

# **INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS**

combined  
with **inprecor**

Vol. 21, No. 16

September 5, 1983

USA \$1.25

UK 50p

## **Intervention in Chad Also Aimed at Libya**

# **Reagan and Mitterrand — Partners in Imperialist Aggression**



French paratroopers in Ndjamena, Chad's capital.

***Speech by Fidel Castro***  
**'Our People are Prepared  
to Resist Aggression'**

***Central America***  
**U.S. Troops, Ships  
Deploy for War**

# U.S. troops and ships deploy for war in Central America

By Steve Wattenmaker

With U.S. troops and warships encircling Nicaragua and poised within striking distance of El Salvador, Washington is pushing ahead on several fronts toward full-scale military intervention in Central America.

- U.S. officials openly engineered the August 8 overthrow of Guatemalan dictator Efraín Ríos Montt, replacing him with a more obedient and less erratic member of Guatemala's military elite. (See article on page 473.) The coup was followed immediately by the announcement that Guatemala will begin to play a bigger role in Washington's region-wide war plans. Ríos Montt's rapid departure from the scene was also intended as a pointed message that others risk the same fate if they don't follow Washington's dictates.

- The U.S. Navy task force patrolling off Nicaragua has initiated a policy of harassing Soviet and Cuban merchant ships entering Central American waters. This policy is intended as a sharp reminder of the naval blockade Washington mounted against Cuba in 1962. Pentagon planners are preparing for a similar move against Nicaragua.

- Washington is driving forward its plans to turn Honduras into a permanent bastion of U.S. military power in Central America and a base for expanded aggression against Nicaragua.

## U.S. forces deploy in Honduras

The first units of what the Pentagon says will be a U.S. ground force of 5,500 troops began landing in Honduras in early August. They are to join 6,000 Honduran soldiers for an eight-month "training exercise," code-named Big Pine II.

Not only are the "maneuvers" a cover for massing thousands of U.S. combat troops on the Nicaraguan border, but they represent a further step in converting Honduras into a sprawling base for Washington's military operations.

U.S. Green Beret advisers are already training 2,400 Salvadoran army soldiers at a U.S.-constructed base near Puerto Castilla, on Honduras' Caribbean coast.

The Pentagon is also modernizing military airports in the country and planning to build several permanent U.S. military bases, including a \$150 million naval facility on the Caribbean coast.

According to a report in the August 2 *Washington Post*, U.S. combat troops arriving for Big Pine II are also being deployed along a narrow strip of Honduran territory that borders both Nicaragua and El Salvador. A military runway in the area is being lengthened to accommodate huge U.S. C-130 cargo planes.

Fewer than 20 miles west of where these U.S. forces are digging in is El Salvador's La Unión province, scene of a sweeping FMLN offensive this spring. The border post itself, El Amatillo, was destroyed in a guerrilla attack April 29.

Due east is the border with Nicaragua, an area where CIA-backed counterrevolutionaries have mounted their biggest attacks against the Sandinista revolution. Directly to the south is the Nicaraguan port of Corinto.

This strategic piece of land, where an initial U.S. force of up to 1,000 troops is assembling, graphically symbolizes U.S. imperialism's political goals in the region.

Behind the Reagan administration's rhetoric of providing a "security shield" to protect Central America from a "Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan axis" is Washington's determination to check the advancing socialist revolution in the Caribbean Basin and reassert its domination over the countries of the region.

Since throwing out U.S.-backed dictators within months of each other in 1979, the workers and small farmers in Nicaragua and the island of Grenada have made tremendous advances in land reform, health care, education, and other areas of social development.

Washington is determined to deny a similar victory to the liberation fighters in El Salvador, while doing everything it can to overturn the revolutions that have already triumphed.

## Soviet ship harassed

On August 16 the U.S. aircraft carrier *Coral Sea*, escorted by four other warships steamed into position off Nicaragua's Caribbean coast. At the same time another task force headed by the newly recommissioned battleship *New Jersey* moved toward Nicaragua's Pacific coast.

The *Coral Sea* carries more than 70 warplanes. The *New Jersey* is outfitted with 16-inch guns and two types of cruise missiles — one with a range of 1,500 miles. Top U.S. officials confirmed that Reagan had approved sending the 19-ship armada, ostensibly in Central American waters to join the "maneuvers," as preparation for a blockade of Nicaragua.

Defense Department officials further stated that the presence of U.S. warships in the area "is designed in part to signal Warsaw Pact nations and Cuba that sending war supplies to Nicaragua could get dangerous," the August 2 *Washington Post* also reported.

To drive the point home, a guided-missile destroyer and two other U.S. warships intercepted a Soviet freighter bound for the Nicaraguan post of Corinto July 30. The destroyer demanded that the captain of the *Alexander Ulyanov* identify his cargo and destination. A

Navy helicopter made flights over the freighter and the warships trailed the *Ulyanov* at a distance of 2,000 yards for more than two hours, breaking off only when the merchant ship entered Nicaragua's territorial waters.

The Soviet Union accused the U.S. government of "overt lawlessness" and described the incident as "provocative." The Kremlin warned in a formal protest that "the U.S. government should clearly realize that the full responsibility for possible consequences of such actions will rest entirely with the American side."

Senior officials in Washington responded to the incident by threatening that all Soviet commercial vessels entering Central American waters would be met by U.S. warships. Another Soviet freighter was reported "under surveillance by patrol planes from the aircraft carrier *Coral Sea*" off Nicaragua's Caribbean coast, according to the August 18 *New York Times*.

## Cracking the whip

As the Pentagon's military noose slips tighter around Central America, Washington meanwhile is strong-arming its friends in the region to line up more squarely behind its war preparations.

Earlier this year the Reagan administration signaled its unhappiness with Panama's public support for negotiations in El Salvador by trying to stir up trouble in Panama's National Guard.

At the end of February U.S. Ambassador Everett Briggs was caught making "courtesy calls" on local military commanders in Panama — without the knowledge of Gen. Rubén Darío Paredes, who was at that time head of Panama's National Guard.

Panama is a key link in Washington's military strategy in the region. Not only are more than 9,000 U.S. troops stationed in the Canal Zone, but the Pentagon has made increasing use of the U.S. Army School of the Americas there to train Salvadoran army soldiers. A pilot stationed at Howard Air Base in the Canal Zone told the May 24 *New York Times* that the base was "swarming" with U.S. aircraft hauling weapons and ammunition to El Salvador and Honduras.

Meanwhile, Washington was cracking the whip closer to home. Using its immense economic leverage in Mexico, the Reagan administration recently pressured the Mexican government to tighten up the credit it extends Nicaragua for the purchase of Mexican oil. Since Venezuela cut off crude oil shipments to Managua last September, Mexico has been Nicaragua's sole source of crude oil.

To underline its decision to demand immediate payment for oil shipments, the government of Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid held up oil shipments to Nicaragua in June and July. The shipments were released only after a high-level Nicaraguan delegation flew to Mexico City for urgent talks.

Mexican officials claimed that the credit squeeze was prompted, not by politics, but by

the economic crisis in Mexico. That claim is belied, however, by the fact that the oil Mexico sells Nicaragua is only a tiny fraction of the country's petroleum exports — 13,000 barrels a day compared to total daily exports of almost 1.5 million barrels.

"Although Mexican officials denied they were acting at the behest of the United States, their move against Nicaragua is something American diplomats in the region have been urging for some time," the *New York Times* reported August 13.

"We have pressured Mexico because we feel Nicaragua is not the type of Government which deserves this kind of financing," an American diplomat said. "It would not break our hearts to see them go bankrupt."

### Caught in the middle

The capitalist governments of Mexico and Panama — as in the rest of Latin America — are in complete sympathy with Washington's political goal of reversing the advance of the socialist revolution in Central America and the Caribbean. These governments are terrified that the revolutions in the region will spur the struggles of exploited workers and peasants in their own countries.

Nonetheless, such is the popular support for the revolutionary struggles of the workers and peasants in Central America, and the anger over U.S. imperialist intervention in the region, that the Mexican and Panamanian governments have thus far refused to publicly endorse Washington's escalating war drive.

On August 11, Panama's figurehead president, Ricardo de la Espriella, called on President Reagan to cancel the current military maneuvers in Honduras to "lessen the tension" in the region.

During a state visit to Mexico August 14, President Reagan was warned by Mexican President de la Madrid that stability in Central America is threatened "by a profound economic crisis and by shows of force which threaten to touch off a conflagration."

### Propaganda barrage

Washington's increasingly open course toward a new Vietnam in Central America has been met by deep opposition among working people in the United States. To counter this sentiment, the White House has mounted a major propaganda effort to portray the administration as a "peacemaker" in Central America, seeking only to protect the region from "troublemakers and bullies," as Reagan told a Veterans of Foreign Wars convention August 15.

At a meeting of Latino businessmen in Florida August 12, Reagan blasted Cuba as "the economic basket case of the hemisphere. . . . They have neither freedom nor material goods. The only thing abundant there today are slogans, weapons, repression, and shortages."

That lie was too big for even the *Washington Post* to let pass without comment. After reporting that part of Reagan's speech, the *Post's*

editors immediately inserted a bracketed disclaimer:

"According to the U.N. Economic Commission, however, Cuba was the only country in Latin America to show an increase in per capita income last year. Median individual income rose 4 percent, and Cuba's gross national product . . . increased 2.7 percent the U.N. study said."

In fact, the real peacemakers in Central America are the Sandinistas, the FMLN rebels, and other revolutionaries who have been

forced to fight, arms in hand, to throw off U.S. imperialist domination — a domination that for most of this century has held their countries in backwardness and misery.

"Nicaragua wants peace, but if it doesn't come, we are prepared for the worst," FSLN Commander Bayardo Arce said recently.

"We don't want the blood of any Hondurans to be shed; we don't want any North Americans dying on foreign beaches. But we won't get down on our knees, except to shoot." □

## — IN THIS ISSUE —

Closing news date: August 23, 1983

CHAD	468	U.S. and France — partners in aggression — by Ernest Harsch
	470	France's shameful intervention — by Christian Picquet
	471	What is Mitterrand after? — by Claude Gabriel
PHILIPPINES	472	Marcos murders opposition leader — by Fred Murphy
GUATEMALA	473	U.S. aids ouster of Rios Montt — by Fred Murphy
NICARAGUA	474	Standing firm in the north — by Jane Harris
	479	1985 election to advance workers' power — by Michael Baumann
CHILE	475	Protests challenge Pinochet — by Fred Murphy
SRI LANKA	476	Racist pogrom hurts all workers — by Will Reissner
CANADA	478	Unions rally against government — by Robert Simms
EAST TIMOR	488	Fretilin leader discusses cease-fire
SWEDEN	489	Organizing in the Volvo truck factory — Interview with Socialist Party leader
AUSTRALIA	493	How workers reacted to a company shutdown — by Robert Johnson
FRANCE	494	Police union holds congress — by Christian Picquet
	495	A more humane police force? — by Christian Picquet
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	496	Government cracks down on left — by Claudio Tavárez
STATEMENT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	477	Reactionary terror in Sri Lanka
DOCUMENTS	482	"Our people are prepared to resist aggression" — Speech by Fidel Castro

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 re-

**Editor:** Steve Clark.

**Contributing Editors:** Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, Ernest Mandel, George Novack.

**Managing Editor:** David Frankel.

**Editorial Staff:** Steve Craine, Ernest Harsch, Fred Murphy, Will Reissner, Steve Wattenmaker.

**Business Manager:** Sandi Sherman.

INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS (ISSN 0162-5594) is published every other Monday except the first in January and the third and fourth in August for \$25 per year by Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

flects 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.



# U.S., France — partners in aggression

## Imperialist intervention targets Libya

By Ernest Harsch

Washington and Paris have joined in a war against the peoples of North Africa.

Several thousand French troops — backed up by helicopters and jet bombers — have poured into Chad to prop up the beleaguered proimperialist regime of Hissène Habré, which is engaged in a civil war with a coalition of forces led by former President Goukouni Oueddei.

It is the largest French military intervention in Africa since the war against the Algerian independence struggle two decades ago.

At the same time, on August 10, the Reagan administration sent some 7,000 U.S. troops to Egypt, the Sudan, and other countries in the region for a series of military exercises, code-named Bright Star '83. The operations include armor and infantry maneuvers, mock air attacks by B-52 bombers, and the use of AWACS electronic surveillance planes. A U.S. naval fleet has been positioned just off the coast of Libya. It is the most massive show of U.S. military force in North Africa since World War II.

Officials in Washington have made little effort to conceal the fact that Bright Star '83 is intended as a threat to the Libyan regime of Muammar el-Qaddafi, which has provided assistance to Goukouni's forces in Chad.

Like the similarly massive U.S. military maneuvers being organized in Central America, Bright Star '83 is a stark reminder of Washington's readiness to launch new wars in defense of its imperialist political and economic interests around the world.

Although the French government of François Mitterrand has attempted to portray its intervention in Chad as a separate initiative from Washington's campaign against Libya, the military efforts of the two imperialist powers are clearly coordinated. Washington and Paris are carrying out a joint military intervention that is directed most immediately against the peoples of Libya and Chad, but also against all those in the region who dare to challenge continued imperialist domination and plunder of their countries.

### Lies about Libya

As a cover for this naked aggression, the Reagan administration, the Mitterrand government, and the various proimperialist regimes in the area have issued a barrage of wild propaganda aimed at portraying *Libya* as the aggressor, accusing Qaddafi of seeking to take over Chad.

"There is a continent-wide pattern of Libyan destabilization and Libyan terrorist activity," a

U.S. State Department official fumed August 3.

On August 5, White House spokesperson Larry Speakes declared, "The United States has a strong strategic interest in assuring that Qaddafi is not able to upset governments or to intervene militarily in other countries as is currently happening in Chad.

"If Libya or Libyan-supported forces were to gain control of Chad, close U.S. allies such as Egypt and Sudan would be seriously concerned about their own security."

At an August 11 news conference in Washington, Reagan sought to justify the sending of \$25 million in arms to the Habré regime by accusing Qaddafi of "adventuring" and "empire building."

The next day, at a debate on Chad in the United Nations Security Council, U.S. delegate Charles Lichenstein denounced "Qaddafi's brutal new colonialism."

While the French government's comments on Libya have not been as rabid as those emanating from Washington, it has also raised the specter of "Libyan aggression" as a justification for sending troops into Chad.

### The real aggressors

Such accusations turn reality on its head.

It is the imperialist powers — foremost among them Washington, Paris, and London — that have for decades imposed a system of brutal colonialism on the peoples of North Africa (and the rest of the continent as well). They have toppled governments, sought to crush popular rebellions, and constantly interfered in the daily political life of those countries.

Chad itself is a tragic example of this.

Colonized by the French for most of this century, it is one of the poorest countries on earth. Some 90 percent of its population of 4.5 million eke out a meager existence from primitive agriculture and stockraising. Barely 18 percent of the people can read or write.

In the semitropical south, which is inhabited mainly by the Sara people, the commercial economy is dominated by Coton-Tchad, a French monopoly that exports the cotton grown by the Sara peasants.

When the French granted formal independence to Chad in 1960, they imposed a neocolonial regime closely tied to Paris. Dominated by Sara politicians from the south, the regime also discriminated against the primarily Muslim and Arabic-speaking peoples of northern and central Chad.

In the mid-1960s, the peoples of the north began to rebel against the neocolonial regime.

They formed the Chad National Liberation Front (Frolinat) to wage their struggle. French troops intervened, and in a brutal war between 1968 and 1972 butchered thousands of Chadians.

Though Frolinat subsequently splintered into a number of factions, the insurgency continued. By the late 1970s the Chadian regime had been weakened to such an extent (despite more French military interventions) that a new coalition regime was established, incorporating most of the Frolinat factions. The largest faction was headed by Goukouni, who became president, and another was headed by Habré.

The French imperialists sought to keep the new government weak and divided by trying to play the rival political groupings off against each other.

### U.S. campaign against Qaddafi

Washington also began intervening more directly during this period. Although the U.S. imperialists did not have significant economic or strategic interests in Chad, they did see the conflict there as a means to pressure and isolate the Qaddafi regime, which had close ties with a number of the Frolinat factions, including Goukouni's.

The imperialists hate the Qaddafi government. It has repeatedly defied their dictates, denounced imperialist policies in the Middle East and Africa, and given political and material support to numerous revolutionary and national liberation movements around the world.

Several months after Reagan came into office, the White House adopted a secret plan to overthrow the Libyan regime. It included propaganda efforts to portray Qaddafi as a supporter of "international terrorism" and an escalation of sabotage and other terrorist actions within Libya by opponents of the government.

U.S. economic sanctions were imposed against Libya, and U.S. oil firms operating there were forced to pull out. This has meant a sharp drop in Libya's oil revenues, upon which many of its social and economic programs depend.

Direct military provocations were carried out as well. Like Bright Star '83, large-scale U.S. military maneuvers were carried out in neighboring Egypt. In August 1981, two Libyan planes were shot down by U.S. jet fighters over Libya's Gulf of Sidra. Military aid to nearby U.S.-backed regimes — like those in Egypt, the Sudan, Tunisia, and Morocco — was increased significantly.

The efforts to encircle Libya with a string of hostile governments extended to Chad as well. Washington was suspicious of Goukouni's ties with Libya, and sought to depose him in favor



of someone who would support imperialist policies and oppose Qaddafi. Habré emerged as Reagan's chosen candidate.

#### **CIA installs Habré**

Habré broke away from Goukouni's regime and launched an armed rebellion against it. The CIA funneled money to him, an amount that eventually reached \$10 million. The French imperialists also provided some assistance to Habré, as did the Egyptian and Sudanese regimes.

In late 1980, several thousand Libyan troops entered Chad at Goukouni's request and helped put down Habré's rebellion. U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig termed it a "grave turn of events."

Under U.S. and French pressure, however, Goukouni asked the Libyan troops to leave the following year. Once they had gone, Habré resumed his rebellion, and in June 1982 succeeded in taking Ndjamen, the Chadian capital, and proclaiming himself president. Habré immediately joined the anti-Libyan chorus.

There were similar imperialist efforts to eliminate other governments and political figures in the region that had friendly ties with Libya.

On June 19, 1983, rightist military forces in Ghana attempted to overthrow the government of Flight Lieut. Jerry Rawlings, which has received economic assistance from Libya. The coup attempt, which was launched from neighboring Togo, was soon crushed, in part thanks to the efforts of Ghana's officially sanctioned Workers Defence Committees. The aftermath of the coup attempt has seen a resurgence of anti-imperialist mobilizations in Ghana.

A similar coup attempt in Upper Volta likewise backfired. In May, a day after Mitterrand's top adviser on African affairs visited Upper Volta, Capt. Thomas Sankara, the prime minister, was deposed and arrested. He had angered the French authorities by arranging for Qaddafi to visit Upper Volta and by making a series of anti-imperialist speeches around the country.

Popular protests, however, forced the regime to release Sankara. He then regrouped his forces and seized power on August 5, pledging to rid Upper Volta of the "domination of foreigners and neo-colonialism." The imperialist news media promptly labeled it a "pro-Libyan coup."

In Chad as well, the forces around Goukouni refused to accept the imposition of the U.S.- and French-backed Habré regime.

Following his defeat in June 1982, Goukouni and his followers reorganized their forces. They drew together a broad coalition of political and military groups and set up the Transitional Government of National Union (GUNT) in the northern town of Bardaï. It includes representatives from most parts of the country and all the political factions that were part of the coalition government set up in 1979, with the exception of Habré's own group.

A political platform issued by the coalition

earlier this year focused on three points: "End Hissène Habré's dictatorial regime, which is in the pay of international imperialism; establish peace, security, and national unity; set up a popular, democratic, socialist, and progressive government."

A single opposition military force was established, the National Liberation Army (ANL). It launched major military operations in northern and central Chad, and has also carried out some actions in the south (against facilities of the French-owned Coton-Tchad). In June, the ANL forces began to make significant advances, taking a series of villages and towns in the north and east, including Faya-Largeau, Fada, Oum-Chalouba, and Kalait.

The Libyan regime recognizes the GUNT as the legitimate government of Chad, and has provided assistance to the ANL forces as part of its efforts to defend Libya from imperialist attack and prevent the country's encirclement by hostile proimperialist regimes. It has every right to provide such assistance.

While the actual extent of this Libyan aid is unclear, it has obviously been exaggerated by Habré and his imperialist backers in order to justify their intervention in Chad.

#### **Troops, jets, 'advisers'**

Alarmed by the advances of Goukouni's troops, the initial reaction in Paris and Washington was to rush additional military aid to Chad to bolster Habré's regime.

Mitterrand declared that "France will fulfill its commitments to Chad without reservation" and dispatched some 235 tons of arms, ammunition, rockets, and other military equipment. The Reagan administration pledged \$10 million in military aid.

Although the French government initially claimed that it had no intention of sending troops into Chad, it began to do so indirectly. By early August, some 150 French "advisers" and mercenaries had arrived in Ndjamen.

The U.S.-backed regime of Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaïre sent close to 2,000 troops to help counter the rebel advance.

With this external backing, Habré's troops managed to recapture all the major towns that had been taken by the ANL forces.

On August 10, however, the ANL launched a second offensive, and after several days of heavy fighting around Faya-Largeau again captured that strategic northern town.

In response, the imperialists escalated their intervention to massive proportions.

On the same day the offensive against Faya-Largeau began, Mitterrand announced that he was ordering 500 French paratroopers to Ndjamen. At first, the French authorities sought to play down the extent of this intervention, portraying the troops as "advisers" who would not engage in combat. But that pretense was soon dropped.

The number of French troops in Chad steadily increased. According to French officials, it may reach 3,000 by the end of the month. The troops are supported by helicopters, jet fighters, and bombers.

Gen. Jean Poli, a veteran of the war against the Algerian independence struggle, was assigned to Chad to command the French forces.

In addition to launching the Bright Star '83 military maneuvers, the Reagan administration boosted its military aid to Habré by an additional \$15 million and sent two AWACS electronic surveillance planes and eight F-15 jet fighters to neighboring Sudan in an effort to intimidate Libya. The planes were accompanied by 550 U.S. ground personnel. Three U.S. military "advisers" were sent to Chad itself.

Mobutu sent more Zaïrean troops, boosting the total number in Chad to 2,700.

#### **Mitterrand's smokescreen**

Through an article in the August 16 *Le Monde* summarizing his views, Mitterrand sought to deny the obvious fact that the French intervention in Chad was being coordinated with Washington.

According to the article, Mitterrand was "irritated at the constant attempts at pressure" on the part of the Reagan administration and did not want to become associated with U.S. efforts to "overthrow the regime of Colonel Qaddafi, toward whom he harbors neither hostility nor surliness." Mitterrand also claimed he first learned through the newspapers of the U.S. decision to send AWACS planes.

Such comments clearly reflect Mitterrand's concern over the political repercussions within France of his government's intervention in Chad. In his campaign for president, Mitterrand had frequently criticized the previous governments' military interventions in Africa. Apparently, Mitterrand hopes to distract attention from the reactionary character of his actions by pointing an accusing finger at Washington as the main culprit.

U.S. officials responded by denying they had pressured Mitterrand.

"What we are seeing here," one State Department official complained, "is another Mitterrand effort to have it both ways. He agrees with us on policy but tries to leave the impression publicly that he has distanced himself from us."

Another official from the State Department remarked, "I can't remember a crisis with better consultation between Paris and Washington."

Mitterrand has also claimed that the dispatch of troops to Chad is designed to "encourage" negotiations. Yet the French troops there are poised for combat. Hundreds have already been dispatched to the frontlines, joining Habré's forces in Abéché, Salal, Biltine, and Arada. They have been sent to Chad to fight, not to talk.

Despite this massive imperialist aggression, Goukouni's forces have pledged to continue their struggle against the Habré regime.

According to Mahamat Nour, the GUNT's minister of foreign affairs, "Foreign intervention in Chad is nothing new. We have already faced the [French] legionnaires before. Nothing can stop a people that is determined to win its freedom." □

# France's shameful intervention

*SP government acts against interests of the peoples*

By Christian Picquet

[The following article is reprinted from the July 8-14 issue of *Rouge*, weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

An escalation that is as dangerous as it is contrary to the interests of the peoples. These words are not too strong to characterize the process France is plunging into by intervening in Chad. Our rulers have decided to get openly involved in supporting one of the two factions going at each other. In this they are fully taking upon themselves the tradition of the Fifth Republic, which has been to want Africa to be the game preserve of one of the foremost imperialist powers on the planet.

The whole gamut of neocolonial expeditions is being carried out today. They have established a veritable air bridge to furnish the authorities in Ndjamena with fifty tons per day of some of the most modern and sophisticated weapons.

"Civilian experts" have been sent in to "advise" Hissène Habré's forces. To avoid the problem of getting bogged down on the ground, Paris is transferring responsibility for ground action to African governments that are closely tied to it — first and foremost the government of Zaïre. For example, Zaïre's 31st Paratroop Brigade — which has been trained and led by French officers for years — has just landed in Chad's capital. This action cannot but remind one of the intervention in Zaïre itself a few years ago by an inter-African force (including Senegalese and Moroccan troops in particular).

Furthermore, this whole operation is receiving logistical support from Washington. We now know that the Americans have stepped up their satellite surveillance of northern Chad and have been forwarding the information they gather to the French foreign ministry.

To justify their policies, our leaders argue that there is a Libyan threat in this area. The explanation does not stand up to an examination of the facts. In the final analysis, Tripoli is acting in the same manner as Paris. In recent years the two capitals have alternately sup-

ported all the figures in this interminable "war of chiefs": Goukouni, Habré, and Kamoun-gué.

In reality, the Mitterrand government's commitment is dictated by a single consideration: to preserve at all costs the neocolonial agreements that tie Chad to France within the franc zone. Moreover, the Mitterrand government wants to prevent an upset of the fragile balance in this region, which would inevitably have repercussions on the stability of all the local oligarchies.

Within this context, and to the extent that they refuse to challenge our country's status as an imperialist power, the group in office can hardly escape military adventures. As *Le Monde* correctly noted on July 3: "The president of the Republic cannot help but be mindful of the tendency of certain heads of state to play off Washington against Paris. . . . If France lost its political credibility in the eyes of its African allies, it would also feel the economic repercussions of this setback on a continent where its influence remains considerable."

When they were not in power, the Socialist and Communist parties condemned the expeditions that President Giscard mounted on the other side of the Mediterranean. The [SP's] *Projet socialiste* itself asserted that "France must not snuff out the rights of peoples." In resuming the practices of the previous regime, the government flouts one of the most fundamental rights of peoples: the right to take their own destiny in hand.

No working-class or democratic activist or organization can remain silent. We must forcefully demand an end to the direct and indirect interventions in Africa. We must demand the withdrawal of all the French expeditionary troops stationed in various countries on that continent. We must demand the cancellation of the military cooperation agreements that enable men like Hissène Habré to now call for the intervention of French soldiers in battle.

It is all the more necessary that we react and express the demand for a different policy because France's present commitment in Chad costs hundreds of millions. All this money profits only a corrupt clique, with an extremely limited base in the population, and some multinational firms.

The peoples of Chad, who are already victims of a conflict over which they have no control, will get no improvement in their conditions of existence from it.

As for the French workers, they will have to foot the bill, which will further worsen the effects of the austerity policy. □

## A mixed response from French left

Following President Mitterrand's August 10 announcement on the sending of French troops to Chad, a number of leftist and workers organizations in France issued statements on the intervention.

The Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International, reiterated its opposition to any French military involvement in the former French colony. According to a report in the August 12 issue of the Paris daily *Le Monde*, the LCR called on workers "to demand the immediate withdrawal of French paratroopers" from Chad.

The August 13 issue of *Lutte Ouvrière*, the weekly newspaper of the Workers Struggle group, featured the slogan "French troops out of Chad!" on its front page. An editorial, signed by Arlette Laguiller, noted that the troops were sent, not to defend "the interests of the peoples" of Chad, as Mitterrand has claimed, but to "defend those of French imperialism."

However, the Internationalist Communist Party (PCI), another major group in France that calls itself Trotskyist, was much less critical of the dispatch of troops to Chad. The August 12-19 issue of the PCI's weekly newspaper *Informations*

*Ouvrières* carried a news article on page 6. The article did not call for a withdrawal of French troops from Chad. However, it did offer a mild criticism. Noting that Mitterrand had invoked the provisions of a secret 1976 military treaty between Paris and Chad drawn up by the previous Giscard government, the article concluded:

"The leaders of the SP and CP previously denounced the 'colonial adventures' of the Giscardians. Won't respecting Giscard's secret treaties through sending 500 ground troops lead to the same thing?"

Mitterrand's Socialist Party issued a statement "unreservedly approving the policy of the French government" on the grounds that "the massive armed intervention of Libyan forces in Chad amply justifies the measures taken by France."

The Communist Party, which has two ministers in the government, did not condemn the sending of the troops and did not call for their withdrawal. At the same time, however, it sought to take its distance from Mitterrand's policy by warning Paris to stay out of the Chadian "hornets' nest" and by calling for "negotiations and a peaceful settlement."

**This Publication  
is available in Microform.**

**University Microfilms  
International**

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



# What is Mitterrand after?

*French rulers seek to stabilize neocolonial regimes*

By Claude Gabriel

[The following article is reprinted from the July 22-28 issue of *Rouge*, the weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

Why is it that for more than 15 years different French governments have carried out military interventions in the Chadian conflict but have never given the impression of defending a consistent policy there?

Why has France successively aided rival factions, at one point supporting the southern leader Kamougué, then Goukouni Oueddei, and today Hissène Habré?

Obviously we should recall the French economic interests in Chad. In 1980, cotton constituted 89 percent of French purchases in Chad. French exports fell in 1980 to 48.3 million francs, mainly vehicles and capital goods. For several years the activities of French companies have been disrupted. The Brasseries du Logone breweries, the oil company Total Chad, Renault, Colas road builders, and the French West Africa Company have had to cease or sharply curtail their activities as chaos slowly replaced the former economic patterns.

But this alone is not enough to explain the contortions of French policy in that country. Chad never represented a decisive market for companies in France, nor was it a source of strategic raw materials.

So is it the "Libyan danger" that makes Paris act? The big press suggests this kind of interpretation. But this explanation is somewhat simplistic and skips over the fact that Libya is a far more interesting export market for the imperialist countries than Chad.

In all the Western countries there are quite a few industrial lobbies that want to take advantage of the Libyan market. In this regard we should recall the desire of the Elf-Erap oil company, and its director Albin Chalandon, to maintain its existing ties with Tripoli when then president Giscard called for breaking off all commercial relations. Qaddafi himself has taken care in recent weeks to make a distinction between France and the United States, accusing the latter of "dragging" the former into this war.

Of course imperialism has no desire to see the influence of the "Guide" [i.e., Qaddafi] spread in Africa. A certain type of Islamic fundamentalism could undoubtedly shake up many regimes in the region. And the French government feels it must respond to that problem, if only to protect and reassure its best allies in Senegal, Cameroon, Mali, and Niger.

But none of this suffices to explain the French twists and turns in Chad.

## A Chadian nation?

There is a third, more fundamental, reason that we must add to the two already mentioned: France and imperialism want to defend the maintenance and stability of a centralized "national state" in Chad, whatever the cost. To that end they invoke the Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which defends the maintenance of the borders inherited from the colonial period. This is obviously stupid. No imperialist country invokes the map with regard to Western Sahara or Eritrea. Nor did any seek a confrontation with Libya when that country in fact occupied a strip of desert in northern Chad.

The Chadian national state is a fiction. Even Pierre Messmer, who was governor of French Equatorial Africa [of which Chad was a part] and a strong partisan of the interventions in Chad under de Gaulle, acknowledged that recently in *Le Matin*. There is no Chadian nation. That leads therefore to the following contradiction: each of the factions in the confrontation (there are, in fact, more than ten) seeks to gain control of the power of the "national" state, while none of them can claim to represent the interests of an established "Chadian national consciousness."

First there was the division between the south and the north. The Black populations of the south formed the base of the cotton economy of the colonial period. The government that was established at the time of independence was set up primarily from "the South." The inhabitants of the north were left to fend for themselves.

Frolinat<sup>1</sup>, which arose in the middle of the 1960s, was rooted in these northern populations. But Frolinat itself broke up into a multitude of rival factions.

The central government was never capable of centralizing the economic networks of the north, of the nomadic and seminomadic peoples of the Tibesti. These networks, which dated back several centuries, were mostly oriented toward Libya and the Sudan.

Incapable of building a national economy, the neocolonial regime could only respond with repression and coercion to the first stirrings of unrest in the north. The economic backwardness and isolation of the Tibesti allowed the continuation of traditional forms of organization of society around the clans. This is what explains the breakup of Frolinat into

1. Chad National Liberation Front, whose aim was to overthrow the Tombalbaye regime [installed when the French left in 1960].



groups based only on the most limited community of interests.

## Defense of the 'national state'

French government spokesman Max Gallo declared on July 5: "France supports the legitimate government of Chad." But the poor man would have quite a time telling us what that legitimacy consists of. A year earlier France supported the "legitimacy" of Goukouni Oueddei against Habré himself.<sup>2</sup> Falling into step, the press began writing of "rebels" and "regular troops." Tripoli, in turn, uses similar language to support its allies of the moment.

The truth is that the defense of the regime in place in Ndjama is an absolute necessity to defend the very principle of the "national state." A change in imperialism's attitude would be tragic for all the dictatorships in the region.

The long-term disappearance of a centralizing state in Chad would challenge the very principle of all the neocolonial institutions in Africa. It would challenge their corrupt repressive powers, whose supposed legitimacy is anchored solely on their ability to centralize a state through force.

Imperialism doesn't give a damn about whether a Chadian nation exists. Its objective is to show all the protagonists in the conflict that it will not permit the state structures in Ndjama to collapse. This is what underlies the references to Chadian "legitimacy" that permit it to support one or another clique that grabs power for a moment. It hardly matters to imperialism that the overwhelming majority of the peoples do not concede any "national" legitimacy to those who occupy the governmental palace. □

2. Goukouni Oueddei was quite conscious of these paradoxes. If he should return to power he would again seek his "legitimacy" from France.

When he was "the legitimate government," he took great care not to denounce the military accord linking Chad to France, an accord signed by [the then Premier Jacques] Chirac in 1976. Adberrahman Moussa, a figure from Goukouni's camp, stated, not without humor, that there was "no problem with France" and that France is simply "obliged to make symbolic gestures."



# The murder of Benigno Aquino

### Marcos' desperate blow at growing opposition

By Fred Murphy

The cold-blooded murder of opposition leader Benigno Aquino, Jr., by the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines points up that regime's desperation in face of mounting mass opposition and a deep economic crisis.

Marcos, one of Washington's key Asian clients, brazenly organized the assassination of Aquino, despite the fact that the international spotlight was turned on the Philippines when the country's leading oppositionist returned from three years in exile.

The dictatorship had publicly warned Aquino to stay out of the Philippines, claiming plots had been discovered against his life.

"The only assassins I'm afraid of are Mr. Marcos's firing squad," Aquino had responded. He had been sentenced to death by a military court in 1977 for his opposition to Marcos.

#### Marcos blames communists

Aquino was gunned down at point-blank range on August 21, seconds after soldiers removed him from the plane on which he had arrived at Manila's international airport. Troops and police had cordoned off the area, and journalists and other passengers were blocked from leaving the plane while the execution took place.

Marcos claimed afterward that a "professional killer" disguised as an airport employee had somehow infiltrated the area and shot Aquino. This unidentified alleged assassin was immediately killed by the soldiers that had surrounded the plane. But the August 23 *New York Times* cited a Japanese journalist on Aquino's plane who said "that he had witnessed one of three military guards who escorted the opposition leader off the plane fire at him from a distance of less than three feet."

The journalist said further "that immediately after Mr. Aquino was shot, a man was pushed out of a military van and was shot dead by the armed guard."

Television film of the incident showed Aquino leaving the plane with two guards directly in back of him and one in front. How then could the supposed killer have walked up and shot Aquino in the head from behind?

Because the regime had been trying to block his return, Aquino kept his exact arrival time and flight secret and traveled under an assumed name. How then did the alleged gunman know Aquino was on that particular flight when even his family did not?

The regime's responsibility for Aquino's murder could hardly be clearer. Nonetheless, Marcos sought to blame his victim for returning to the Philippines despite warnings of



Aquino during his military trial in 1977.

death plots, and even suggested that Aquino's killing had been a "communist rubout job."

#### Latest move in crackdown

The Aquino murder is but the most drastic move in a crackdown on all opposition launched by Marcos a year ago. Emboldened by the unconditional support offered to his rule by Washington, Marcos jailed dozens of trade-union leaders, dissident priests and nuns, and opposition journalists. In December a major counterinsurgency drive was launched in the countryside with extensive U.S. advice and support. In April Marcos revealed secret decrees issued in 1981 imposing the death penalty for political crimes such as "seditious" writings and speech or the organization of opposition rallies.

These moves were in response to a big wave of strikes and labor struggles brought on by a sharp deterioration in the Philippines' economy. Austerity measures have been imposed by the regime at the behest of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, which are providing loans to help Marcos cope with a \$22 billion foreign debt and a balance-of-payments crisis.

Marcos also confronts a growing guerrilla movement in large areas of the Philippines countryside under the leadership of the New People's Army. The NPA has expanded its military activity and geographic scope consid-

erably in the past year and has gained increasing popular support. It has close ties to the National Democratic Front (NDF), a bloc of trade unions, peasant organizations, and organizations of women, students, health workers, teachers, lawyers, and journalists. Since leading a successful mass campaign for a boycott of Marcos' phony elections in 1981, the NDF has outpaced the bourgeois opposition forces in its popular support.

Marcos evidently feared that Aquino's presence in the Philippines could serve to rally the various currents of opposition in a new campaign against the dictatorship. Aquino had recently begun calling for efforts to take advantage of economic discontent in order to bring down the dictatorship.

In the speech he had prepared for delivery upon his return, Aquino was to call for "national reconciliation . . . but only with justice." There could be "no deal with a dictator," he wrote, "no compromise with dictatorship."

Aquino also referred favorably to the guerrilla movement. "The nationwide rebellion is escalating and threatens to explode into a bloody revolution," he said. "There is a growing cadre of young Filipinos who have finally come to realize that freedom is never granted, it is taken."

#### Washington's complicity

Benigno Aquino's blood is also on the hands of the Reagan administration, which has made all-out support to the Marcos regime a cornerstone of its policy for southeast Asia. In June, a new, five-year U.S. aid package totaling \$900 million was announced as "rent" for Washington's huge military installations in the Philippines — Subic Bay naval base and Clark air base. Almost half the sum is direct military aid, while the rest will be largely devoted to military projects in the guise of "economic" aid.

U.S. police agencies have subjected Filipino opponents of the Marcos regime living in the United States to spying, harassment, and the threat of extradition to the Philippines on Marcos' trumped-up charges. There is even evidence suggesting U.S. complicity in the murder of two young Filipino trade unionists by Marcos agents in Seattle, Washington, in 1981.

U.S. officials have repeatedly stressed their backing for Marcos. "We love your adherence to democratic principles and democratic processes," Vice-president George Bush told the dictator in 1981. Last year, Pentagon chief Caspar Weinberger affirmed that Washington would remain "a steady and reliable partner" of the Marcos regime. And during a visit to Manila this June, Secretary of State George Shultz hailed the "very special" relationship between the United States and the Philippines.

Reagan himself is set to visit the Philippines in November. In a further demonstration of support for Marcos, Reagan refused to cancel the trip following Aquino's murder. The White House announced that it was confident Reagan would be well protected. □

# U.S. aids ouster of Ríos Montt

*Spurs regionalization of Central American war*

By Fred Murphy

After 90 minutes of fighting between army troops and the presidential honor guard on August 8, Guatemalan President Efraín Ríos Montt was removed from office by the military high command and replaced with his defense minister, Gen. Oscar Mejía Victores.

General Mejía's supporters in the officer corps shot their way into power one day after Mejía met in Honduras and aboard the U.S. aircraft carrier *Ranger* with Pentagon officials and with the defense ministers of El Salvador and Honduras. Washington's role in the ouster of Ríos Montt was highlighted further when Guatemalan television showed a U.S. military attaché reporting to his embassy by walkie-talkie from the presidential palace during the fighting itself.

With General Mejía's seizure of power, the Reagan administration registered a big step toward its goal of drawing the Guatemalan military into a regionwide counterrevolutionary role and making the country another staging area for U.S. aggression in Central America.

Mejía quickly launched verbal attacks on Nicaragua, branding the Sandinista government "not only a threat to Guatemala but to the whole continent." The United States, Mejía said, "is the only country that can help to combat the guerrillas in the region."

On August 14 Guatemala and El Salvador announced an agreement whereby Salvadoran troops will receive counterinsurgency training at Guatemalan bases in exchange for the provision by El Salvador of U.S.-supplied arms and ammunition to the Guatemalan military. Pentagon officials have long pointed to the latter's tactics as a model that the Salvadoran army should follow. The arrangement will also enable Reagan to sidestep continued reluctance in Congress to arm the Guatemalan dictatorship directly.

## Opposition by Guatemalan capitalists

Besides helping to further U.S. aims in Central America, the August 8 coup also served the needs of the Guatemalan ruling class. While Ríos Montt's brutal counterinsurgency drive against Indian peasants had been welcomed by the country's capitalists and landowners, other aspects of his rule had antagonized virtually all sectors of the ruling class:

- By making use of the state apparatus to proselytize for his tiny right-wing Protestant religious sect, and by snubbing the pope during the latter's Central America tour in March, Ríos Montt brought the conservative Catholic Church hierarchy into open opposition to the government.
- By decreeing a special sales tax of 10 per-

cent on all but the most necessary consumer goods, Ríos Montt gained the enmity of merchants and of industrialists who depend on the domestic market. The tax, a condition imposed by the International Monetary Fund for a \$120 million loan, went into effect a week before the coup.

- By stalling plans for long-promised elections, Ríos Montt exasperated the traditional right-wing political parties that had backed his March 1982 seizure of power in hopes of regaining a place at the public trough.

- And, by going outside the established chain of command to appoint a group of junior officers as his special advisers, Ríos Montt angered the top layers of the military hierarchy. The latter moved to get rid of him as soon as Washington's acquiescence was assured.

## Switch by Washington

Until shortly before the coup, the Reagan administration had given Ríos Montt strong public backing. When coup rumors and ruling-class discontent mounted in June, Reagan's special ambassador Richard Stone visited Guatemala and praised Ríos Montt for bringing "positive changes" to the country.

But Washington apparently failed either to placate Ríos Montt's increasingly restive opponents or to fully convince him to bring Guatemala directly into a regional counterrevolutionary role.

Just three days before his ouster, Ríos Montt complained in an interview with the *New York Times* that neither the United States nor the Soviet Union really cared about Central America — both "want geographical positions, strategic positions," he asserted, but "do not want to help us."

General Mejía has made the routine promises about restoring "democracy" and has received the customary praise for these from Washington. But the real content of both his and Reagan's policy was summed up in the high command's post-coup pledge "to fight by all available means to eradicate Marxist-Leninist subversion." Under this watchword the Guatemalan armed forces have carried out almost 30 years of terror against the workers and peasants.

Ríos Montt's 1982 drive against the Indian peasantry was the latest in a long series of such counterinsurgency efforts. According to Allan Nairn, a U.S. journalist who spent considerable time in Guatemala in 1982, Ríos Montt instituted "province-by-province sweeps by massed troops to clear the tiny mountain villages and to resettle much of the population in army-controlled towns." The strategy, Nairn concluded, "was based on organized killing,



General Mejía swears to defend U.S. interests.

torture, and bombing of unarmed civilians" (*New Republic*, April 11).

It was Defense Minister Oscar Mejía Victores, the new chief of state, who was directly responsible for the implementation of this campaign. He has summed up his racist philosophy toward the majority of Guatemala's population as follows: "We must do away with the words 'indigenous' and 'Indian'" (quoted in *NACLA Report on the Americas*, March-April 1983).

## Guerrilla forces remain intact

Despite the massacre of 10,000 or more peasants, the displacement of nearly a million, and the driving of some 100,000 into southern Mexico, the campaign failed to do away with the insurgent forces that make up the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG). While the guerrillas' popular base suffered sharp blows, their fighting forces emerged almost intact. Nor has the regime been able to make good on its demagogic promises to provide food, housing, and jobs to those displaced by the counterinsurgency drive. Armed revolutionary activity has been on the upswing again since the beginning of this year.

The most active front is in the central province of Chimaltenango, where the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) have the strongest presence. For the first time, however, combined columns of fighters from the FAR and other URNG components are operating in a united fashion in Chimaltenango. Units of between 80 and 125 guerrillas carried out a series of ambushes of troop convoys and army patrols there in June and July.

In Huehuetenango and El Quiché provinces, where the army terror was especially intense last year, the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP) has resumed activity. Issue No. 25 of the EGP's *Informador Guerrillero* reports 78 operations against the army during March, April, and May, resulting in 158 casualties to the regime's forces.

The Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA) has rebuilt its urban network in the capital, Guatemala City, and has carried out several attacks on National Police installations there. The ORPA has also been able to make clandestine broadcasts to the population by cutting in on the frequencies of radio stations in the capital and other cities. □



# Standing firm in the north

## Border residents organize against rightist attacks

By Jane Harris

SAN RAFAEL DEL NORTE, August 20 — Things haven't been the same in this town for the last few days. Not since townspeople turned back a surprise attack by counter-revolutionaries five days ago, killing 29 and wounding others.

"The *contras* acted with incredible arrogance. They thought everyone here was reactionary. What stupidity!" Marcos Antonio González, head of the voluntary militia here, told *Intercontinental Press*.

"Here the motor force of our defense is the peasantry. Just about everyone is a small producer or they are unemployed."

During the late 1920s, San Rafael del Norte was a major headquarters in Gen. Augusto César Sandino's battle to drive out the U.S. Marines. The *contras* began their attack last week by trying to kick down the doors of the Sandino museum, hoping to make a big splash in the international press.

They came up against 13-year-old militia member Lucas Rodríguez, who gunned down two of them. They were also confronted by 19-year-old militiaman Maria Axíel Rodríguez, who picked up her father's rifle after he fell, and killed another.

This town of 9,000 has become a symbol throughout Nicaragua for its heroism and quick action. Its leading combatants received medals of honor.

Speaking at the award ceremony August 18, Humberto Ortega, Commander-in-Chief of the Sandinista People's Army (EPS), put the attack on San Rafael del Norte in the context of other major clashes that have recently taken place in Jinotega and neighboring Chinandega provinces.

### A new escalation

"We are confronted with a new counter-revolutionary escalation," he said. "It is bigger than the attack earlier this year." That invasion, beginning in February, was carried out by some 1,500 to 2,000 counterrevolutionaries.

Now, Ortega continued, "there are more men. They are better organized. They have a greater logistical capacity, including resupply of weapons by air. They have the open support of the Honduran army in the border region."

The aim of the Somozaists' current offensive, Ortega said, is to carry out the objectives they were unable to accomplish in the earlier offensive — to seize one or two important northern population centers, declare a "provisional government," and call for open U.S. aid.

As a visit here proved, the *contras* are not going to have an easy time.

Within twenty-four hours after the attack, 80 militia members, including 7 women (2 of them pregnant), were mobilized. They have organized a rear guard, arms distribution, clothing, food and shelter, trenches, and everything else within the last few days. Three hundred people, half a battalion, are now armed in the area.

"Before the attack there were a lot of young students who didn't see the necessity of the militia, but now they do," one militiaman commented.

### Coffee harvest a target

This town, located in the northern province of Jinotega, and other towns nearby have been recent targets of the *contras*.

González explained that coffee accounts for 25 percent of Nicaragua's export income. Sixty percent of that coffee comes from Jinotega and Matagalpa provinces. "The *contras*' strategic goal in the region is stopping the coffee harvest. By terrorizing the people, they hope to make it hard to get pickers."

Capt. Francisco León Picardo, head of the region's militia, described the military situation in the area:

"It is a difficult war, a war of constant ambushes and withdrawals. Our idea is to let them pass over the border so we can annihilate them on our own territory. If we can't do that we want to at least neutralize them. By that I mean kill 60 percent of them, so they will be forced to go back to Honduras and regroup."

González agreed to escort us some 15 kilometers south to La Concordia, a town of about 5,000 people. "La Concordia is even more revolutionary than San Rafael del Norte. Maybe because it's poorer," he told us.

We arrived at the militia office at dinner time and found some very good food — all donated from the local farming cooperative — cooking over a fire.

Teolinda Rivera, one of the town's teachers who has volunteered to cook brought over a plate full of tortillas, beef, fresh cheese, and a cup of coffee for each of the new arrivals.

"We haven't had classes all week since the *contras* came," she explained. "Everything has been for the defense effort. About 100 militia members have been mobilized."

At dawn the next day we saw them assembling, an impressive force of all ages. The youngest member, aged 12, is about as tall as his rifle; the eldest is Nieves Moradon, 67-years-old, who served as a messenger for Sandino's forces more than 50 years ago.

### 'One united army'

Some 20 well-armed militiamen were assigned to protect five journalists on our five-

kilometer hike to the cooperative at Las Chichiguas, inaccessible from La Concordia by car.

We were told that there were still *contras* in the region. Estimates ranged as high as 800. The militia took no chances, stopping us every five minutes, while a scouting team set out ahead. These militiamen were all members of the same agricultural cooperative. Only a couple of days ago cooperative members gunned down two *contras* entering their land after retreating from San Rafael del Norte.

"We knew they were coming from our messenger service. The *contras* have two-way Motorola radios, but we just have the boys who run messages between here and La Concordia," one militiaman explained.

"After the combat, we saw that the counter-revolutionaries were wearing two sets of pants, civilian over their uniforms. And they always go with their Bibles, claiming that they are killing in the name of God. What hypocrisy — killing children and raping women!" Edgar Herrera Baldivia, a 19-year-old member of the cooperative, put in.

"We're all Catholics here," he continued pointing to the crosses on their homes. "We're also all members of the militia, the reserves, the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers [UNAG], and the FSLN. There is no other way forward. Before we were humiliated by the National Guard, the rich, by the Somocistas. For us the only command is the FSLN."

"And here on the co-op we have to function as one united army," Herrera added.

In the last week the co-op dug trenches and made sure that all the families were armed — a task made easier by the recent arrival of hundreds of brand-new Soviet AK-47 assault rifles. The existing homes all have underground shelters. Choosing sites for new home construction will have to take the ambush factor into account.

### Impact of attacks

While this was the first attack on this particular co-op, the 106 people who live there have felt the effects of the *contras* for some time.

For example, while adult members of the co-op, who passed through the 1980 literacy crusade, are receiving adult education for two hours after their 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. workday, their children receive no formal education.

"The school in La Concordia is too far. You saw how difficult the path is. We are afraid they will be kidnapped," one father told *IP*. "Maybe, with time, the revolution will be able to give us materials to build a school here. But we lack teachers as well," he added.

The co-op raises cattle and grows beans and corn. The beans were ready to be harvested when the *contras* came. With 17 of the 30 members mobilized in the militia, they know they will lose some of the harvest.

And what they do harvest will be gathered with rifles slung over their shoulders, because in the last six months some 120 of their fellow members of UNAG have been killed by the *contras* throughout Nicaragua. □



# Protests challenge Pinochet

## Dictatorship's crackdown fails to intimidate masses

By Fred Murphy

The biggest deployment of troops and police since the Pinochet dictatorship seized power in Chile ten years ago failed to halt the fourth in a series of monthly mass protests demanding an end to the military regime.

All during the evening of August 11, thousands of youth built barricades and confronted the army in the poor and working-class districts of Santiago, while throughout the city Chileans stood on rooftops, on balconies, or at windows, banging pots and pans, blowing whistles, or ringing bells to back up the increasingly universal demand for democracy and the ouster of Pinochet.

"I am not going to give an inch," the dictator had blustered before the protest, saying that his opponents could "rest assured that Santiago is covered with 18,000 men with orders to crack down hard."

The crackdown came. "During a dusk-to-dawn curfew," the August 13 *Miami Herald* reported, "army patrols roamed the streets of the capital, shooting at curfew violators and firing bullets and teargas grenades into houses where women banged empty pots to protest Pinochet's regime."

Hundreds gathered at funerals for some of the regime's victims the next day. These turned into further protests that were also attacked by the police. Skirmishes continued at bonfires and barricades in the poor neighborhoods.

The dictatorship's show of force cost the lives of at least 26 persons, including several children. More than 100 were wounded or injured, and some 2,400 arrested. But such savagery has only spurred the anger of Chileans, who are suffering the blows of a deep economic crisis and are unwilling to tolerate Pinochet's brutal rule any longer.

### Monthly strikes and protests

The upsurge against the dictatorship began in March of this year when thousands of students and youth demonstrated in Santiago, Valparaíso, and Concepción to protest the regime's economic policies.

On May 14, the first of an ongoing series of National Days of Protest was called by the Copper Workers Confederation (CTC) and other trade unions. Demonstrators again took to the streets in Santiago as motorists honked their horns in a show of support. Students boycotted classes and parents kept their children home from school.

The working class came to the fore in mid-June. Protests called by the CTC and other unions brought hundreds of thousands into the streets of Chile's major cities on June 14. Two days later copper miners launched a nation-

wide strike to demand the release of CTC leader Rodolfo Seguel, jailed for his role in the protests. On June 23, coal, steel, concrete, textile, and other workers responded to a call for a general strike.

The June protests were also joined by independent truck and bus owners, farmers, and professionals. These layers include many who had once been strong supporters of Pinochet but are now suffering the effects of his economic policies. Business failures have reached record levels, and farmers unable to meet crushing debt payments have had their farms seized by the banks.

### Union leaders jailed

Following the June upsurge, Pinochet sought to weaken his opponents with a crackdown on the copper miners and concessions to the independent truckers. CTC leader Seguel and other union officials were held in jail for up to a month while hundreds of miners were fired by the state copper corporation. Meanwhile, debt relief totaling \$120 million was provided to the independent truckers. "The government has been tolerant in facing the two protests that have taken place," Pinochet warned in a June 27 speech, "but that's over with now, gentlemen."

But despite the arrests, maneuvers, and threats, a third National Day of Protest went off successfully in July. According to the July 23 *Latin America Weekly Report*, at 8 p.m. on July 12 "the *caceroleo* (banging on pans and other kitchen utensils), allied with the blowing of whistles and the ringing of bells, seemed to blot out all other sounds in Santiago, including

the military music played through army loudspeakers as a countermeasure." The intensity of the noise "encouraged many to brave the curfew and gain the streets . . . while in the outlying *poblaciones* the supply of electricity was interrupted and barricades were set up."

At the jail where trade-union and political prisoners were held, "the prisoners joined in at the appointed time with a *cuchareo*, banging their spoons on the cell bars."

Because of the repression aimed at the union leaders, the July and August protests were initiated instead by an informal bloc of several illegal opposition parties. This grouping, now formalized as the Democratic Alliance (AD), includes the Christian Democrats, Radicals, Social Democrats, and one faction of the Socialist Party. The bourgeois parties have vetoed the participation in this bloc of the Communist Party, which is reported to have a substantial clandestine apparatus and to play a role in the neighborhood "commands" that have sprung up to organize the protests.

The perspective of the parties in the Democratic Alliance has been to pressure the military to remove Pinochet, take some of their leaders into a provisional government, and schedule elections. AD leaders warned after the August 11 repression that such events "create an extremely serious chasm between the people and the armed forces, and [are] the fruit of measures adopted by the chief of state, the only one responsible for the situation."

Thus far, the regime's only concession has been the appointment August 10 of a civilian right-winger, Sergio Onofre Jarpa, as minister of the interior, the chief cabinet post. Jarpa has spoken vaguely of speeding up election plans so as "to have an elected Congress before 1990." At the same time, Jarpa warns that "the people should be conscious that the worst that can happen in a country is a civil war."

The mounting protest in Chile has set off



Secondary school students take to streets in Santiago during August protests.

alarm signals in Washington. The Reagan administration has begun backing off slightly from its earlier wholehearted support to Pinochet. State Department spokesmen have voiced mild criticism of the repression, and U.S. Ambassador to Chile James Theberge has met publicly with leading Christian Democrats and bureaucrats from the more conservative opposition trade unions. The July 15 *Washington Post* reported a "growing feeling" among U.S. officials "that a failure by Pinochet to shift course could cause internal upheavals leading to civil war."

Thus far, the dictator shows no sign of backing down. A new National Day of Protest is set for September 11, the tenth anniversary of the bloody, U.S.-backed coup that smashed an earlier popular upsurge and brought Pinochet to power. The regime is trying to apply those brutal methods once again, but now it is on the defensive.

"We beat pots and they shoot bullets," a woman in the working-class neighborhood of Lo Hermida told the *New York Times* after the latest protests. "They are starting a war that no one can stop." □

wedge between the Tamil and Sinhalese sections of the working class, opposition to the government's policies is weakened.

The anti-Tamil pogroms also serve notice on the unions and the labor movement that any resistance to austerity will be met with severe repression.

The viciousness of the recent attacks on Tamils drives these lessons home. A Norwegian tourist described one scene to the Norwegian newspaper *Verdens Gang*: "A minibus full of Tamils was forced to stop in front of us in Colombo. A Sinhalese crowd drenched the vehicle with gasoline, then set it on fire. The crowd blocked the doors to prevent the Tamils from getting out. Hundreds of spectators witnessed the fiery death of the twenty-odd Tamils."

In numerous instances, police and soldiers watched massacres without doing anything to intervene.

### Demands for independence

The attacks against the Tamils, who make up nearly 2.7 million of Sri Lanka's 15 million people, began after a July 24 ambush of an army patrol by members of the Tamil Tigers, a separatist group calling for the establishment of an independent Tamil state in the heavily Tamil north and east of the island.

Thirteen government soldiers, all of the Sinhalese nationality, were killed in the ambush. According to Tamil activists, the ambush was carried out in retaliation for the rape of four Tamil women by troops the previous week.

The demand for an independent Tamil state has grown in recent decades as the Tamils have been subjected to mounting oppression.

The Tamil population is made up of two segments. Nearly 1.5 million indigenous Tamils have lived in northern and eastern Sri Lanka for thousands of years. In addition, there are about 1.2 million "hill Tamils" living in the interior. They are the descendants of Tamils brought to Sri Lanka from India during British colonial rule to work on the tea plantations.

### Divide and rule tactics

During the colonial period, the British rulers used the ethnic differences between Tamils and Sinhalese to maintain their control. For example, although the hill Tamils on the tea plantations lived in conditions little better than slavery, they were bitterly resented by the Sinhalese peasants in the area, whose lands had been taken by the British to establish the plantations.

The British also used divide-and-rule tactics in establishing their colonial administration. Tamils from the north and east were proportionally better represented in the English-speaking colonial civil service than the Sinhalese population.

When nationalist movements arose to challenge British rule, one of the main demands was for use of "our own language" in administration. The Sinhalese call for "our own lan-

## Sri Lanka

# Racist pogrom hurts all workers

## Regime encourages attacks on Tamil minority

By Will Reissner

An estimated 385 members of the Tamil minority on the Indian Ocean island of Sri Lanka were killed in more than a week of anti-Tamil rioting that began July 24. Up to 100,000 people were left homeless following the pogrom.

Burning and looting of Tamil-owned businesses and homes was widespread in rural areas of the island, formerly known as Ceylon. In the country's capital, Colombo, half the 4,100 Tamil-owned shops were burned to the ground and 17 major Tamil-owned textile factories were destroyed.

Punishing the victims of the mob violence that had been encouraged by his government, Sri Lanka's rightist President J.R. Jayewardene stripped the Tamil population of their parliamentary representation. On July 28 he announced that all parties would have to take a stand against "separatism" to maintain their seats in parliament. This led to the removal of all 17 members of parliament from the Tamil United Liberation Front, which advocates autonomy for the Tamil areas.

Two days later, Jayewardene's government banned three left parties — the Communist Party, the People's Liberation Front (JVP), and the New Equal Society Party (NSSP). More than 500 people were rounded up as "communist agitators."

### Target is whole working class

It is quite clear that the Jayewardene regime is taking aim at the working-class movement as a whole under the pretext provided by the anti-Tamil riots.

The Sri Lankan government, staggering under a huge burden of foreign debt, has been carrying out austerity programs mandated by the International Monetary Fund. Jayewardene hopes to establish free trade zones, to which foreign investors would be attracted by low wages and lack of union protection.

In June 1980 a national railway strike almost developed into a general strike. The govern-

ment responded with brute force, using troops and scabs to break the strike, and throwing 100,000 workers out of their jobs.

The banning of the CP, JVP, and NSSP in the wake of the latest events is one more step in the overall course against the rights of the working people that the Sri Lankan ruling class has been following.

The use of anti-Tamil racism serves Jayewardene's purposes by channeling resentment against the deteriorating economic situation onto Tamil scapegoats. And by driving a





guage," however, excluded the Tamil language. This became a bone of contention between the two groups after independence.

In 1948, after Sri Lanka won its independence, the Tamil tea plantation workers were stripped of their citizenship and voting rights.

In 1956, the Sinhala language of the majority group in Sri Lanka was made the country's only official language. Buddhism, the religion of most Sinhalese, was made virtually the state religion in 1972. Most Tamils, however, are Hindu or Muslim.

The repression against Tamils increased significantly when the rightist United National Party (UNP) government of J.R. Jayewardene came to power in 1977.

In August 1977 inflammatory speeches by UNP leaders sparked a racial pogrom against Tamils, and another took place in 1979. Security forces carried out attacks on Tamils in the city of Jaffna in May and June 1981.

### Prisoners murdered

The government has used the cover of the latest racial violence to carry out wholesale murders of Tamil political prisoners already in jail under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). At least 52 Tamil political prisoners were murdered in two separate incidents inside Welikada maximum security jail. Three other prisoners were killed in Jaffna.

The first massacre, of 35 prisoners, took place the day after the ambush in which the 13 soldiers died. The authorities claim that several hundred prisoners stormed the cell-blocks where the Tamils were held and killed them.

Two days later, according to government claims, Sinhalese prisoners again "overpowered" their jailers and went on a rampage, killing 17 Tamil political detainees.

Conveniently for the government, a number of prisoners who were murdered had been the objects of an international campaign to prevent their execution under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

The international defense campaign had particularly focused on two young Tamil activists, Kuttimani and Jegan, who were sentenced to

death under the PTA in August 1982.

Both had been held in a remote army camp prior to their trial, and were not permitted to meet with lawyers, family members, or friends. While in custody they had been tortured, and were denied jury trials. (See *Intercontinental Press*, November 15, 1982, and April 18, 1983.)

## STATEMENT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

# Reactionary terror in Sri Lanka

[The following statement was issued by the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on August 1, 1983.]

\* \* \*

For a week now, an unprecedented wave of terror has been unleashed against the Tamil minority on the island of Sri Lanka [formerly called Ceylon]. Tamils make up 20 percent of the population.

Hundreds of Tamils have been massacred in what can only be described as pogroms. Many men, women, and children have been burned alive. Others have been tortured to death. More than 50 Tamil political prisoners were savagely killed inside the prisons.

These massacres and the self-defense measures taken by sectors of the Tamil minority in these conditions have been used by the conservative government of J.R. Jayewardene as a pretext to launch an out-and-out witch-hunt.

The majority of the Tamil nationalist organizations, and three left organizations — the Communist Party, the People's Liberation Front (JVP), and the New Equal Society Party (NSSP), which is a left split from the Social Democratic Ceylon Equal Society Party (LSSP) — have been banned.

More than 150 leaders and figures in the workers movement have been detained. The left is accused of having systematically organized the riots, massacres, and looting in Colombo. This is a complete lie.

This wave of reactionary terror has to be placed in the more general context of political, social, and economic developments in Sri Lanka over the last few years.

Mrs. Bandaranaike's coalition government of the reformist parties (LSSP and CP) and the bourgeois-liberal Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) had deeply divided and demoralized the working masses through its repression of the [1971] JVP youth insurrection, its anti-Tamil policies, and its austerity measures. This paved the way for the return of the conservative United National Party (UNP), led by Jayewardene, to power in 1977. This government carried out a systematic political attack on the organized workers movement. It broke strikes, limited democratic rights, and changed the constitution in order to stay in power.

The workers movement, thrown on the de-

Kuttimani and Jegan were among the 35 Tamil prisoners murdered on July 25.

On August 17, the Sri Lanka government extended for another month the state of emergency that has been in effect since May. The state of emergency was originally declared to quell protests of voting frauds during parliamentary and local elections. □

fensive and disoriented by its discredited and bankrupt traditional leaderships, was increasingly weakened, not just in parliamentary terms (where representation from the workers parties was reduced to one member of parliament from the CP) but also on the trade union level. The conservatives hoped that by doing this they would encourage imperialist capital to invest in the island and get the economy moving again after the stagnation of the Bandaranaike period.

But the international economic crisis was to hit the debt-ridden Sri Lankan economy shortly afterwards. The International Monetary Fund demanded stepped-up austerity measures, especially against subsidized food prices, free education, and the social security system. The living standards of the masses began to slide. People were becoming politicized again.

In the October 1982 presidential elections, 47 percent of the electorate, and the absolute majority of voters in the industrialized zones in the south and southwest and in the Tamil north, voted for the opposition according to official figures.

It is clear that today the reactionary terror aims to stop this politicization, to step up the repression and the trend toward banning workers organizations, and to ensure the maintenance of a strong state increasingly based on the bourgeois army.

The Fourth International denounces the bloody crimes of the Ceylonese semicolonial bourgeoisie against the Tamil minority and the toiling masses of Sri Lanka.

It calls on the workers and democratic organizations throughout the world to defend the victims of repression in Sri Lanka and to demand the restoration of democratic rights without restriction.

It calls on all anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist militants to come to the aid of their brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka.

Free all political prisoners in Sri Lanka!

Lift the ban on all the Tamil and workers organizations!

Full democratic rights for all the masses in Sri Lanka!

For the right of the Tamil nationality to self-determination!

### Indian Tamils protest

The south Indian state of Tamil Nadu was completely shut down August 2 in a sympathy strike expressing solidarity with the beleaguered Tamils of northern Sri Lanka.

In the streets of Madras, crowds burned effigies of Sri Lanka Prime Minister J.R. Jayewardene.

On July 28, at the height of the murders of Tamils in Sri Lanka, three young Sri Lankan Tamils associated with the Tamil Tigers were released from prison in Madras and greeted as heroes in the streets. They had been in jail for a year.



# Unions rally against government

*Demand halt to attacks on working people*

By Robert Simms

[The following article appeared in the August 25 issue of the *Militant*, a U.S. revolutionary Marxist weekly.]

\* \* \*

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — A massive fightback against sweeping government attacks on working people is developing in British Columbia, Canada's westernmost province.

Close to 45,000 people poured into Vancouver's Empire Stadium August 10 to protest an all-out assault on trade union economic and civil rights by the provincial government, headed by the Social Credit Party.

Protests closed government offices and shut down Vancouver's transit system. Tens of thousands of workers left their jobs for several hours to attend the rally.

This action added more momentum to a rapidly growing struggle that had previously mobilized 25,000 demonstrators in Victoria on July 27 and nearly 20,000 in Vancouver on July 23.

Workers are uniting with their allies from every sector of society to fight the government's July 7 budget and the dozens of legislative bills that accompanied it.

The government was emboldened by the May 10 reelection of the Social Credit Party. The New Democratic Party (NDP), the labor party based on the trade unions, was defeated in the elections although it captured 45 percent of the vote.

## Far-reaching attacks

The new legislation authorizes the government to: "fire without cause" any of the 250,000 public sector workers in the civil service, municipalities, hospitals, and schools; cut the civil service by 25 percent and the number of teachers by 10 percent; abolish the Human Rights Commission, the enforcement body of the British Columbia Human Rights Code, and water down the code itself; and extend indefinitely wage controls on all public sector workers.

The new laws would also: end rent controls and allow landlords to evict tenants "without cause"; begin dismantling the public health insurance system; and severely cut aid to the elderly, handicapped, students, and welfare recipients.

One bill would allow employers to negotiate collective agreements that ignore minimum labor standards in the areas of maternity leave, overtime, vacations, and hours of work. This will mainly affect women and those in weaker unions.

The far-reaching attacks in British Columbia

are not isolated. Step by step, Canada's capitalist parties are working to impose severe austerity programs on labor everywhere. The provincial government introduced wage controls in early 1982. It was soon followed by the federal government and most other provinces.

In March of this year, the Quebec government succeeded in forcing deep wage cuts and weakened job security on its 300,000 public sector workers.

Such takebacks are an expression of the international capitalist economic crisis as imperialist governments around the world prop up the profits of corporations to boost their ability to compete. At the same time, working people are told they must put up with lower living standards, less social services, and fewer democratic rights.

The budget provoked an immediate groundswell of protest. Picket lines were set up at several government offices for short walkouts. The 600 workers at the Tranquille Health Center in Kamloops, staged an occupation that lasted nearly four weeks after the government ordered the center closed as part of the cutbacks.

Women's groups, civil rights organizations, and tenants associations have held large public protest meetings.

The labor movement quickly became the backbone of the struggle. On July 15 the British Columbia Federation of Labor (BCFL) called all unions in the province together, including those not affiliated to the BCFL, to set up a labor united front called Operation Solidarity. The unions involved represent 500,000 organized workers, more than 50 percent of the work force.

Operation Solidarity has established a Solidarity Coalition, which scores of organizations representing women, the unemployed, churches, tenants, and East Indians and other minorities have joined.

Solidarity coalitions with the same forces are being reproduced in every region of British Columbia.

NDP members of the provincial legislatures are filibustering all bills.

## Show of strength

The August 10 Vancouver rally was an impressive show of strength. The vast majority of participants were unionists and their families. Reflecting the large proportion of women working in the public sector, about half the rally participants were female. While public employee unions predominated, contingents of workers in telecommunications, the post office, and rail numbered several hundred each. Four hundred shop craft workers at B.C. Rail, a railway owned by the provincial govern-

ment, walked off the job to attend the rally.

As the proceedings got under way, the huge crowd exploded into cheers and applause when the 1,000 bus drivers who had shut down the transit system marched into the stadium. A wave of applause followed them as they paraded around the track. They responded with clenched fists.

With that, most other union contingents came down from the stands one after the other to march on the track. "Come on, show them your strength," shouted a nursing assistant to encourage thousands of hospital workers to join in. Women's groups, Chinese-Canadians, human rights workers, and tenants groups paraded to applause. Even a group of doctors carried a banner.

"It makes everybody feel better to see so many," said hospital worker Maranne Berenson. "This is tremendous, another step towards getting rid of [B.C. Premier] Bill Bennett," said another rally participant.

One point of weakness was the fact that the NDP was scarcely present, even though most of those at the rally voted NDP in the provincial elections. One lone NDP constituency association paraded its banner to vigorous applause. Although the NDP is the governmental alternative to the Social Credit Party, the NDP was not invited to speak at the rally.

## 'We are the majority'

Those who addressed the demonstrators included spokespersons from the churches, handicapped, civil rights organizations, and labor.

Human rights director Hanne Jensen, whose job was abolished by the legislation, told the rally, "the minorities who have had their rights attacked are the disabled, native peoples, gays, East Indians, women, and trade unionists. That's about everybody in B.C. except a few free enterprisers. We are the majority."

Jack Munro, president of Western Region 1 of the International Woodworkers of America, explained that "the government hopes to drive a wedge between public and private sector workers. We know if Bennett gets his way, we're next on the list."

Operation Solidarity's steering committee meets August 18 to plan the next stage of mobilization. As BCFL Pres. Art Kube told the rally, "this is not the sort of struggle that ends, but gains momentum day by day. . . . Whatever human costs, that is the price we will pay." □

**This Publication  
is available in Microform.**

**University Microfilms  
International**

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

# 1985 election to advance workers' power

*Capitalists not happy with electoral prospects*

By Michael Baumann

MANAGUA — Is Nicaragua a totalitarian state run by a dictatorial minority — the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN)?

This is one of the favorite themes of imperialist propaganda against the Nicaraguan revolution.

It is echoed by local representatives of reaction. These range from the U.S.-financed Somozaist army based in Honduras, to the counterrevolutionary forces under ex-Sandinista Edén Pastora in Costa Rica, the Catholic church hierarchy, and right-wing Nicaraguan political parties.

What are the facts?

## What the capitalists don't like

What the imperialists and Nicaraguan capitalists call "totalitarianism" can be summed up in three bitter realities they have had to face.

1. The landlords and capitalists — the former ruling classes in Nicaragua — are precisely that: *former* ruling classes. There is a new revolutionary government in Nicaragua today that represents the interests of the workers and small farmers who make up the overwhelming majority of the population.

2. The former ruling classes lost political power, not through an election (elections nowhere and at no time have ever changed which *classes* rule a society), but through a revolutionary war and massive popular insurrection in which 50,000 people sacrificed their lives to bring to victory.

3. The old minority of exploiters have no hope whatsoever of regaining political power through elections or any other peaceful means. That is why they are increasingly open in their support to the armed counterrevolution.

This entire process has been led by the FSLN, which is at one and the same time the vanguard of the working class, the backbone of the new revolutionary administration of governmental power, and a political party with massive support among the people.

What exists in Nicaragua today is something new in mainland Latin America — a workers and farmers government. That is, a government that gives priority to the *social and economic interests* of the worker-farmer majority over the *profits* of the capitalist minority.

The workers and farmers government in Nicaragua is encouraging the organization of the toilers, their participation in every aspect of social life, and, through this process, their increasing control over society and the economy. It is laying the basis for the transition from

capitalist production to a planned economy run collectively by the producers.

This is what imperialism calls "totalitarianism."

## Preparations for elections

Although you'd never know it from most of the coverage in the imperialist media, elections are scheduled here for 1985. In fact, one of the central activities this year of Nicaragua's parliament, the Council of State, has been the discussion and approval, point by point, of a major piece of election legislation — the Law on Political Parties.

In weekly sessions, open to the public and widely covered in the country's three main newspapers, legislators are hammering out a code that will serve as the basis for formalizing the status of qualifying political parties.

A parliamentary delegation, which all seven parties represented in the Council of State were invited to join, has visited nine countries in Western Europe and Latin America to examine their electoral legislation.

The draft law that is being discussed was initially introduced in the Council of State on Feb. 22, 1982. Discussion on it was interrupted by the state of emergency that opened in March 1982, following the first wave of counterrevolutionary attacks.

Discussion was renewed in November; included a national symposium in January in which *all political parties*, even those too small to be represented in the Council of State, were invited to attend and express their views; and became the first order of business when the 1983 parliamentary session began May 4.

So why do the imperialists try to dismiss all this as a farce?

## What is the Council of State?

To begin with, they and their local allies don't exactly like the Council of State. It is not exactly their idea of what a parliament should be like.

The debate over this goes all the way back to the months preceding the the victory of the July 1979 insurrection.

In June of 1979, based on the apparent relationship of forces that existed in the anti-Somoza movement, the FSLN and the bourgeois opposition reached preliminary agreement on who would be represented in the post-Somoza parliament.

Thirty-three seats were to be divided among 23 organizations, at least half of which represented various sectors of the capitalist class. Exactly how the seats were to be divided was left to be determined later. But it was generally

assumed, at least by the bourgeoisie, that they would have a majority.

Things worked out differently in life. It was the mass of the toilers who carried out the insurrection that toppled Somoza and smashed the National Guard. And the new parliament, when it first met May 4, 1980, reflected this changed relationship of forces in its composition.

The new revolutionary Council of State was made up of 47 representatives, divided among 29 organizations. To the old list, 14 new organizations were added and 8 were dropped.

Among the most important organizations added were the following:

Nine seats to the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS), the organizations that grew out of the neighborhood insurrectionary committees and today number some 600,000 members.

Three seats to the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST), the union federation that emerged out of the revolution to become the country's largest, organizing four-fifths of the industrial work force.

Two seats to the Rural Workers Association (ATC), which also grew out of the revolution and today numbers over 30,000 members.

Two seats to the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG), which represents the country's largest social class, the small and medium farmers and stockraisers.

And one seat each for the Sandinista armed forces, the Sandinista Youth-July 19 (JS-19), the Nicaraguan Women's Association (AMNLAE), the teachers union (ANDEN), the health workers union (FETSALUD), and the Federation of Trade Union Unity and Action (CAUS).

Furthermore, two organizations were provided representation additional to that envisioned in the old setup. The FSLN was allotted six seats and the General Workers Federation-Independent (CGT-I), the labor federation led by the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN), was allotted two.

## Revolutionary democracy

Where did this leave the capitalists? They retained an ample but minority voice. Five seats were allotted to the main big-business and agricultural organizations, four seats to right-wing political parties, and two seats to right-wing union federations that openly and formally function as part of the rightist bloc.

In short, the Council of State's composition simply formalizes the popular, revolutionary, and working-class democracy that was born

out of the insurrection.

The Sandinistas explained it this way in a 1981 publication:

"The organizations now included in the Council of State that weren't envisioned in the first proclamation by the [provisional] Governmental Junta are those that were formed during the development of the most pressing activities of our people, those who were never before permitted to organize.

"These organizations arose in the people's struggle against the dictatorship, and grew at a dizzying rate after the armed triumph thanks to the freedom of organization they were guaranteed by the revolution.

"These organizations represent the majority of the Nicaraguan people, and by that alone deserve to be represented in the Council of State."

#### Capitalists demand immediate elections

The capitalists, of course, didn't simply roll over and play dead. Urged on by the U.S. embassy, and backed by the church hierarchy and their labor lieutenants, they fought to block installation of the new Council of State.

Millionaire industrialist Alfonso Robelo, leader of a bourgeois party called the Nicara-

guan Democratic Movement (MDN), resigned from the Government of National Reconstruction April 22, 1980, 12 days before the new parliament first met.

It was clear, however, that the Council of State had overwhelming popular acceptance. So the capitalists switched tactics. They became the most vocal proponents of elections to the national government, immediate elections.

The FSLN promised elections in its program, they said. Elections are required by the human rights covenants that Nicaragua is a signatory to.

The need to reconstruct the country's war-shattered economy should pose no obstacle, they insisted.

And, citing the success of the campaign to teach the alphabet and basic reading skills to Nicaragua's formerly illiterate majority, they claimed everyone is now prepared to vote.

In other words, the very same forces who tried to *keep the masses out* of the Council of State were now posing as protectors of democracy.

#### Masses back FSLN proposal

At a rally of 350,000 in Managua Aug. 23, 1980, to celebrate the conclusion of the liter-

acy campaign, the FSLN responded to these arguments.

Humberto Ortega, commander in chief of the Sandinista armed forces, read to the rally an official communique of the FSLN National Directorate on the question of elections and asked for their opinion.

The points Ortega raised go to the heart of the discussion today. They are worth recalling.

"For the Sandinista Front," Ortega said, "democracy is not something that is expressed solely in the political arena. . . . Democracy is not simply elections. . . ."

"It means the people's participation in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres. And the more people participate in all these areas, the more democracy there is. . . ."

"Democracy starts in the economic realm, when social inequalities begin to weaken, when the workers and peasants can better their standard of living. . . ."

"When these objectives have been reached, democracy is soon extended to other areas [such as] workers' participation in the administration of the factories, haciendas [farms], cooperatives, and cultural centers.

"To summarize, democracy is the intervention of the masses in all aspects of social life."

The first step, Ortega said, had to be rebuilding the economy and society. The FSLN estimated this could not possibly be accomplished before 1985 due to the massive devastation wreaked by Somoza's forces in the course of their war against the Nicaraguan people.

Thus Ortega proposed that the existing Government of National Reconstruction remain in office until 1985, at which time elections would be held — elections totally different from those held in capitalist-ruled countries.

"They won't be like the old elections, imposed on us by the gringos," Ortega stressed.

"They are imposed by you, by the working people, by the Sandinista Youth, by the National Directorate of this revolution. These are our elections.

"*And mark my words, they will be elections to improve revolutionary power, not to raffle off who will hold power. Because here the people hold power through their vanguard, the Sandinista National Liberation Front*" (emphasis in original).

"Do you agree?" he asked the rally.

Hundreds of thousands of fists shot into the air amid prolonged chants of "Si!" and "People's power!"

Sergio Ramirez, a Sandinista member of the Government of National Reconstruction, summed up the meaning of the rally's decision:

"Now that our people have learned how to read, now we can start to discuss democracy with the feudalists and old political bosses. Today we can tell them that we have voted in the first democratic election law in our country's history. . . ."

## Political parties in Nicaragua

There are at present 10 political parties in Nicaragua. No figures exist on size, but it is clear that even in terms of formal membership the FSLN is at least several times larger than all others combined.

Seven of these parties are aligned with one or the other of the two political fronts in the Council of State.

The first is the Revolutionary Patriotic Front (FPR). Generally supported by the 12 mass organizations and 4 of the trade-union federations, it is formally made up of the following parties:

FSLN — Sandinista National Liberation Front.

PSN — Nicaraguan Socialist Party. The traditional Moscow-line party in Nicaragua, which split in 1978, with a wing going over to the FSLN.

PLI — Independent Liberal Party. A small formation that describes itself as representing "patriotic professionals and patriotic businessmen."

PPSC — People's Social Christian Party. A small formation that split from the Social Christian Party in the 1970s.

The second front is the right-wing "Democratic Coordinating Committee," which includes:

PSC — Social Christian Party.

PLC — Liberal Constitutionalist Party.

PSD — Social Democratic Party (not represented in the Council of State).

Two union federations represented in the Council of State function as formal mem-

bers of the "Democratic Coordinating Committee". They are:

CTN — Nicaraguan Workers Federation. Linked with the Christian-Democratic labor movement in Europe and Latin America.

CUS — Council on Trade Union Unification. Linked with the CIA-dominated American Institute for Free Labor Development.

A fourth right-wing political party, the Democratic Conservative Party (PCD), although a member of the Council of State, does not send a delegate and does not participate in the "Democratic Coordinating Committee."

Two ultraleft formations not represented in the Council of State complete the list of parties:

PCN — Nicaraguan Communist Party. Split from PSN in 1971. The PCN professes loyalty to Moscow but has no official relations with the Soviet Communist Party. It leads a small but important labor organization, the Federation of Trade Union Unity and Action (CAUS), which is represented in the Council of State.

MAP-ML — People's Action Movement—Marxist-Leninist. This group distinguished itself by refusing to disband its private militia after the insurrection, and by encouraging strikes against the revolutionary government among relatively privileged workers.

— M.B.



"This is an election law bearing the signature of nearly half a million humble Nicaraguans — poor peasants, workers from the factories and shops, landless agricultural laborers, small farmers, market vendors — all of whom have been taught to read by you."

Unlike in the past, he said, when the landowners and the capitalists controlled the elections, the vast majority of those who are going to vote in the new Nicaragua are "those who have no property, who collect no rent, who have little or nothing, who aspire to a life with dignity and without poverty, not to exploit their brothers and sisters without mercy."

This is the course that the Sandinistas have followed. As FSLN Minister of the Interior Tomás Borge explained in a December 1982 interview, when he was asked whether his conception of pluralism included the possibility of the opposition coming to power: "To be frank with you, I don't think they will find circumstances permitting that."

### Capitalists boycott Council of State

If the capitalists weren't happy with the Council of State, they were even less enchanted with the prospect of elections to "improve revolutionary power."

Over the next two and a half years, as the revolution continued to deepen and consolidate its support among workers and farmers, the bourgeois opposition gradually began to complain more and more about the supposed lack of democratic rights in Nicaragua. At the same time, they increasingly refused to exercise the democratic rights that they did have, turning instead to armed resistance against the workers and farmers government.

Alfonso Robelo and most of the leaders of the MDN left the country to join Pastora's armed counterrevolutionary forces in Costa Rica. Since the MDN has taken up arms against the revolution, it is no longer a legal political party and has been removed from the Council of State.

Adolfo Calero Portocarrero, millionaire leader of the Democratic Conservative Party (PCD), has also left Nicaragua. He joined the Somozaist counterrevolutionaries in Honduras, where he is one of the central leaders of the U.S.-financed Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN).

Another leader of the PCD, Carlos Rodolfo Icaza, is currently in political asylum in the Venezuelan embassy. He fled there after it was learned that he had collaborated with the recently revealed CIA plots to organize terror squads inside Nicaragua and poison Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto.

The PCD still retains its seat in the Council of State, but refuses to attend any sessions.

The five big-business organizations represented in the Council of State generally boycott all sessions. One of them has never bothered to name a delegate.

The two right-wing union federations, the Federation of Trade Union Unification (CUS) and the Nicaraguan Workers Federation

(CTN), generally do not show up, and seldom speak when they do.

### Law on political parties

As of mid-July, about half the draft of the Law on Political Parties has been discussed, frequently amended, and voted on point by point.

The main political points so far approved can be summarized as follows:

The aim of political parties is to "attain power."

Political parties that seek a return to Somozaism "or propose similar principles and aims" are prohibited.

Parties' rights are spelled out in detail and include the right to:

- Publicize their views, including through access to TV and other mass media.
- Hold meetings.
- Criticize the government.
- Form alliances with other parties.
- Seek incorporation in the Council of State.

- Run in elections.
- Raise and administer their own funds, and maintain offices throughout the country.

Parties' obligations are also spelled out in detail. The most important include:

- "Respect the political and social gains attained by our people."
- "Defend the revolution against any attempt, external or internal, that seeks the installation of a regime of oppression and exploitation of the Nicaraguan people."
- "Fight to preserve the liberty and independence of the country, and to defend the national sovereignty and self-determination of the Nicaraguan people."
- "Accept responsibility for actions taken

by the alliances they may form with other parties."

As a result of discussion, a few points of the law as actually passed were altered from the original draft, which was largely drawn up by the FSLN.

The original, for example, stated that the aim of political parties was to "participate in public administration." It said nothing about "attaining power."

The original draft also listed nine principles that political parties would have to accept to gain legal standing. These ranged from "anti-imperialism" to "anti-interventionism" to "support for people fighting for national liberation." This whole point was dropped.

### The real threat to democracy

These changes are in accordance with the pledge the FSLN made at the beginning of this year's discussion on the law. Rafael Solís, secretary of the Council of State and delegate to it from the Sandinista armed forces, said:

"We have been and continue to be prepared to hold discussions even with those sectors that are opposed to the revolution, that are against it, on each and every one of the points contained in the draft law. . . . What we are not prepared to compromise on are the questions of principle; on these we have a firm position, with little possibility of modification."

There is a threat to democracy in Nicaragua today. But it comes not from the FSLN, not from the country's majority of workers and farmers whose interests the FSLN represents. It comes from the U.S.-armed, U.S.-trained, and U.S.-paid counterrevolutionary forces that are invading Nicaragua to try to turn the clock back to the days of Somoza. □

## Don't miss a single issue of Intercontinental Press! Send for your subscription now!

- Enclosed is \$25 for a one-year subscription.
- Enclosed is \$12.50 for a six-month subscription.
- Enclosed is \$6.25 for a three-month subscription.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to**

*Intercontinental Press*

410 West Street

New York, N.Y. 10014 U.S.A.

# 'Our people are prepared to resist aggression'

Speech by Fidel Castro on 30th anniversary of attack on Moncada

[The following speech by Cuban President Fidel Castro was given in Santiago de Cuba on July 26 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada Barracks, which opened the armed struggle against the Batista dictatorship. The text of the speech is taken from the August 7 issue of the English-language *Granma Weekly Review*, published in Havana.]

\* \* \*

Distinguished Guests;  
People of Santiago;  
Compatriots Throughout the Country:

I wrote this speech in order to prevent the emotions aroused by the date we're celebrating, this afternoon's heat, the magnitude of this rally, and the effort involved in improvising from clouding the ideas involved and upsetting the balance of my statements. Our people awaited this anniversary with affection, enthusiasm, joy, and fervor. For me and for all the other survivors of the attack on the Moncada, it is a unique experience to meet 30 years later with the people of Santiago to commemorate the date on which our generation embarked on the course of our country's definitive liberation. None of those who preceded us in our people's long struggle for independence, freedom, and justice enjoyed such a privilege. It is fitting that we bow our heads in tribute to those who showed us the way, those who from 1868 on have led our people on the road to revolution and made our Revolution possible with their lives, their sacrifice, and their heroism, often with no other reward but the bitterness of setbacks and the seemingly infinite, unattainable distance between their efforts and their goal.

Unquestionably, those of us who are with you today are not the same as we were then, for we had to live through these 30 years of rich, unimaginable experience in order to be able to acquire the knowledge and the maturity that only the school of the Revolution itself is capable of teaching. Then, everything seemed to be a dream and armed with those dreams we began our struggle. We were even called dreamers by many of our contemporaries, who were not completely convinced that the future of our country could be changed and was inexorably bound to change.

Long before then Martí had said: "The real man does not take into account on what side life is most enjoyable but rather on what side duty calls. He is the only practical man, whose dream of today will be the law of tomorrow, for he who has looked into the entrails of the world and has seen the peoples flaming and bloody in the crucible of centuries knows that, without exception, the future is on the side of duty." (APPLAUSE)

There is only one way in which we are the same as on July 26, 1953: we have the same faith in the future of our country, the same confidence in our people's virtues, the same sureness of victory, the same capacity to dream of everything that will come true tomorrow, above and beyond the dreams come true today. (APPLAUSE)

In those days even we ourselves were unable to appraise the full magnitude of the stage of history that was being born. Revolutionary fighters usually just carry out their duty, giving no thought to either history or glory. Seen now in perspective and in light of the events that have taken place in the last three decades, the struggle that was begun on that morning in Santiago de Cuba would lead to victory a process that had been evolving for almost a century.

The revolution for independence begun at Yara in October 1868 ended with the Zanjón Peace Treaty, after ten years of extraordinarily heroic struggle against overwhelming odds.

The revolution begun in Baire in February 1895 was tragically cut short by the military intervention of the United States and the establish-

ment of the shameful status of Yankee neocolonial domination legalized by the odious Platt Amendment. The right to intervene in our country, to our humiliation, was included in the Constitution of the Republic.

In these wars of independence, at a time when our population was only about one and a half million, our people fought for many long

---

## A social revolution merged with the national liberation struggle . . .

---

years against an army of over 300,000 Spanish soldiers — which will give us an idea of the magnitude and heroism of their effort.

The struggles waged in the so-called republican stage and the revolution of 1933 also ended in the frustration of the Cuban people's most cherished aspirations and the further consolidation of imperialist domination over our country.

Eighty-five years after Yara, our struggle was renewed with the attack on the Moncada Garrison, and on January 1, 1959, the final liberation of our country was achieved.

The fortress did not fall with the first attack, but it crumbled five and a half years later and with it the entire military apparatus of the odious tyranny that served as the foundation for the regime of exploitation and imperialist domination that existed in Cuba.

How different the names of Céspedes, Agramonte, Gómez, Maceo, Martí, Mella, Villena, Guiteras, Jesús Menéndez, and other beloved figures in our history sound now! (APPLAUSE) And today they are joined by those of Abel, Frank, Camilo, Che, and so many others of the most recent generation of heroes. (APPLAUSE)

But when we began our struggle on July 26, 1953, it was only with a feeling of embarrassment that we were able to recall our own history, for the work was still incomplete. The invocation of our heroes by sell-out, corrupt politicians was practically a daily offense. A false version of our history was taught in our schools and those who robbed us of our freedom in 1898 were depicted as our country's liberators.

Even our beautiful history of struggles had to be restored. However, we found the source and the inspiration for our struggles in the insuperable example set by our glorious predecessors, in their intelligent, heroic battles and in Martí's luminous thought.

Fortunately, to this we could add the knowledge and the correct interpretation, in the existing conditions, of the ideas of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Without them we wouldn't have been able to fully understand the world we lived in, nor find the correct strategy to be followed in the Cuba of 1953, when the mention of their names was practically forbidden in our country.

What gave added richness and content to the last stage of our struggle for liberation was the fact that a social revolution merged with the national liberation struggle. From the time of the Moncada attack we could conceive of no form of true revolution except a socialist revolution. Hatred of the bloodthirsty, pro-imperialist tyranny acted as the cement that drew together all our people into the battle. However, there were some who believed that the process would come to a halt on January 1, 1959, and that we would go back to the sickening political and socioeconomic system of 1952. But the Revolution did not come to a halt, nor could it. Today, 30 years after the attack on the Moncada Garrison, I can assert, as convinced as I was then, that it would have constituted an act of high treason against our homeland.

This is why today we can proclaim with legitimate pride that the blood shed on that day and in the following five and a half years, and the blood shed in almost 25 years of Revolution was not shed in vain; it did not serve to contribute to bourgeois exploitation nor to maintain,





Teacher training school in Matanzas Province. "Within the next two decades our educational system will rank among the world's best."

under pseudodemocratic forms, a society where the immense majority work for a minority of exploiters and parasites, with the resulting privileges, abuse, injustice, inequality and vice inherent to such a system, which is inexorably condemned by history. In this regard we are years ahead of the other countries in Latin America, and this will some day be considered as a great historical merit for our country. (APPLAUSE)

What we have achieved in 25 years' time — and we have achieved more than any other sister nation in this hemisphere — we would have never achieved under capitalism. (APPLAUSE)

In the first years of this brief period of history we were able to do away with unemployment, illiteracy, beggary, racial discrimination,

---

### **What we have achieved in 25 years' time we would have never achieved under capitalism . . .**

---

gambling, prostitution and drugs. We would like to know what other country in this hemisphere has achieved that. (APPLAUSE)

All the workers in our country are covered by a decent, fair, and far-reaching social security system.

Our health system and our health indices place us at the lead of Third World nations and even above several developed countries; and within the next 20 years we shall be among the best in the world. (APPLAUSE)

We have trained over 200,000 teachers and our educational system, our teaching levels and our curricula are at the lead of the underdeveloped countries and within the next two decades will also rank among the world's best. (APPLAUSE) We have over 200,000 university students, 18 times greater than the largest figure in prerevolutionary Cuba. Every one of our 14 provinces has a center of higher education.

Thousands of new constructions, among them primary schools, children's day care centers, secondary schools and polytechnic schools,

universities, hospitals, polyclinics, homes for the aged, and other facilities have been built in our country.

All the land, all the mines, and every plant and factory, that is, all of the country's wealth and natural resources, have been recovered. (APPLAUSE)

Our agriculture has been mechanized and modernized. Electricity now extends to practically all the rural areas in our country. There are highways and roads all over the island and hundreds of new rural communities have sprung up along with thousands of agricultural works including dams, irrigation systems, dairies, poultry and hog farms, warehouses, machine and repair shops, and other facilities.

Hundreds of new factories have been built and those under construction include our first nuclear plant, the oil refinery in Cienfuegos, the thermoelectric plant east of Havana, and the nickel processing plants in Moa and Punta Gorda. Given their complex construction, importance, and technological level, the last two constitute an exceptional merit for their builders and are also a source of pride for our country, since prior to the Revolution all plants in our country involving complex construction were built by foreign firms. (APPLAUSE)

The plans for our new sugar mills are drawn up in our country and more than 60 percent of these mills' components are produced here.

Dozens of planning and design enterprises have been set up, and over 100 research centers have been opened. Thousands of Cuban professionals — engineers, architects, biologists, biochemists, and other technicians and scientists — are working in these highly technical and scientific centers.

Culture and sports have become massive and are now the birthright of our people.

There isn't a single sphere of our economic and social life where the progress made in these years has not been significant, despite the criminal imperialist blockade and the fact that Cuba started off as a country with an underdeveloped and dependent economy.

And it's very important that the victorious Revolution was able, from the very beginning, to rally around its flag all the revolutionary, demo-

cratic, patriotic, and progressive forces of the country and to create, on the basis of merit, ability, and spirit of sacrifice, a solid and indestructible vanguard party that is the educator and guide of our people and the defender of its closest unity and of the principles of our revolutionary process. (APPLAUSE)

Our young people, meanwhile, have also created their powerful vanguard organization, where those who constitute the relief force of the Party are trained.

Our workers, our peasants, the residents of every block in our cities and towns, our students, and even our children also organized a strong mass organization, to which practically all our people belong and which constitutes an impregnable bastion against the enemies of the Revolution. (APPLAUSE)

Never in the 25 years of existence of our revolutionary process has a soldier, a policeman, or a fireman been used against our people. (APPLAUSE) This is because the people are the Revolution, and the people, with their immense power, defend themselves. (APPLAUSE) What a glaring contrast between this and the panorama we are witnessing in the Americas and in a large part of the rest of the world, where workers, peasants, students, and fighters for civil rights and for peace are beaten up by the police and met with dogs, tear gas, firefighting equipment, and so forth! (APPLAUSE)

Isn't it so that the capitalist world is constantly demonstrating for all of us to see what really is happening there?

The Revolution has created the necessary institutions in our country by proclaiming the socialist Constitution and by founding the National Assembly and People's Power, an experiment full of political wealth and possibilities in the social sphere, a school of self-government in which all the people participate. The functions of the state have been broadly decentralized to an extent unknown in any bourgeois regime.

Our people already have a highly developed political education, a profound knowledge of national and international problems, and a spirit of solidarity and internationalism that makes us all feel proud because it is one of the Revolution's most beautiful achievements. (APPLAUSE)

Our Revolution proves false the myth that as time goes by all revolutionary processes lose their strength and enthusiasm. Revolutionary strength and enthusiasm are today greater than ever, with the difference, as compared with the early years, that the process is now more solid, more conscious, and more profound. (APPLAUSE)

1983, which marks the 25th year of the Revolution, is the year of our greatest efficiency. In a recent analysis made by the Executive Commit-

---

### **Never in the 25 years of existence of our revolutionary process has a soldier, a policeman, or a fireman been used against our people . . .**

---

tee of the Council of Ministers we have been able to see the impressive way in which the workers have responded to the resolution of the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party in confronting difficulties, conserving fuel and raw materials, and boosting efficiency in production and services. This is why, at a time of serious international economic crisis and in spite of severe natural disasters that afflicted the country in the first half of the year, we have had outstanding results in all activities. Our people's working and fighting spirit nowadays is far greater than at any other time in our revolutionary process, this being a worthy tribute to the 30th anniversary of the Moncada attack and the 25th anniversary of the triumph of the Revolution, which we will celebrate next January 1. (APPLAUSE)

But have these achievements been accomplished without struggle? Can we afford to rest on our laurels and, convinced of the justness and rightness of our cause, ignore the dangers now threatening us? (SHOUTS OF "NO!") Is imperialist arrogance resigned to the successes of our Revolution and the example set by it? (SHOUTS OF "NO!") We know well that the answer is "No." Seldom has more threatening language been heard; seldom has imperialist arrogance reached more ab-

surd heights; seldom has a U.S. ruler spoken so brutally, aggressively, and wickedly in relation to Cuba. They threaten us with military blockades, they threaten us with reprisals and punishments, they threaten us with invasions. Should we be afraid? (SHOUTS OF "NO!") No. We must be prepared. (APPLAUSE AND SHOUTS OF "COMMANDER IN CHIEF, WE AWAIT YOUR ORDERS!")

Our defense efforts all these years have been substantial. It has meant the investment of considerable energy and material resources. How happy we would have been to have spent every last penny of that money

---

### **Our revolution proves false the myth that as time goes by all revolutionary processes lose their strength and enthusiasm . . .**

---

on factories, housing, hospitals, schools, roads, cultural centers, and recreational and sports facilities! No one can forget that during the first months of the Revolution we turned nearly all the country's army barracks into schools. (APPLAUSE) But we would have deluded ourselves in an unforgivable and fatal manner if we had neglected our defense.

Almost from the very beginning, the imperialists' plans for aggression, criminal conspiracies, smuggled weapons, acts of sabotage, counterrevolutionary bands, cynical plans to kill off the Revolution's leaders, and planned mercenary invasions forced us to arm ourselves speedily, train our militia, and efficiently organize and train our Revolutionary Armed Forces. (APPLAUSE)

Had we not been duly prepared, the April 1961 mercenary invasion, a prelude to foreign troops being dispatched to our homeland, could have cost hundreds of thousands of our people's lives. Because there's no question that the country would have resisted regardless of cost and whatever the price. Thanks to the steps taken in due time, we dealt the enemy a complete and crushing defeat. (APPLAUSE)

Yankee hysteria and their aim of seeking revenge led to political and military measures that ushered in, 18 months later, the October 1962 missile crisis, which brought the world to the brink of nuclear war and ended with the U.S. commitment to give up plans to invade Cuba.

Yet imperialism never abandoned its aim to destroy the Revolution one way or another. The economic blockade was stepped up and the various forms of sabotage even included resorting to biological warfare against plantations, animals, and the people themselves. However, during the long years of the Vietnam War, the imperialists — deeply submerged in that dirty war which ended in defeat and subsequent trauma — brought us some respite on the military level.

The arrival to power in the United States early in 1981 of a reactionary, extreme right clique with an openly warmongering and fascist foreign policy brought once more to the forefront the subject of military aggression against our nation.

The political philosophy of the new administration was known since before the elections in the United States. A group of haggard, ignorant, frenzied, and irresponsible Reagan advisers belonging to the Santa Fe Committee had drawn up in detail the future imperial policy of the United States vis-à-vis Cuba, Central America, the rest of Latin America, and the Caribbean. Cuba was to be given the alternative of yielding to the United States or else being destabilized, militarily blockaded, and even invaded if necessary. Economic promises would be made to encourage us to submit. Plainly put, we were to be intimidated and bought off or else liquidated.

Such a policy stemmed from the supposition that Cuba, thousands of miles away from the socialist camp, could not receive any military aid and that the October 1962 commitment between the United States and the USSR, following the removal of the nuclear missiles from Cuba, has now lapsed after 20 years.

It is infuriating to witness the cynicism with which the right of a people to a free and sovereign existence is questioned and tied to the possibility that military aid may or may not be forthcoming from abroad in the event of aggression, or to the issue of whether or not a binding commitment is still in force. That commitment still exists and remains





Prensa Latina

"1.8 million women, in a strong and moving gesture, have volunteered to join the Territorial Troop Militia."

completely in effect. But the imperialists underestimate our people and overestimate themselves.

Our Revolution was not exported from abroad; we made it ourselves. (APPLAUSE) The arms with which we fought against the tyranny and defeated it didn't come to us from anywhere; they were U.S.-built and we captured them from the enemy. (APPLAUSE) Socialism was not exported to Cuba from any other country; we developed it ourselves. (APPLAUSE) We made this Revolution with our own blood and we have defended it with our own blood. (PROLONGED APPLAUSE) Not before, or now, or ever have we made or will we make sovereign decisions at the expense of others or thinking that others will fight for us. (APPLAUSE) Our philosophy since July 26, 1953 — it could be said since long before that, October 10, 1868 — is that we Cubans have always felt capable of fighting for our freedom and defending it. (APPLAUSE) Freedom is not a gift that can be given or bought. No people is entitled to it unless able to defend it on its own. (PROLONGED APPLAUSE)

We wouldn't have the privilege of calling ourselves revolutionaries or considering ourselves free unless we were convinced that we are more than capable of defending our nation and our Revolution from any enemy, no matter how powerful. A truly revolutionary and patriotic people may be physically swept off the face of the earth but can never be conquered. (APPLAUSE)

When the threats and the risk of Yankee military aggression against Cuba began anew, we didn't lose a minute in adopting the pertinent measures. Even before Reagan's inauguration, once he was elected president of the United States, our Party decided to set up the Territorial Troop Militia. (APPLAUSE) Over half a million men and women and tens of thousands of officers were organized, trained and armed in less than a year. The combat readiness of our armed forces grew considerably thanks to this effort and the simultaneous reception and assimilation of new combat equipment. The Revolutionary Armed Forces accomplished a true feat in rapidly structuring and preparing the Territorial Troop Militia. (APPLAUSE)

We have likewise drawn up plans to resist any naval blockade, no matter how long it lasts, and we have prepared ourselves to face any kind of aggression the imperialists may contrive. (APPLAUSE) Recently we staged the Bastión '83 strategic maneuvers, in which over 100,000 persons took part, including the principal Party, government, and Revolutionary Armed Forces cadres, based on a supposed sudden

and massive attack. This evidenced how our people are seriously and efficiently prepared to resist aggression.

Out of the patriotism that grows in the face of danger, 1.8 million women, in a strong and moving gesture, have volunteered to join the Territorial Troop Militia. (APPLAUSE) The combat potential of our people, men and women alike, is now almost six million citizens. In the next 12 months an additional half million men and women plus 30,000 new officers will be joining the Territorial Troop Militia, well prepared, trained, and armed. (APPLAUSE) In this case, since our men of military age are already part of the regular troops and reserves of the Revo-

---

**They threaten us with reprisals  
and punishments, they threaten us with  
invasions. Should we be afraid?  
No. We must be prepared . . .**

---

lutionary Armed Forces and the current Territorial Troop Militia, or else are indispensable in production and services in case of war, the new units will be made up mainly of women, in a ratio of three to one in relation to men. (PROLONGED APPLAUSE) In this way, one million additional combatants will be added to the existing armed forces and reserve troops.

Our people will be prepared to fiercely resist, not just naval and airborne landing operations and defend the cities and positions to the last inch and the last man, but also to go on fighting even when the country has been invaded and occupied. (APPLAUSE) Every cadre of the Party, the state, the armed forces; every officer, every combatant, every citizen, and even every teenager will know what to do under any circumstances. On every square meter of our cities and mountains, on every street, on every block, in every home in our cities, the enemy will be up against our combatants. (APPLAUSE)

Our Revolutionary Armed Forces are studying the terrain and, in coordination with the Party, People's Power, and the mass organizations, are carrying out detailed and methodical preparation for this type of struggle. We will never forget our beginnings when with only seven rifles we took up the war against an 80,000-strong armed enemy. (APPLAUSE) Even if the main leaders of the Revolution had perished

---

in the struggle, the resistance never would have stopped. (APPLAUSE)

In a territory that barely covers the surface area of Havana and Matanzas provinces, a few thousand Salvadoran patriots have brought more than 60,000 armed men to the brink of collapse. The genocidal regime's soldiers, national guardsmen, police, and paramilitary troops wouldn't

---

**Our people, their patriotism, their spirit of struggle, and their combat morale are what make up our invincible force . . .**

---

be able to keep fighting if it weren't for the avalanche of material support, political support, and military advice supplied by the government of the United States. In Western Sahara, the Saharawi patriots fight in the desert against tens of thousands of Moroccan soldiers also supplied by the United States and yet they hold 80 percent of the territory. In Lebanon, the Zionist aggressors are shaken by their losses caused almost daily by the growing Palestinian and Lebanese resistance. (APPLAUSE)

How many troops would imperialism need to occupy Cuba? Five million soldiers wouldn't be enough to confront hundreds of thousands, or even millions of determined and well-trained combatants and tens of thousands of officers and cadres fighting on their own soil under a single banner against a despicable foreign attack bent on destroying our Revolution and our country. (APPLAUSE) Here, with their soldiers pitted against ours, imperialism's nuclear weapons, dozens of divisions, thousands of planes and tanks, and hundreds of warships would be worth nothing. Our people, their patriotism, their spirit of struggle, and their combat morale are what make up our invincible force, superior to any weapon or military technology that may exist. (APPLAUSE)

As we have said to many comrades, we would apply the formidable watchword of Maceo: "Whoever tries to conquer Cuba will gain nothing but the dust of her blood-soaked soil — if he doesn't perish in the struggle first!" (APPLAUSE) But in this case, the enemy would not gain the dust of our blood-soaked soil. He would perish first. (PROLONGED APPLAUSE)

That is our answer to the insolent Yankee threats.

And, in this area, not only is our country the object of threats and dangers. Nicaragua and Central America at large are seriously threatened by the same insane and aggressive policy. (APPLAUSE AND SHOUTS OF "VIVA NICARAGUA!")

In fact, the United States is already intervening in Nicaragua through thousands of former Somocista guards based, trained, and supplied in Honduran territory. Support to the counterrevolution is openly declared by imperialism, which hasn't been able to hide it, although according to CIA jargon it is a secret war.

Hundreds of humble Nicaraguan patriots have lost their lives as a consequence of the U.S. government's crimes. The history of the Escambray Mountains and Playa Girón is being repeated with unparalleled cynicism against the sister people of Nicaragua.

Similarly the United States is intervening in El Salvador, supplying, training, and advising the army of a genocidal regime which has murdered more than 40,000 Salvadorans.

The United States is intervening in Honduras, establishing land and air bases, undermining the civil government's authority, and openly turning it into an instrument of aggression against Nicaragua.

The historical causes of the problems of Central America are only too well-known, originating in prolonged and brutal domestic oppression and exploitation and the chain of U.S. interventions in those countries. Sandino's struggles in Nicaragua against U.S. occupation, the peasant insurrections of the '30s in El Salvador, and the Guatemalan revolution smashed by the U.S. government in 1954 were developments that occurred many years before the Cuban Revolution, the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua, and the current revolutionary process in El Salvador.

The situation in the convulsed Central American region has awakened very deep concern throughout the world, including that of European governments allied with the United States. In our region, Mexico, Ven-

ezuela, Colombia, and Panama took the initiative months ago to pursue politically negotiated solutions to the grave situation in the area. In a summit meeting held in Cancún on July 17, these countries, called the Contadora Group, issued a broad appeal to the countries of Central America which was extended to the United States and Cuba for support and cooperation in the search for a political solution.

Nicaragua responded July 19, accepting the initiation of immediate multilateral negotiations in the presence of the Contadora Group, with a six-point program including its willingness to sign a nonaggression pact with Honduras and its desire to reach an agreement regarding El Salvador based on a halt to the supply of all weapons to both opposing parties. Nicaragua's serious and dignified position excludes any kind of unilateral concession, capitulation, or surrender in response to the pressure, threats and aggressions of the United States. But it expresses with complete clarity its willingness to discuss and resolve, within an honorable and principled context, the above mentioned points as well as any other point included in the declaration of the Contadora Group's presidents.

Cuba's answer to the presidents of the Contadora Group was equally rapid and clear. We unhesitatingly support their efforts in pursuit of a worthy and just negotiated solution to the problems of Central America; we fully support Nicaragua's July 19 statements and express our willingness to cooperate with Nicaragua in order to achieve a negotiated political agreement on the area's problems.

The U.S. answer, apart from any formal statements, included an extremely aggressive speech given on July 18 by President Reagan against Nicaragua, which practically demanded the resignation of the Sandinista government; the hurried dispatch of an aircraft carrier together with several warships to Nicaragua's Pacific coast; the announcement that another aircraft carrier, similarly escorted by warships, would be sent from the Mediterranean to Nicaragua's Atlantic coast; and the decision to conduct military maneuvers with thousands of U.S. soldiers in Honduran territory starting at the beginning of August. It's said the maneuvers include blockade exercises and will last six months. This kind of maneuvers, of such prolonged duration, is truly unusual. In reality it

---

**We fully support Nicaragua's July 19 statements and express our willingness to cooperate with Nicaragua in order to achieve a negotiated agreement on the area's problems . . .**

---

is an actual deployment of U.S. troops in Central America. Nicaragua is already essentially surrounded by U.S. warships and soldiers. The threats and pressures couldn't be more vulgar or more repugnant.

Nevertheless, we must be rational. We do not doubt in the least that the U.S. government has been trying deliberately in recent weeks to create an atmosphere of terror and insecurity regarding Nicaragua, increasing the pressure to the highest imaginable degree. But such measures are dangerous because the distance between this kind of psychological warfare and action has been reduced to the minimum. The irresponsible people advising Reagan may feel tempted to take new steps, making the situation irreversible.

Thus we are exceptional witnesses to the way in which the United States is moving towards an extremely serious mistake with incalculable consequences. The Nicaragua of 1983 is not the Nicaragua of 1926. A heroic and victorious people's revolution has involved the entire nation in the struggle, in spite of a tiny minority favoring the Somocistas and other counterrevolutionary forces. Patriotic, revolutionary fervor has grown with the external aggression and the people are more united than ever before in the history of that brave country. Nicaragua has no modern combat aviation nor armored equipment in abundance, and neither does it have enough artillery to face up to a large-scale act of aggression by the United States. But it does have the means to arm the people and this means many tens of thousands of fighters with a patriotic tradition and combat experience, capable of making life impossible for any aggressor, no matter how powerful. (APPLAUSE) The imperialists also



underestimate the peoples of Central America.

I am convinced that the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutionaries can never be subdued by force. (APPLAUSE) An attempt to crush the revolutions of Nicaragua and El Salvador by means of armed intervention would be like trying to cut out a tumor that would spread quickly all over the body of Central America. (APPLAUSE)

Just a year has passed since a NATO country, supported by the United States, waged war on a Latin American nation, constituting an affront and a humiliation to the peoples in Our America. Now the United States, in a call to battle stations, is advancing its squadrons and troops in a threatening fashion against another Latin American nation. A new Vietnam in the heart of the American continent? May it never happen, and there's still time to avoid it! The peoples of Our America and the rest of the world would not sit back and observe a crime of such magnitude.

The same aggressive policy of the present U.S. administration is found everywhere in the world: in the Middle East, southern Africa, in the Indian Ocean, and even in Europe, where the deployment of 572 medium-range strategic nuclear missiles is scheduled to take place soon. This is an unprecedented and unheard-of provocation against the socialist community. Amidst a frightening economic crisis, the arms race is raging with untold force.

We are living in risky and difficult times. The threat of confrontation is not only local; it is worldwide. We need nerves of steel, the greatest strength, the greatest mobilization of the peoples, and an absolute determination not to yield to blackmail if we are to stop the aggressor, if we are to safeguard peace, if we are to survive.

Two days ago we celebrated the bicentennial of Simón Bolívar's birth. To him, the father of Our America's freedom, we wanted to pay special tribute on this occasion. (APPLAUSE)

Our America is still a long way from realizing Bolívar's dream. It is not the community of solidly united peoples that he set out to forge. The empire to the North, turbulent and brutal, has kept us balkanized and divided; more than a few of our peoples live under brutal fascist systems or are subject to iron repression; illiteracy, unhealthy conditions, stark poverty, ruthless exploitation by transnational companies and reactionary oligarchies afflict nearly all of them to a greater or lesser extent. Even those of us who in recent years have undertaken profound revolutions are forced to fight against the legacy of a foreign domination that lasted for centuries. Nevertheless, the awareness of the American peoples is beginning to come alive. The Malvinas War made us all realize how cynical and opportunistic the U.S. government is, with its total lack of morals and the vulgar manner in which the imperialists are able to abandon their own commitments, and all this contributed to the awakening of the Americas. Fascism is in crisis and progressive, democratic ideas are advancing in the hearts and minds of the peoples.

In the struggle for this awakening of our awareness, the peoples of Central America this time have taken the lead. Today, there is still va-

---

### **A new Vietnam in the heart of the American continent? The peoples of Our America and the rest of the world would not sit back and observe a crime of such magnitude . . .**

---

lidity to Martí's words about the great Liberator, spoken on October 28, 1893: "Bolívar is there in the American heaven . . . vigilant and stern . . . wearing his campaign boots, because what he did not complete has yet to be accomplished; because Bolívar still has work to do in the Americas!" (APPLAUSE)

From this rostrum I hail the dauntless children of Sandino, (APPLAUSE) who smashed Somoza's army to bits and are unafraid of the United States' gross aggressions and threats to blockade and invade the country. I hail the admirable Salvadoran fighters, who have known how to check the imperialists' domination of their small nation and who astonish the world with their feats of war. (APPLAUSE) I hail the unselfish, tenacious Guatemalan patriots, who for over 20 years have been

fighting against the genocidal regime imposed by the United States in 1954. (APPLAUSE) I hail the brave, determined Grenadians, who broke the chains of oppression and are building a just society. (APPLAUSE) I hail the courageous Chilean people, who unanimously are rising up against the fascist tyranny, (APPLAUSE) and I hail the peoples in the Americas' Southern Cone who are fighting for their democratic liberties and for an end to repression and oppression. (APPLAUSE)

I hail all the peoples who in other continents are fighting in similar ways against the same imperialism: the brave Saharai fighters; (APPLAUSE) our very dear friends the Palestinians; (APPLAUSE) the brave, unyielding fighters in South Africa; (APPLAUSE) our sister peoples of Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, and other Front Line states who courageously are resisting the pressures, threats, and attacks of the racists and the imperialists; (APPLAUSE) the Arab countries, which are constant victims of imperialist and Zionist aggression; (APPLAUSE)

---

### **I hail the dauntless children of Sandino, who smashed Somoza's army to bits and are unafraid of the United States' gross aggressions and threats . . .**

---

and all the peoples of Asia and Africa who are confronting the underdevelopment, colonial exploitation, and abysmal poverty left by centuries of exploitation past and present. (APPLAUSE)

With particular affection I hail the Soviet Union and all the socialist sister countries, (PROLONGED APPLAUSE) with deepest gratitude for the solidarity they gave us in crucial, difficult moments and for their constant support.

I hail working people everywhere in the world; those who fight for peace, who in all continents and in the heart of Europe, in Japan, and in the United States itself are making intrepid efforts to stop the stupid arms race and avoid a worldwide holocaust that could mean the end of the human race. (APPLAUSE)

Today I wish to especially recall those comrades who died during the Moncada attack; (APPLAUSE) those who were persecuted and unjustly punished for their revolutionary struggles; those who were with us in Batista's prisons; those who went into exile with us and organized the *Granma* expedition; (APPLAUSE) the unforgettable fighters of the Sierra and the plains; (APPLAUSE) those who tenaciously defended the Revolution in the Escambray Mountains and at Playa Girón; (APPLAUSE) those who stood up to and defeated the plots, terrorist plans, acts of sabotage, and crimes of the United States against our Revolution; (APPLAUSE) those who with their blood or sweat expressed the solidarity of our country, to the extent of their abilities, with the just causes and economic, technical, and social needs of many other peoples; (APPLAUSE) the unselfish relatives of those who died or suffered, and those who had to weep over their loved ones in these long, glorious years of struggle. (APPLAUSE)

A grateful, deep and eternal recognition of our working people who with sacrifice, steadfastness, and heroism made the ideas and program behind the Moncada attack their own and then carried them forward until they culminated in the most radical Revolution in our history and the establishment in Cuba of the first socialist state in the western hemisphere; (APPLAUSE) who not only were able to carry it out but who now defend it and are determined to defend it to the very last man or woman. (APPLAUSE)

Everlasting glory to the Cuban people and their heroic sons and daughters! (SHOUTS OF "GLORY!")

Everlasting glory to those who died for their country and the Revolution! (SHOUTS OF "GLORY!")

Everlasting glory to the ideas that made us revolutionaries and brought us freedom, justice, honor, and victory! (SHOUTS OF "GLORY!")

Patria o muerte!  
Venceremos!  
(OVATION)

# Fretilin leader discusses cease-fire

*Independence fighters control over 70 percent of territory*

[The following interview with Abilio Araujo, a representative of Fretilin (Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente — Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor), appeared in the July 12 issue of *Direct Action*, the weekly newspaper of the Australian Socialist Workers Party.

[Fretilin led the 1975 revolution that ended 400 years of Portuguese colonial rule over East Timor. Ten days later, Indonesia's military dictatorship — supported by the United States, Australia and New Zealand — invaded. Over 200,000 Timorese are estimated to have died under the eight-year Indonesian occupation, out of a former population of only 650,000.

In March 1983, the Indonesian government approached Fretilin and requested a cease-fire. Fretilin has put forward the following proposals as a basis of settlement: unconditional withdrawal of Indonesia's 40,000 occupation troops, entry of a United Nations peace-keeping force, and a free vote of self-determination by the people of East Timor.

[Araujo and another representative of Fretilin toured Australia in July, explaining the case for East Timor's independence. Araujo had been barred from entering Australia for seven years under the previous Australian government, but the ban was reversed following the victory of the Labor Party in the elections last

March. Araujo was interviewed on July 9 by Geoff Streeton.]

\* \* \*

*Question. Fretilin took part in negotiations in March this year with the Indonesian military command in East Timor. What was the meaning of these negotiations? What was the process that led up to them?*

*Answer.* What these negotiations show is that the Indonesians are unable to control the political and military situation in East Timor. They cannot solve the social and economic problems that exist among the population in the Indonesian-controlled areas.

The fact that negotiations were held also means that the international support for the East Timorese people is being felt in Indonesia.

The proposal for talks came from the Indonesian authorities.

On March 21 and 23, Indonesian helicopters brought the Indonesian military commanders, headed by the supreme commander of their troops in East Timor, Colonel Purwanto, to Lari Guto in the Fretilin-controlled part of our territory. In these conversations both parties agreed to a cease-fire.

Fretilin told the Indonesian delegation that the discussions should lead to the total and un-

conditional withdrawal of Indonesian troops from East Timor, and to respect for the right to independence and self-determination of the people of East Timor.

On these two points, the Indonesian authorities said that they would wait for a reply from the central government, to which Fretilin itself sent a message.

In this message we said that the second round of preliminary talks would only begin after the Indonesian government had notified the General Secretary of the United Nations.

Today there is a cease-fire. There are no armed clashes.

*Q. And large areas remain under Fretilin control?*

*A.* Yes. According to the last military and political map drawn up by our Revolutionary Council of National Resistance, Fretilin controls over 70 percent of the territory of East Timor.

*Q. Can you say something about the course of the military struggle from 1975, when East Timorese independence was declared and the Indonesians invaded, up until the cease-fire at the beginning of this year?*

*A.* This period of national resistance can be divided into several stages. The first period extended from 1975 until the end of 1978. The second lasted from the end of 1978 to 1981, and the third, from 1981 until the present day.

Throughout the first phase Fretilin controlled most of the country and the population, and was successful in stopping the advances of the Indonesian armed forces.

During this period life in the Fretilin-controlled areas was well organized. We had agricultural cooperatives, we had cooperatives of production, distribution, and consumption. We had schools, we had small industries, we developed our own medicines, and so on.

But after this period came the campaigns of encirclement and annihilation. This was when the aggression reached its highest point.

The Western governments contributed to this escalation of the war by giving military aid to renew the Indonesian armed forces' equipment.

The period from 1978 to 1981 was a period of some disorganization and demoralisation for us.

An overwhelming majority of our Central Committee members were annihilated. Ninety percent of our armed forces were destroyed, and our war materiel captured.

By the end of 1979 only the extreme eastern part of the island was untouched by the enemy



Jill Jolliffe/IP

March 1975 demonstration in East Timor. Banner says: "Only one power: the people. Only one party: Fretilin. Only one aim: independence."



aggression. In other parts of East Timor there were only some guerrilla pockets.

The population had to surrender to the Indonesians, or they would have been completely destroyed by the lack of food and lack of the basic conditions for survival.

That's why the remnants of the Fretilin leadership at the end of 1979 told the population to move to the Indonesian-controlled areas.

Together with the population went our clandestine cadres, to organise them.

Political and military cadres came from the eastern zone and were spread throughout the country.

This process of reorganization reached its culmination in March 1981, when the first national conference of Fretilin took place.

At this conference, Fretilin elected a new leadership, the Revolutionary Council of National Resistance, which is headed by Comrade Xanana.

In this period we constructed what we call the combination of guerrilla warfare with the underground resistance.

Last year Fretilin's new army succeeded in destroying several military targets of the enemy. We captured a lot of weaponry. We captured a lot of medicines from the Indonesian army, and even a lot of money.

*Q. What is Fretilin's strategy for carrying on the struggle from this point?*

A. Our strategy continues to be one of people's protracted war.

In 1979 we realised that we could not continue to conduct the classic positional war. We were at a disadvantage because we could not renew our equipment, but our enemy could.

So we turned to guerrilla warfare. This does not only involve military aspects; the people also have to participate.

Even the people who live in the occupied areas take part in the struggle, by organising themselves, by sending food and medicine to the mountains.

So it is a war that is being carried out by all the people.

We are prepared for a long war. And of course, we combine the political and military struggle in East Timor with diplomatic struggle.

*Q. So the cease-fire allows Fretilin to work more freely on the political front, organising and propagandising around its ideas — that's why it was entered into?*

A. Yes. For us it is a phase, it means we can save our forces, and we can deepen our work

in the occupied areas.

*Q. Finally, how would you assess the role which Australia has played in the years since 1975 with relation to East Timor?*

*Have you any comments to make about the attitude which the Hawke government has taken during the past few months?*

A. The Whitlam government, as well as the Fraser government, sold out the East Timorese.

That is our assessment. We even say that the past Australian governments shared responsibility for the genocide that took place in East Timor.

We were hopeful that the new Labor government would respect the ALP [Australian Labor Party] foreign policy drawn up by the successive national conferences.

We think that since the Indonesians already recognise Fretilin, since the Indonesians and Fretilin are sitting together to negotiate on the future, there is no reason for the Australian government to fear jeopardising its relations with Indonesia if it supports our right to self-determination and independence.

We ask Australia to play a positive role, because we want our victory to have an Australian contribution. □

---

## Sweden

---

# Organizing in the Volvo truck factory

## Interview with Socialist Party leader Goete Kilden

[The Volvo auto and truck plant at Gothenburg is the biggest industrial plant in Scandinavia, with some 12,000 to 13,000 workers. Goete Kilden, who works at the truck factory there, is a leader of the union opposition, chairman of the section committee at the truck factory, and a leader of the Socialist Party, the Swedish section of the Fourth International. The following interview with Kilden was obtained by Tom Gustafsson. It appeared in the July 11 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a biweekly magazine published under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

*Question. How would you describe the position of the Union Opposition at Volvo today, after ten years of consistent work?*

*Answer.* It is hard to express the influence of the Union Opposition in terms of percentages. The vote it gets differs from question to question and depending on the general political situation.

But let's start with the results of the most recent elections.

In the election for the union local leader-

ship, the opposition ran one candidate, myself. The result was relatively good. I got 35 percent of the vote. The vote we got differed from shop to shop. In all, there were ballot boxes in 23 shops. We got the majority in two, including the truck factory, where I work.

I ran as a candidate for the Union Opposition. But the Social Democrats in the engineering union have rigged the rules in such a way that I was obliged formally to stand under a party label, as a candidate for the Socialist Party.

The Social Democrats got about 65 percent of the votes. About 45 percent of the work force voted. You have to keep in mind that nearly everyone at Volvo is in the union.

Before the union local elections, at the beginning of the year, there were shop leadership elections. I was elected chairman of the largest section of the truck assembly workers with 70 percent of the vote.

In this shop, the opposition got a majority of the section leadership, with an average vote of 60 percent. We also made a breakthrough in the elections for another shop leadership.

Up until then, the only leadership posts we held were in the truck assembly section. But

this time the opposition managed to win two places in another shop leadership. In both other shops where we ran straight opposition candidates, we got about 35 percent of the vote.

But there are a number of representatives in other section leaderships that sympathize strongly with us. They may hesitate to take part in all our activities or to run under the label "Union Opposition." But they can back up the opposition in various skirmishes that occur in the plant and in battles in the union.

*Q. What's the situation like at the other levels in the union?*

A. If we take Volvo/Gothenburg as a whole, there are 600 elected union representatives. The number supporting the opposition has varied over the recent years. But we have steadily made inroads into the union apparatus. Today there may be 75 or even 100 shop stewards who are ready to support the opposition in an active way. They were elected because of their close relations with workers on the shop floor and use their posts as levers to advance union organization.

If you add to this the backing we have gotten

in connection with conflicts with the management and on democratic questions in the union as a whole, we can estimate that we have a much broader base of support.

On the other hand, there are a series of problems in the way the union functions that obstruct our work. One example is that the national union has abolished our membership meeting and replaced it with a delegated one. These delegates are bureaucratically chosen, partly appointed. So, in the delegate meetings, we have only about 10 percent on our side. In the membership meetings we often got majorities on various questions.

And as I said, party labels are imposed on candidates running in union elections.

*Q. What sort of impact has the union work at Volvo had outside the plant?*

A. The long years of work and the results it has achieved have made the Union Opposition at Volvo a factor in political life, something that people are aware of here in the Gothenburg district but also on the national level.

Gothenburg is probably Sweden's most important industrial city. Volvo is here, along with the port, shipyards, and various other industries. Everyone active in the unions or interested in the life of the unions knows about the opposition.

Over the last year, above all in connection with the most recent union elections, there has been a great deal of material about the opposition in the papers and on the local radio. So a lot of people have had to take a position on what we are doing.

The opposition is inevitably a subject of discussion in union training sessions and conferences. Where there are representatives of the opposition, people seek us out and discuss with us. A lot of people are curious, interested by the attention our union work has gotten.

*Q. How have the conditions for your work changed in the past year?*

A. The opposition made a certain comeback this year in the elections by comparison with the previous period. When the bourgeois coalition was in power, especially toward the end of its time in office, it was more and more aggressively antilabor. But with the Social Democrats in opposition, the Social Democratic leadership in the union had a lot of maneuvering room. The Union Opposition was pushed back to a certain extent.

The abolition of membership meetings also hurt us. It seriously reduced democracy in the union and put another obstacle in the way of the membership having any say in the union. For the Union Opposition, this meant that we no longer had the kind of forum we had before where we could meet as representatives from various shops, work out statements, prepare contributions, and in general prepare proposals for orienting the union's work in a natural way.

The character of the opposition has also changed as a result of the decline of various political organizations that had been active in

its work. Maoist and centrist groups coming out of the radicalization of the 1960s and 1970s just simply threw in the towel. Foerbundet Kommunist [Communist League (FK)] dissolved outright, nationally. And the formerly very powerful Maoist Sveriges Kommunistiska Parti [Communist Party of Sweden (SKP)] wasted away to a mere shadow of its former self. For some years now, it has had no real influence in our union.



GOETE KILDEN

So, we made something of a comeback in the recent elections. This reflected the beginning of a new situation, which has a lot to do with the installation of the new Social Democratic government.

This shift reflected the first protests, the first distrust, about the Social Democratic government's policy. The Social Democratic Party has in fact introduced abruptly a series of measures aimed against the working people — devaluation of the Swedish crown by 16 percent, increases in indirect taxes, and an informal incomes policy through which the Social Democrats got the unions to make record-low wage demands in the latest contract negotiations.

*Q. In this situation, what were the main trade union and political questions in the union elections this year?*

A. After 1976, which was the last "fat year" as regards the Swedish workers' living standard, the years of declining wages set in, and the thin years have been getting thinner under the Social Democratic government. Since 1976, the living standard of the average Volvo worker has dropped by about 12 percent.

At the same time, the Volvo concern has been making advances on a number of fronts — in its sales of both automobiles and trucks, of marine motors, airplane motors, and busses. In the context of the general crisis in the au-

tomotive industry, Volvo has won new markets and raked in unequalled profits.

In the union local elections, we could point out that the estimated profits for this year — about 4 billion crowns — represent 70,000 crowns for every Volvo employee in the country.

The union's national wage demand — and that was generally accepted as the standard — added up to between two and four thousand crowns.

The union local elections led to an argument, a confrontation, between two lines for the local negotiations, which were to begin in March or April. We demanded that the local should go after a local wage increment of three crowns per hour. We can say that we got good results from this campaign. The union local leadership was forced to get involved in a real discussion about the workers' standard of living and finally for the sake of sheer self-preservation was obliged to raise its demands.

Of course, we also fought hard on other fronts, raising an issue that has become sort of the theme song of the opposition — democracy. We demanded regular reports on the state of contract negotiations, the right to vote on the contract before it is signed (which is not the case today), and membership meetings instead of delegated ones, and so forth.

We also attacked examples of the way the leadership misused its mandate, such as the case of junkets to Portugal for members of the union local leadership, which the company paid for. This amounted to union officials taking money "under the table" from the bosses.

In the elections to the section leadership, a series of specific questions came up, such as reorganization of production and how workers transferred to other shops were treated by union representatives.

*Q. A lot of the leaders of the Union Opposition have political connections, often to the Socialist Party. How did that affect the union local election campaign, and what is the relationship between the trade union questions and the broader political ones?*

A. The very fact that I ran both as a spokesman for the Union Opposition and a member of the Socialist Party meant that I had to take up a whole body of related questions in interviews with the newspapers and radio reporters.

It is well known that the Socialist Party actively supports the Union Opposition and that a number of the leaders are members of the party. But it is also well known that the Opposition is a broad current. It is open to everyone who is ready to work around the immediate class questions and to transform the union into a democratic and fighting organization — socialists, workers who have voted for the Social Democrats but are critical of them, and independents.

The biggest newspaper in the area, the *Goeteborgs-Post*, which is read by most Volvo workers, ran a nearly full-page interview with me and a leading Social Democrat on the theme "Two Lines for Trade Unionists." It was



possible and necessary to give a broader background to the concrete issues and also to put forward broader solutions, such as nationalization of the banks and socializing the big companies.

The Social Democratic campaign was rather defensive. They wanted to avoid any discussion of buying power and austerity, but they could not get away with that.

They concentrated on evocations of the Socialist Democratic party's long experience and its long history of statesmanship. And they did not fail, of course, to try to play the card of primitive anti-Communism, talking about how untrustworthy, etc., we and other small groups were.

*Q. Can you describe in more detail the relationship between the Union Opposition and the Socialist Party's work at Volvo?*

A. The Union Opposition has never been an organization. It has never had any statutes or any elected leadership, as would be standard operating procedure for political parties. We have always talked about the Opposition as a *current*. Its activity has always depended largely on the trade union responsibilities we have held. It has been through these positions that we have been able to take a number of practical initiatives and unite as many workers as possible on the shop floor around the most acute questions of the moment, regardless of party affiliations. It has been a rallying ground for those ready to act. That means, therefore, that its strength has ebbed and flowed.

At the same time, the Opposition's relationship to various political forces has shifted. I mentioned what happened to Foerbundet Kommunist and the SKP. The official Swedish Communist Party, the Vaensterpartiet Kommunisterna [Left Party of Communists (VPK)] was originally involved in the opposition work. But it later fell away from it. Today, its very limited forces at Volvo and other workplaces in Gothenburg oppose the Opposition and are pursuing a policy of polite pressure on the Social Democratic union local leadership.

At the same time, the position of the Socialist Party has grown stronger in the local.

The fact that the Opposition's activity expands in certain periods and then may contract is understandable. Such a broad current obviously ebbs and flows depending on the general political conditions that affect it. Where there is an ebb, the political currents play a bigger direct role in maintaining the level of activity. And when there is a period of upturn, there is a broader basis.

We saw this in the most recent period. In the truck factory at Volvo, the upturn has led to the involvement of the older generation of workers, forty- to fifty-year-olds, in the activity of the Opposition. This is an important development. The majority are politically unaffiliated, although most of them have voted for the Social Democrats in various elections.

The members and close sympathizers of the Socialist Party are organized in a separate trade union club at Volvo as in a number of other

workplaces in the country. This is the traditional form of party organization within the Swedish movement; there is nothing new or special about it.

You could say that the union club is our political fraction in the union and in the workplace. It coordinates and organizes the party's campaigns and trains the membership through meetings and discussion groups as well as running a number of social activities.

The last point should be stressed. Most of the members of the union club — and the same goes for the Union Opposition — have families. This is something we have to take account of when we plan our activity, when we determine its content, forms, and rhythm. This is important both for getting workers to join the union club and for holding them.

So, the union club also runs film showings and trips to the country. We have traditional family parties with dancing and international music groups, with food and political speeches. Every year we run a summer camp for families, with boating, canoeing, political discussions, and so forth. In a nutshell we weld politics to everyday life.

It was only when we managed to broaden our activity in this way and to make politics a natural and integral part of our coworkers' lives and work that we were first able to begin to recruit "ordinary Volvo workers." We have continued this work so successfully that today our union club at Volvo has about fifty members.

*Q. What conclusions have you and the Socialist Party as a whole drawn from your work at Volvo and in other workplaces across the country in opposing a Social Democratic leadership that still has nearly total control of the union movement on the national scale?*

A. The most important thing is that we never flutter around like butterflies.

We have seen a lot of other groups and individuals "pass through" the factory. They come in from the outside, speak at meetings, make their proposals, sell their papers, pass out their leaflets, and then disappear, perhaps as fast as they appeared in the first place. They pop up like "jack-in-the-boxes." You can never gain any real confidence that way.

We have operated in a completely different way. The most important thing is that we are in Volvo to stay. We are there to earn our living, to get the best possible working conditions for ourselves and others, and to win the majority of the workers for a new trade union orientation, for a socialist program, to build a new force in the Swedish workers movement. We can only do that by sustained activity over many, many years, rounded activity as individuals and as a group.

Even if there are concrete reasons why one or another individual has to leave or change jobs, that is never something we take for granted. Every such case weakens the work and can only be regarded as an unavoidable evil.

We strive to win confidence on all levels, on

the basis of being good workmates, to get a hearing and gain understanding for our socialist ideas.

When we started our work at Volvo we often got involved in solidarity campaigns, for example in support of Vietnam. But we were not able to win the support or the interest we should have.

A lot of what we said did not get a proper hearing because the great majority of workers had a natural skepticism about a new party in the workplace. They did not know if they could really count on us, if we would stay there through thick and thin.

Today we can draw a balance sheet. First, we have accomplished our task, assumed our responsibility for our fellow workers and for the union (often in very "day-to-day" questions such as insurance, transfers, grievances, and so forth), so that we could make real progress.

Then we showed that we could deal with these questions, that we could deal with the problems facing us as shop stewards and members of the union leadership, that we could handle negotiations with the company, that we could gain something in the negotiations. We then also got more of a hearing for what we were saying in other areas. Then our fellow workers took more time to read what we were saying on broader political questions, to read our national newspaper and our factory sheet, to take part in our party meetings. It was not always that they agreed altogether but that at least they saw that what we were saying concerned them and their future.

Let's compare the effects of our international solidarity work today and five, six, or seven years ago. Take solidarity with El Salvador for example.

On our initiative, and without any big opposition from any quarter, the union local leadership invited Gabriel Lara, the FDR/FMLN's representative in Sweden, to a delegate meeting. He was given a platform to appeal for solidarity with the struggle in El Salvador. He had an hour to speak. And then the meeting decided to conduct an extended collection through the Volvo plant and that all the money would be turned over to the FDR/FMLN.

This was not only important for the Volvo workers. It is important for solidarity in other workplaces. In other plants, people can point to the Volvo example. This initiative would not have had this effect if we had not gained real confidence, a well-established position in the workplace.

Over the last ten years, there has been a veritable barrage of leaflets and newspapers aimed at Volvo. In certain periods of intensive activity we have put out two factory sheets a week, as members of the Opposition and as party members. This has been very energetic activity. And it was very important to break the Social Democrats' monopoly on information.

In the section where I work, we can see that 90 percent of the workers read the leaflets we produce and which we distribute both inside and outside the factory. Even though people

read what we print with varying degrees of attention and criticism, we can see that there is a completely different climate than when we started our work.

We are no longer seen as just individuals, responsible for the good we do or the mistakes we make. There is organized, collective work, and we have a presence in as many heavy production sections as possible.

Our trade union opposition work has always had a conscious orientation of avoiding sectarianism. We have fought to defeat proposal after proposal, often coming from other political currents, that would have transformed the Opposition into a kind of ersatz party, with its own discipline and its own newspaper for political debate and other purposes.

We have argued that the Opposition would lose its force if it operated like that. We have striven to maintain a broad, open current, that could draw in everyone ready to get involved in developing an active, fighting orientation for the union, in fighting the management and a capitulationist and class-collaborationist union leadership.

*Q. What have been the dividing lines between this line of developing opposition work and what the other political currents stand for?*

A. We have always stressed the central role of trade unions in Swedish politics, their central role in the Social Democracy's control of the Swedish workers movement.

Our first consideration has always been the crucial importance in the Swedish union movement of the elected officers closest to the ranks, such as shop stewards, safety officers, and education officers, and — where there is sufficient support from below — positions in the leading bodies. Such positions are essential as underpinnings for our work as a means for organizing.

Let's compare this attitude with that of another political organization, the Kommunistiska Partiet, Marxist-Leninisterna (revolution-aererna) [Communist Party, Marxist-Leninist (revolutionary), KPML(r)]. This is a unique organization in Western Europe. It has about a thousand members in the Gothenburg area. It has Maoist origins but today can be better characterized as a centrist organization.

The KPML(r) has always had a sectarian orientation in trade union work. It refuses to take positions of responsibility, and follows a generally propagandistic line.

Despite its original strength, which was based mainly in the broad Vietnam movement, and despite a conscious and consistent orientation of political work in industry, the KPML(r) has in general failed in its industrial work, been isolated. Today it has *less* influence than it had some years ago.

The Socialist Party's work has developed in the opposite way. Its predecessor organization started out from much more modest beginnings, but we have taken better advantage of the opportunities.

The reason is not simply or even primarily

that we have a transitional program, which they do not. The reason is that the KPML(r) turned its back on the union and important questions facing union members.

It is clear now that the KPML(r) is at a crossroads and is being forced to change its course. A whole section of it are even talking about that.

The struggle that the Union Opposition waged in the union election campaign this year over the three crowns increment has been continued. This has been a broad campaign, backed up by a petition signed by 3,500 people. For the first time, we got the support of the KPML(r). We hope that that foreshadows a change of course on other questions as well. That would be quite important. The work of the Union Opposition has undoubtedly had an effect here.

*Q. Volvo is a multinational company, which has an important part of its operations abroad. What has this meant for the work of the Union Opposition in solidarity with Volvo workers elsewhere?*

A. We have regularly pushed solidarity questions, such as Vietnam and Salvador, but also questions directly related to Volvo's international operations.

We did this for example with a campaign to break the isolation of the union in Peru. We also gave impetus to a solidarity strike in support of Belgian Volvo workers. Of course, we have problems overcoming the obstacles to making direct contact with other groups of workers, who are often far away.

The actions we have carried out have been an encouragement to further activity along these lines. It is easy to see today what belonging to an international organization such as the Fourth International can mean, especially if it succeeds in increasing its membership, its number of industrial workers, and its trade union and political influence.

We have a broad basis here for taking part

in, and backing up, such international initiatives as the campaign for a shorter workweek — 35-hour week with no pay cut (or a six-hour day, which is the way this demand has been popularized in Sweden). Our work in the Swedish automotive industry, through the union oppositions and the party clubs at Volvo in various parts of the country, and through our comrades at SAAB and at other automotive and airplane plants in Sweden, can be used as a lever for reinforcing the international campaign on this question.

*Q. Given the place that Volvo holds in Swedish industry and in the Swedish trade union movement, trade union and political work at Volvo/Gothenburg has broader implications. The issues that you raise and push, and the results you get, have a clear national dimension. How can the party's work at Volvo be used as a lever for building the party in general?*

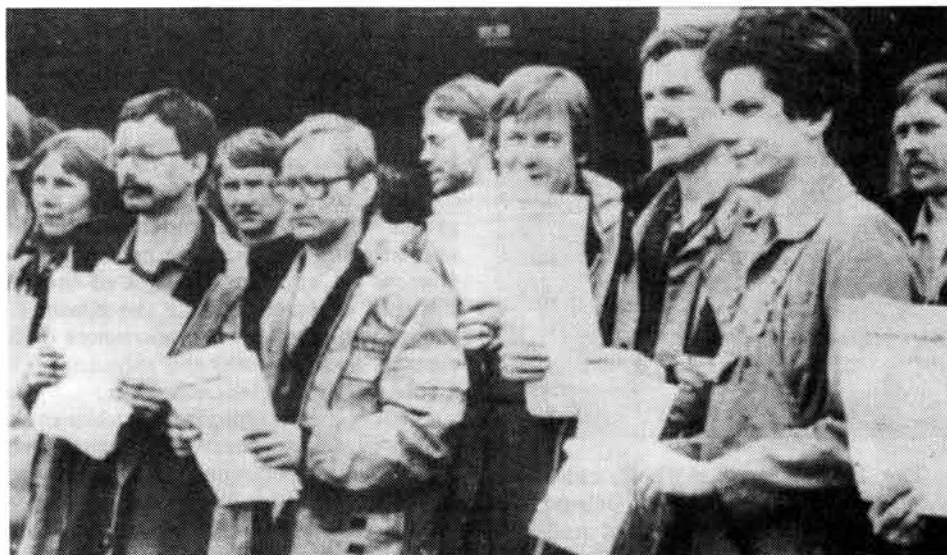
A. It's obvious that there is a direct connection between the Volvo work and the role that we can play with respect to issues at the municipal and even national level.

The work we are carrying on in Volvo has its natural extension in the campaigns the party is conducting in the Gothenburg region or nationally.

We, as well as our fellow workers, are being hard hit by cuts in real wages, social cutbacks, and unemployment. Questions such as child care, educational policy, the media, the environment, leisure-time possibilities all concern us.

For us, there are two things that knit together our activity as workers, rent-payers, and political activists. One is the unified and rounded programmatic answer we are fighting for in all areas of society. The other is our party's work as a representative of the interests of the working class in all those areas.

With our base at Volvo and in collaboration



Volvo workers presenting wage demands.



with activists in other places, we can confront the politicians in the city governments, the provincial governments, and the national government. With the base we have, we can demand that the Social Democratic Workers Party give an accounting for the election promises it made before the 1982 elections and which it has done so little to keep.

We can demand that these election promises

be fulfilled and build broad united actions to force through measures that the Social Democrat leadership has reneged on. In this mass work, our party is winning a place. Through this work we can win the confidence that will make people more and more ready to listen to our overall political positions. Through it we will lay the foundations of a new socialist force in the Swedish workers movement. □

---

## Australia

---

# History of a mine takeover

## *How workers reacted to a company shutdown*

By Robert Johnson

[The following article is reprinted from the May 24 issue of *Direct Action*, a socialist weekly published in Sydney, Australia, which presents the views of the Socialist Workers Party, the Australian section of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

I suppose you could describe Nymboida as a handful of houses and a dead mine in the middle of nowhere. But it's more than that. It's so much more.

Nymboida is a legend and a lesson to all workers whose bosses try to sack them. When the Nymboida Colliery Company closed their mine, the workers wouldn't let them do it. They took over the mine from the boss, and then successfully ran it. Nymboida is still unique.

About 28 miles south-west of Grafton, 400 miles north of Sydney, Nymboida didn't have much going for it. Its coal mine was its source of jobs. But from a peak of 100 workers in the 1950s, it declined to only 30 by 1975.

Nymboida coal was hard-won. Its seams were as low as 2 foot 9 inches.

The mine was not mechanized. Its coal was gouged out by pick and shovel by miners who labored in a crouch or a deep squat.

Its equipment run down by its cheapskate owners, Nymboida was, of all the mines in Australia, the hardest to work. It supplied its only major customer, Koolkhan power station, seven miles past Grafton, with more than 500 tonnes of high-grade coal every week.

On February 7, 1975, the company gave one week's notice to the entire workforce. Without any explanation, the company had decided to shut down Nymboida.

What was worse, there appeared to be little chance of the workers obtaining any severance pay, annual leave, or other entitlements.

Why the closure? Nymboida wasn't worked out. Plenty of coal remained. Nor was there any problem of markets: Koolkhan needed Nymboida coal for four more years.

The only reason for closure was that Nymboida Collieries Pty. Ltd. decided that they could make higher profits elsewhere. To hell

with the community. To hell with the mineworkers. Profits are all that matter to bosses.

There was Buckley's chance of finding other jobs in the area. Grafton had high unemployment. So there were only three alternatives — go on the dole, leave the district, or fight against the closure.

At a meeting on February 16 the miners made a unanimous decision to defy the company's shutdown by working as usual. On Monday, February 17, at 7:30 a.m., the work-in began. For the following three days, production exceeded normal levels.

On Wednesday, the company withdrew the dismissal notices, agreeing to a conference on February 26.

But they did not turn up to it. Instead, the company again arrogantly ordered the mine closed from February 28.

By now, there was no way the miners would give up. One of the miners' wives said:

"If we get any more dismissal notices, we're going to paper our bedroom with it, but we're taking no notice of it."

The Miners' Federation demanded of the company that "it surrender the Nymboida lease to the state immediately to enable arrangements to be made for the continued operation of the mine."

The company didn't answer so on March 3, the Nymboida miners started their second work-in. They had to overcome company sabotage to do it.

News of Nymboida spread.

The extraordinary guts and doggedness of these blokes from a backwater caught everyone's imagination. Help and encouragement poured in from all over the country.

On March 11, the company surrendered to the avalanche of public opinion. It agreed to hand over the leases to the mine. In return, the workers agreed to exempt the company from any further payments — something the miners reckoned they would never get anyway.

When the state Liberal government refused to take over the mine, the Miners' Federation became the owners.

For the next four and a half years, Nymboida was run by the workers. □

---

They proved the truth of the old saying: "bosses need workers but workers don't need bosses."

The workers elected a management committee from their ranks. The committee met monthly to discuss safety, equipment, production, pay, and conditions.

Reports of each meeting were pinned on the notice board and discussed at the next meeting of the miners' lodge — everyone who worked at Nymboida had to be a Miners' Federation member.

Full financial statements were also distributed.

The miners were enthusiastic about their experience of workers' control.

One of them, Vic West, said: "There's a big difference between how it is now and how it used to be under the Nymboida Company. There isn't a boss breathing down your neck. There is more contentment. That doesn't mean to say that we're not working. We're probably working a bit harder still than we had to before, but there's a difference."

Another miner, Frank Smidt, said: "You now know what's going on and you have your say in it."

In the period the miners ran it, more than \$1.5 million in wages was paid out, and no profits.

As a result, Nymboida miners were paid a higher basic wage than anywhere else. Everyone was paid at least the yardstick skilled base rate, called the mechanical-unit rate, regardless of age or seniority.

In 1979, Koolkhan power station was closed down. So, on August 31, 1979, the last skip of Nymboida coal was lifted to the surface.

This time the workers made the decision they knew was inevitable. But by then, they'd earned enough to pay themselves full severance pay, holiday pay, and all other entitlements for their entire workforce.

The achievement of workers' control at Nymboida earned acclaim from all over the world. Admiring messages came from mining unions as far afield as America, the Soviet Union, Britain, and Asia.

*The Mine the Workers Ran*, a Miners' Federation pamphlet written by Pete Thomas, expressed it well:

"All the difficulties in mining existed at Nymboida and yet they made it. If workers can successfully operate the industry's worst mine, then what could they do with the best? The success story will be indelible in mining and working-class history. Nymboida mine has closed, but the inspiration which Nymboida created will endure."

In another coal mine in northern NSW [New South Wales], at Preston, 14 gutsy miners fought for their jobs by staying underground for 54 days.

In interviews, they have insisted that Preston has to be taken out of company hands and run by the workers. They are determined because they know it can be done.

Why? Because they remember Nymboida. □

# Police union holds congress

*Calls for 'humane and effective police force'*

By Christian Picquet

[The following article appeared in the June 24 issue of *Rouge*, weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the French section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

A congress of the Autonomous Federation of Police Unions (FASP) always reveals quite a lot about the changes taking place within the police.<sup>1</sup>

The FASP, which was founded in the late 1960s and calls for united, democratic, and progressive trade-unionism that fights for "a police force at the service of the public," is itself the product of the crisis in the repressive apparatus.

At the FASP's congress in Rouen just after the victory of the left [in the 1981 presidential and legislative elections], the leaders of the organization put forward the slogan "a new police force, new men," demanding the ouster of "key figures" linked to the policies of the previous regime.

At its Strasbourg convention held this June 14 to 17, the tone had completely changed.

In his introductory report, FASP general secretary Bernard Deleplace muffled his attacks on the police hierarchy. Following that, he called for "all those of good will" to come together and showed a much more conciliatory attitude toward the government than in the past.

### Tell-tale sign

This change in focus reflects the present difficulties of police trade-unionism. In the course of two years, the government has shown its inability to carry out the reforms that the great bulk of rank-and-file cops hoped for. With the rise in petty crime, the official tone has steadily adapted to the demands of the reactionary sectors. As a result, the right wing has been able to retake the initiative in the police administration, in which it has traditionally had a strong influence. By contrast, the groupings committed to basic freedoms have been thrown off-balance.

Deleplace dealt with this situation at length. "When some of us get discouraged and no longer stand our ground," he said, "the extremist unions can successfully draw certain sectors of the police into seditious actions and,



FASP General Secretary Bernard Deleplace

especially, can draw them into sharing particularly dangerous doctrines about the role of the police.

"Demagogy pays off," Deleplace continued, "when education in trade-unionism has been insufficient to inspire rationalism. Demagogy pays off when the government is divided on the remedies needed to resolve the fear of crime."

Such a tendency could not help but have an impact in a federation that is extremely heterogeneous because it encompasses the majority of police. For example, the general secretary made a self-criticism of the terms he had used in condemning the "wild ass" cop action on Rossini Street in September 1982:<sup>2</sup> "The method I used certainly was not the best in regard to questions that touched on all the units."

By moderating their language, the FASP leaders undoubtedly hope to strengthen the cohesion of their organization. But they also want to take advantage of a situation where the rightist unions have been thrown on the defensive by the government's reaction following the rebellious police demonstrations of June 3.<sup>3</sup> This explains the emphasis placed on the

2. On September 9, 1982, police deliberately opened fire on an automobile, killing one of its passengers. — *IP*

3. On June 3, several thousand cops in Paris staged a rightist demonstration following the funeral of two police officers who had been killed May 31 in the course of an auto theft. During the demonstration, police units assigned to crowd control openly fraternized

with the demonstrators and allowed the march to go through police lines to the ministry of interior and the presidential palace. In the aftermath of the demonstration, the government took disciplinary measures against some cops, including leaders of police associations. — *IP*

existence of "two conceptions of trade-unionism, one authentic and based on majority-rule, the other warped and minority-based." By adopting a new profile, the FASP apparently hopes to become the linch pin of a united front of "republican police" (the term "republican" was used constantly at the Strasbourg congress). The first manifestation of this united front would be the proclaimed rapprochement with certain organizations like the Union of Plainclothes Police (SNAPC).

### Objectives upheld

Clearly the FASP has taken a backward step that could have negative future consequences. Nonetheless, it is maintaining its course on a series of fundamental objectives. For example, it wants to take advantage of the "electric shock treatment" caused by the growing boldness of the reactionaries in the police in order to force through a basic democratic reform. And Bernard Deleplace clearly warned the government: "If the long-awaited reforms are not rapidly put into effect, this would be a new betrayal and the organization I lead would again take action to press its demands."

The union representing the majority in the police force summarized the aim of the changes it wants by using the formula "a more humane and effective police force."

More humane, meaning closer to the population. "Our federation," Deleplace indicated, "has taken up the fight for defense of the rights of man."

Denouncing the way the theme of fear of crime is being exploited — "the fears do not always have any relationship to the facts themselves" — the general secretary made this appeal to the members of his union:

"If public opinion is unanimous in recognizing that overall the national police's activity is positive, it is equally unanimous in protesting against the excess committed by certain elements. That is why we must be conscious of the important work we must take up . . . so that within the profession, in our units, in our organizations, we do not let up on the indispensable effort (which must be maintained and sustained) against all the racist and anti-foreigner campaigns, which unfortunately do not stop at the stationhouse doors."

Similarly, the FASP reaffirmed its desire to link itself to the social movement, to the population. "We are not embarrassed," said Deleplace, "by our traditions and origins. We remain firmly attached in the closest way to the workers movement."<sup>4</sup>

4. It should be noted that the FASP signed the call for the reunification of the trade-union movement launched by the National Teachers Federation (FEN), the United Tax Collectors Union, the foodworkers federation, and the National Union of Journalists.

1. The FASP has 70,000 members in five sections, including patrolmen, members of the CRS (riot squads), officers, as well as administrative personnel. In the last police representation elections, the FASP got 58 percent of the vote.



Making this more concrete, Deleplace concluded his report from the chair with these words: "The police need the populace. The reform we want will not come about . . . if the citizens of this country do not understand that the improvement of our profession, of our working conditions, of our everyday life, is also their business."

On the basis of this orientation, the FASP leadership leaves the Eighth Congress in a stronger position. The report from the chair was approved by the 250 delegates and the general secretary was reelected by a nearly unanimous vote. But the coming months will be decisive and will put the new line of the unionized police to the test. □

## A more humane police force?

### Questions raised by FASP congress

By Christian Picquet

[The following article is from the June 24 issue of *Rouge*, the weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

The central theme of the Eighth Congress of the Autonomous Federation of Police Unions (FASP) was "act for a more humane and effective police force," for a "republican" police force.

The union leaders laid out the content of the reform they want: "The role of the police is not to repress workplace conflicts but to assure the safety of citizens and their property." This leads them to sharply criticize the practices prior to [President François Mitterrand's election on] May 10, 1981: "Too many activities involving crowd suppression, too much spying for obvious ends led to the police getting the blackest of images, similar to a praetorian guard or a political police, and we would make a mistake to underestimate the consequences of that situation."

These remarks incontestably show that a large number of rank-and-file cops and even some sergeants would like to stop being a corps separated from the population, and want to use the left's victory to accomplish that. The workers movement cannot but rejoice about that evolution and support the struggle of the organizations that reflect that sentiment. The existence of powerful democratic forces in the police is, in fact, a bonus for the struggle of the workers. It prevents the ruling class from having a perfectly effective tool serving its interests. That is why the LCR has always been for recognition of all trade-union rights and the right to strike in that arena.

Nonetheless, the problem of the repressive apparatus remains in full force. The police, as an institution — like the courts or the army — cannot free itself from the state or stop serving the interests that the state guarantees.

In France, the Fifth Republic, which arose from a military putsch, considerably expanded the coercive structures. Faced with the refusal of a segment of the police to function as a praetorian guard for big business, the bourgeoisie perfected and specialized its instruments and assured itself tighter control over the essential decision-making centers.

The way the police have been used, especially since May 1968, and the establishment of elite units, of brigades specializing in crowd control, the growing number of "wild ass" episodes (isn't the latest one that took place in Vénissieux revealing?), all show that the sole objective of the bosses and of the police high command is to prepare for a confrontation with the people's movement.

Under these conditions it would be utopian to believe that the social and political function of this corps could be changed through the simple expedient of a parliamentary discussion and vote. Any measure that really strikes at the cohesion of the repressive apparatus will encounter stiff resistance from the reactionary sectors, whose determination we have recently had a chance to witness. And it is certain that the majority [Socialist and Communist] parties will then retreat when faced with the prospect of a confrontation.

It is even more utopian to think, as the FASP leaders do since their most recent gathering, that the police can be placed at the service of the population while keeping in key posts men who for decades have been trained exclusively to serve the exploiters.

An interview with FASP leader Bernard Deleplace in the June 20 *Témoignage chrétien* is revealing about his illusions. Regarding the nomination of Pierre Verbrugghe — a high official before May 10 — to the top command of the police, the union leader stated: "Mr. Verbrugghe is an effective man. He is a great civil servant."

A "great civil servant"? The latest issue of the far-right confidential newsletter *Dans la coulisse* expresses its satisfaction that the undercover and espionage services had recently organized a de facto strike, simply refusing to investigate the right wing's inroads into the police. And yet we also find "great civil servants" heading up these services.

The Autonomous Federation of Police Unions wants to function connected "in the closest way to the workers movement." To

\* On March 21, dozens of police entered a housing project in Vénissieux looking for a stolen motorcycle. They got into a confrontation with the mostly North African residents and began beating up women and shooting tear gas grenades. Eventually 150 to 200 cops were involved in terrorizing the residents. — IP

move in that direction would require immediate radical measures, which could not be carried out in a half-baked manner without allowing the right wing to act as it pleases. It is necessary to throw out the men involved in the destabilization attempts and who served the previous governments; dismiss the perpetrators of racist attacks and participants in "wild ass" actions; disarm the specialized crowd suppression units; dismantle the political spying services, etc.

But the trade-unionists' declarations would also have to be accompanied by more concrete acts. Why not, for example, forge contacts on all levels with the workers organizations? Why not mount joint action against attempts to clear out occupied factories or against racist campaigns?

That kind of permanent link would be the only kind that could assure the democratic police organizations of the support of the people's movement. And the mobilization of the people's movement is still the best guarantee to counter the seditious thrusts of the reactionaries. □

### Intercontinental Press . . . It's Unique!

On-the-scene reports from Nicaragua, El Salvador, Ireland, Iran, Grenada, Cuba, Poland . . .

Interviews with class-struggle fighters and revolutionary leaders such as Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and Irish liberation fighter Bernadette Devlin McAliskey . . .

Translations of key documents from the world revolutionary and workers movements . . .

Analysis and features on the most important world events and the issues facing working people — from the unfolding revolutions in Central America, to the liberation struggles in Southern Africa, to the changing consciousness of the U.S. working class . . .

*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

# Government cracks down on left

### Fears mass protests over growing social problems

By Claudio Tavárez

SANTO DOMINGO — A sweeping campaign of repression against leftist leaders and activists has been unleashed in the Dominican Republic by the administration of President Salvador Jorge Blanco.

More than 50 activists from the Dominican Left Front (FID) have been detained. The FID is a coalition of 10 of the principal left organizations in the Dominican Republic.

President Jorge Blanco has accused the Dominican Left Front of "organizing strikes and occupations of land and churches" and of "mounting demonstrations throughout the country with the aim of destabilizing" the government.

At the same time, José Francisco Peña Gómez, who is mayor of Santo Domingo as well as leader of the ruling Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), has gone on a media campaign charging that the Dominican left organizations are preparing for guerrilla warfare.

In statements to the newspaper *La Noticia*, Peña Gómez claimed the Dominican Left Front had set up a military training school for guerrillas.

This baseless charge has been echoed by the military high command and the National Police, who have leaked documents to the press claiming that 43 known leaders of the Dominican left have been involved in this "school for guerrilla training."

### Protests hit Dominican arrests

A broad protest campaign has been organized against the Dominican government's roundup of left activists, trade unionists, and peasant leaders.

Several newspapers have written editorials protesting the arrests, and trade unions, political and cultural organizations, and prominent individuals have called for the immediate release of all those detained.

Activists in the Dominican Republic have called for an international campaign to demand that the Dominican government release the detainees and respect civil liberties.

They have asked that telegrams and letters protesting the arrests be sent to: Dr. Salvador Jorge Blanco, President of the Republic, Palacio Nacional, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Copies should be sent to Nuevo Diario, Apartado Postal 841, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Among those arrested have been Socialist Bloc (BS) leaders Leo Mercedes, Edgar Erickson, Wellington Peterson Pieterz, and Victor Morales; Dominican Communist Party central committee member Carlos Dore Cabral; and other leaders of the Dominican Left Front.

The Dominican government has also resorted to charges of Cuban interference. Two Cuban sociologists, who had been invited to the Dominican Republic to participate in a seminar on methods of research in rural areas, were arrested and expelled from the country. The Cuban scholars were charged with engaging in politics and taking part in the alleged destabilization plan against the Dominican government.

In the midst of this sweep against Dominican activists, U.S. Gen. Robert Schweitzer, head of the Inter-American Defense Board, arrived in Santo Domingo for talks on military training plans.

The real reason for the government's crackdown is not a guerrilla threat or Cuban interference. Rather, the Jorge Blanco regime is confronted by a rising tide of protests by workers, peasants, and other layers of the population who are demanding that the government carry out its election promises.

During the 1982 election campaign, Salvador Jorge Blanco promised to solve the basic problems facing Dominican workers and peasants. He pledged his government would carry out a major land reform and promised farmers that the government would replace pigs they were forced to slaughter to prevent the spread of a swine fever epidemic.

Victims of Hurricane David in 1978, who have been living in temporary shelters ever since, were promised new housing and schools.

Workers were told that trade-union rights would be respected and their living conditions would improve.

On his campaign swings throughout the country, Jorge Blanco promised to solve the problems of each area by implementing public works programs to build highways, schools, roads, hospitals and clinics, and waterworks.

In international relations, the PRD candidate pledged to carry out an independent foreign policy, including establishing diplomatic relations with countries like Cuba.

Not one of these promises, however, has been fulfilled. Instead the workers and peasants have been subjected to an austerity program imposed at the insistence of the International Monetary Fund. This has led to growing unemployment and rising prices for basic necessities.

Since Jorge Blanco's election in May 1982,



demonstrations, rallies, and marches have taken place demanding that the government deliver on its promises.

In recent months, thousands of peasants from all over the country have gathered in the capital demanding land reform and implementation of the pig replacement program.

In some provinces, machete-wielding peasants have occupied lands promised them by the government. Hundreds have been arrested and threatened upon their release.

In the poor and working-class neighborhoods of Santo Domingo and other cities, People's Struggle Committees have been set up to demand that the government carry out its promises to build schools, housing, and clinics and to improve living conditions in the slums.

These committees have organized demonstrations, strikes, and occupations of churches to press their demands.

The government's response has been to jail hundreds of participants in these struggles.

In recent months these campaigns have taken on a massive, nationwide character. Organizations working in the Dominican Left Front have actively participated in and led many of these actions. Taking their inspiration from the process of left unity taking place in Central America, the ten organizations that came together in the FID have been able to help coordinate and strengthen the struggles now taking place in the countryside and cities.

It is this growing unity and effectiveness that is behind the government's witch-hunt against "communist subversion."

PRD leader José Peña Gómez has also publicly warned that the growing U.S. intervention in Central America could cause an explosion inside the Dominican Republic. By striking at the left now, the government hopes to cripple the response to U.S. aggression in the region.

The Dominican Left Front answered the roundups with an open letter to Peña Gómez, who is also a vice-president of the Socialist International. The letter challenged his claim that the left is involved in a destabilization campaign and argued that the present wave of repression stems from the PRD's inability to solve the problems facing Dominican workers and peasants. □