoples on how to differentiate clearly the imperialist, criminal, and genocidal attitude of Reagan from the traditions of struggle of the American people. It has been made clear internationally that just as our own peoples are the victims of aggression, so too are the American people under attack.

U.S. working people

Q. How does the World Front see the solidarity offered by the people of the United States?

A. At the international level, our peoples have understood that there is a tradition of struggle among the American people. In this sense the World Front values highly the solidarity of U.S. working people.

Why do we place such value on this solidarity? Because we know that they are the strategic force that can change the conditions of life of the American people. As the strategic force in U.S. society, the labor movement needs to be well informed about imperialist aggression against other peoples.

With all its social power, it is the U.S. labor movement that can hold back and halt once and for all the imperialist aggression. It is the strategic force in solidarity work. I would dare say that this is the case not only for the American people but also on a world scale. They are the strategic force. The American workers are the ones who have to understand that their strength, their intelligence, their sweat, their

labor, must not be used to kill, to commit these tremendous genocidal attacks that the Salvadoran government commits with the arms provided by Reagan's government.

The U.S. labor movement, once it understands this — and we are certain that it will understand — will again rise up as it did against the war in Vietnam. We are certain that it will be the strategic force that, together with the struggle of the Salvadoran people, will stop intervention.

And if we add to this the world spectrum of solidarity, we think the prospects are very good.

The U.S. working class is quite complex — it comes from a variety of ethnic origins and is also made up of oppressed minorities. The working class cannot be reduced simply to the workers in the factories; it permeates the entire structure of U.S. society.

Chicanos, Blacks, Indians

The specially oppressed groups are also strategic in solidarity work. We believe that the World Front has many possibilities for growth there as well — among groups of Chicanos, among Black groups, among the North American Indians who have been deprived of their land and cultural identity. This cannot be reduced simply to the Chicanos, the Indians, and the Latin Americans, but must extend to the whole range of oppressed groups, of the poor in the United States — that is where the vitality of the solidarity of the U.S. people comes from.

We are certain that those are the strategic sectors for solidarity work, and that the World Front must be built there as well. This powerful force for the transformation of American society should be included in solidarity work.

Q. Could you say something about the campaign for the University of El Salvador?

A. The National University of El Salvador is an institution that has been systematically attacked by the dictatorship, not only in recent times, but during its entire history. And that is for one reason — the university has always been linked to the struggles of the people.

Today the university is closed down physically. The campaign has the aim of showing that although the university's facilities are closed, the university itself is alive. This big international campaign consists in enrolling people in the University of El Salvador. Those who enroll pay tuition in solidarity with it. This allows the university to stay alive.

The university authorities have also made agreements with many other universities. For example, there is an agreement with the Autonomous Metropolitan University of Mexico whereby Salvadoran students can take courses there as though they were studying at the University of El Salvador.

Workers movement in El Salvador

Q. Could you talk a little about the work-

ers' movement in El Salvador?

A. To keep this brief but at the same time not skip an essential reference point, I am going to mention only one fundamental date, 1932. In that year a popular insurrection by the workers and peasants took place in El Salvador. There was a horrible massacre. Around 30,000 persons died, repressed by a fierce dictatorship that was truly blind to history.

The blow was tremendous, but from that time on the Salvadoran people began to seek new forms of organization. Little by little, in the 1940s, the Salvadoran workers' movement began to reorganize. Trade-union activity was revitalized, until by the 1960s the workers' movement in El Salvador had fully recovered.

There now exists, for example, the Trade-Union Unity Committee (CUS), which brings together the entire workers' movement and which has had a fundamental role in supporting the struggle of the Salvadoran people. The CUS is one of the pillars of this struggle. There is also the National Federation of Salvadoran Workers (FENASTRAS), which is the union federation at the national level. It has also had an outstanding role. It is no accident that at this moment many of the leaders of FENASTRAS are in jail.

What is the crime of these jailed compañeros, according to the dictatorship? Above all, to have led the big national strikes in 1980 that served as a point of support for both the armed and democratic movements of El Salvador. These were extraordinary high points in the struggle of the Salvadoran people.

It is not true to say that the workers' movement is now in retreat. On the contrary, there is a revitalization of the workers' movement, which is being expressed in demands raised by the trade unions against the regime of President Alvaro Magaña, as well as in the repression with which the regime has responded, and also in the really massive participation of the workers' movement in all forms of popular struggle.

The fact that the FMLN can operate securely in San Salvador [the capital] is a demonstration of the support the workers' movement gives the struggle of the Salvadoran people.

I think that at this moment the workers' movement in El Salvador is playing a really strategic role, and I would even say that in a very short time, as the victory draws near, the workers' movement is going to be decisive. The workers' organizations have not been destroyed. The unions still exist, the coordinating bodies among the national unions still exist, and there is day-to-day political activity by the workers at the side of the Salvadoran people.

Campaigns of World Front

Q. What are the campaigns of the World Front?

A. At present we have an ongoing campaign of mass mobilization. In this sense the World Front sees the plans in each country as part of its own solidarity work. As for mass

mobilization, two essential dates were set for the world movement. One already took place, January 22. We are now working to put together another big mobilization for next October 10, which is the anniversary of the founding of the FMLN-FDR. Between these two dates a great many mass actions are going to be held as part of the World Front's programs, but these will not necessarily be coordinated at the international level, because it is difficult to get all countries to coincide.

There is also an ongoing press campaign. We have a bulletin that we are working to improve. This bulletin ought to reflect the broad potential for solidarity with the Salvadoran people. We are working to increase its circulation and to make it better known internationally.

Third, there are the financial campaigns, which have two aims: to support the work of the World Front; and to enable the World Front to aid the struggle of the Salvadoran people.

Together with all this the World Front has

various meetings set for its coordinating committee to evaluate the work and suggest new ideas.

There will be a meeting of the Executive Secretariat of the World Front soon to discuss the problems of solidarity work and how to bring greater pressure on governments by the peoples to get them to express clearly — without hedging — their stance against imperialist aggression. We think that it is also possible to hold a meeting of the Standing Bureau around the middle of the year, as well as to see when to hold another assembly of the entire World Front.

That will depend greatly on the state of the struggle inside El Salvador, which is now quite favorable. The Salvadoran army is practically in retreat, the FMLN is advancing, the Salvadoran people are gaining a higher level of consciousness, and in that sense the World Front is also making gains, as the expression of the worldwide movement in solidarity with the people of El Salvador. □

Special offer for readers outside North America

Save 20% on a 1-year subscription
Offer good only until March 1, 1983

If you don't have a subscription to *Intercontinental Press*, you're missing an invaluable source of news and analysis of events in the international class struggle and developments and discussions in the revolutionary movement.

During the next two months, you can remedy that at a bargain rate for an airmail subscription. We are offering a 20% discount, on 1-year subscriptions only, to our readers outside North America, where our subscription rates are highest.

PLUS, you will receive, free, the special 240-page issue of *IP* containing major resolutions and reports from the 1979 World Congress of the Fourth International.

Until March 1 only, airmail subscription rates for readers outside North America will be:

Europe and South America \$28 (regularly \$35)
Central America and Caribbean \$20 (regularly \$25)
Africa and Asia \$36 (regularly \$45)

YES! I want an airmail subscription. Enclosed is:

- \$28 (Europe and South America) \$20 (Central America and Caribbean) \$36 (Africa and Asia)
 Send me a free copy of the 1979 World Congress documents.

Name _____

Address _____

City/Postal Code/Country _____

Payment must be made in U.S. dollars.

Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014

50,000 protest U.S. threat

As Yankee troops begin Honduran maneuvers

By Jane Harris

MANAGUA — Some 50,000 people raising clenched fists massed at the U.S. embassy here February 2 to protest the "Big Pine" military maneuvers by U.S. and Honduran troops just 15 kilometers north of Nicaragua's border.

U.S. officials said that the troop exercise will consist of Honduran soldiers attempting to repel an attack by the "Red Army." This is a thinly veiled cover for the actual point of the maneuvers: a dress rehearsal invasion of Nicaragua. The provocative exercises involve 1,600 U.S. soldiers, and 4,000 Honduran soldiers.

The demonstration here was in support of the Nicaraguan revolution and of revolutionaries all over Latin America.

It was led by the mothers of some of the 50,000 people who gave their lives in the revolution to overthrow U.S.-backed dictator Anastasio Somoza. The demonstrators shouted:

"Nicaragua is a triumph that is consolidating!"

"El Salvador, a revolution on the march!"

"Guatemala, a people that will not surrender!"

"Central America, a region that will conquer imperialism!"

"Latin America, the tomb of imperialism!"

The size of the demonstration — held after work — was particularly significant given the thousands of MANAGUANS who have left the city to pick cotton or coffee, Nicaragua's two most important cash crops.

The turnout was also in response to recent attacks by Honduran troops against the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador.

In El Salvador, on January 28, Radio Venceremos denounced the bombing of several rebel-controlled regions of Morazan Province by two Honduran A-37 jets and the entry of Honduran troops through the eastern border town of El Tafite.

On Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast January 25, counterrevolutionaries attacked Cabo Viejo, situated only 20 kilometers from where the maneuvers are taking place. Although Sandinista soldiers beat back the attack, killing 29 *contras*, four Sandinista soldiers were gunned down in the fight.

The same day, in the northern province of Jinotega, *contras* ambushed an intercity bus, killing five Nicaraguan civilians — among them an eight-year-old girl and an 80-year-old man.

Four days later, in the north-central province of Matagalpa, eight unarmed agricultural cooperative members were gunned down as

they began the day's labor. Three cooperative members were kidnapped and a fourth wounded.

When "exercises" are completed on the Nicaraguan-Honduran border, the U.S. Army will move southward with further maneuvers, known as "Kindle Liberty," in the Panama Canal Zone February 11-17. These maneuvers will involve 4,500 soldiers from the U.S. Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps as well as

500 Panamanian Guardsmen.

Nicaraguans, surrounded by hostile governments on its borders, are expected to turn out in large numbers next week for the opening of the new session of militia practice.

Around the country, revolutionary night-watch by neighborhood block associations has increased dramatically.

And with good reason.

As the revolution deepens, Nicaraguans have more to defend. Two signs of this came last week. The first was the announcement from the Agrarian Reform Institute that 350,000 more acres of land would be given to the *campesinos* in 1983. Second was the introduction of a housing bill that will eventually eliminate the landlord system and, in tens of thousands of cases, eliminate rent all together. □

Heavy cost of war on border

Report from Nueva Segovia Province

By Michael Baumann

NICARAGUAN-HONDURAN BORDER — The Sandinista guard post at El Ciprés in Nueva Segovia Province is located within a few yards of the Honduran border.

Normally border defense units are not placed this close to enemy territory.

Here there was no choice. Literally within inches of the other side of the border are hundreds of yards of trenches dug late last year by units of *contras*, as the some 5,000 counter-revolutionary Nicaraguans based in Honduras are called here. Most of the *contras* are ex-National Guardsmen.

In six days of heavy fighting in late December and early January, Sandinista troops forced the *contras* to retreat further back into

Honduras. They also captured a large supply of weapons and ammunition, much of it of U.S. manufacture.

The trenches are a graphic reminder that the warmakers in Washington who arm and train the *contras* have no intention of halting this war until either they or the Sandinista revolution are defeated.

This was underscored when joint U.S.-Honduran military maneuvers, originally scheduled for December, but postponed because of Reagan's visit to Latin America, were rescheduled for the first week of February.

The largest military exercises ever to be carried out in Central America, they are taking place less than 10 miles north of the border.

They are "yet another provocation," said the

Revolution gains despite war

MANAGUA — Year-end speeches by Sandinista leaders pulled no punches. 1983, if anything, will be harder than 1982, Commander Humberto Ortega told a memorial meeting for the year's war victims December 22.

"But if they attack us and we continue to suffer casualties, it is because we are advancing and deepening our process."

Despite the cost of mobilizing for defense, the revolution was still able to provide modest but significant gains for the country's majority of workers and peasants.

Polio was wiped out in 1982. Not a single case was reported during the entire year, in contrast to the 80 to 100 cases that were normal under Somoza. Inoculation of the great majority of the country's children, carried out by neighborhood defense committees,

did the trick.

Six thousand peasant families received land this year, as the revolution continued to carry out the agrarian reform decrees announced as soon as it came to power. Some 134,000 manzanas (more than 350 square miles) of land was turned over — 80 percent to peasant cooperatives and 20 percent to individual families.

Throughout the country, 52,000 homes for the first time gained access to running water, and another 13,000 were hooked up to electricity.

As modest as these figures may seem, they dwarf any comparable gains in the rest of Central America. They take place in the midst of a full-scale war. And they take place in the region's second-poorest country. Only a revolution could accomplish them.

— M.B.

Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry in a statement January 20, aimed at "intimidating Nicaragua" and "providing support and supplies to the criminal Somozaist ex-National Guardsmen based in Honduras."

Politically, said Nicaraguan junta member Sergio Ramírez, the maneuvers represent U.S. imperialism's response to "the defeat it received at the nonaligned conference." At that conference, held in Managua in mid-January, delegations representing 116 governments and national liberation organizations unanimously approved a statement condemning U.S. attacks on Nicaragua.

The maneuvers are just one part of Washington's war against Nicaragua. In the northern border area, particularly here in the rugged, mountainous province of Nueva Segovia, peasants are being killed and kidnapped every day.

"The counterrevolutionaries usually avoid confrontations with our troops," Captain Rodrigo González, chief of the Nueva Segovia Border Guard, recently told a group of foreign journalists.

"Instead they kidnap peasants, take them to Honduras where they force them to join their ranks, and murder coffee pickers and technicians in an effort to sabotage production."

In Nueva Segovia, in the area of the northern city of Jalapa alone, he said, 120 peasants have been kidnapped in the last three months. More than 500 families in this thinly populated area have been forced to flee their farms and seek shelter with friends and relatives in the city.

Since October of last year, Nueva Segovia has been one of the main targets of contra attacks.

The heaviest fighting took place in December, when six contra units, totaling an estimated 2,000 men, tried to take over and occupy the northern sector of this province.

Their aim was to install a "provisional government" on Christmas Eve, followed by an immediate appeal for U.S. recognition and military aid.

Mobilization of the Sandinista army and militia units prevented the contras from establishing the toehold they had hoped for, and the counterrevolutionaries involved in the operation were driven back across the border by New Year's Day.

In January the contras reverted to hit-and-run operations in the area, aimed at spreading terror and disrupting the coffee harvest.

On New Year's Day 62 peasants, mostly women and children, were kidnapped at a small border village northeast of Jalapa. A few who later escaped from Honduras reported that several of the kidnapped had been brutally beaten.

On January 12 two agrarian reform technicians were killed and five wounded in an ambush on their vehicle, five miles south of the border.

On January 16 two children aged 14 and 15, part of a Sunday volunteer brigade to pick coffee, were killed near Jalapa. Fifteen other vol-



Barricade

Sandinista soldiers guarding coffee harvest also helped out with the work.

unteers were wounded. Contras armed with machine guns simply opened fire on their truck as they passed within half a mile of the border.

In Costa Rica, which borders Nicaragua on the south, exiles such as ex-Sandinista Edén Pastora and ex-ambassador to the United States Francisco Fiallos have their base. Camps have also been set up there for training counterrevolutionary troops.

Until recently the Costa Rican government has denied any knowledge of these camps. This lie was exposed by a visit to one of them in early January by Agence France-Presse correspondent Isabel Ovares.

Following a visit to Los Angeles, a camp located just 12 miles south of the border, Ovares reported:

"Costa Rican authorities assure that they had no information about the existence of this camp until the end of December. But in reality the presence of counterrevolutionaries there was well known in Quebrada Grande, the nearest village, and complaints about it had previously been made to the judicial authorities.

"This camp, used for infantry training, had been functioning for at least a year, said one of the anti-Sandinistas captured recently. He added that some 1,000 men had been trained there." □

Don't you know someone who should be reading *Intercontinental Press*?

Why not ask a friend, family member, or co-worker to subscribe?

For rates, see inside cover.

Schafik Jorge Handal article

In our issue of Nov. 15, 1982, we reprinted an article on revolutionary strategy in Latin America by Schafik Jorge Handal, the general secretary of the Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS). At that time we were not able to inform our readers of where the article was first published, but since then it has come to our attention that the article originally appeared in issue no. 4 of the PCS's theoretical journal, *Fundamentos y Perspectivas*, published in January 1982.

Political firing upheld in Israel

Israeli antiwar activist Asaf Adiv learned January 15 that officials of the Histadrut, which claims to be a labor union, had supported his firing from the Hamat steel plant in Tel Aviv. Adiv was fired from his job during the first month of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. A Histadrut committee, which met on his case December 26, charged that Adiv's firing was justified because he had prevented "any attempt to calm tempers among the workers."

In fact, Adiv, a member of the Israeli Revolutionary Communist League (Turn), was fired solely because of his antiwar activities. Factory bosses charged that he "held dialogues with Arab workers" and that "he continued to express his opposition to the war" while there was fighting in Lebanon.

Three women members of the RCL were also fired from an electrical factory for their opposition to the war.

Landlords and rents on way out

New housing law discussed throughout country

By Michael Baumann

MANAGUA — "My landlord is trying to throw me out," the young worker explained as TV cameras rolled.

"He can't do that," replied the minister of housing.

"Report the facts immediately to the nearest police station."

All evictions of tenants have been suspended for months in Nicaragua. In addition, all sales and transfers of homes have been frozen to prevent last-minute swindles.

The entire country is discussing the draft of a sweeping new law that will gradually abolish landlords and rents, converting all current tenants into homeowners.

Mass meetings discuss law

Five hundred people, mostly tenants, gathered in a church in the working-class Larreynaga neighborhood here January 28 to find out more about the new Law on Housing.

It was one of the weekly "de cara al pueblo" (loosely translated, "face the nation") sessions in which top government leaders come to a neighborhood, announced in advance, to discuss and answer any questions citizens want to raise.

At this nationally televised meeting, nearly 50 questions about how the new law would work were fielded by the minister of housing, the national chief of the Sandinista Police, and two of the three members of the Junta of National Reconstruction, Sergio Ramirez and Commander Daniel Ortega.

Dozens of other meetings are being held throughout the country to publicize and discuss the law.

Nicaragua, the second-poorest country in Central America, has a housing shortage of nearly 250,000 units, a number that grows by 30,000 each year.

A simple, straightforward measure, the new law takes the following emergency steps to alleviate the burden this shortage places on the poorest and most exploited:

- It declares housing a human right, not a commodity.
- It states that except in extraordinary circumstances, no one needs more than one house to live in.
- Therefore, with minimal exceptions, all rented housing will now become the property of the current tenants.
- Rent is converted into a form of mortgage payment, with full credit for all rent paid in the past.

The law assumes that a tenant who has paid 20 years of rent has fully compensated the landlord for the value of a house. Tenants who have paid rent that long or longer now simply become owners, receive title to the house and

land, and pay nothing further.

Tenants who have paid rent for less than 20 years will receive credit toward purchase for all past payments, and will make all future payments directly to the Ministry of Housing.

Disputes, where receipts are lacking, will be settled by taking testimony from neighbors and the local Sandinista Defense Committee.

Former landlords will be compensated until the 20-year limit is reached, but only to a maximum total of US\$1,000 a month. In special cases, such as retired persons with no other source of income, former landlords will receive a modest state pension.

Compensations for houses owned by corporations, syndicates, and landlords living outside the country will be made in the form of long-term bonds, whose exact nature has not yet been specified.

Those who become homeowners under the new law do so in the social context of the new Nicaragua that is being built.

They have the right to live in the house as long as they choose, but cannot sell it.

Nor can the house be passed on directly through inheritance. When one of the new homeowners dies, the house reverts to the government which, with the help of neighborhood committees, will decide what to do with it. Priority normally will go to the surviving spouse or to adult children with families of their own, but this is not automatic.

One of many measures

No one in the government claims the new law will by itself solve the housing crisis.

It is one step among many that the revolutionary government is taking to shift the burden of the war and the world economic crisis off the backs of those with the fewest economic resources.

In housing, in the three and a half years it has been in power, the Sandinista government has also:

- Built nearly 8,000 new houses (proportional to Nicaragua's population of 2.9 million, this is the largest government housing program in Central America);
- Given out, at no charge, 18,000 lots on prime urban real estate, for families to build their own houses;
- In an earlier law, limited annual rent to 5 percent of a house's assessed tax value (usually significantly lower than actual market value).

The new housing law, drafted by the revolutionary government and currently under discussion in the country's parliament, the Council of State, is sure to pass.

It has the overwhelming support of the country's workers and farmers, whose majority in the population is reflected in the revolu-

tionary parliament.

The law is so popular that the tiny minority who will be adversely affected by it — the big landlords — have been noticeably quiet.

Even the main capitalist mouthpiece, the reactionary Managua daily *La Prensa*, has felt compelled to run favorable articles about the measure.

Is law 'anti-Marxist'?

Oddly enough, the most vocal dissent so far has come from the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN), which identifies itself with the Soviet Communist Party.

The PSN, although it played virtually no role in the armed struggle that toppled the old regime, nonetheless views itself as the guardian of Marxist orthodoxy in all political matters.

On January 27, PSN delegate to the Council of State Domingo Sánchez used what was supposed to be strictly a question and information period to blast the draft law as a "petty-bourgeois" scheme reminiscent of the ideas of the 19th-century French petty-bourgeois socialist Pierre Proudhon, an opponent of Marx and Engels.

Two hundred fifty tenants who had come to the Council of State that day to hear the report and discussion broke into applause when the president of the Council of State, Commander Carlos Núñez, ruled Sanchez out of order.

Minister of Housing Miguel Ernesto Digil explained that the government just did not have the resources to nationalize housing and, in effect, itself become the country's landlord.

"We can't do it," Digil said.

"We can barely handle the work involved in administering this law."

The Ministry of Housing, he explained, had neither the money nor the personnel to administer and repair the country's existing housing while trying to add to it.

There is only one exception, he added. That is *cuarteras* — ramshackle urban slum dwellings that house the poorest of the country's poor.

These units, in which as many as 20 families share a single bathroom, will be nationalized under the new law so that they can be torn down as soon as possible. Those who live in these inhuman conditions will have priority as other housing opens up, and as more urban lots can be made available.

How many will benefit?

On the basis of the last census taken in Nicaragua, in 1971, it is conservatively estimated that more than 50,000 families will benefit under the new law.

The 1971 figures show that Nicaragua had 300,000 houses, of which more than 60,000 (20 percent) were occupied by tenants who paid rent. A 1980 spot check in 14 cities showed the figure for rental housing to be closer to 30 percent.

No one knows exactly *how many* people will benefit, but everybody knows *who* — the poor and working people who made this revolution in the first place. □

South Africans suffer setback

Resume direct rule in fight against SWAPO

By Ernest Harsch

The South African regime officially dissolved the four-year-old National Assembly in Namibia and resumed direct rule over the country on January 18.

Thus, the apartheid authorities have been forced to discard one of the masks they have been using to cover up their brutal occupation of Namibia. This move comes in the context of their inability to crush the Namibian independence struggle led by the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) or to undermine SWAPO's base of popular support.

The dissolution marked an admission of failure by the South African regime of the policy it has been following since the December 1978 South African-supervised elections in the territory. Those elections, which were boycotted by SWAPO and other parties, brought to nominal power a coalition of pro-South African and ethnically based political parties known as the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA). While most of the groups in the DTA were Black, it was headed by Dirk Mudge, a white rancher.

The white minority regime in Pretoria had hoped to boost the DTA as an alternative to SWAPO, which has been waging an armed struggle for Namibia's independence since the mid-1960s. Some tentative moves to prepare Namibia for the fiction of independence under a DTA regime had been made by the South African rulers.

Puppet show flops

But the DTA was so obviously a creature of Pretoria that it failed to win any real support among the Namibian people or to ease the international condemnations of South Africa for its continued occupation of the country.

The South African authorities publicly admitted the DTA's weakness and the wide influence of SWAPO.

In November, South African Prime Minister Pieter Botha ruled out the possibility of general elections in Namibia, citing the "unpreparedness" of the DTA. Around the same time, John Barratt, the director-general of the South African Institute of International Affairs, a prominent think-tank in Johannesburg, said that there was a "strong likelihood" of SWAPO winning any elections that were monitored by the United Nations.

Even under the current conditions — in which the authorities have numerous ways to intimidate voters — the DTA has fared badly. In local elections in the Damaraland region in December, the DTA was soundly trounced by the Damara Council, a local Damara political party. The results were particularly significant

since the Damara Council had adopted a resolution at its August 1982 congress that recognized SWAPO as "a vital link in the freedom struggle of Namibia" and called for the establishment of direct contacts with SWAPO's leadership. This stance was reaffirmed following its victory in the Damaraland elections.

U.S. cover for aggression

Unwilling to accept a SWAPO victory and unable to push forward a strong enough alternative that could help defend South Africa's long-range interests in the territory, the apartheid regime has been stalling for time in the numerous international negotiations on Namibia's future. It is doing so with the help of Washington.

Since the Reagan administration came into office in 1980, it has sought to tie any prospect of a South African withdrawal from Namibia to a withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. The Cuban forces in Angola originally arrived in 1975 — at the request of the Angolan government — to help drive out a massive South African invasion force. The Cubans remain there today because of the continued South African attacks against Angola.

By introducing the issue of Cuban troops into the Namibia negotiations, the White House has been trying to take the spotlight off South Africa's illegal occupation, and to provide a cover for its footdragging in those negotiations. To an extent, this specter of Cuban "aggression" has also been presented as a justification for the apartheid regime's murderous attacks on neighboring countries.

Angola has borne the brunt of these attacks, largely because of its provision of sanctuary and other assistance to Namibian freedom fighters and refugees. South African troops have repeatedly struck into southern Angola, burning villages, bombing roads and bridges, and massacring thousands of Angolan villagers and Namibian refugees.

According to the most recent Angolan estimates, these attacks have caused some \$10 billion worth of damages from the time of Angola's independence in 1975 until November 1982. And this figure does not include the costs of the continued South African occupation of Kunene Province in southern Angola and the dislocation of much of the population of the region.

Other countries in southern Africa have been targeted as well. South African-backed guerrilla forces are causing widespread disruption and damage in Mozambique. In December South African commando units attacked Maseru, the capital of Lesotho, and killed more than 40 South African refugees and Lesotho

citizens. South African economic pressures and military threats against Zimbabwe have been escalating recently.

Atrocities in Namibia

Pretoria's aggressive policies throughout the region closely mirror the ones that it is following inside Namibia itself.

More than 60,000 South African troops are based in the country. For years, they have been conducting a vicious campaign of counterinsurgency and intimidation in the heavily populated northern regions, where SWAPO's base of support is particularly strong. More than half of Namibia — comprising 80 percent of the country's population of more than 1 million — is officially considered a "war zone."

Tens of thousands of villagers along the northern border with Angola have been uprooted from their homes. South African troops and police routinely detain, torture, and kill suspected SWAPO activists and supporters. Troops have carried out massacres of villagers in an effort to intimidate the Namibian population as a whole.

Last year, Commandant A. Kleynhans, an officer at the South African army headquarters at Oshakati in northern Namibia, admitted to journalists, "We are not completely innocent. . . . We do get atrocities."

'Alarming vigor and organization'

Although the racist authorities have been able to inflict some serious blows against SWAPO and the Namibian population, they have not been able to stop the liberation struggle.

SWAPO freedom fighters have continued to carry out important military actions within Namibia. In April 1982, hundreds of SWAPO guerrillas, in the largest operation ever mounted by the organization, managed to get past the border patrols and conduct a series of daring attacks in various parts of northern Namibia.

In the wake of this fighting, the Johannesburg *Rand Daily Mail*, one of the main South African newspapers, complained that SWAPO "hardly gives the appearance of being a down-and-out organisation which is on the run, rather it displays alarming vigour and organisation. . . . Instead of being on the defensive, it is attacking."

Diamond miners strike

The strength of this liberation movement has also inspired Namibian working people to defy the government and employers. Despite harsh laws against strikes by Black workers, some 5,000 miners at the Consolidated Diamond Mines in Oranjemund downed their tools in October to protest the dismissal of two Black workers who had gotten into a fight with a white supervisor. It was one of the largest strikes in recent years.

Although the South African authorities try to claim that SWAPO's support is limited to the Ovambo people in the north (who in any case make up about half of the country's popu-

lation), there have been numerous expressions of its popularity among other language groups as well. At meetings in Kavango-speaking areas, or in Damaraland, or in Black townships like Katutura, Tseiblaagte, and Kuisebmond, participants often give clenched-fist salutes, which are recognized in Namibia as expressions of support for SWAPO.

The *Windhoek Observer*, one of the main white-run newspapers in Namibia, pointed to this phenomenon in its October 9, 1982, issue: "The Damara-speaking region belongs to Swapo. The Nama-speaking region belongs to Swapo. The Ovambo-speaking region belongs to Swapo. Bewildered, one starts to think what does not belong to Swapo?"

To try to keep the freedom fighters from coming to power — and thus striking a new

blow against imperialist interests throughout southern Africa — the apartheid regime is pressing ahead with its barbarous war against the Namibian people. At the same time, it is looking for new collaborationist forces to fill the role previously assigned to the DTA.

But its efforts to block the tide of liberation in Namibia are unlikely to be any more fruitful than previous ones.

On January 14, just a few days before Pretoria resumed direct rule over Namibia, SWAPO President Sam Nujoma declared that the liberation organization was planning to step up its activities within Namibia.

And the white authorities will find it difficult to stop SWAPO from doing so, since, as the *Windhoek Observer* concluded, "the country is rallying behind it in greater numbers day by day." □

Nigeria

Foreign workers scapegoated

Hypocritical imperialist reaction to expulsions

By Ernest Harsch

Like his mentors in Washington, London, Paris, and Bonn, Nigerian President Shehu Shagari is seeking to blame his country's economic and social difficulties on the presence of workers from other countries. Shagari has ordered the mass expulsion from Nigeria of several million immigrant workers.

By taking such drastic action, Shagari is hoping to divert attention and mass anger from the capitalist ruling class that he represents, and from the real source of Nigeria's economic slowdown and rising unemployment: the crisis of the world capitalist economic system and Nigeria's continued domination by imperialist powers.

The imperialist news media have given the expulsions prominent coverage, and have been sharp in their criticisms. "Grim and cruel" is how an editorial in the February 3 *New York Times* termed it. The January 29 *London Guardian* blasted the Nigerian government's "inhumanity, high-handedness and irresponsibility."

The expulsions certainly are cruel and inhuman. But the commentaries in the imperialist press are both implicitly racist and hypocritical.

Because the Nigerian government is Black, its repressive policies are thrown under a spotlight, while similar actions carried out daily by the white minority regime in South Africa have been given scant attention. Over the years, the apartheid regime has forcibly expelled more than 6 million Blacks from their homes and deported them to impoverished, drought-ridden rural reserves.

In a similar manner, these same newspapers have shut their eyes to the daily deportations of undocumented workers from the United

States, and the racist policies of the British and French governments designed to keep people of color out of their countries.

One editorial in the February 1 *Washington Post* at least displayed a measure of frankness. Nigeria, it claimed, had the "right to remove undocumented aliens; the United States ousts people in this class every day."

And that is the model that the Nigerian ruling class is imitating.

The scale of these expulsions, which were first ordered on January 17, is truly massive. It is estimated that between 2 million and 3 million people will soon be forced to leave Nigeria. About half are from Ghana, and the rest from other nearby countries.

The sudden flow of these unemployed workers into neighboring states will have a devastating impact on their economies, already enfeebled by the world capitalist economic crisis.

Ghana will feel this impact the most. The imperialists — and the Nigerian government as well — clearly hope that the influx of perhaps 1 million unemployed Ghanaians (in a country with a population of about 14 million) will cause difficulties for the government of Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings, which has carried out some anti-imperialist measures over the past year and sought to mobilize Ghana's working people.

These workers from Ghana, Togo, Benin, Niger, Cameroon, and other countries in the region were originally drawn to Nigeria by the prospect of more and better-paid jobs, at a time when Nigeria's economy was expanding thanks to its earnings from oil exports. The Nigerian government then found it convenient to ignore the fact that these workers did not have valid papers.

But because of Nigeria's dependence on oil

— which accounts for 95 percent of its export earnings — it has been hard hit by the glut of oil on the world market and the drop in its price. Over the past two years, Nigeria's oil revenues have fallen by more than half. This has led to disruptions throughout the economy and has contributed to rising unemployment.

As a result, social tensions within Nigeria have sharpened considerably.

The Shagari regime has faced more labor unrest than any government since the 1960s. In 1981, more than 350,000 workers went out on strike, and the following year dockworkers, teachers, water workers, and many others downed their tools to press for higher wages or to protest the policies of the government and the employers.

Under the political impact of the Iranian revolution, northern Nigeria, which is predominantly Muslim, has been swept by anti-imperialist ferment. Over the past two years there have been several uprisings in Kano, Kaduna, and other northern cities, led by Islamic religious groups. In putting down one such uprising in Kano in December 1980, Nigerian troops killed some 4,000 people, according to the government's own admission.

As a justification for the mass expulsion, the government is now charging that the unrest in the north was stirred up by immigrants from Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. Yet police officials have admitted that most of those involved were Nigerians.

What the Nigerian government and its backers in London and Washington are particularly afraid of is the potential for an anti-imperialist political movement among the Nigerian population. During a demonstration at Bayero University in Kano in early 1982 to commemorate the Iranian revolution, students called for a similar revolution in Nigeria and condemned the country's continued domination by imperialism, particularly U.S. imperialism.

"We are against the United States," the university's student union president said, "because the United States is the enemy of the black people. . . . If Iran and Libya can stand up to the United States, so can Nigeria."

To try to isolate such views, to try to politically confuse working people, the Shagari regime has now launched a major effort to turn foreign workers into scapegoats for all the country's social ills.

The ouster of these workers will certainly cause serious disruptions throughout much of West Africa. And the ruling class may be able to use it to whip up some chauvinist sentiments among Nigerians. But the mass expulsions cannot defuse the explosive tensions that are building up within Nigerian society. □

**This Publication
is available in Microform.**

University Microfilms International

300 North Zeeb Road, Dept. P.R., Ann Arbor, Mi. 48106

The fight against foreclosures

Workers and farmers demand relief from debt

[The following editorial appeared in the January 21 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

* * *

Growing numbers of working people face the threat that their home or farm will be placed on the auction block in the near future. This danger is justifiably generating widespread alarm. According to a recent Harris poll, 66 percent of a national sample reported fear of losing their homes or farms within a year for failure to meet mortgage payments. Farm foreclosures rose 240 percent in the past year, and home foreclosures are the highest in 30 years.

As unemployment continues to rise and interest rates remain high, workers and farmers find it more and more difficult to make their mortgage payments. And the banks, backed up by the government, will not accept nonpayment. They're in business to make profits.

In response to this worsening situation, protests are mounting across the country to halt mortgage foreclosures. Three actions, just in the first few days of 1983, serve to highlight the anger and determination of the protesters and the savage means that are used by government officials against them.

- On January 3, workers won a victory in the Pittsburgh area when the Allegheny County sheriff withdrew 42 owner-occupied homes from a list of properties that were to be sold to pay back taxes and past-due loan payments. Hard-hit by unemployment, workers in Pittsburgh face a foreclosure rate that has jumped 225 percent in the past five years.

Protests by unemployed workers in the area for the past three months forced this action by the sheriff. Demonstrations organized by the Mon Valley Unemployment Committee, which includes several steel and electrical workers unions, have been held at the last three monthly sheriff's sales in Pittsburgh to prevent foreclosures by banks. Under this pressure County Judge Nicholas Papadakis backed the sheriff's action. This success will give a boost to unemployed workers in scores of other cities.

- On January 4, 500 farmers converged on Springfield, Colorado, to protest the foreclosure of a farm on which the last two mortgage payments had not been met. The farmers were clubbed and tear gassed by a sheriff's posse and two were jailed. The American Agriculture Movement, which organized the action, has pledged to continue the fight to stop foreclosures.

- On January 6, 75 farmers drove their tractors into London, Ohio, and staged a 10-hour protest in front of the Production Credit Association (PCA).

They forced the PCA to agree to renegotiate a \$400,000 mortgage on a farm that was about to be foreclosed. The action was organized by the Family Farm Movement, a farmer's coalition that has been growing rapidly in Ohio.

These three actions show the growing reliance on direct action as workers and farmers get fed up with waiting for Democratic and Republican politicians to help them. They are taking matters into their own hands. And they are employing a wide range of ingenious tactics to try to prevent foreclosures and force the creditors to renegotiate new terms of payment and to get government bodies to declare a moratorium on mortgage foreclosures.

Among other tactics, farmers are conducting "penny auctions," a tactic from the 1930s. With this approach farmers do not actually stop a foreclosure sale. They only permit bids of a few pennies from the neighbors of the farmer being foreclosed. Whoever purchases it sells it back to its owner for a few cents.

The moneylenders and their flunkies, however, do not like these militant methods and this growing independence. One economist with the Federal Reserve Bank in Dallas complained to a *Newsweek* reporter that the penny

auction tactic used by farmers in many states is "very much a strong-arm technique" rooted in a growing "us-or-them mentality."

It is precisely this recognition by working people that there is an "us" and "them" that the exploiters fear. It registers an important step forward in advancing the kind of movement that will be necessary to put an end to the exploiting policies of the big banks and the monopolies.

And the "us" means both workers and working farmers, because as the mortgage protests show, we face a similar problem, and we confront the same "them."

This enemy has massive forces of repression, from the army to the local police, to back up its interests. It is the "strong-arm" measures used by the sheriff's posse in Colorado that show why workers and farmers need to organize a massive, independent, and fighting movement with the strength to defeat our oppressors.

The banks, government agencies, and the Democratic and Republican politicians argue that working people who fail to meet their mortgage payments no longer have a legal right to their homes and farms.

One of the legal beagles for the banks in Pittsburgh told the Associated Press that he thought the sheriff should not have backed down to the protesters. "Somebody has to pay," he exclaimed. "Nothing's for free these days. It's a distasteful part of anybody's life. It's not what I enjoy doing, but other people have rights in this and they have to be protected."

This gets to the heart of the matter: whose



Scott Breen/Militant

Farmers protest at debt auction in London, Ohio, January 14.

rights come first, those of the profiteers and the real estate sharks, or those of people who work for a living.

Unemployed workers *should* have the right to live in their homes without being evicted.

Farmers squeezed by monopolies and banks *should* have the right to work the land they need to make a living.

And these rights *are* higher than any prerogatives of the banks, the Federal Home Administration, or any other lending agency. All mortgage foreclosures of farms and owner-occupied homes should be immediately stopped. The struggle for immediate relief through a moratorium on all mortgage foreclosures demands the full support of all working people and their organizations. The labor movement ought to put its muscle behind this struggle.

An effective struggle for a moratorium can lay the basis for fighting for longer-run relief from the entire lending and mortgage policies that plague working people today.

A new government loan policy should be instituted that would:

- Guarantee low-interest loans for working farmers with priority to those who are the most needy.

- Not demand that family farmers or homeowners put up their land and machinery or owner-occupied homes as collateral in order to obtain loans. This is the principal mechanism by which their farms and homes are taken

away from them.

- Halt eviction of tenant farmers who cannot pay their rents.

- Stop real estate speculation and parasitic profiteering by outlawing the renting and selling of land. When a farm family, through its own voluntary decision, no longer wants to continue farming or to pass the farm on to the next generation, the farm should become public property.

All of these measures would effectively eliminate the parasitic rents and mortgages system that presently oppresses working farmers and urban workers. It would get rid of one of the means by which the banks hold farmers in bondage.

To carry through and enforce these measures, it will require a government that truly respects the rights and interests of workers and farmers. The present government run by the Democrats and Republicans has proven that it does not.

The struggle to institute measures in our interests, therefore, points to and is interconnected with the fight to replace the present government with one of workers and farmers. To carry through such a momentous transformation, militant workers and farmers fighting to defend their rights and a decent living will have to forge their own political party — a labor party based on the unions that will involve exploited farmers at all levels of its activities. □

Cuba

New economic plan approved

Modest goals for 1983 in face of world crisis

By Robert Mance

Confronted by the pressures of the world capitalist economic crisis, representatives of Cuba's legislative body, the National Assembly of People's Power, met in Havana December 27-28, 1982, to evaluate the results of Cuba's economic performance over the past year and to map out projections for 1983.

A separate report was devoted to the sugar industry, which remains one of the pillars of the Cuban economy. Diocles Torralbas, the sugar industry minister and a vice-president of the Council of Ministers, pointed to the steady growth in Cuba's sugar production: "... from a total of 5.6 million tons of sugar produced on the average during the best period under capitalism, which was 1951-55, we went to 5.8 million in 1966-70, and then to 7 million in 1976-80. The goal for the 1981-85 period is more than 8 million tons in the first three years and over 9 million in the last two."

The central economic report was presented by Humberto Pérez, president of the Central Planning Board, who outlined the results of the 1982 economic plan and projections for 1983. (Its text was published in the January 16 issue

of the English-language weekly *Granma*.)

When the 1982 plan was originally drawn up, Pérez stated, "we drew attention to the world economic situation in which we would carry out our activities this and following years. We drew attention to the high interest rates we were forced to pay for loans; the drastic effects of galloping inflation on the rising prices we were forced to pay for the products we import from the convertible currency area while the price of our main export product, sugar, was clearly depressed. To that we added that the United States had stepped up its policy of aggression and blockade against Cuba and was pressuring economic, trade and financial institutions in the Western countries in order to create more difficulties for our country."

Because of this, the 1982 plan projected "modest goals for our economic growth," Pérez said.

The 1982 plan envisaged a 2.5 percent growth in the Cuban economy, a goal that was achieved.

As planned, there was a slight decline in the consumption of meat, eggs, and milk in workers' dining rooms, schools, and other places. These reductions were offset to an extent by an

increase in the supply of root and garden vegetables. Footwear production was 5 percent less than in 1981.

However, the goals for the construction of new housing were overfulfilled, and the consumption of durable consumer goods — television sets, refrigerators, radios, and washing machines — increased by between 6 and 12 percent. Enrollment at all levels of the educational system increased, from daycare centers through universities. The number of hospital beds and doctors increased, and the infant mortality rate was reduced even further, from 18.5 per every 1,000 live births in 1981 to 17.4 in 1982.

Investments were 10 percent less than in 1981, as planned, but work productivity increased, so that by the end of 1982 it was 14 percent higher than in 1980. Economic efficiency was improved through various measures to use available resources more carefully.

Because of the worldwide capitalist crisis, the lack of confidence of banking institutions, and "the pressure put on some of them by the government and imperialist interests of the United States," Pérez explained, Cuba was unable to obtain sufficient loans to finance its development programs. Over the last quarter of 1981 and through all of 1982, this meant a reduction of \$750 million in Cuba's convertible currency fund.

As a result, Cuba has had to approach its foreign creditors to try to renegotiate part of its debt. Those negotiations are still under way.

The economic plan for 1983 again projects a growth rate of between 2 and 2.5 percent. Sugar production is expected to increase by 8 percent, the production of nickel by 12 percent, and coffee and citrus fruits by 21 percent. A 10 percent growth of exports is planned.

Although food consumption in workers' dining rooms and the distribution of clothes will be similar to 1982 levels — and there will be a further slight reduction in the distribution of shoes and underwear — a further increase in the number of hospital beds, doctors, and dentists is projected.

"This is, then," Pérez said, "a modest plan with certain restrictions. However, it enables us to keep up minimum growth levels in our economy in the midst of a world crisis that leads most capitalist and underdeveloped countries to have a zero growth rate. This Plan will allow us to maintain our consumption level and to continue — although at a slower pace — our modest development plans, mainly because they are being carried out with the collaboration of the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union. . . ."

"It is a difficult plan that depends as never before on the efforts of all of us. But we are certain that we will once again rise to the occasion, that we will again prove that there is no difficulty that our working and revolutionary people can't overcome, that no aggressive policy of imperialism can bring us to our knees no matter how many difficulties are involved, no matter how much sacrifice and effort is needed to defeat it." □

Amnesty victory spurs struggles

State of siege lifted, but death-squads remain

By Fred Murphy

A series of important victories for democratic rights have been scored in Colombia in recent months. The mass movement is on the upswing after four years of repression. Nonetheless, large sections of the countryside remain under army occupation, while death squads linked to the military have stepped up attacks and threats against trade unionists, political figures, and other opponents of the government.

State of siege lifted

In mid-June, outgoing President Julio César Turbay Ayala lifted the state of siege that had been in effect almost continuously since 1948. Turbay's Liberal Party had been decisively defeated in the May elections by the Conservatives, whose winning presidential candidate was Belisario Betancur.

Turbay also suspended the repressive Security Statute he had decreed upon taking office in 1978. That measure had militarized the judicial system; outlawed strikes, street demonstrations, and "subversive propaganda"; authorized mass dismissals of workers; allowed warrantless searches and detention without trial; and imposed censorship on radio and television broadcasts.

The Turbay regime had used the Security Statute to detain some 15,000 persons between 1978 and 1982. Of these, more than 250 were tried by military courts and sentenced to lengthy prison terms on charges of "subversion" or "rebellion." Many of these were members of guerrilla organizations.

Those detained under the Security Statute were often subjected to torture at the hands of the army. In an extensive report on Colombia issued in April 1980, Amnesty International reached the "unequivocal conclusion that political prisoners were systematically tortured by Colombian military personnel" at 33 detention centers around the country. It identified 50 different torture techniques, including beatings, burnings, use of drugs, electric shock, and psychological methods.

The lifting of the repressive decrees was the prelude to a broad, unconditional amnesty pushed through the Colombian congress with the support of the newly elected president. Betancur signed the amnesty law November 20, opening the way for the release of more than 500 political prisoners and the dropping of charges against some 1,500 more political fugitives. Excluded from the amnesty were those accused of "atrocious crimes," defined in the law as killings of defenseless persons off the field of battle.

Most of those covered by the amnesty were



President Belisario Betancur signs amnesty decree in November 1982.

from Colombia's various armed leftist organizations. Chief among these are the April 19 Movement (M-19) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).¹

Among the top M-19 leaders released from La Picota Prison in Bogotá on December 4 was Rosenberg Pabón Pabón, who directed

1. The M-19 originated as a left-wing splinter from the National People's Alliance (ANAPO), the party formed to back the presidential candidacy of ex-dictator Gen. Gustavo Rojas Pinilla. Rojas gained wide support through populist demagoguery and was defeated in the April 19, 1970, elections only through massive vote fraud engineered by the Liberals and Conservatives, the two traditional parties of the Colombian bourgeoisie.

The M-19 states that it is a "political-military organization" that seeks "to lead the masses on all levels of their economic, political, and military struggle." Its stated goals are democracy and national liberation, which it says will be gained through "the political and military defeat of the oligarchy and its army."

The FARC arose in the mid-1960s out of various guerrilla columns led by the Colombian Communist Party during the civil war of the 1950s. The FARC continues to have close ties to the CP, a pro-Moscow organization.

the 1980 seizure of the Dominican embassy. The M-19 had carried out that action to publicize Turbay's repression. Carlos Toledo Plata, an M-19 founder, was also released. Two other central M-19 leaders, Jaime Bateman Cayón and Iván Marino Ospina, who had never been captured, were amnestied as well. They remain with the M-19's guerrilla front in the southern province of Caquetá.

Human-rights campaign

One key to the democratic gains was the campaign waged by the Standing Committee for Defense of Human Rights (CPDH), an umbrella group that unites leftist political parties, trade unionists, academic and professional figures, and certain bourgeois politicians such as ex-Foreign Minister Alfredo Vásquez Carrizosa.

The CPDH arose out of the First National Forum for Defense of Human Rights, which drew 3,500 persons in Bogotá in April 1979. Similar gatherings were held periodically in subsequent years to expose and denounce the ongoing repression in the cities and countryside.

In November 1981, Turbay tried to co-opt this growing movement by appointing a so-called Peace Commission that included both top generals and figures from the CPDH. When the armed forces and Turbay rejected the commission's recommendations last May that the state of siege and Security Statute be lifted and a general amnesty be granted, all the civilian members resigned in protest.

Parallel to the CPDH's campaign for democratic rights were a series of political initiatives by the April 19 Movement.

In November 1980, the M-19 issued a statement hailing the human-rights movement and declaring its readiness to accept "a general amnesty, without humiliations, that could open a perspective of peace and democratic rights in the country." The M-19 also stated its willingness to challenge the two main bourgeois parties for popular support "in the public plazas, with the weapons of reason and intelligence." It even offered to present Commander Jaime Bateman as a candidate for president in the 1982 elections.

But the repression went on. In 1981, Turbay tried to carry out a phony amnesty by promising to drop charges against any guerrillas who turned themselves in. The M-19 responded by renewing its call for a real amnesty, demanding as well the lifting of the state of siege and Security Statute. It also called for negotiations "to discuss a cease-fire and the conditions for a just and democratic peace."

The Turbay regime's response was to intensify counterinsurgency operations in Caquetá Province, where the M-19 and the FARC had forged a military alliance.

In October 1981, more than 10,000 special troops poured into Caquetá, backed up by the air force.

Army terror in Caquetá

The situation in Caquetá since then has been described as follows in a study produced by the CPDH:

The access roads to population centers are cut off after the arrival of a military contingent. Residents are left at the mercy of the troops, who proceed to search all houses. . . . Food supplies are ransacked, crops destroyed, domestic animals killed, money, clothing and furniture and other personal belongings stolen, and in many cases the houses themselves are burnt to the ground.

The majority of the males, including children and old men, are arrested and maintained in cattle pastures tied up to trees, exposed to the elements, blindfolded and deprived of food and drink. . . .

If the men in the houses manage to hide, the women will be hung up and often raped, sometimes with the utmost sadism, to extract from them information as to where their husbands and sons are hiding.

In the jungle areas, bombs are dropped from helicopters to force the men to run out from their hiding places into the traps laid by the army.²

The army has also blockaded the region's main rivers, which are virtually the only means of transportation for food and other supplies. Peasants who wish to travel outside their own village must carry a safe-conduct pass issued by the army. Peasant youth have been pressed into so-called civilian counterinsurgency teams and forced to fabricate evidence against neighbors and to take part in the terror against the population.

Thousands of peasants have fled the rural areas of Caquetá for the provincial capital, Florencia, or for other parts of the country. The exodus is reminiscent of ones that followed similar campaigns of military brutality in the countryside in the 1950s and 1960s. Indeed, many of the Caquetá peasants first settled there in the 1950s after fleeing Colombia's 1947-57 civil war known as *La Violencia*.

Tradition of armed peasant struggle

In the course of that war, which began when a Conservative Party regime launched a reign of terror against its Liberal opponents, peasant guerrilla columns sprang up in many parts of the country. When the Liberal and Conservative leaders settled their differences and united behind the dictatorship of Gen. Gustavo Rojas Pinilla in 1953, many Liberal guerrillas fought on under more radical leadership, often from the Colombian Communist Party.

Through the mid-1960s these peasant armies

controlled large sections of the countryside, which came to be known as the "independent republics."

Out of the resistance to a particularly brutal army attempt in 1964 to suppress the Marquetalia republic in Tolima Province, the FARC was born. Later, the National Liberation Army (ELN), in which the rebel priest Camilo Torres played a brief but heroic role, was able to draw on the traditions of peasant armed resistance in Santander Province. More recently, the M-19 has established itself in this way in Caquetá, where the FARC has also been active.

The persistence of such rural rebelliousness has caused the Colombian ruling class to keep wide areas of the countryside under military occupation. Besides Caquetá, other occupied areas include parts of Santander, Magdalena, and Huila provinces. As a result, the demand that the government "demilitarize the countryside" remains at the forefront of the struggle for democratic rights in Colombia today.

Military buildup

The armed forces have made it clear that they totally reject this demand. In fact, military occupation is now being deepened in rural areas under the guise of "civic action" programs.

The army is also making preparations for a still wider war against the Colombian people. In September, Defense Minister Gen. Fer-



M-19 leader Jaime Bateman Cayón.

nando Landazábal Reyes presented to the congress a request for \$2.5 billion in arms purchases over the next two years — planes, helicopters, ships, submarines, radar systems, and armored vehicles.

U.S. military aid to Colombia jumped from less than \$1 million in 1980 and 1981 to \$12.5 million in 1982. This makes Colombia the recipient of the third-largest amount of U.S. military aid in Latin America, behind El Salvador and Honduras.

Death squads

While the army remains deployed in the countryside, repression continues in the cities despite the amnesty and the lifting of the state of siege. Much of the dirty work has been shifted onto clandestine paramilitary squads. Chief among these is the one that styles itself Death to Kidnappers (MAS). The MAS's own propaganda claims it was established in December 1981 by Colombia's biggest narcotics dealers and organized-crime lords. In fact, all the evidence points to the MAS being an instrument of the regime's own repressive forces.

A few MAS victims who have managed to escape have reported recognizing personnel from the military intelligence services at their places of captivity. MAS operations often involve the mobilization of dozens of armed men and vehicles that surround an entire neighborhood. The police never intervene to stop them. The MAS also has access to detailed information on its victims and the organizations to which they belong. And, according to a report by the U.S. human-rights group Americas Watch, "the victims of a number of M.A.S. killings were persons released by the police or another branch of the armed forces just minutes or hours previously."

The CPDH reports that in the MAS's first 11 months of existence it killed 96 persons, kidnapped 65, and tortured 46 others. These victims included 38 workers or trade-union leaders and 63 peasants.

No sooner had discussion of the draft amnesty law begun in August than the MAS began targeting former political prisoners. Three ex-prisoners who had been accused of M-19 membership were gunned down in August. In early December, an amnestied M-19 member, Fernando Zapata Suárez, was killed in Cali by MAS terrorists.

There is an ominous parallel here to the aftermath of a previous amnesty decreed in Colombia in 1953. In that year, according to the September-October *Informe Colombiano*, "6,500 men turned themselves in; the government, rather than keeping its promise of peace, utilized the information it had gained about the mass movement and its leadership as a result of its contact with those who surrendered and unleashed a new wave of terror and violence."

Another attempt to sabotage the current amnesty is being mounted openly by the military itself, with the frame-up on murder and kidnapping charges of several figures from groups that have never had anything to do with armed

2. This 70-page study, *Death and Torture in Caquetá*, has been translated into English and is available from the Committee for Human Rights in Colombia, P.O. Box 1214, Cathedral Station, New York, N.Y. 10025.

activity (see accompanying article).

M-19 vows to continue struggle

In this situation, with the army still deployed against the peasants and with continual death threats against rebel leaders, it is not surprising that the M-19 and other groups have rejected appeals to lay down their arms. The capitalist press and politicians had sought during the amnesty debate in congress to imply that M-19 had agreed to do so in exchange for the release of its prisoners. But this was by no means the case.

"It would be foolish to suppose that the guerrilla organizations are willing to pay for their legality at the price of sacrificing the people's interests and betraying a struggle whose main objective has been the restoration of democratic rights," the M-19 stated in the lead editorial of the September-October issue of its magazine, *Colombia*.

"No one in Colombia is about to surrender, and the amnesty will therefore not imply any turning in of weapons. These will remain as the legacy of a struggle that will conquer democracy and national self-determination, resorting to the means that reality demands."

Once the amnesty was signed, M-19 leader

Jaime Bateman sent a letter to President Betancur proposing a six-month truce between the army and the guerrillas, to be accompanied by a "great national dialogue" on the social and economic problems facing the Colombian people.

FARC leader Manuel Marulanda Vélez also called for talks, saying that "amnesty in and of itself does not mean much." Major changes in the country's structures were needed, Marulanda said, "so the people can feel their conditions of life are being improved in all respects."

Bateman elaborated on the M-19's proposals in a November interview with a journalist from the Bogotá newsweekly *Semana* who traveled to the group's guerrilla encampment in Caquetá.

"Let the Colombian army stop firing against the people," Bateman said. "Let the raids cease, the tortures cease, the safe-conduct passes for the peasants cease. . . . Let us start with that and then talk. Let us have a dialogue. But let the CTC, the UTC, the CSTC speak — they represent thousands of workers in this country. . . . Let the ANUC speak,

and the Indians."³

Taking up accusations that the M-19 was opposed to "peace" and responsible for "violence," Bateman continued:

The guerrillas are not the fundamental problem of the country. The country should not be fooled. The real problems of the country are the 1.5 million unemployed. . . . And why don't we talk of the 400 children who die each day in Colombia? Why? That is the economic violence no one wants to speak of. Let's talk about the people who have no voice. . . .

In Medellín, one of the most industrialized cities in the country, 70 percent of the population suffers malnutrition.

Turning to the situation in the countryside, Bateman warned:

Either the president knows and is fooling the country, or else the president doesn't know and the military is fooling the president. . . .

There is a climate of peace in the political circles,

3. CTC — Confederation of Colombian Workers; UTC — Union of Colombian Workers; CSTC — Trade-Union Confederation of Colombian Workers. These are the three largest Colombian labor federations.

ANUC — National Association of Tenant Farmers, the main Colombian peasant organization.

Army brass attempts to sabotage amnesty

Colombia's Military Institutes Brigade (BIM, the army's secret police) has launched a major frame-up designed to sabotage the recent amnesty and intimidate all opposition political currents.

One week after the amnesty went into effect, the body of kidnapping victim Gloria Lara de Echeverri was found in Bogotá, draped in a banner bearing the initials "ORP."

Lara, the director of a social welfare program under the Turbay regime and a prominent figure in the Liberal Party, had been kidnapped by unknown persons in June 1982. Her captors had never sought a ransom or raised any political demands. There had never been any response to her family's offer of a 4 million peso reward. And police investigators had never made known any clues or suspects in the case.

But within four weeks of the discovery of Lara's body, the Military Institutes Brigade announced that it had arrested her captors and obtained detailed confessions from them. This was despite the fact that since the lifting of the state of siege last June the military has had no legal authorization to intervene in such cases.

The same day as the BIM's announcement, the paramilitary death squad MAS made known that it had "condemned to death the kidnapers of Señora Lara de Echeverri."

The military charged that Lara had been killed by Juan Tadeo Espitia Supelano, and

that the whole kidnapping operation had been planned and led by Hernando Franco.

Espitia is a government worker and a trade-union activist. He was first seized by the MAS and then turned over to the military. Through torture, the BIM extracted a confession from Espitia, which he repudiated upon being brought before a civilian judge.

Franco is a professor of chemical engineering at the National University of Colombia and a well-known leader of the Colombia Labor Party (PTC), a legal political group with Maoist origins. He went into hiding upon being publicly accused by the military.

Both Franco and Espitia once belonged to a group known as the Revolutionary People's Organization (ORP), which ceased to exist in 1977. The ORP was also a public organization, with a well-known stance of opposition to individual terror. Several other ex-ORP members have been arrested in the Lara case, including some who are now prominent in New Liberalism, a spinoff from the Liberal Party.

Hernando Franco has issued an open letter to the Colombian press condemning the murder of Gloria Lara and rejecting all the BIM's charges. His letter points out that "events since the capture of Tadeo Espitia clearly show that there are no constitutional guarantees or respect for human rights. . . . Tadeo Espitia was kidnapped. The state security organs, including

the BIM, denied his capture. But two days later he was taken to his house with clear signs of having been tortured. His family has received anonymous threatening phone calls."

Franco declared that he was "ready to present myself to the civilian courts at the moment guarantees are given that they will act according to the law and the constitution."

A committee has been set up in Colombia to expose this frame-up and to defend the lives and constitutional rights of Espitia, Franco, and the other accused. It includes the Communist Party, the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR, Colombian section of the Fourth International), the Firms movement, the national teachers and public employees unions, and the CSTC labor federation.

Additionally, the Standing Committee for Defense of Human Rights (CPDH) has denounced the use of torture in the case and the attempt by the national prosecutor to cover this up, and has joined the defense committee in calling for the rights of the accused to be protected. The CPDH has also condemned the unconstitutional intervention of the military in the case.

Messages urging that the lives of the accused be protected and that their constitutional rights be guaranteed should be sent to Colombian embassies or to President Belisario Betancur, Palacio de Nariño, Bogotá, Colombia.

but the population continues living under terror. The population lives in fear, not knowing at what moment a military patrol will arrive and carry off their sons. . . .

Go to central Magdalena. In central Magdalena there is overwhelming persecution against the peasants. Go to Sinú and Antioquia. Or don't even go that far — go to the south of Bogotá, to the northwestern or southwestern barrios of Bogotá. Go see the poverty that people are living under there. See the terror the population lives under for lack of food, of health care, of the most elemental necessities. So I ask you, what peace, for God's sake?

Betancur rejected the M-19's call for a truce in a December 1 speech. "Peace is not negotiable," he declared. "The army will defend the new public order against anyone who attempts to threaten or disturb it."

Strikes, demonstrations, protests

In the months since the state of siege was lifted, popular mobilization has begun to take shape against the conditions Jaime Bateman described.

- Some 10,500 railroad workers across Colombia struck for 60 days in July and August.

- In the remote Sarare region of Arauca Province in August, some 20,000 peasants mobilized to blockade roads, the local airport and an oil-exploration project to back up demands for highway construction, credit, and other government services. The regime flew in 120 paratroopers in an attempt to halt the protest.

- In Bogotá, 20,000 persons attended the funeral on August 21 of a law professor murdered by the MAS. The procession turned into a protest demonstration demanding that the paramilitary squad be disbanded. Similar demonstrations took place that month in Cali and Yumbo in Valle Province to protest the MAS murders of recently released M-19 activists and trade-union leaders.

- Hospital workers, teachers, and other public employees went on strike in several provinces in August and September. Owing to the fiscal crises of local governments, many of these workers had not received their wages for periods of up to four months.

- Ten thousand longshoremen struck for two weeks at the beginning of September to demand wage increases. They shut down five of the country's main ports.

- A series of militant local general strikes swept Colombia in September and October. These occurred in more than two dozen towns and raised demands for rural electrification and potable water supplies, a rollback in recent electricity rate hikes, and other service improvements.

- More than 50,000 persons turned out in Bogotá on October 21 in a march for "bread, peace [an end to repression], and jobs." Trade-union and peasant leaders addressed the rally that followed, demanding an end to killings by the MAS, passage of the amnesty law, and demilitarization of the countryside.

- On January 19, 9,000 longshoremen again shut down Colombia's main ports in a 24-hour strike to demand wage increases of 35

percent. The regime dispatched troops to the ports of Cartagena, Barranquilla, and Santa Marta, and the workers warned they would resume the work stoppage if the army was not withdrawn.

Illusions in Betancur

While there has been a rise in struggles, illusions in Betancur persist among broad sections of the masses. His support for the amnesty law, his campaign promises of low-cost homes for workers with no down payment and other improvements in living standards, and his stance of relative independence toward Washington have gained Betancur considerable popular support. The new president has also fostered a populist image that contrasts sharply with the aristocratic haughtiness of recent Colombian rulers.

But the regime is not fundamentally different from the one that preceded it. Both are products of the two-party bourgeois monopoly

Colombian socialists hail amnesty

[The following statement on the amnesty law in Colombia was issued in November 1982 by the Executive Committee of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR), Colombian section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

The Amnesty Law is a democratic conquest of the Colombian people. It is the result of three years of struggle for human rights, for general amnesty, and political freedoms. As a result of this law, nearly 100 of our compatriots can return to their country, at least 300 political prisoners can be freed, and many individuals persecuted for their political opinions can benefit from it.

What is more, the law opens the way for a dialogue between the government and the insurgent guerrilla forces. This ought to begin with a truce between the sides in conflict, as the Peace Commission has called for, not to mention the withdrawal of the army from the countryside and the dismantling of the paramilitary organizations.

Certainly, this law contains some negative aspects, since its application is not total. It does not include a reform of the Penal Code, while allowing, in an absurd and unconstitutional fashion, the possibility for the government to reorganize the police and continue its civic-military campaigns. But the law nonetheless constitutes a step forward. We who have struggled for it as a revolutionary opposition recognize this fact.

The amnesty, it is clear, is only one important conquest of political democracy; it is not the social revolution. The revolution is not something to be demanded or negotiated. It is a mass process that must be organized and carried through.

What is important today is to make sure the amnesty is applied — through street mobilizations and through holding the Third Forum for

that has dominated Colombia since the Liberals and Conservatives divided up power in the late 1950s so as to better suppress the workers and peasants.

The limitations of the recent gains in democratic rights are becoming clearer, while Betancur's high-flown economic pledges are running up against the deepening crisis that besets all Latin America. On December 24, the president decreed an "economic emergency" and ordered hikes of 22 to 29 percent in gasoline, petroleum products, and urban transport. At present, his government is confronting the trade unions over an attempt to hold a scheduled raise in the minimum wage to a level below the inflation rate.

Having scored victories through the amnesty law and the lifting of the state of siege, the Colombian workers and peasants are now in a better position to wage the next round of struggles. □

Human Rights. It is necessary to struggle for the amnesty at the universities and in the workplaces; and to struggle as well for an economic emergency plan that would include the massive creation of jobs; for a democratic urban and agrarian reform; for real nationalizations of the big foreign and domestic monopolies; for effective political guarantees for the opposition so that it can participate in debates and socio-political processes; for respecting the lives of oppositionists, and for their permanent access to radio and television. A Statute on the Opposition is needed, along with the abolition of Article 28 of the national Constitution [which authorizes declaration of a state of siege].

We repeat that the overall solution of the country's crisis requires the convening of a people's constituent assembly. Such a framework would make possible the adoption of the necessary social, economic, and political solutions. □

Intercontinental Press. Subscribe Today.

YES! I want to subscribe. Enclosed is \$25 for a one-year subscription; \$12.50 for six months; \$6.25 for a three-month introductory subscription.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Postal Zone _____

See business information inside front cover for overseas rates.

Intercontinental Press
410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014

Revolution's next step forward

1983 named 'Year of Political and Academic Education'

By Sue Hagen

In his New Year's address to the nation on January 3, Prime Minister Maurice Bishop of Grenada declared 1983 a "Year of Political and Academic Education."

Bishop reviewed the performance of Grenada's economy over the past year and outlined plans that the People's Revolutionary Government will carry out in 1983.

"Our overall objective," Bishop declared, "is to make our country and Revolution a big popular school. . . . Let us put into full practice that great principle of the Revolution that education never stops — that it is the fundamental right of all of our people. . . ."

"Our party and government have set this priority because we firmly believe that it is on the realization of this basic task that our future will be assured.

"Without education, no genuine people's democracy can be built, since real democracy always assumes the informed, conscious, and educated participation of the people. Without education, there can be no real worker participation, no substantial increase in production and productivity . . . no true dignity, no genuine independence."

Progress in 1982

Despite the worsening world capitalist crisis, Bishop reported that Grenada had made progress toward its stated goals for 1982 — economic construction and greater worker participation in national planning.

Although the economies of the Caribbean region were marked by lack of growth and soaring unemployment, Grenada scored solid gains. Bishop cited an August 1982 World Bank report showing 9 percent cumulative economic growth over the three years following the March 1979 overthrow of dictator Eric Gairy. The report also showed a steep reduction in Grenada's unemployment rate — from 49 percent in 1979 to 14.2 percent.

These accomplishments came, Bishop noted, despite the "dismal legacy of economic backwardness, corruption, and mismanagement from the Gairy dictatorship, and the well-known list of imperialist attempts at economic sabotage."

In agriculture, the "motor of our economy," Bishop reported that the People's Revolutionary Government was spending 54 times more money for development than Gairy ever spent. Grenada continued to be plagued, however, by falling export revenues for nutmeg and cocoa.

To deal with the crisis, the government moved to put more land into production. With the aid of the Canadian government, it began a

cocoa rehabilitation project that will bring 10,000 acres under cultivation over eight years.

Increased food production

Grenada also moved toward greater crop diversification and new techniques to raise productivity, Bishop reported. To provide more local markets for farmers' crops and greater foreign exchange, the government stepped up agro-processing operations. This sector of the economy grew by 166 percent in 1982.

Bishop also cited:

- Construction of 39 miles of new farm roads and 7 miles of feeder roads on the small island;

- Introduction of 35 new tractors into production and the creation of a National Machinery Pool, to which all farmers will have access;

- The rebuilding of Mirabeau Farm School and the opening of four additional agricultural training schools, including one on the sister island of Carriacou.

Such measures, combined with greater cooperation among farmers, led to an increase in the production of food crops last year, Bishop announced. Sales by the Grenada Farms Corporation rose 58 percent. More than 1 million pounds of food was marketed — nearly double the 1981 figure.

As a result, Bishop reported, "we may soon become a nation that feeds itself." Food imports — which made up 40 percent of total imports in 1979 — are now down to 28 percent. He called this "a remarkable advance in the right direction," but stressed the need to further reduce the \$3 million a month spent on food imports.

Bishop also reported on a number of projects under way to improve Grenada's physical infrastructure:

- At the site of the new international airport at Point Salines, the first 5,000 feet of runway have been paved. Construction has begun on the terminal building and a fuel storage facility.

- 11,000 people are now receiving housing repair assistance to upgrade their homes. The new Sandino prefabricated housing plant, built with the aid of the Cuban government, will give Grenada the capacity to construct 500 houses a year.

- The \$10 million Eastern Main Road project moved ahead, as did the islandwide program of road reconstruction and repair.

- New reservoirs, replacement of the outmoded water system in the capital of St. George's, and other projects will increase pumping capacity to nearly 7 million gallons

of water a day, up from 4 million in 1979.

- New electrical generators will double present output. Villages on Carriacou and Petit Martinique received electricity for the first time.

- A new telephone system from the German Democratic Republic will double the number of lines and provide direct dialing to Grenada's sister islands.

Bishop also announced the allocation of \$400 million in the next three years for hotel construction and increased promotion for the tourist industry; and a \$7.1 million development program for the fishing industry.

Mass participation

The Grenadian people themselves played a major role in setting this course for the economy. Bishop underlined the point: "We stressed then and will continue to stress in 1983 that our working class and our working people must be more involved in the planning and decisions affecting their work, as well as the work itself."

In January 1982, delegates from the mass organizations began the process of formulating what Bishop called "a genuine people's budget." Zonal and workers parish councils in every corner of the island met to draw up proposals. The process culminated in a mass public meeting in March that produced "a virtual treasure chest of valuable and creative ideas coming out of the concrete experiences . . . of our people," Bishop reported.

This exercise in revolutionary people's democracy did not end with the presentation of the budget. The trade unions also elected new leaders and the National Women's Organization drew up a plan to advance the cause of women over the next three years.

International ties extended

Grenada also extended the hand of friendship and solidarity to other nations in 1982. Bishop reported that "the many visits made by the leaders of the Revolution to such countries as Bulgaria, Cuba, France, the German Democratic Republic, Libya, the Soviet Union, Venezuela, to name a few, helped to strengthen our relations of cooperation, and in all cases resulted in tangible, material benefits for our people."

Bishop recounted Grenada's successes at the Caribbean Community (Caricom) and Organization of East Caribbean States (OECS) conferences in November. Grenada foiled a U.S.-inspired slander campaign designed to discredit and isolate the revolutionary government. "Once again, we showed imperialism,

their agents and lackeys that the Revolution is firm and clear and must be respected," Bishop explained. Grenada thus won a victory "not only for us but for all the people of the Caribbean."

As it enters 1983, Grenada faces a new set of challenges as a result of its economic gains. Bishop projected that thousands of new jobs in agriculture and construction would open up in the next few years — enough to completely wipe out unemployment. The problem is a shortage of skilled workers.

"We have to recognize," Bishop stated, "that we cannot build a national economy; we cannot reclaim our economy from the grips of imperialism without a well-trained and highly skilled work force. This low training of our people is a major weakness and if we do not move fast to correct it, the progress of the Revolution will be held back. . . ."

"The educational system we inherited from colonialism and Gairysm was geared to exporting our people, not orientating them to tackle the social and economic developmental tasks facing the country."

The "Year of Political and Academic Education" is designed to correct that deficiency. But job training and basic skills will not be the only subjects on the curriculum.

Educating future leaders

Bishop emphasized that "our people must develop in the new year a mental grasp on the true nature of the international capitalist crisis which is holding back the progress of our Revolution and the development of all poor countries in the world. They must know the causes and origins of this crisis. They must see clearly the link between politics and economics, between imperialist exploitation and persistent poverty, between the mad buildup of arms by imperialism and the economic crisis.

"With their political consciousness raised and broadened, our people will better understand the necessity to join and to strengthen those mass organizations and trade unions that already exist.

"Political education will help to identify from the ranks of our working people the future leaders of the Revolution and it will help to prepare the working class to assume its historic role of transforming Grenada from backwardness and dependency to genuine economic independence."

To accomplish these goals, Bishop proposed the following:

- Worker education in all workplaces and political discussion forums in factories, fields, and communities.
- Expansion of the adult education program organized by the Centre for Popular Education (CPE). Thousands more will have the opportunity to earn CPE certificates, qualifying them for jobs and promotions.
- Greater involvement by the trade unions and mass organizations in CPE and worker education.
- More work-study programs for students



Jim Percy/Direct Action

PRIME MINISTER MAURICE BISHOP

and technical training seminars for working people.

- Consolidation of the National In-Service Teacher Education program.

All of these measures, Bishop explained, lay the basis for the establishment of universal secondary education, a more long-term goal of the revolution.

Job skills for women will be a top priority for the year, Bishop declared. Due to their his-

Bolivia and Cuba restore ties

Diplomatic relations between Cuba and Bolivia were restored on January 12, with the signing of an agreement in Managua between the foreign ministers of the two countries. Mario Velarde of Bolivia and Isidoro Malmierca of Cuba were in the Nicaraguan capital to attend a meeting of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries.

The Bolivian government broke diplomatic relations with Cuba in August 1964, following a meeting of the Organization of American States at which Washington pushed through a resolution calling on all countries in the hemisphere to cut ties with Havana.

The Bolivian Chamber of Deputies voted 67 to 22 on January 11 to approve the restoration of relations. The same day, U.S. ambassador to Bolivia Edwin Corr made a sudden visit to President Hernán Siles Zuazo, in a transparent but unsuccessful attempt to sabotage the move. The Bolivian news media later reported "evident disgust at the U.S. embassy over the surprising announcement by the Foreign Minis-

tronic oppression, women make up 4,000 of the 5,600 unemployed in Grenada — 71 percent. The majority are without primary school certificates or special skills.

To remedy the situation, the government will offer training programs for 2,500 new jobs in agriculture, 2,000 in construction, and 500 in tourism. Women will be encouraged to choose careers as soil scientists, agricultural economists, farm managers, electricians, carpenters, masons, architects, and engineers — as well as more traditional hotel and restaurant jobs.

In this way, the government will not only wipe out unemployment by creating productive work, but also reduce the inequality between women and men.

Solidarity with oppressed peoples

Bishop concluded his address by pledging Grenada's uncompromising struggle "for an end to all forms of oppression, exploitation, and military aggression against the peoples of the Caribbean, Latin America, and the entire world."

"Let us reaffirm our strongest solidarity," Bishop declared, "with the peoples of South Africa, Namibia, El Salvador, and Palestine, who are today struggling for their freedom, sovereignty, and human rights. Let us especially remember our brave sisters and brothers of Nicaragua, who are right now being subjected to such brutal, terrorist, and cowardly attacks by imperialism and their agents in Central America.

"Let us once more pledge our solidarity with all popular, democratic, anti-imperialist, progressive, revolutionary, and national liberation forces around the world struggling to bring about a more just and happy life for the vast majority of mankind." □

try."

The decision met with sharp criticism from former military ruler Gen. David Padilla, who termed it "a grave error by the executive branch." Padilla said "the measure was a surprise and has not been well received among the armed forces because Cuba violated Bolivian territory in 1967."

Padilla was referring to the efforts made by Ernesto "Che" Guevara and a number of Cuban revolutionaries to help launch a guerrilla struggle in Bolivia against the dictatorship of Gen. René Barrientos. In a speech to the Bolivian Senate last October, Cuban Vice-president Carlos Rafael Rodríguez noted that the young Cubans who shed their blood in Bolivia in 1967 had not done so "to interfere with the sovereign will of the Bolivian people," but rather "came to this country humbly to cooperate in the Bolivian spirit, because Bolívar and Sucre, the founders of Latin America, viewed solidarity as a necessity, an obligation and a duty." □

Army terror in countryside

20,000 in Lima demand withdrawal of troops

By Fred Murphy

"They roared into Pomacocha, a tiny hamlet wedged in a narrow valley 10,000 feet up in the Andes, at 4 in the morning," correspondent Barry Came reported from Peru in the February 7 issue of *Newsweek* magazine.

"Firing automatic rifles into the air, the mixed unit of Peruvian antiterrorist police, infantrymen and paratroopers quickly fanned out among the startled residents. Within minutes the raiders jerked 39 men from their beds and ordered them to lie face down in the local square. 'Where are the terrorists?' the soldiers demanded, pushing a booted foot on each suspect's neck. Three of the younger men replied with taunts. They were dragged to a nearby mud wall, bound with wire and summarily shot."

Such incidents are now common in the impoverished districts of Ayacucho, Apurímac, and Huancavelica provinces that were placed under martial law at the end of December by the regime of President Fernando Belaúnde Terry.

Belaúnde sent 2,000 soldiers, paratroopers, and marines into the southern Andes to back up the special counterinsurgency units known as *Sinchis* that had already been in the field for months. The president's orders called for "totally wiping out" a growing Maoist guerrilla movement known as the Communist Party of Peru "Sendero Luminoso" (SL — Shining Path).

Journalists murdered

The terror the regime's forces have brought to the Andean highlands is evoking growing protests in the capital. On February 2, some 20,000 persons demonstrated in Lima to demand "Sinchi out of Ayacucho!" and to denounce government complicity in the murders of eight Peruvian journalists in the Ayacuchan village of Uchuraccay on January 26.

The journalists had traveled to the remote area to try to verify reports that peasants there had killed seven SL guerrillas the week before. After the reporters were killed, some 50 of their colleagues converged on the site. In talking to the villagers they learned that the latter had indeed killed the journalists, but that this was because the *Sinchis* had "told us to kill any stranger that appeared," as one peasant in Uchuraccay put it.

The area is one where the SL had only recently begun to try to penetrate. *Sinchis* had been in the villages earlier, inciting fear by telling the peasants that the guerrillas would come and kidnap youth, rape women, and steal livestock.

The massacre of the journalists — five of whom were from opposition dailies — fol-

lowed a series of denunciations of the news media by President Belaúnde himself. In a January 24 news conference, he charged that a "concerted press campaign" was under way against Peru. He claimed to have "clippings from all over the world in which terrorism is glorified."

Belaúnde has striven to portray the conflict in Ayacucho and surrounding provinces as the work of bandits and criminal terrorists, but it is clear that something quite different is involved.

Several years ago, the small Maoist faction now known as Sendero Luminoso sent most of its cadres into the wretchedly poor peasant communities of the south-central Peruvian Andes. They learned to speak the Quechua Indian language and incorporated into their ideology the tradition of Indian rebellion against the Spanish conquistadors and their descendants.

The SL announced in May 1980 that it was launching armed struggle. In a January 1981 statement, it declared it was fighting for "the democratic revolution that will bring down imperialist domination, feudal oppression, bureaucratic-capitalist exploitation, and the decrepit ruling state."

A March 1982 document entitled "Let's Develop the Guerrilla War" set forth the SL's strategy as follows:

"Our war is nothing other than a peasant war led by the Party, which, making the countryside the armed bastion of the revolution . . . isolates the reactionaries and their imperialist master in the cities, where the proletariat and the popular masses . . . prepare conditions for the final assault."

SL gains support

The SL has been able to gain considerable support among the poorest sectors of the Indian peasantry of the highlands. Ayacucho and the neighboring provinces are the most impoverished areas of Peru. The land reform implemented under Gen. Juan Velasco's populist government in the early 1970s scarcely affected these districts, where the average annual income is \$60 a year and where illiteracy stands at 68 percent. Most communities lack electricity or running water, and there is but one doctor for every 18,000 inhabitants.

This desperate situation in an area traditionally ignored by most of the Peruvian left has provided fertile ground for the SL. Correspondent Jonathan Cavanagh reported in the January 4 *Wall Street Journal* that he had found "a widespread consensus in Ayacucho that the peasants have more reason to fear the police than the guerrillas." He cited the opinion of an

air force officer that "it would be difficult to eliminate the Shining Path because the peasants regard it as the only political force visibly concerned with improving their lot."

In September, between 10,000 and 15,000 persons gathered in the city of Ayacucho for the funeral of Edith Lagos, a young SL leader tortured and murdered by the *Sinchis*. General strikes called by the SL have shut down Ayacucho twice, on December 2 and January 8.

During the closing months of 1982, the SL was able to gain control of a number of towns and villages in the central part of Ayacucho Province after assassinating or driving out local officials and landlords. According to a dispatch from Ayacucho to the January 30-31 *Le Monde*, the guerrillas "then proceeded to redistribute the land according to the needs of each family and urged the peasants to reduce their production to what was strictly necessary for their own consumption."

Support for the SL is hardly universal among the region's peasant communities, however, especially in areas where land was distributed in the 1970s.

Cases have been reported of SL threats against local leaders of the Peruvian Peasants Federation (CCP). In one incident cited by longtime CCP leader Hugo Blanco, a community that rejected the SL's appeals had its tractor destroyed. Blanco told the Lima daily *La República* last November that "if it has been said that supporting Sendero means the CCP won't support a community, that is incorrect and unjust. But even so, this doesn't justify a threat to kill a social fighter, whoever he is."

The SL's early armed actions consisted mostly of dynamite bombings aimed at government installations. The regime's response was to decree an Antiterrorist Law and use the bombings as the pretext for jailing peasant and trade-union leaders.

Peasants' strike

Elsewhere in Peru, working people have been stepping up resistance in recent months to the regime's economic austerity policies and its attacks on social gains made under the populist military government that preceded it.

In late November, some 4 million peasants took part in an unprecedented nationwide strike and protest. The 48-hour action was jointly organized by the CCP, the National Agrarian Federation (CNA), and organizations of sugar, coffee, and cotton producers. The peasants were demanding improved prices, preferential credit, and a halt to government attempts to return land to the big landlords who had been expropriated by the military regime's agrarian reform.

In January, 5,000 miners conducted a 12-day strike against the Southern Peru Copper Co., an imperialist-owned concern. Thousands of miners and other workers demonstrated in Lima on January 20 and 27 to support that struggle. □