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## Nicaragua

## Sandinistas Counter U.S. Invasion Plans

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Bitter Medicine  
for Israeli Workers**

**Fidel Castro:  
'Grenada Had Become  
a True Symbol'**

## Bloody alliance of Reagan-Shamir

By Fred Murphy

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir arrived in Washington November 27 for talks in which, he said, "the situation in Lebanon and the Syrian threat to peace" would be at the top of the agenda.

The official visit by Shamir and his defense minister, Moshe Arens, highlighted the stepped-up military cooperation in Lebanon between the Zionist state and U.S. imperialism. In raids applauded by the Reagan administration, Israeli jets hit villages in Syrian-controlled portions of Lebanon on three occasions during the month of November, the first such air strikes since August 1982.

A similar raid was carried out November 17 by French jets flying from an aircraft carrier off the Lebanese coast.

The purpose of these and other recent military moves by Washington, Tel Aviv, and Paris is to bludgeon the Lebanese people into accepting the proimperialist regime of President Amin Gemayel, imposed after last year's Israeli invasion. A related goal is to force the withdrawal of some 50,000 Syrian troops that have occupied parts of Lebanon since 1976.

Shamir and French President François Mitterrand claimed their November 16 and 17 air strikes against villages near the town of Baalbek were aimed at the bases of an alleged terrorist group made up of Shi'ite Muslims. The group, Islamic Amal, has been widely accused in the imperialist news media of having organized the October 23 bombings of French and U.S. military installations in Beirut and a similar attack on an Israeli headquarters in Tyre on November 4.

Islamic Amal has denied responsibility. Moreover, the November 20 *Washington Post* reported, "intelligence analysts believe it may prove an impossible task to pinpoint exactly who committed" those bombings.

Israeli Defense Minister Arens discounted the need for such proof. "The terrorist groups are all intertwined," he asserted. "It's not important which group carried out the attack."

Since the October 23 bombings in which 239 U.S. troops and more than 50 French soldiers died, Lebanon's Shi'ite Muslim population has been the target of a slander campaign in the imperialist news media. "All over the United States and all over Paris they say the Shiites did it," Shi'ite leader Nabih Berri complained in an interview published in the November 13 *Miami Herald*. "So it became racist against the Shiites. They don't have any proof. Let's say one Shiite can steal from your house. Does this mean all Shiites are thieves?"

Shi'ites make up one-third of Lebanon's population and are concentrated among the poorest sectors. They are politically disenfranchised under the discriminatory system that gives a privileged place to the Maronite

Christian minority, and they have been the victims of armed attacks by President Gemayel's extreme-rightist Phalange Party. The Shi'ites have organized to arm themselves and fight back through groups like Amal (Hope), led by Nabih Berri, and Islamic Amal.

Shi'ite militia fighters have also clashed with U.S. Marines, who occupy positions near the predominantly Shi'ite suburbs south of Beirut. According to the November 15 *Washington Post*, "There has been much talk in Washington in recent weeks of mounting some sort of military operation against the suburbs — either a surgical strike . . . or a broader sweep to rid the area of its arms and its most radical factions."

The regime of President Hafez al-Assad in Damascus has done little to respond to the Israeli and French air raids or to the threats of more serious U.S. and Israeli military action against Syrian troops and Syrian-backed opposition forces in Lebanon. Instead, Assad has concentrated on bringing the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) under Syrian control and destroying it as the independent and fighting representative of the Palestinian people.

On November 16, renegade PLO forces supported by Syrian tanks and artillery overran the Baddawi refugee camp near Tripoli on Lebanon's northern coast. PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat and 4,000 fighters were forced to retreat into the city of Tripoli.

A new cease-fire was declared November 21, but not before Syrian shelling had killed hundreds of Palestinians and Lebanese. On November 18, PLO renegades opened fire on 2,000 unarmed pro-Arafat demonstrators at the Nahr al Bared refugee camp north of Tripoli; reports of the number killed ranged from three to 25.

Washington has welcomed the Syrian attack on the PLO. The November 20 *Miami Herald* reported on a speech the day before by Secretary of State George Shultz, in which he "said . . . that Syrian domination may eliminate the Palestine Liberation Organization as the

spokesman for the Palestinians and open new opportunities for peace.

"Shultz said President Reagan's peace proposal of Sept. 1, 1982, that Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza be self-governing in association with Jordan is still available. He indicated that PLO infighting could create new opportunities for Jordan to negotiate with Israel on the plan."

But despite suffering the worst blows in its history, the PLO has yet to be destroyed. "By all accounts," *Washington Post* correspondent Edward Walsh wrote from the West Bank November 23, "Arafat, even in his weakened condition, has retained the overwhelming loyalty and support of the West Bank and Gaza Palestinians. . . . While some acknowledge that [PLO renegade] Abu Musa's rebellion sprang from genuine grievances and mistakes by Arafat, the rebel leader has been tainted by his embrace from the Syrians, who are not seen here as friends of Palestinian nationalism.

"Nor is there any sign that large numbers of Palestinians, demoralized by the civil war within the PLO, are ready to turn to Israel and make the best deal they can strike, as Israeli officials hope."

Speaking of Palestinian youth on the West Bank, Mayor Elias Frej of Bethlehem told the *New York Times*, "They support Arafat and they are afraid that the struggle will destroy the PLO. They are really angry at the Syrians and Libyans, but the Israelis represent the source of their tragedy, so they throw stones at the first Israeli car or soldier they see."

The embattled Palestinian people did score one major victory at the end of November, when the Israeli government decided to release more than 4,000 Palestinians held at the Ansar concentration camp in southern Lebanon in exchange for six Israeli soldiers held by the PLO. The Ansar camp had become a major political embarrassment to the Zionist state internationally and a focus of opposition inside Israel itself.

Also released were 63 Palestinians who had been serving long sentences in Israeli jails for alleged terrorist acts. Among these was Ziad Abu Eain, a young Palestinian framed up on a bombing charge and extradited from the United States in 1981. □

## Grenada, an occupied nation

By Russell Morse

Despite repeated claims by the Reagan administration that U.S. combat troops in Grenada will be "home by Christmas," the U.S. military occupation of the Caribbean island shows no sign of ending. In fact, U.S. officials in Grenada admit that 2,000 or more "noncombat" troops are to remain there well into 1984.

While a puppet regime headed by British-appointed Governor-General Sir Paul Scoon has been installed, a European diplomat in Grenada says "the fact is the government here

is still very much headed by" U.S. Ambassador Charles Gillespie and U.S. military commander Maj. Gen. Jack Farris.

"GIs with guns slung over their shoulders are everywhere," correspondent Loren Jenkins reported from Grenada in the November 23 *Washington Post*. "Although a token force of policemen and soldiers from six neighboring islands are technically in charge of public security . . . it is the U.S. military police who patrol on foot and in jeeps and man roadblocks that provide the real force of law and order."

Jenkins himself was stopped at a U.S. roadblock in St. George's, the capital, and ordered to open the trunk of his car. When he "protested strongly about such searches being conducted on U.S. citizens," the reporter "was wrestled to the ground and had my hands tied behind my back and was placed under armed guard. Journalists who took pictures of the scene were ordered at gunpoint to turn over their cameras and film."

Jenkins later recounted the incident to a Grenadian businessman. "If your soldiers treat you Americans that way," the Grenadian responded, "is it any wonder that some people are beginning to question the long-term impact of your being here?" The businessman added that "some people here are beginning to ask themselves who is going to rescue us from our rescuers."

The aim of the U.S. occupation is to keep such incipient opposition from finding organized political expression while the surviving gains of the Grenada revolution are being eradicated.

An article in the November 16 *Miami Herald* detailed some of the social cost to Grenadians of the counterrevolution. Before the U.S. invasion, "Grenada had two pediatricians, a Cuban man and a Swedish woman. Now it has none. . . ."

"Thirty-two Cuban teachers are gone. Now virtually every school on the island has been forced to cut back its curriculum. . . ."

"Hardest hit have been Grenada's lone hospital and the dozens of countryside clinics established under [murdered Prime Minister Maurice] Bishop. Hospital officials said the Cubans made up almost one-quarter of its medical staff."

The Centres for Popular Education (CPE), which organized an extensive literacy and adult-education program, have been shut down. Their director, a citizen of nearby St. Lucia, has been expelled from the country.

Free monthly distribution of milk powder and butter oil has been halted.

Unemployment, which stood at 14 percent before the invasion, has shot up to 25 percent with the suspension of work on the new international airport and the virtual halt to visits by foreign tourists. (Tourism is a mainstay of Grenada's economy.)

According to the November 21 *Christian Science Monitor*, "U.S. and Grenadian officials are aware that most of the unemployment is among that sector of the young who were, to an extent, radicalized by the regime of Prime Minister Bishop. Officials want to put these people to work as quickly as possible partly in order to reduce potential political and security problems."

Thus far, the U.S. occupiers have met this problem with jail, not jobs. Some 2,200 Grenadians — out of a total population of 110,000 — passed through the open-air internment camp the U.S. Army set up at the unfinished airport. Those released after interrogation were given cards directing them to "refrain from participating in anti-Government activities."

Between 60 and 200 persons have been imprisoned indefinitely without formal charges.

The U.S. Army's 100-member "psychological operations" group has added insult to injury with a poster attacking the new international airport, in which all Grenadians took special pride. The poster carries a photograph of weapons allegedly captured from Cuban construction workers, with the caption, "Are These the Tools That Build Civilian Airports?"

This "psywar" unit has also distributed hundreds of tiny U.S. flags and has sent jeeps mounted with loudspeakers into the countryside to broadcast anticommunist propaganda.

Meanwhile, a *New York Times* headline has asserted, "An Independent Newspaper Publishes Again in Grenada." The publication in question is the counterrevolutionary *Grenadian Voice*, closed down in 1981 for violating press regulations. Its "independence" may be gauged from the fact that the first issue was typeset on equipment provided by the U.S. military, with copy flown for printing in Barbados by a U.S. military transport. The military also flew the papers back to Grenada for distribution.

The only other news outlet in the country is Radio Spice Island — operated by the U.S. Navy. □

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# FSLN counters U.S. invasion plans

*New peace initiatives, heightened military defense*

By Steve Wattenmaker

As evidence mounts of an impending U.S. invasion of Nicaragua, the Sandinista leadership is taking new steps to prepare the country militarily and politically to defend the revolution. Among the recent measures are several important initiatives intended to rob Washington of pretexts for armed intervention.

The Sandinistas have both offered their own peace proposals and cooperated with regional diplomatic efforts spearheaded by the Contadora group of Mexico, Panama, Venezuela, and Colombia. "We are prepared to seriously negotiate our differences with the United States and Honduras," Sandinista leader Tomás Borge repeated November 24. "Are Honduras and the United States prepared to negotiate seriously with Nicaragua?"

Washington's response has been to brush aside the Nicaraguan proposals and drive ahead with its preparations for an all-out military assault.

Speaking at a meeting of the Organization of American States (OAS) November 16, Nicaraguan Deputy Foreign Minister Víctor Tinoco warned that the Reagan administration was readying new "covert actions" against Nicaragua as a prelude to a direct U.S. military move.

Tinoco cited published reports that the military chiefs of Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala — grouped in the Central American Defense Council (CONDECA) — had met in late October to discuss an invasion of Nicaragua supported by U.S. forces. That meeting was only one of a number of ominous signs that Washington is preparing a major assault on Nicaragua.

## 'Mock' invasion

- Two days after Tinoco spoke to the OAS, the U.S. military build-up in Honduras reached a high point as 1,200 U.S. Marines stormed ashore in a mock invasion near Puerto Castilla, Honduras — less than 200 miles from the Nicaraguan border. The landing brought the total of U.S. combat-ready troops in Honduras to more than 5,000, backed up by a formidable U.S. Navy task force.

Supposedly on extended training maneuvers, the troops and ships are actually establishing a permanent U.S. military strike force in Honduras. The Pentagon has already opened a training school for Salvadoran soldiers near Puerto Castilla, upgraded military airports, installed advanced radar, and improved strategic roads near the Nicaraguan border.

U.S. officials also have admitted that the Pentagon plans to continue the "maneuvers" well into 1984 and that Washington is eyeing a

permanent U.S. naval base on Honduras' Caribbean coast.

- The State Department and the Pentagon refused to comment November 16 on a report by the Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA) that Washington had "urgently prepared" a plan that called for "U.S. military action against Nicaragua within the period of three to four months."

Under the code name "Operation Pegasus," COHA said, the plan envisaged the "commitment of U.S. air and naval power against the Nicaraguans. . . ." The report confirmed Nicaragua's warnings that Washington's scenario included plans to have Honduran, Salvadoran, and Guatemalan government troops invade Nicaragua with U.S. air cover and logistical support — paving the way for eventually deploying U.S. ground troops in combat.

- On November 17 Congress sent its own signal to Managua by voting \$24 million to continue funding CIA-directed counter-revolutionary gangs based in Honduras and Costa Rica. Since December 1982 the *contras* have killed more than 780 Nicaraguans, wounded another 700, and caused \$103 million in damage.

The U.S. military "maneuvers" in Honduras also are in part a cover for resupplying the *contras*. CBS television news reported November 23 that U.S. Air Force C-130 transports were making supply drops to the anti-Sandinista gangs along the border as often as twice a week and flying reconnaissance missions over Nicaraguan territory.

- The escalation in U.S. war preparations is also reflected in recent statements by U.S. officials. Reagan's top national security adviser, Robert McFarlane, was asked November 13 if Washington would support the Honduran army if it invaded Nicaragua. McFarlane answered, "Yes, we support them."

U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica Curtin Winsor said in an interview published November 20 in the San José newspaper *La Nación* that "an invasion of Nicaragua is not impossible." He stated that the United States cannot live with a "subversive" and active Marxist-Leninist regime in the region.

For their part, the *contras* and the Honduran government are eager for U.S. military action. Honduran dictator Gen. Gustavo Álvarez Martínez said recently he saw a U.S. invasion as "plausible."

## Nicaragua offers peace proposals

Faced with the prospect of imminent invasion, the Sandinista leadership has taken a number of diplomatic steps to underscore its desire for peace and assure that the onus for

war in Central America rests clearly on the shoulders of U.S. imperialism.

At the same time the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) does not harbor any illusions that its initiatives can actually prevent a U.S. invasion. What imperialism fears is the *example* of the Nicaraguan revolution, leaving Washington with no option other than militarily intervening to overthrow the Sandinistas.

Managua's moves are timely and important, nonetheless, in forcing U.S. imperialism to pay the highest possible political and diplomatic price for any military action.

On October 20 Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto Brockman presented the Reagan administration with four draft agreements he described as "concrete and detailed proposals for guaranteeing the international peace and security of the Central American states."

The U.S. State Department rejected the proposals one day later without even bothering to study them. It claimed that the initiative was only a ploy to derail the Contadora group's regional peace efforts.

The Nicaraguan government exposed that lie by pointing out that not only had the proposals been drawn up in consultation with the Contadora group, but Managua had also endorsed the Contadora group's own 21-point peace plan.

In particular, the Sandinistas offered to open immediate negotiations — within the framework of Contadora — on the issues of arms and foreign advisers in Central America.

"We have decided to discuss all the problems that worry the United States," Nicaraguan junta coordinator Daniel Ortega told the November 24 *New York Times*. "By doing so we are testing the will of the United States to achieve a lasting peace in Central America."

Tomás Borge outlined Nicaragua's negotiating stance in a speech November 24:

"We have expressed to Contadora, with a clarity that precludes doubtful or suspicious interpretation, that Nicaragua is prepared to initiate immediate discussions leading to immediate agreements to freeze what has been called the arms race in Central America.

"This means Nicaragua's renunciation — if agreement can be reached, and we are fully prepared to reach such an agreement — of acquiring certain types of arms necessary for conventional war, the limitation of the number of such arms in accordance with agreements attained. At the same time Nicaragua has made clear, also within Contadora, that it is prepared immediately to remove foreign military advisers, in the context of a simultaneous with-

drawal of all foreign advisers in Central America.

"The advisers are important for technically developing and arming, but in our case they are not absolutely essential.

"We have had assistance in military training, as is well known, from our Cuban brothers who, with extraordinary respect, have restricted themselves to their technical functions and made no effort to influence our political decisions. In any event, they have been technical advisers for defense, not aggression.

"If agreement is reached, we will ask the Cuban government, while expressing our warm gratitude for the service they have rendered, to withdraw their advisers immediately. Are the governments of Honduras and El Salvador prepared to do the same as Nicaragua?"

"In Honduras there are not advisers, but rather foreign occupation troops. Are they prepared, for the sake of peace, to get rid of these troops, these supposed advisers, who are an outrage to the dignity of their nation?"

"Nicaragua can get rid of its foreign advisers tomorrow. Can Honduras say the same? Can the Salvadoran generals? It is their turn to speak."

Not only do the Nicaraguan proposals put Honduras and El Salvador on the spot, but they undercut what until now has been the Reagan administration's loudest criticism of the Sandinistas.

"If [the United States] wants to negotiate, we will negotiate," said Nicaraguan government leader Henry Ruiz November 24. "But Nicaragua is not prepared to make concessions."

#### Cubans return home

Washington can be expected to snub the new Nicaraguan proposals just as it dismissed D'Escoto's mission in October. In fact, despite pretended devotion to the Contadora negotiating efforts, the Reagan administration has tried to throw cold water on them claiming the Contadora proposals lack adequate verification provisions.

In addition to the Nicaraguan peace proposals, the Sandinista leadership simultaneously moved on a number of domestic fronts to undercut a number of pretexts Washington has seized on to justify its invasion preparations.

The departure of about 1,000 Cuban internationalist volunteers received especially wide publicity in the U.S. daily press. Many of those who returned to Cuba were teachers who left Nicaragua several weeks before the school term was due to end.

Deputy Minister of the Interior Moisés Hassan confirmed that some Cubans had gone home. "Some of those Cubans who could be used as an excuse for invasion have been recalled by their government," Hassan was quoted in the November 24 *New York Times*. "Nicaragua does not want to give the Reagan administration a chance to say that we Nicaraguans would welcome the Marine invaders with kisses while the only resistance would come from the Cubans."

Published reports also said that several leaders of the Salvadoran Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front-Revolutionary Democratic Front (FMLN-FDR) and other liberation organizations were moving from Managua to other countries.

To coordinate their diplomatic efforts, the FMLN-FDR's diplomatic commission met in Managua November 23 with the Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry and the FSLN Department of International Relations.

At a news conference after the meeting, FMLN-FDR representative Salvador Samayoa indicated that the Salvadoran rebels and the Sandinistas shared a common view of Washington's strategy.

"Imperialism's strategy of aggression is obviously regional; no step is isolated," Samayoa said. "If imperialism is militarily occupying Honduras, it is with the aim of destroying Nicaragua and the Salvadoran revolutionary movement. If they invade El Salvador, it is with the aim of liquidating our forces in order to isolate Nicaragua and later invade it. If they intervene in Nicaragua, it is with the aim of weakening the revolutionary process in the entire region."

The Nicaraguan government likewise met with the editors of the reactionary daily *La Prensa* and agreed to ease some restrictions on the newspaper. Under Nicaragua's state of emergency, *La Prensa*, along with the rest of the country's news media, has been subject to censorship. The government also initiated meetings with other powerful groups opposed to the revolution — sections of the Catholic church hierarchy, businessmen organized in the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP), and right-wing political parties.

These moves, combined with an expected announcement on plans for national elections in 1985, took even more wind out of U.S. imperialism's anti-Sandinista propaganda. The actions were also important in buying time and going as far as possible toward cementing a national unity in the face of the looming invasion.

#### Washington thrown on defensive

The barrage of Nicaraguan initiatives and conciliatory gestures caught Washington off guard and forced the Reagan administration to stall for time until it could come up with a response. "We can't interpret the current actions down there," a White House official told the November 26 *Washington Post*.

State Department officials, clearly thrown on the defensive by the Sandinistas' offer to negotiate "all the problems that worry the United States," tried to cover themselves by challenging the sincerity of the Nicaraguan moves.

The U.S. government "can't confirm" any change in Managua's "assistance to guerrilla groups in the region and its close ties to Cuba and the USSR," State Department spokesman Alan Romberg said November 25.

Furthermore, Romberg said, "we have seen

no real evidence that the Sandinistas have changed their basic philosophy toward human rights and the expression of views by internal opposition groups."

While the Reagan administration was downplaying the Nicaraguan initiatives on the one hand, on the other it was claiming credit for successfully pressuring the Sandinistas into taking the steps they did.

"I think they're feeling the heat," a senior State Department official told the November 26 *New York Times*.

In fact, the Sandinista leadership went on a diplomatic offensive to partially outflank the Reagan administration from a position of political strength, not weakness. The FSLN is able to employ flexible tactics, including making conciliatory moves, because the Nicaraguan masses — and other revolutionary fighters in the region, especially the Salvadoran FMLN — are at a high level of mobilization, unity, and consciousness.

Acutely aware of the danger they face, the Nicaraguan workers and farmers have mobilized in their hundreds of thousands to militarily defend the revolution and confront domestic counterrevolutionary forces.

Some 20,000 volunteers, armed against contra attacks, are gathering Nicaragua's coffee crop in the northern mountains.

More than a quarter of a million people participate each night in *vigilancia*, guarding factories, economic installations, and neighborhoods from attack.

"The *contras* won't get here," a woman on night watch told the November 14 *Miami Herald*. "We'll stop them. Everyone ready, everyone alert. Like they say, 'Always standing fast in the struggle.'"

In the days leading up to the U.S. Marine "invasion" in Honduras, the country went on a state of high alert. Thousands of people dug air-raid shelters and trenches, improved tunnel systems, checked neighborhood arms supplies, and made other preparations for house-to-house combat.

The masses in Managua and other cities have also dealt the internal counterrevolution strong blows in recent weeks. A watershed was reached in late October when neighborhood Sandinista Defense Committees mobilized to physically block right-wing demonstrations cloaked in the garb of religious processions.

The confrontations established that the revolutionaries control the streets of Nicaragua.

Tens of thousands then marched in Masaya November 1 to support military conscription and condemn what march leaders called "reactionaries in clerical robes."

Speaking at a neighborhood meeting in Managua November 23, Daniel Ortega expressed the determination of the Nicaraguan revolution to stand fast:

"They can land troops here like they did in Grenada, they can bomb like they did in Vietnam, but in the long run we are going to defeat them." □

# Death squads run rampant

*U.S. criticisms a cover for greater intervention*

By Steve Wattenmaker

Is Washington finally demanding that the Salvadoran dictatorship crack down on the country's notorious right-wing death squads?

"We've had it with these guys," a U.S. official told the November 19 *New York Times*. "If they don't clean up this time, we're going to do something."

U.S. officials have made similar statements in the past, and nothing was done to halt the murders. There is no reason to think this time will be any different.

In fact, the Reagan administration's newfound devotion to human rights is nothing more than window dressing for its plans to escalate U.S. military intervention in El Salvador. The show of concern over the death squads is designed to deflect expected protests of Washington's moves to send U.S. combat troops to prop up a regime of thugs, torturers, and assassins.

Since 1979 the death squads in El Salvador have murdered an estimated 40,000 people — trade union organizers, peasant activists, sympathizers of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), priests, and ordinary working people.

## Tacit encouragement

From the very beginning of U.S. involvement in El Salvador, Washington tried to cover up its tacit encouragement of death-squad activities. Despite the fact that no one has ever been brought to justice for the killings — including the highly publicized murders of four U.S. church women — the White House has routinely certified to Congress that the regime has been steadily improving its human rights performance.

Washington's stance of downplaying death-squad activity began to shift in early October. U.S. officials suddenly adopted a supposed "get tough" attitude toward the regime's refusal to interfere in the death squads' operations.

This shift came during a pronounced upswing in death-squad murders and kidnappings. During September and October the wave of violence claimed the lives of more than 100 trade union leaders alone. Right-wing terrorists even went so far as to kidnap a high-ranking official in El Salvador's Foreign Ministry.

After that kidnapping, the new U.S. ambassador, Thomas Pickering, met with right-wing ARENA party leader Roberto D'Aubuisson and "really leaned on him," according to the October 7 *Wall Street Journal*. D'Aubuisson, a former army intelligence major and currently president of the Constituent Assembly, is thought to be the key figure in organizing the

death squads.

In mid-November the U.S. embassy intentionally leaked the names of three top-ranking military officers also directing the killings: Héctor Antonio Regalado, head of security for the Constituent Assembly and a close friend of D'Aubuisson's; Major José Ricardo Pozo, head of intelligence for the treasury police; and Lt. Col. Aristedes Alfonso Márquez, head of intelligence for the national police.

## Guerrillas aiding right wing?

Undersecretary of Defense Fred Iklé made a well-publicized visit to El Salvador in November to underscore the administration's new propaganda scam.

After his return, in a major policy speech November 16, Iklé charged that the "death squads of the violent right" are actually benefiting the Salvadoran revolutionaries. He told his audience that by assassinating and intimidating members of the "democratic center" in El Salvador, "the violent extremists" on both the left and the right "are in fact working together."

"Both must be defeated," Iklé said.

While in El Salvador, Iklé even made the preposterous charge that "some of the most notorious elements in the death squad activities are in fact enjoying the protection of the Communist guerrillas."

As Iklé was meeting with Salvadoran officials, a death squad carried out a massacre at the El Cauca cooperative farm in southern La Paz province.

Before dawn on November 7 a group of armed men — some wearing military uniforms — dragged nine members of the cooperative from their beds. Two days later the nine were found strangled and stuffed into burlap bags along a roadside. The bodies, including those of two pregnant women, showed signs of torture.

Relatives of the murdered peasants said that some of the victims were among 30 members of the cooperative who had recently signed a letter to the government land reform agency complaining that the cooperative's manager — an activist in D'Aubuisson's ARENA party — was stealing money from the farm's accounts.

A few weeks after this massacre, U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering, speaking to a group of Salvadoran businessmen, said that the unwillingness of the Salvadoran government to take action against the death squads "runs an extremely serious risk" of provoking a cutoff of U.S. aid. Pickering called the work of the death squads "another case of fascists serving the Communist cause."

Referring to the murders of the nine farm workers at El Cauca, Pickering asked the

businessmen: "Where are the condemnations? Why hasn't the private sector . . . publicly condemned such outrages?"

Pickering could easily have answered his own question. Many of those he was speaking to are representatives of the far right and back the actions of the death squads.

Moreover, why should they feign outrage over the killings when Washington itself has given its tacit approval to the Salvadoran oligarchy's rule by terror? Whatever the pretended concern over human rights violations, organized terror on a massive scale remains Washington's real strategy for combating the Salvadoran revolution.

## Army massacre

The depth of U.S. hypocrisy was illustrated by what Pickering failed to condemn. A week before his talk, reporters broke the story of a massacre carried out by the U.S.-trained and -advised Atlacatl Battalion during an early November sweep through the villages of San Nicolás, Copapayo, and La Escopeta. The towns lie close together about 45 miles north-east of San Salvador.

Reporters who visited the towns after the battalion left were told by witnesses that the soldiers had massacred some 118 men, women, and children. Many of the victims were herded into houses and then machine-gunned. Survivors said that 30 of the villagers were driven into a lake and drowned.

The Salvadoran army at first tried to hush up the atrocity, but later sought to excuse its action, saying that a few civilians may have been caught in a cross-fire.

In the final analysis, the real audience that Washington has in mind when it makes its sham criticisms is not the Salvadoran authorities, but working people in the United States.

Suggesting as much, editorial writer Frank del Olmo asked in the November 17 *Los Angeles Times*, "Could it be that Iklé and other Reagan aides have conceded the impossibility of the Salvadoran military saving itself and are priming the American public for some form of deeper U.S. involvement to save the government? . . ."

"Perhaps that is why the Reagan Administration is finally, belatedly moving against the right wing in El Salvador. Because even the President must know how bad it would look for U.S. Marines and Army Rangers — fresh from having rescued U.S. citizens from 'leftist thugs' in Grenada — to rush to the aid of a Salvadoran government filled with rightist thugs."

No amount of "humanitarian" declarations can hide Washington's actual war aims in Central America. The Salvadoran dictatorship will remain filled with "rightist thugs," and the U.S. imperialists will do whatever they can to keep it in power, including through the use of U.S. combat troops. □

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# B.C. workers block antiunion laws

*Unions and allies gird to face new government attacks*

By Michel Dugré

VANCOUVER — The unions and their allies won the first round in the massive battle they have been waging against British Columbia's Social Credit (Socred) government.

This titanic struggle, organized by Operation Solidarity, a united front of virtually all British Columbia unions, has marked a watershed for the entire cross-Canada labor movement. For two weeks, workers here carried out an escalating series of walkouts, which was heading to an all-out general strike.

By November 13, when a settlement was reached, some 85,000 provincial government employees, teachers, and school support staff workers were off the job. Set to join them within a week were municipal workers in every city, plus B.C. Rail, transit, hydro [electrical], and hospital workers. By November 18, all of British Columbia's 250,000 public sector workers would have been on the picket lines.

Private sector workers, including the 48,000 members of the International Woodworkers of America (IWA), were ready to join them if the government of Premier William Bennett introduced strike-breaking legislation or jailed a single unionist.

This magnificent display of working-class solidarity produced such a nightmarish vision for the Bennett government that it was forced to back down from its all-out assault on union rights — for the moment.

The Socreds had selected the trade union movement as the primary target for their vicious restraints program.

## Bennett backs down

After almost two weeks on strike, the British Columbia Government Employees' Union (BCGEU) was able to negotiate a contract with the government that exempted it from most provisions of Bills 2 and 3, which would have gutted free collective bargaining and allowed the firing of thousands of unionists without cause and without regard to seniority provisions in the previous contract. The government also had to agree to extend this agreement to the entire public sector.

Following this huge setback, the government quickly tried to regain lost ground by attempting to deny teachers important gains they had won. British Columbia Teachers Federation (BCTF) President Larry Kuehn warned that teachers may have to go back on the picket lines if the government does not withdraw its threat to force the teachers to make up the days they were on strike.

It is clear, however, that the government is in a much weaker position to proceed with new

attacks. As BCGEU chief negotiator Cliff Andstein explained, this victory is a direct product of the tremendous mobilization by working people and their allies, who showed an iron determination. Among other things, he stressed the part played by the Solidarity Coalition.

It was this broad coalition, which includes organizations of women, tenants, immigrants, unemployed workers, and others, that was responsible for building the huge antigovernment demonstrations of the last four months, including one of 60,000 on October 15. These actions played an important role in undermining support for the Socreds.

Every provincial government in Canada, and especially the federal government of Pierre Trudeau in Ottawa, was looking to British Columbia to see if they could get away with the same type of frontal attacks on unions. That is why the struggle gave rise to such unprecedented solidarity from the trade union movement across Canada. Unions sent millions of dollars, along with messages of support, to British Columbia.

## 'Growing militancy'

The struggle in British Columbia has already contributed to the growing confidence in labor's ability to use its own power. "Our union is stronger than ever," declared Cliff Andstein. On November 15, the Vancouver *Sun* published an article on the "growing militancy" of the teachers. "Teachers," declared Kuehn, "discovered a strength we didn't realize we possessed."

In fact, even though the British Columbia labor code does not recognize teachers' right to strike, they carried out a militant struggle which won such widespread support that the government was not able to carry out its threat to fire striking teachers or take away their teaching certificates. As a result, teachers are discussing transforming the BCTF from a "professional association" into a recognized trade union.

This is a very different situation from that which prevailed in Quebec in the days following the defeat of the Common Front of public sector unions earlier this year. The Parti Québécois government there was able to jail leaders of one of Montreal's key transit unions and put the union under trusteeship with little resistance by the rest of the labor movement.

Here in British Columbia it is the unions that have emerged victorious in the skirmishes that have taken place since the strike. When strike-bound Greyhound Bus Lines tried to drive scab-operated buses into Vancouver from the United States, pickets forced it to cancel these

plans. As British Columbia Federation of Labor (BCFL) spokesperson Gerry Scott put it, "B.C. today is not a healthy place for scabs."

This entire battle has been a very rich experience for the entire labor movement, and its key lessons will not be soon forgotten.

This battle showed the importance of unity, not only between trade unions, but with all the oppressed sectors of the population.

As the strike movement escalated, the struggle deepened. Increasingly, the unions were taking up a wide range of social issues outside the narrow trade union framework. More and more workers considered the fight against the abolition of the Human Rights Commission, part of Bennett's antilabor legislation package, to be of vital interest to them. The unions also showed a greater awareness of the importance of championing women's demands.

## Struggle not over

But the victory does not mean that the fight is over. The government says it agreed only to "meaningful consultations" with Operation Solidarity on many of the issues — such as education funding, human rights, and tenants' rights — that were at the heart of Solidarity's platform.

To a large degree, the confusion on what was won flows from the fact that the union leaders in the Operation Solidarity steering committee decided to call off the strike without any consultation with the union ranks or with their allies in the Solidarity Coalition.

Nor have the arguments of BCFL President Art Kube — who now insists that it is not the role of unions to negotiate "social issues" such as human rights or education cutbacks — convinced many workers.

The actions of the top leaders of Operation Solidarity angered many unionists and allies of labor. One IWA member summed up the feelings of many: "The union leadership decided to retreat before all the troops were even in the field." Many government workers and teachers have pointed out that they were fighting against Bennett's attacks on basic social rights just as much as against the attacks on unions.

The government tried to use the confusion following the end of the strike to regain some of the ground it had previously lost. It has announced its intention to cut back spending on social services even further. It has also sought to minimize the terms of the agreement with the unions.

But it is already clear from the reaction to its attack against the teachers that if the govern-

ment continues down this road there will be a powerful response to any new round of attacks.

That was clear the day after the settlement, when the Lower Mainland Solidarity Coalition [in the Vancouver area] voted to continue the fight for all its demands. That same day, Operation Solidarity voted to give the provincial Solidarity Coalition \$50,000 per month until next summer in order to carry on the struggle. As well, in an unprecedented move the BCFL has opened up part of its annual convention,

which begins November 27, to allow all unions in Operation Solidarity, including those not affiliated to the BCFL, to participate in discussions on how to effectively continue the struggle.

It is impossible to predict what will happen in the next weeks here in British Columbia. But one thing is certain, the movement built by the workers and their allies is very deep. The inspiration provided from this victory in the first round excluded the possibility that the government can silence the opposition. □

## Gain in fight against police spying

### *Socialist wins right to prosecute RCMP*

By John Steele

[The following article is taken from the October 31 issue of *Socialist Voice*, a fortnightly newspaper published in Montreal, Quebec, that reflects the views of the Revolutionary Workers League, Canadian section of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

An important victory in the struggle against RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] law-breaking was registered October 13 when the Supreme Court of Canada decided unanimously that Ontario Attorney General Roy McMurtry can't stop citizens from laying charges against members of the RCMP.

The decision overturns an earlier Ontario Court of Appeals ruling that upheld McMurtry's efforts to prevent socialist writer Ross Dowson and York University professor Howard Buchbinder from prosecuting RCMP officers for criminal acts carried out during the 1970s.

In 1980 and 1981, Ross Dowson and John Riddell, former leaders of the League for Socialist Action (LSA), jointly filed charges against RCMP Commissioner Stanley Chisholm and RCMP Superintendent Ronald Yaworski, the two men responsible for the RCMP's Operation Checkmate. Operation Checkmate was an undercover operation of harassment and disruption of left wing organizations, including the LSA, carried out by the RCMP in the 1970s.

The LSA is one of the predecessor organizations of the Revolutionary Workers League, of which John Riddell is today a leader.

During the Ontario government's Krever Commission inquiry into the invasion of government health records by the RCMP, it was revealed that the RCMP had circulated fake letters to LSA members in an effort to disrupt the organization. Riddell and Dowson tried to bring the RCMP officers up on a charge of forgery and extortion.

At each stage the Ontario government ran interference for the RCMP. McMurtry refused to prosecute the cops, and by ordering a stay of

proceedings he blocked Dowson's own attempt to prosecute. McMurtry claimed the prosecution of RCMP members guilty of breaking the law was "not in the public interest."

In the face of this obstruction, Dowson went to small claims court to seek \$3,000 in damages. On August 10, Ontario Provincial Court Judge Marvin A. Zuker ruled Dowson could launch a new damages suit against Chisholm and Yaworski. The judge ruled they had violated Dowson's right to constitutional freedom and association.

The August 10 and October 13 legal victories come at a time when opposition is growing to the federal government's proposed new security service legislation — Bill C-157. Demonstrations against the bill took place on Parliament Hill and in Montreal on October 15.

The proposed powers of this "civilian" security service would actually *legalize* all the illegal activities previously carried out by the RCMP against government opponents. This puts the lie to the government's claim that disruptive tactics against government opponents ended after Operation Checkmate. On the contrary, disruption has been routine policy all along.

- Last August, for example, Canadian Labour Congress officials charged that the RCMP was carrying out a sophisticated campaign of police intimidation centered particularly on members of public sector unions and women trade union leaders.

- Last year, according to federal Human Rights Commissioner Gordon Fairweather, the RCMP security service ran 76,521 security checks on government and defense industry workers.

- In 1979 and 1980, three members of the Revolutionary Workers League found out the hard way what RCMP security checks are really all about. They were fired from their jobs at the Pratt & Whitney aircraft company plant in Longueuil, near Montreal. Two of them were later fired from Canadair, a crown corporation.

In both cases the Quebec Human Rights Commission (HRC) found they had been fired for their *political* views and that visits from RCMP agents to company officials at Pratt & Whitney had been "decisive" in that company's decision to fire the three.

A HRC suit against Pratt & Whitney demanding the rehiring of the three women is still before the Quebec courts.

Dowson's ability to now proceed with the prosecution of the RCMP officers can help lift the lid on these kinds of RCMP practices. His case deserves the support of all defenders of democratic rights.

However, the Supreme Court decision in no way guarantees that RCMP law-breakers will be punished for their crimes. In fact, the Trudeau government decided last year not to prosecute a *single one* of the hundreds of RCMP officers who have committed criminal acts. Obviously, very few private citizens will have the financial means to themselves prosecute RCMP members.

What's more, on the very day it ruled on the Dowson case the Supreme Court decided in another ruling that police agencies have the right to keep secret the identities of their informers and *agents-provocateurs*. The court ruled that Jean Keable, the head of a Quebec government commission set up to investigate police activities during and after the October 1970 declaration of the War Measures Act, does not have the right to demand the identity of Montreal police who were at the time undercover agents in the Quebec nationalist movement. Quebec's mass nationalist movement is a key target of the new federal legislation.

To turn back the assault on democratic rights, mass pressure has to be brought to bear on the federal government to prosecute RCMP criminals and withdraw its new security legislation, Bill C-157. □

### **Vietnam hard hit by floods**

Nearly 700 people were killed, more than 500 injured, and 1.5 million left homeless by repeated storms and floods hitting Vietnam from late September to early November.

Between September 28 and November 3, four storms, two tropical depressions, and six torrential rains hit Vietnam's coastal areas.

More than 375,000 hectares of riceland were destroyed or waterlogged in the storms. Reports from Hanoi indicate that the storms also destroyed or damaged 5,700 classrooms, 1,700 hospitals and dispensaries, and 460,000 homes. In addition, nearly 1,500 fishing boats were sunk.

Australia's Labor government, which was elected last March on a platform of resuming aid to Vietnam, has indicated that it will provide \$500,000 to Hanoi to purchase food for emergency flood relief. □



# Meeting pays tribute to Farrell Dobbs

*'An indomitable fighter for liberation through socialism'*

By Margaret Jayko

[Farrell Dobbs, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) from 1953 to 1972, died October 31 in California, following a brief illness, at the age of 76.

[He was a leader of the Teamsters union in Minneapolis during a series of important strikes in 1934 and was the central organizer of the union's campaign over the next several years to organize inter-city truckers. He joined the Communist League of America, a predecessor of the SWP, in 1934.

[Dobbs and other leaders of the SWP served 13 months in federal prison for their opposition to U.S. imperialism's course in World War II. In the early 1960's he helped lead the process of reunification of the Fourth International.

[After his retirement as SWP national secretary, he wrote a four-volume history of the Teamsters union and completed two volumes of *Revolutionary Continuity*, his history of the development of Marxist leadership in the United States.

[The following article reports on the first of a series of meetings to celebrate Dobbs' life and contributions to the revolutionary movement. It is taken from the December 2 issue of the U.S. revolutionary socialist newsweekly *Militant*.]

\* \* \*

NEW YORK — Five hundred people packed into the District 65 United Auto Workers hall here on November 20 to celebrate the life of Socialist Workers Party leader Farrell Dobbs. It was a real celebration — of his accomplishments, his example, and the legacy he leaves to the new generation of fighters for the American socialist revolution, hundreds of whom were at the meeting.

The speakers were revolutionary socialists who had benefited from their collaboration with Dobbs and who shared his Marxist perspective.

The meeting was chaired by Mary-Alice Waters, national cochairperson of the SWP. Messages were sent from friends and comrades across the country and around the world.

The most important greeting sent to the rally, said Waters, was the news of the victory of Marine Sgt. Jim Stryffeler in obtaining an honorable discharge from the Marine Corps. Stryffeler had been threatened with possible court-martial for his active opposition to U.S. military intervention from Grenada to Lebanon and for his membership in the Young Socialist Alliance.

Stryffeler's courage and internationalism is an example of the kind of young people that



Howard Patrick/Militant

FARRELL DOBBS, 1907-1983

are being attracted to the movement that Dobbs spent almost a half century helping to lead.

## Finest qualities

The first speaker was George Novack, a long-time leader of the SWP. Novack joined the SWP's predecessor — the Communist League of America — in 1933.

"In his activities, ideas, and outlook, Farrell embodied the finest qualities of the working class he belonged to and so faithfully served," Novack said. "His career demonstrated what untapped powers are inherent among the wealth-producers who constitute the bedrock of our society and are destined to transform it."

Perseverance, said Novack, was one of Dobbs' most prominent traits. "From the time he gave up the leadership of the over-the-road Teamsters organizing drive to assume the greater obligations of national party organization and leadership, he was totally occupied with the problems of gathering and holding together the vanguard of American socialism as national secretary of the SWP."

Novack then made a point which was reiterated by other speakers: "Farrell best displayed the mettle of his capacities as a party leader during the toughest years of the 1950s when

the cold war and McCarthyite witch-hunt terrorized the forces of the left and hounded thousands from their jobs."

Thanks in large part to the "astute and level-headed guidance" of Dobbs, said Novack, the party "successfully weathered the adversities, stuck to our course, and emerged to meet, welcome, and recruit the young radicals of the oncoming generation who were to provide worthy replacements for us oldsters."

## Impact of Cuban revolution

Many of these youth, said Novack, "were uplifted and had their views and lives changed by the Cuban revolution."

Novack recalled Dobbs' enthusiasm "about the achievements and prospects of this first breakthrough of the socialist forces in our hemisphere. It promised to revitalize the opponents of capitalist domination with confidence that the U.S. imperialists and their servitors could be combated and defeated and the ideals of socialism take hold of the worker and peasant masses. Farrell retained confidence in the cadres around Castro to the end."

Novack concluded his remarks by saying: "What has Farrell bequeathed to us? Not only his finished books but, most of all, the inspiration of his exemplary career as an indomitable fighter for liberation through socialism.

"Here, we can proudly say, is what an American worker, guided by Marxist ideas within a revolutionary party, can be and become."

## Absolute objectivity

John Riddell spoke for the Revolutionary Workers League of Canada. He recounted how the example of the SWP's transition in leadership in the 1960s helped the Canadian section of the Fourth International to make a similar change. "In observing the leadership transition in the SWP, we came to know Farrell's leadership method, which was one of absolute objectivity. All revolutionists had to conduct themselves as agents of our great historical purpose and stand unswayed by personal considerations or subjective feelings."

Riddell stressed the way Dobbs collaborated with the less experienced leadership team in Canada: "He was anxious to talk with us, to know how we were doing, to discuss the broadest political questions. But he was a little slow in offering any specific advice. Farrell thought the Canadian party leadership had to stand on their own feet — that was the only way to gain authority in their members' eyes.

"For him, and for every leader of the SWP, the rule has always been: every form of political assistance, but never the slightest interfer-

ence in the internal affairs of the Canadian party.”

### Develop potential

Connie Harris, a 42-year veteran of the British communist movement and a leader of the Fourth International, also spoke. She described how her first encounter with Dobbs 25 years ago made a profound impact on the course of her political life. Dobbs and Marvel Scholl, his wife, had gone to Britain in 1958 to try to heal the 1953 split in the Fourth International.

They stayed with Harris while they were there. Harris was a member of the Socialist Labour League, then a Trotskyist group and part of the Fourth International.

Harris was apprehensive about having someone of Dobbs' stature stay with her. "Farrell's books on the Teamsters struggle hadn't been written then, otherwise I would have known of his outstanding leadership qualities and realized what a warm, compassionate human being he was, constantly concerned to develop the full potential of every militant in the class struggle in order for them to become more effective class-struggle fighters."

Harris described the hours of political discussions she had with Dobbs and Scholl and the way that education enabled her to maintain her lifelong commitment to the revolutionary movement.

Harris recalled that "Farrell's international assignment in 1958 was by no means an easy one. It required immense political skill, a lot of patience, and was physically demanding also. I never heard him complain, however frustrated he must have felt at times. He always maintained his good humor, total objectivity, and pursued his task relentlessly, convinced that a principled reunification would objectively aid the revolutionary struggle internationally."

Clifton DeBerry described how he first met

Dobbs sweeping the floor of the Chicago SWP headquarters in 1950. At the time DeBerry was a union leader and an activist in the Black struggle. The fact that Dobbs was sweeping the floor made a lasting impression on DeBerry because it showed that "he wasn't too good to sweep the floor."

DeBerry began having regular meetings with Dobbs, who offered him valuable tactical suggestions in his union work. Dobbs also persuaded DeBerry of the correctness of the SWP's perspectives for the Black struggle. DeBerry, who had previously been a member of the Communist Party, joined the SWP in 1952 and was the party's presidential candidate in 1964.

DeBerry discussed Dobbs' concern with developing a layer of party leaders who were Black, an absolute necessity given the vanguard role of Blacks in the working-class movement.

This point was taken up further by Mac Warren, a young party leader who was involved in the Boston school desegregation struggle in the mid-1970s and is today a member of the SWP Political Committee.

Warren pointed out that while Dobbs was not actively involved in the party leadership during the battle in Boston, he had a big indirect impact on it.

A combat situation existed in that city as a result of the racist terror organized to try to crush the court-ordered plan to desegregate the schools through busing. The SWP's response was to work together with all those willing to stand up to this racist terror.

Young Black SWP members, like Warren, were part of the leadership team in the Black community that met weekly to discuss out how to organize this fight, which included both advances and retreats. These young socialists turned to Dobbs' *Teamster Rebellion*, which describes the hard-fought strikes in 1934 that brought unionism to Minneapolis. The main

lesson these young fighters got from this book, said Warren, was an understanding of the responsibilities of leadership in such a serious struggle as the one fought out in Boston.

"This is exactly why Farrell wrote the books. For situations like this. For young workers who go into battle," said Warren. Out of this experience, a number of young Black SWP members became more firmly convinced of the leadership capacities of the party, and more confident in their own ability to lead the party.

### Leadership transition

Ed Shaw joined the SWP during World War II as a seaman. When the Cuban revolution occurred, he became the Midwest organizer of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. He then became the party's national organization secretary during the early and mid-1960s and its vice-presidential candidate in 1964.

At the beginning of the 1960s the party's membership was dwindling. Many of its members were older, many of them inactive. "You can understand the difficulties we felt as we went into the early '60s, when we had a chance to begin to recruit the youth who had been awakened by the Black struggle for equality in this country and by the tremendous explosion of the Cuban revolution — something that has done more for us than perhaps can really be recognized."

Shaw focused his remarks on the indispensable role Dobbs played in making the necessary leadership transition in the SWP.

"One of the problems that Farrell understood was the need to change, to make a transition in leadership in the party even though we were in a period of relative stagnation, when comrades are not being tried in struggles, when there is not much change, and it's difficult for leadership changes to take place.

"We needed a new layer of youth, and the youth was being awakened. And I think one of the greatest things that Farrell ever did for the party was to understand that we could do it."

Shaw explained that Dobbs helped ensure that the transition was *organized* instead of the result of a destructive struggle of the youth against the older leaders, which would have been disastrous for the party.

Another important quality of Dobbs, said Shaw, was that when he retired, he did so without "kibbitzing from the sidelines afterwards. That's something no one likes in others, but which is difficult to control in oneself."

### Three lives

The final speaker was SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, the party leader who had worked most closely with Dobbs during the last decade.

Barnes explained that Dobbs led "three lives."

The first one was as a leader of the Minneapolis and Midwest union battles. This was a very concentrated period of political activity.

## Fourth International honors Dobbs

[The following statement was issued on November 2 by the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

Farrell Dobbs represented as few have the understanding of the best working-class leaders of the necessity of building a revolutionary socialist party to liberate the working people.

More than 40 years ago, although he had gained a historic stature as a trade unionist, he left trade union work to head a small, revolutionary-Marxist party.

Farrell Dobbs led the Socialist Workers Party through the 1950s, the most difficult period in the history of the American socialist movement, symbolizing the deter-

mination of the Trotskyist cadres in the United States to persevere at any cost in the work of building a revolutionary party in the central country of modern capitalism and imperialism.

Farrell Dobbs' stature and his total dedication to the aim of building the instrument necessary for liberating the working class and all of humanity is testimony to the quality of the small group of revolutionists who rallied around Leon Trotsky to rebuild the international revolutionary party and to continue to develop revolutionary Marxism as a scientific tool.

The Fourth International honors the memory of Farrell Dobbs as an example of the dedication of the cadres educated by Trotsky to the task of building the world party of the socialist revolution.

It saw the pendulum swing from the rise of class-struggle unionism and Dobbs' role in leading it to the beginning of the decline of those unions. In the late 1930s Dobbs was on the verge of being framed up and sent to federal penitentiary for opposing U.S. imperialism in World War II.

His second life was his several decades as a central leader of the SWP. This was also a time of first a rise and then a lessening of his leadership responsibilities. However, the change this time was not forced upon him — it was a result of the conscious organization of leadership transition in the party.

His third life was the last 10 years, spent in California where he wrote what Barnes called the finest books to be written on the battles of U.S. labor and communist continuity within the working class in this country.

"Farrell always seemed to me to be more marked by being a battle commander, a combat commander, which went back to his earliest days, than any other single attribute." Dobbs felt that weight of command as a very young person in the early bloody battles to organize Minneapolis.

Dobbs was convinced that every layer of fighters could only lead other fighters in struggle after they had "seen the elephant" — a Civil War saying that means, seen the reality of combat.

#### Ex-con

"Farrell never forgot and never quit drawing on his experience as a con," at Sandstone penitentiary, said Barnes. He followed the letters from prisoners in the *Militant* closely. The serious attention by the *Militant* to prisoners and the reaction by prisoners to the *Militant* was seen by Dobbs as an acid-test of a serious revolutionary publication.

Dobbs was convinced that the fight of the workers to defend democratic rights would be part and parcel of the battle to overturn capitalism.

Dobbs covered the Smith Act trials of the Communist Party in the 1950s for the *Militant*. Barnes said that Dobbs thought this attempt to railroad the entire leadership of the CP to prison was a deadly blow to the working people of the United States. He saw this as a question of principle. Many of these leaders whom Dobbs' articles defended were the same people who had called for Dobbs' conviction and imprisonment a few years earlier when he was a victim of the same Smith Act.

Having his name on the articles was an act of education and objectivity. Dobbs hoped to convince a broad layer of workers of the need for solidarity in the face of ruling-class attacks.

In reviewing Dobbs' many accomplishments, Barnes said the most important of all was his indispensable role in leading the party during the 1950s.

#### An ordinary man

Dobbs was an ordinary person, just like the rest of us, said Barnes. Dobbs was dubious of the use of the term genius, especially in poli-

tics. He thought that the real gap was between what was present in millions of working people and how much of it was prevented from coming out by this rotten capitalist society.

Barnes closed by saying a few words to the members of Dobbs' movement, the SWP and Young Socialist Alliance.

He pointed out that the last four weeks had been bitter ones. The revolutionary movement had lost Maurice Bishop and other central leaders of Grenada's New Jewel Movement, the Cuban workers who gave their lives in the fight against the U.S. invaders, and Dobbs.

Barnes described how Dobbs closely followed the recent events in Grenada from the hospital during his last days. He saw the Grenada invasion as the opening battle of what will be a massive war in Central America and the Caribbean. And he had unshakeable confidence in the young fighters coming forward to be part of the battles ahead — in the United States and in Cuba, Nicaragua, Grenada, and El Salvador.

Barnes quoted a speech Dobbs gave to the

## Message from Harrison Salisbury

[The following message was sent to the New York tribute meeting for Farrell Dobbs by Harrison Salisbury, an author and former associate editor of the *New York Times*.

[In his recently published book, *A Journey for Our Times*, Salisbury describes Dobbs, whom he went to high school with, as the "most important member of my class and surely the most interesting."]

\* \* \*

I never knew Farrell Dobbs as a politician, a Trotskyite, a member of the Socialist Workers Party, or a revolutionary. I knew him as a personal friend, a schoolmate, and I knew very well where he came from — he came from the same north Minneapolis workers' milieu in which I grew up. I knew where he was at.

Farrell and his wonderful wife Marvel and myself went to Northside High School together in the first half of the 1920s. They were a bit older than I was and half a year ahead of me in school. We were not close, but we were close enough to sign each other's class annuals.

Farrell was smarter than me. I had no idea that he would go on to become a major political figure, to run for the presidency of the United States, to lead a revolutionary party. But he had me pegged. He was sure that I was going to be a success as a newspaper man — that was more than I was in those days. In fact, I didn't even know that I would be a newspaper man.

Some 50 years passed between the time Farrell and Marvel graduated from North High and my meeting with them again in Berkeley, California — 50 years of a turbulent world, of a world devoted to struggle, to revolution, to oppression, that found Farrell Dobbs, the one-time coal team driver and loader in Min-

neapolis, in the vanguard of the movement for revolution and change.

YSA in 1966. Dobbs passed on what Trotsky, a central leader of the Russian revolution, had told him: "Don't make it a condition that the socialist revolution must come in your lifetime. Be not only a citizen of the planet; be a citizen of time."

Barnes read the concluding section of that speech:

"Our job is to build a movement of men and women who emulate the seasoned fighters of the Continental [Army] in the first American revolution. Learn to be professional revolutionary fighters. Don't be summer soldiers. Don't dawdle; don't vacillate. Put nothing above the considerations of the movement. Maintain your place in the front ranks of the revolutionary fighters, and stand in that place for the duration.

"There is no other way in which you can find so rich, so rewarding, so fruitful, and so purposeful a life."

A collection was taken for the Farrell Dobbs Party Building Fund to continue Dobbs' work. □

Long since, his horizon had broadened enormously. He was no longer a Minneapolis boy, growing up in a quiet little corner of the blue-collar part of the city, so far away from social and political consciousness that when he first went to work he didn't even know what the word strike meant, as he wryly told me 50 years later, sitting with Marvel in their quiet and pleasant California bungalow.

He had not known the names Trotsky or Lenin, and nothing was further from his mind than revolution when he was suddenly whirled up into the Minneapolis Teamsters' strike and received on-the-job training in strike tactics with the famous Dunne brothers, who were his mentors and the leaders of the Teamsters union and its famous strike.

I will not here try to recount and recall the career of Farrell Dobbs. There are others far better able than I to tell that story.

I can only give testimony to the spirit and the straightness of the man, a pure product of the Middle West in which I grew up, tempered by the storms of agrarian depression that came long before the famous stock market crash and the big depression of the 1930s; a man who had a heart and a conscience and devoted his life to trying to change the lot of the poor and the oppressed and the down-trodden, a real American; and, I am sure, in his own way as staunch a revolutionary as the country has seen since the days of its own revolution and the likes of Tom Paine and Tom Jefferson and Sam Adams and George Washington and Ben Franklin.

A man like Farrell Dobbs lives his life in the swirl of conflict and confrontation, and perhaps it is only with his death that we begin to see what his days had been all about. □

# Bitter medicine for Israeli economy

*Resignation of finance minister marks change of course*

By Michel Warschawski

JERUSALEM — Three days after his nomination to Yitzhak Shamir's new government had been confirmed by the Israeli parliament, Finance Minister Yoram Aridor announced his resignation on October 13.

Although Aridor's resignation had been demanded for a long time by all the leading economic circles in Israel, including a significant sector of his own Herut Party, Aridor continued to cling to his post while trying to show that it was possible to counter the laws of the market within the context of a capitalist economy and satisfy both the bourgeoisie and the working masses.

What finally forced Prime Minister Shamir to get rid of his finance minister was a leak, apparently orchestrated from within the country's economic leadership, about the plan to "dollarize" the Israeli economy.

Yigal Cohen-Orgad, one of the strongest opponents of Aridor's policy, took Aridor's place, thereby signalling the definitive end to an economic adventure that brought the Israeli economy to the brink of bankruptcy.

## Aridor's economic populism

Contrary to the widespread view, the Herut Party of Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Shamir, David Levy, and Yoram Aridor is not, and has never been, the party of the Israeli big bourgeoisie. In its big majority, the bourgeoisie has always supported the Labor Party.

The Herut Party's social base is among the petty bourgeoisie and those of modest means. And the Herut leadership has always been very sensitive to pressures from the low-income neighborhoods of the big cities and immigrant towns.

The tensions between the Herut Party and the Liberal Party that have been expressed on several occasions inside the Likud coalition reflect the class differences between the backers of those two formations. The Liberal Party is closer to the leading economic circles, especially those in small industry, commerce, and real estate.

Several months before the last parliamentary elections, in early 1981, Begin replaced Finance Minister Yigal Hurvitz, who had tried to carry out an austerity policy under the slogan "the cash box is empty." The post went to Aridor, who had been leader of the Herut faction in the Histadrut.<sup>1</sup>

1. The Histadrut (General Federation of Labor) is a major underpinning of the Zionist state. While purporting to be a trade union, and grouping together the big majority of Jewish workers in Israel, the Histadrut is also the country's largest employer, with

Aridor immediately launched a program of reducing taxes on consumer goods and increasing subsidies for basic necessities. At the same time, Aridor blocked all the plans that threatened to boost unemployment. While this political policy was not met with enthusiasm among the leading economic circles, it helped seal the Likud victory in the parliamentary elections.

Advised by Dr. Yakir Plessner, a charlatan who asserted that the number one priority had to be the fight against inflation (then 120 percent annually) and that inflation was primarily a psychological phenomenon, Aridor decided to pursue his economic policy even after the elections. He refused to devalue the shekel and eliminated taxes on imported products.

These measures led to a dramatic rise in the deficit in the balance of payments and also resulted in a flight of capital from industry to trade and the stock market, where huge gains of more than 200 percent a year could be made.

For more than two years the Aridor-Plessner team's policies meant full employment and a rise in real purchasing power for the workers because of the indexing of wages to inflation, the subsidies and tax reductions on consumer goods, and the stock market speculation that was by no means limited to the most favored layers of the population.

Of course the deterioration of health services, education, and social services had an impact on the living conditions of the workers. But the full extent of the catastrophe in those areas will not be seen for another year or two. For the great majority, this deterioration has still passed unnoticed amid the appliances, video sets, cars, and trips abroad. The consumption of these is, in proportion to the number of inhabitants, the highest in the world.

A recent anecdote shows the dimensions of the consumption fever that Israel has undergone. One of the largest producers of Japanese video equipment sent one of its directors to Israel to determine what its Israeli clients were doing with the large quantity of sets ordered and to make sure they were not serving as intermediaries to reexport them elsewhere.

It was only after seeing the situation with his own eyes that he was convinced that this huge quantity of products was in fact being sold in Israel itself.

## Suicidal policy

This massive subsidy of consumer products and the relative guarantee of purchasing power

nearly 250,000 workers employed in Histadrut-owned factories, farms, and stores. — IP

and jobs are in themselves laudable objectives. But they are absolutely unrealizable in the concrete context of the economic reality of the state of Israel and the world capitalist system.

From the capitalist point of view, which is the Zionist regime's point of view, the economic policy applied by the Begin government was suicidal. Local industry was unable to compete with foreign products, not only in the international market but in the domestic market as well. As a result, dozens of factories have closed their doors and capital has been reinvested in import activities.

Agriculture, for two decades the pride of the Israeli economy, and the production of cut diamonds literally collapsed in the last two years, following the reduction in subsidies and the overvalued shekel.

The balance of payments deficit surpassed \$5 billion, and the foreign debt will reach \$22 billion by the end of the year. As might be expected Dr. Plessner's theories about inflation were proven to be completely wrong: the rate of inflation should exceed 200 percent annually by the end of the year.

## Cohen-Orgad declares war

Succeeding Aridor as head of the Finance Ministry is Yigal Cohen-Orgad, a fierce partisan of "rationalizing" expenditures.

Cohen-Orgad announced that his goal was to reduce the budget deficit and the deficit in the balance of payments. How does he plan to proceed? Certainly not by making substantial reductions in the military budget and the budget for settlements, which make up more than 50 percent of the national budget. Yigal Cohen-Orgad is not only a loyal representative of the Israeli bourgeoisie, he was also one of the members of parliament who voted against the Camp David accords, which he considered too defeatist, and he is an open partisan of Gush Emunim, the far-right settlers' movement.

The new finance minister is putting the finishing touches on his new home in Ariel, a new settlement right in the middle of the West Bank.

If the cuts are not made in the area of cannons or settlements, Cohen-Orgad has to cut butter and jobs, and he has announced draconian measures: reduction of subsidies on basic necessities; 5 to 10 percent cuts in the social services budgets, which will result in a further deterioration of social services; and massive job cuts.

But the key target of the new finance minister's attack on the workers is the system of indexing wages, which he views as the main factor responsible for inflation and for the inability

ity of Israeli products to compete in international markets.

For the first time in more than 15 years, it seems that the Zionist government has no choice but to impose austerity on the workers. The international banks and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have made it clear that such measures are a precondition for the new loans the Israeli economy needs.

At present the main economic indicators, especially the construction index that traditionally heralds every turn in the country's economic situation, show that we are on the brink of the economic crisis that has been deferred for more than six years through a rise in American aid and at the price of a growing deficit in the national budget and balance of payments. The moment has come to refill the cash box, or at least to patch the holes through which the government allowed astronomical sums to pour out. For example, the war in Lebanon has thus far cost at least \$2.2 billion, which the government never had.

### The popular reaction

While the collapse of bank stocks in early October caused panic among the great majority of the population, which had been attracted by the high profit rate of these shares, on October 11 the government used the collapse to push through a 50 percent increase in the price of basic necessities and to devalue the shekel by 23 percent.

"This is only the beginning," the new minister told the employers. They quickly responded: "It's now or never to carry out an austerity policy, even if that means the end of full employment" (*Yediot Aharonot*, October 21, 1983).

For the workers, the era of the car and the video set seems definitely over. Discussions in the factories and neighborhoods now revolve around preserving purchasing power through wage indexing and guaranteeing jobs. An animated meeting of delegates of the workers committees forced the Histadrut to organize a two-hour protest strike October 16, which for the first time in a long while brought out nearly all the workers.

Although a two-hour stoppage is almost laughable given the stakes involved, the massive participation that characterized the strike was a warning to the leaders of the Histadrut as well as to the government.

The "workers" federation and its Labor Party leaders are completely incapable of presenting an alternative economic policy to that of the government. In fact, the only way to achieve both the maintenance of purchasing power and jobs and a significant reduction in the budget deficit would be to substantially reduce military expenditures and the budget for establishing settlements. But no significant Zionist party is ready to do those things. That is why one can speak of a consensus in the ruling class on the need to deal a heavy blow to the living standards of the workers, with the Labor Party contenting itself with demands that the efforts be "shared equally."



YITZHAK SHAMIR

It is not yet possible to predict the pace and mode of the working-class response. Will it be through the elected workers committees in the factories, coordinating their efforts by branch of the economy and by region? That was proposed in the call distributed in the workers centers by the members of the Revolutionary Communist League.

Or will it perhaps take place around the Action Committees, as happened in the early 1960s?

Will we again see the low-income neighborhoods blow up, this time linking economic and

social demands to the assertion of the Oriental identity of their inhabitants?<sup>2</sup>

It would be futile to speculate on these questions. But one thing is certain. From the beginning the workers' and people's demands will be political. The first demonstrations by the organizations in the low-income neighborhoods unanimously took up the slogan "money for low-income neighborhoods, not for settlements." This shows that the economic choices all ultimately hark back to political choices.

The question that is now sharply posed is whether the movements that massively mobilized against the war and the occupation, whose composition was in the great majority petty bourgeois, will be able to orient toward the poor layers in order to unite the movement against the war with the social layers capable of offering a progressive solution to the crisis of Israeli society.

In any case, that is the focus of revolutionary Marxist activists in the working class, where they have limited forces, and in the organizations of the antiwar movement, where they have gained a fairly significant audience. □

2. Jewish society in Israel is sharply divided between those from Europe, known as Ashkenazim, and those from the Arab countries, known as Sephardic or Oriental Jews.

Sephardic Jews are heavily concentrated in low-income neighborhoods in the large cities and in isolated "immigrant towns." In 1981, the average income of Sephardic urban families was 20 percent lower than for Ashkenazi families. In recent years, Sephardic Jews, who make up a majority of the Jewish population, have been increasingly vocal in their opposition to Ashkenazi domination of Israeli society and to the second-class status of Oriental Jews in Israel. — IP

## 'Bring the boys home'

15,000 at Israeli antiwar festival

By Leila Khatib

[The following article originally appeared in the October–November issue of *Sharara* ("Spark"), Arabic-language publication of the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL), section of the Fourth International in Israel. The translation, from a French version provided by the RCL, is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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It no longer makes the front page of the newspapers. The massacres have given way to more discrete sweeps, and the large-scale military offensives to routine operations. But the war in Lebanon continues, as shown by the government budget and the number of mobilized troops still on the other side of the northern border. The fact that Operation "Peace for Galilee" has been transformed into the Lebanese quagmire undoubtedly explains why the center of gravity of the Israeli antiwar

movement has shifted toward the soldiers in the Yesh Gvoul ("There is a Limit") movement.

While Peace Now and the Committee Against the War in Lebanon have recently experienced a certain ebb in their mobilization, Yesh Gvoul has just organized [on September 28] a festival in A'hziv, near the Lebanese border, bringing together more than 15,000 participants, making it the most massive antiwar demonstration since the Peace Now gathering on the anniversary of the invasion of Lebanon.

Despite threats of boycott and the real danger of seeing the doors of the radio and television stations shut in their faces, the most famous singers and musical groups in the country responded to Yesh Gvoul's call and appeared at a benefit for the families of soldiers who refuse to go to Lebanon and who lose their wages during the weeks or months they are in prison.

With the poet Yehonatan Gefen chairing,

we heard Hava Alberstein, Shalom Hanoch, Arik Sinai, the group Benzine and many others, most of whom did not just sing, but also explained why they were at A'hziv, standing under an immense banner that said "Bring the boys home."

The participants, most of them young, came from the kibbutzim in the south as well as the immigrant towns of the north. One even saw, sitting next to each other, soldiers recently released from prison after refusing to serve in Lebanon and military police who, several months earlier, were still their jailers. Some of the military police returned to Prison No. 6 the next day, bringing with them solidarity messages for those serving their sentences.

The success of the Yesh Gvoul festival

(which the Israeli press has already dubbed Yesh-Gvoulstock) is above all explained by the real impact of the war resisters in the Israeli army, and through that in society as a whole. Because if the war is less dramatic than before, it remains a quite tangible and dangerous reality for the tens of thousands of reserve soldiers.

As our comrade Michel Warschawski, currently serving 28 days detention in Prison No. 6, wrote us, "in each unit that must leave for Lebanon, only one or two soldiers are ready to go to prison, but there are dozens of others who discuss whether or not they should refuse, who hesitate, and who will refuse the next time or the time after. Not to mention the dozens and dozens of soldiers who look for some kind of 'scam' to avoid having to go there. . . . In

any event, before going to prison, I participated in dozens of discussions on this subject in my unit, and not once did I get a clearly hostile reaction; in general you could say it was an encouraging reaction."

It is precisely because the opposition to the war in Lebanon is so strong within the Zionist army that the military authorities do whatever they can to discourage people from refusing: three weeks after he has served his sentence, our comrade Michel Warschawski will have to join another unit in Lebanon or serve a new term in prison, a cycle that can go on endlessly. It will take more than that to break the movement of Yesh Gvoul soldiers, and more still to convince the Israeli soldier that he has something to gain in the Lebanese swamp. □

## DOCUMENTS

# 'Grenada had become a true symbol'

## *Castro speaks on overthrow of Bishop government and U.S. invasion*

[The following is the full text of the speech delivered by Fidel Castro, president of Cuba, to more than a million people in Havana November 14. The people had gathered to honor Cuban workers killed during the U.S. invasion of Grenada. This English translation of Castro's speech was distributed by the Cuban government.]

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On October 15, 1976, a little over seven years ago, we gathered here, in this same place, to deliver a funeral address for the 57 Cubans who were vilely murdered in the Barbados plane sabotage,\* carried out by men who had been trained by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. Today we have come once again to bid farewell — this time to 24 Cubans who died in Grenada, another island not very far from Barbados, as a result of U.S. military actions.

Grenada was one of the smallest independent states in the world, both in territory and population. Even though Cuba is a small, underdeveloped country, it was able to help Grenada considerably, because our efforts — which were modest in quantity though high in quality — meant a lot for a country less than 400 square kilometers in size, with a population of just over 100,000.

For instance, the value of our contribution to Grenada in the form of materials, designs, and labor in building the new airport came to \$60 million at international prices — over \$500 per inhabitant. It is as if Cuba — with a population of almost 10 million — received a project

worth \$5 billion as a donation.

In addition, there was the cooperation of our doctors, teachers, and technicians in diverse specialties, plus an annual contribution of Cuban products worth about \$3 million. This meant an additional annual contribution of \$40 per inhabitant.

It is impossible for Cuba to render considerable material assistance to countries with significantly larger populations and territories, but we were able to offer great assistance to a country like tiny Grenada.

Many other small Caribbean nations, accustomed to the gross economic and strategic interests of colonialism and imperialism, were amazed by Cuba's generous assistance to that fraternal people. They may have thought that Cuba's selfless action was extraordinary. In the midst of the U.S. government's dirty propaganda, some may even have found it difficult to understand.

Our people felt such deep friendship for [Maurice] Bishop and Grenada, and our respect for that country and its sovereignty was so irreproachable, that we never dared to express any opinions about what was being done or how it was being done.

In Grenada, we followed the same principle we apply to all revolutionary nations and movements, full respect for their policies, criteria, and decisions, expressing our views on any matter only when asked to do so. Imperialism is incapable of understanding that the secret of our excellent relations with revolutionary countries and movements in the world lies precisely in this respect.

The U.S. government looked down on Grenada and hated Bishop. It wanted to destroy Grenada's process and obliterate its example. It had even prepared military plans for invading the island — as Bishop had charged nearly

two years ago — but it lacked a pretext.

Socioeconomically, Grenada was actually advancing satisfactorily. The people had received many benefits, in spite of the hostile policy of the United States, and Grenada's Gross National Product was growing at a good rate in the midst of the world crisis.

Bishop was not an extremist; rather, he was a true revolutionary — conscientious and honest. Far from disagreeing with his intelligent and realistic policy, we fully sympathized with

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### **Bishop was not an extremist; he was a true revolutionary . . .**

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it, since it was rigorously adapted to his country's specific conditions and possibilities.

Grenada had become a true symbol of independence and progress in the Caribbean. No one could have foreseen the tragedy that was drawing near. Attention was focused on other parts of the world.

Unfortunately, the Grenadian revolutionaries themselves unleashed the events that opened the door to imperialist aggression. Hyenas emerged from the revolutionary ranks. Today no one can yet say whether those who used the dagger of divisionism and internal confrontation did so for their own ends or were inspired and egged on by imperialism.

It is something that could have been done by the CIA — and, if somebody else was responsible, the CIA could not have done it any better. The fact is that allegedly revolutionary arguments were used, invoking the purest principles of Marxism-Leninism and charging Bishop with practicing a cult of personality and with drawing away from the Leninist

\*On Oct. 6, 1976, a Cuban airplane crashed off Barbados as a result of an explosion on board. Counter-revolutionary terrorists trained by the CIA took credit for the blast, in which a total of 73 people were killed.

norms and methods of leadership.

In our view, nothing could be more absurd than to attribute such tendencies to Bishop. It was impossible to imagine anyone more noble, modest, and unselfish. He could never have been guilty of being authoritarian. If he had any defect, it was his excessive tolerance and trust.

Were those who conspired against him within the Grenadian party, army, and security forces by any chance a group of extremists drunk on political theory? Were they simply a group of ambitious, opportunistic individuals, or were they enemy agents who wanted to destroy the Grenadian revolution?

History alone will have the last word, but it would not be the first time that such things occurred in a revolutionary process. In our view, [Bernard] Coard's group objectively destroyed the revolution and opened the door to imperialist aggression.

Whatever their intentions, the brutal assassination of Bishop and his most loyal, closest comrades is a fact that can never be justified in that or any other revolution. As the October 20 statement by the Cuban party and government put it, "No crime can be committed in the name of the revolution and liberty."

In spite of his very close and affectionate links with our party's leadership, Bishop never said anything about the internal dissensions that were developing. On the contrary, in his last conversations with us he was self-critical about his work regarding attention to the armed forces and the mass organizations. Nearly all of our party and state leaders spent many friendly, fraternal hours with him on the evening of October 7, before his return trip to Grenada.

Coard's group never had such relations nor such intimacy and trust with us. Actually, we did not even know that this group existed.

It is to our revolution's credit that, in spite of our profound indignation over Bishop's removal from office and arrest, we fully refrained from interfering in Grenada's internal affairs. We refrained even though our construction workers and all our other cooperation personnel in Grenada — who did not hesitate to confront the Yankee soldiers with the weapons Bishop himself had given them for their defense in case of an attack from abroad — could have been a decisive factor in those internal events.

Those weapons were never meant to be used in an internal conflict in Grenada, and we would never have allowed them to be so used. We would never have been willing to use them to shed a single drop of Grenadian blood.

On October 12, Bishop was removed from office by the central committee, on which the conspirators had attained a majority. On the 13th, he was placed under house arrest. On the 19th, the people took to the streets and freed Bishop. On the same day, Coard's group ordered the army to fire on the people and Bishop, [Unison] Whiteman, Jacqueline Creft, and other excellent revolutionary leaders were murdered.



Fidel Castro greets Maurice Bishop during Grenadian prime minister's visit to Cuba in 1980.

As soon as the internal dissensions, which came to light on October 12, became known, the Yankee imperialists decided to invade.

The message sent by the leadership of the Cuban party to Coard's group on October 15 has been made public. In it, we expressed our deep concern over both the internal and external consequences of the split and appealed to common sense, serenity, wisdom, and generosity of revolutionaries. This reference to generosity was an appeal not to use violence against Bishop and his followers.

This group of Coard's that seized power in Grenada expressed serious reservations toward Cuba from the very beginning because of our well-known and unquestionable friendship with Bishop.

The national and international press have published our strong denunciation of the events of October 19, the day Bishop was murdered.

Our relations with [Gen. Hudson] Austin's short-lived government, in which Coard was really in charge, were actually cold and tense, so that, at the time of the criminal Yankee aggression, there was no coordination whatsoever between the Grenadian army and the Cuban construction workers and other cooperation personnel.

The basic points of the messages sent to our embassy in Grenada on October 12 through 25, the day in which the invasion took place, have been made public. Those documents stand in history as irrefutable proof of our unblemished, principled position regarding Grenada.

Imperialism, however, presented the events as the coming to power of a group of hard-line communists, loyal allies of Cuba. Were they really communists? Were they really hard-liners? Could they really be loyal allies of Cuba?

Or were they rather conscious or unconscious tools of Yankee imperialism?

Look at the history of the revolutionary movement, and you will find more than one connection between imperialism and those who take positions that appear to be on the extreme left. Aren't Pol Pot and Ieng Sary — the ones responsible for the genocide in Kampuchea — the most loyal allies Yankee imperialism has in Southeast Asia at present?

In Cuba, ever since the Grenadian crisis began, we have called Coard's group — to give it a name — the "Pol Potist group."

Our relations with the new leaders of Grenada were to be subjected to profound analysis, as was set forth in the October 20 statement by the party and government of Cuba. In it, we also stated that, due to our basic regard for the Grenadian people, we would not rush to "take any steps regarding technical and economic cooperation which might jeopardize the basic services and vital economic interest of the people of Grenada."

We could not accept the idea of leaving the Grenadians without doctors or leaving the airport, which was vital to the nation's economy, unfinished. Most certainly, our construction workers were to leave Grenada when that project was completed, and the weapons that Bishop had given them were to be returned to the government. It was even possible that our very bad relations with the new government would make it necessary for us to leave much earlier.

The thing that placed Cuba in a morally complex, difficult situation was the announcement that Yankee naval forces were en route to Grenada. Under those circumstances, we couldn't possibly leave the country. If the imperialists really intended to attack Grenada, it was our duty to stay there.

To withdraw at that time would have been dishonorable and could even have triggered aggression in that country then and in Cuba later on. In addition, events unfolded with such incredible speed that if the evacuation had been planned for, there would not have been time to carry it out.

In Grenada, however, the government was morally indefensible. And, since the party, the government, and the army had divorced themselves from the people, it was also impossible to defend the nation militarily, because a revolutionary war is only feasible and justifiable when united with the people. We could only fight, therefore, if we were directly attacked. There was no alternative.

It should nevertheless be noted that, despite these adverse circumstances, a number of Grenadian soldiers died in heroic combat against the invaders.

The internal events, however, in no way justified Yankee intervention.

Since when has the government of the United States become the arbiter of internal conflicts between revolutionaries in any given country? What right did Reagan have to be so aggrieved over the death of Bishop, whom he so hated and opposed? What reasons could

there be for this brutal violation of the sovereignty of Grenada — a small independent nation that was a respected and acknowledged member of the international community?

It would be the same as if another country believed it had the right to intervene in the United States because of the repulsive assassination of Martin Luther King or so many other outrages, such as those that have been committed against the Black and Hispanic minorities in the United States, or to intervene because John Kennedy was murdered.

The same may be said of the argument that the lives of 1,000 Americans were in danger. There are many times more U.S. citizens in dozens of other countries in the world. Does

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### **Coard's group objectively destroyed the revolution and opened the door to imperialist aggression . . .**

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this, perchance, imply the right to intervene when internal conflicts arise in those countries?

There are tens of thousands of Grenadians in the United States, England, and Trinidad. Could tiny Grenada intervene if domestic policy problems arose that pose some threat to its compatriots in any of those countries?

Putting aside the fallacy and falseness of such pretexts for invading Grenada, is this really an international norm that can be sustained? A thousand lessons in Marxism could not teach us any better about the dirty, perfidious, and aggressive nature of imperialism than the attack unleashed against Grenada at dawn on October 25 and its subsequent development.

In order to justify its invasion of Grenada and its subsequent actions, the U.S. government and its spokesmen told 19 lies. Reagan personally told the first 13:

1. Cuba was responsible for the coup d'état and the death of Bishop.
2. The American students were in danger of being taken hostage.
3. The main purpose of the invasion was to protect the lives of American citizens.
4. The invasion was a multinational operation undertaken at the request of Mr. [Paul] Scoon and the eastern Caribbean nations.
5. Cuba was planning to invade and occupy Grenada.
6. Grenada was being turned into an important Soviet-Cuban military base.
7. The airport under construction was not civilian but military.
8. The weapons in Grenada would be used to export subversion and terrorism.
9. The Cubans fired first.
10. There were over 1,000 Cubans in Grenada.
11. Most of the Cubans were not construction workers but professional soldiers.

12. The invading forces took care not to destroy civilian property or inflict civilian casualties.

13. The U.S. troops would remain in Grenada for a week.

14. Missile silos were being built in Grenada.

15. The vessel *Vietnam Heroico* was trans-



BERNARD COARD

porting special weapons.

16. Cuba was warned of the invasion.

17. Five hundred Cubans are fighting in the mountains of Grenada.

18. Cuba has issued instructions for reprisals to be taken against U.S. citizens.

19. The journalists were excluded for their own protection.

None of these assertions were proved, none are true, and all have been refuted by the facts. This cynical way of lying in order to justify invading a tiny country reminds us of the

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### **We fully refrained from interfering in Grenada's internal affairs . . .**

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methods Adolph Hitler used during the years leading up to World War II.

The U.S. students and officials of the medical school located there acknowledge that they were given full guarantees for U.S. citizens and the necessary facilities for those who wanted to leave the country.

Moreover, Cuba had informed the U.S. government on October 22 that no foreign citizens, including Cubans, had been disturbed,

and it offered to cooperate in solving any difficulty that might arise, so that problems could be settled without violence or intervention in that country.

No U.S. citizen had been disturbed at all prior to the invasion, and if anything endangered them, it was the war unleashed by the United States.

Cuba's instructions to its personnel not to interfere with any actions to evacuate U.S. citizens in the area of the runway under construction near the university contributed to protecting the U.S. citizens residing in that country.

Reagan's reference to the possibility that Grenada might turn into another Iran — a reference calculated to appeal to the U.S. feelings wounded in that episode — is a demagogic, politicking, dishonest argument.

The assertion that the new airport was a military one — an old lie that the Reagan administration had dwelt on a lot — was categorically refuted by the English capitalist firm that supplied and installed the electrical and technical equipment for that airport.

The British technicians of the Plessey Company, which has made a name for itself internationally as a specialist in this field, worked alongside the Cuban construction workers, to whose civilian worker status they attest. Several countries of the European community that are members of the Atlantic alliance cooperated in one way or another with the airport. How can anyone imagine them helping Cuba to build a military airport in Grenada?

However, the idea that Grenada was being turned into a Soviet-Cuban base is refuted by the proven fact that there wasn't even one Soviet military adviser on the island.

The supposedly secret documents that fell into the hands of the United States and were published by the Yankee administration a few days after the invasion refer to the agreement between the governments of Cuba and Grenada by virtue of which our country was to send Grenada 27 military advisers, which could later be increased to 40 — figures that coincide with the ones Cuba published on the number of advisers, which was 22 on the day of the attack, to which were added a similar number of translators and service personnel from the mission.

Nowhere in those documents that they have been crowing over is there anything that has anything to do with the idea of military bases in Grenada.

What they do show is that the weapons that the Soviet Union supplied to the government of Grenada for the army and the militia were subject to a clause that prohibited their export to third countries. This refutes the idea that Grenada had been turned into an arsenal for supplying weapons to subversive, terrorist organizations, as the present U.S. administration likes to call the revolutionary and national liberation movements. No weapons ever left Grenada for any other country, and, therefore, Reagan can never prove that any did.



The assertion that Cuba was about to invade and occupy Grenada is so unrealistic, absurd, crazy, and alien to our principles and international policy that it cannot even be taken seriously. What has been proven is the absolutely scrupulous way in which we refrained from meddling in the internal affairs of that country, in spite of our deep affection for Bishop and our total rejection of Coard and his group's conspiracy and coup, which could serve only the interests of imperialism and its plans for destroying the Grenada revolution.

The messages containing precise, categorical instructions to our embassy in Grenada, which have been widely publicized by the government of Cuba, constitute irrefutable proof of the clear position of principles maintained by the leadership of our party and state with regard to the internal events in Grenada.

The civilian status of the vast majority of the Cuban cooperation personnel in Grenada has been shown to the whole world by the hundreds of foreign journalists who saw them arriving in our country and who were able to interview each and every one of them.

Nearly 50 percent of them were over 40 years old. Who could question their status as civilian cooperation personnel and workers with long years of experience on their jobs?

When the U.S. government spokesmen asserted that there were from 1,000 to 1,500 Cubans in Grenada at the time of the invasion and that hundreds of them were still fighting in the mountains, Cuba published the exact number of Cuban citizens who were in Grenada on the day of the invasion — 784, including diploma-

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### **If the imperialists really intended to attack Grenada, our duty was to stay there . . .**

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tic personnel with their children and other relatives.

The agencies that sent them and the kind of work they did were also reported, as well as the instructions given them to fight in their work areas and camps if attacked, and the fact that it was impossible — according to the information we had — that hundreds might still remain in the mountains.

Later, the names and jobs of all cooperation workers were published, as well as the known or probable situation of each one.

The facts have shown that the information provided by Cuba was absolutely true. There isn't a single fact in all that information that could be proven false.

The assertion that the Cubans initiated the acts of hostility is equally false and cynical.

The irrefutable truth is that the Cubans were sleeping and their weapons were stored at the time of the air drop on the runway and around the camps. They had not been distributed. There weren't enough to go around, and they weren't distributed until the landing was al-



Part of huge crowd of demonstrators in St. George's, Grenada, on October 19 that freed Bishop from house arrest.

ready underway. And that is when the Cuban personnel went to the places assigned to them for that emergency.

Even so, our personnel, now organized and armed, had time to see the U.S. paratroopers regrouping on the runway and the first planes landing. That was the invader's weakest moment. If the Cubans had fired first, they would have killed or wounded dozens — perhaps hundreds — of U.S. soldiers in those early hours.

What is strictly historical and strictly true is that the fighting began when the U.S. troops advanced toward the Cubans in a belligerent way.

It is also true that when a group of unarmed cooperation personnel was captured, they were used as hostages and forced to lead the way in front of the U.S. soldiers.

The invasion of Grenada was a treacherous surprise attack, with no previous warning at all — just like Pearl Harbor, just like the Nazis. The note from the government of the United States to the government of Cuba on Tuesday, October 25, in an attempted response to our note of Saturday, October 22, was delivered at 8:30 in the morning, three hours after the landing had taken place and an hour and a half after the U.S. troops began attacking our compatriots in Grenada.

Actually, on the afternoon of the 25th, the U.S. government sent the government of Cuba a deceitful note that led us to believe the fighting would cease in a reasonable and honorable manner, thus avoiding greater bloodshed. Although we immediately responded to that note, accepting that possibility, what the U.S. gov-

ernment did was to land the 82nd Airborne Division at dawn on the 26th and attack with all its forces the Cuban position that was still resisting.

Is this the way a serious government behaves? Is this the way to warn of an attack? Was this the way to avoid greater bloodshed?

Mr. Scoon blatantly declared that he approved of the invasion but that he had not previously asked anyone to invade Grenada. A few days after the landing, Mr. Scoon — lodged in the *Guam* helicopter carrier —

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### **A thousand lessons in Marxism could not teach us any better about the dirty, perfidious, aggressive nature of imperialism . . .**

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signed a letter officially requesting the intervention. Reagan could not prove any of his false assertions.

As a pretext for keeping the *Vietnam Heroico* — which was in the port of St. George's on the day of the invasion — from being used as a means of transportation for evacuating the Cuban hostages from Grenada, it was alleged that it carried special weapons. Its captain was immediately asked if by any chance he carried weapons onboard, and the only thing that was determined was that it had just one fearful weapon — its name: Vietnam.

The slanderous charge that Cuba had given

instructions to carry out actions against U.S. citizens in other countries was given a worthy, official, and public reply based on the reality, proven by the history of the revolution, that Cuba has always been opposed to acts of reprisal against innocent people.

The government of the United States has not even condescended to make known the number of people arrested nor the figure of Grenadian losses, including civilian losses. A hospital for the mentally ill was bombed, killing dozens of patients.

And where is Mr. Reagan's promise that U.S. troops would withdraw in a week? President Reagan himself in his first address to the U.S. people, at 8:30 a.m. on the day of the invasion, in a speech prepared before the land-

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## **The invasion of Grenada was a treacherous, surprise attack . . .**

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ing, stated that the situation was under control.

That same day, his own spokesman described the resistance the invading forces were facing. The military parade the Pentagon had planned to hold in four hours did not take into account the tenacious and heroic resistance of the Cuban cooperation personnel and of the Grenadian soldiers.

Who, then, has told the truth, and who has cynically lied about the events in Grenada? No foreign journalists — not even those from the United States — were allowed to see and report on the events on the spot.

The pretext that this prohibition was a security measure for the journalists is both superficial and ridiculous.

What they obviously wanted was to monopolize and manipulate the information so they could lie without hindrance to world public opinion, including the people of the United States. This was the only way they could spread deliberate lies and falsehoods of all kinds — which would be difficult to clear up and refute after their initial impact and effect on the people of the United States.

Even in this, the method used by the U.S. administration was fascist.

What is left now, objectively, of those 19 assertions?

Where are the silos for strategic missiles that were being built in Grenada?

But all those lies that the world did not believe, told by the U.S. president and his spokesmen, made a tremendous impact on U.S. public opinion.

Moreover, the invasion of Grenada was presented to the U.S. people as a great victory for Reagan's foreign policy against the socialist camp and the revolutionary movement. It was linked to the tragic death of 240 U.S. soldiers in Beirut, to the memory of the hostages in Iran, to the humiliating defeat in Vietnam and the resurgence of the United States as an influential power on the world scene. A dirty, dishonest appeal was made to U.S. patriotism, to

national pride, to the grandeur and glory of the nation.

This was how they got a majority of the U.S. people — it is said that it was 65 percent at first and then 71 percent — to support the monstrous crime of invading a sovereign country without any justification, the reprehensible method of launching a surprise attack, the

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## **All those lies made a tremendous impact on U.S. public opinion . . .**

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press censorship, and all the other procedures the U.S. government used for invading and justifying its invasion of Grenada.

Hitler acted the same way when he occupied Austria in 1938 and annexed Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia in 1938 in the name of German pride, German grandeur and glory, and the happiness and security of German subjects.

If a poll had been taken in Hitler Germany at that time, in the midst of the chauvinistic wave unleashed by the Nazis, around 80 or 90 percent of the people would have approved of those aggressions.

The deplorable, truly dangerous fact — not only for the peoples of the Caribbean, Central and Latin America, but for all the people of the world — is that, when world opinion unanimously denounced the warmongering, aggressive, unjustifiable action that violated people's sovereignty and all international norms and principles, most of the United States — manipulated, disinformationed, and deceived — supported the monstrous crime committed by their government.

There is something even more disturbing: when this about-face was effected in U.S. public opinion, many U.S. politicians who initially had opposed these events ended up by condoning Reagan's actions, and the press — censored, humiliated, and kept at a distance from the events — ended up moderating its complaints and criticism.

Are these, perchance, the virtues of a society where the opinion and the political and the informational institutions can be grossly manipulated by its rulers, as they were in German society in the time of fascism?

Where is the glory, the grandeur, and the victory in invading and defeating one of the tiniest countries in the world, of no economic or strategic significance?

Where is the heroism in fighting a handful of workers and other civilian cooperation personnel whose heroic resistance — in spite of the surprise element, the shortage of ammunition, and their disadvantages in terms of terrain, arms, and numbers — against the air, sea, and land forces of the most powerful imperialist country in the world forced it to bring in the 82nd Airborne Division when the last stronghold was being defended at dawn on October 26 by barely 50 fighters?

The United States did not achieve any victory at all — not political or military or moral.

If anything, it was a pyrrhic military victory and a profound moral defeat.

As we pointed out on another occasion, the imperialist government of the United States wanted to kill the symbol of the Grenada revolution, but the symbol was already dead. The Grenadian revolutionaries themselves destroyed it with their split and their colossal errors.

We believe that, after the death of Bishop and his closest comrades, after the army fired on the people, and after the party and the government divorced themselves from the masses and isolated themselves from the world, the Grenadian revolutionary process could not survive.

In its efforts to destroy a symbol, the United States killed a corpse and brought the symbol back to life at the same time. Was it for this that it challenged international law and won the repudiation and condemnation of the world?

Does it feel such contempt for the rest of humanity? Is that contempt really so great that Mr. Reagan's appetite for breakfast on November 3 was not at all affected, as he declared before the press?

If unfortunately all this were true — and it seems to be — the invasion of Grenada should lead us to an awareness of the realities and dangers that threaten the world.

Mr. [Thomas] O'Neill, speaker of the House of Representatives, said that it was sinful that a man who was totally uninformed and ignorant about international problems and who

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## **Many U.S. politicians ended up condoning Reagan's actions . . .**

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doesn't even read the documents was president of the United States. If we consider that the United States has powerful sophisticated means of conventional and nuclear warfare and that the president of that country can declare war without consulting anyone, it is not only sinful but truly dramatic and tragic for all humanity.

An air of triumph reigns in the Reagan administration. The echoes of the last shots in Grenada have barely died away and already there is talk of intervening in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and even Cuba, in the Middle East and southern Africa.

Imperialism's acts of interference and military aggression against progressive countries and national liberation movements continue unabated.

In Europe, the first of the 572 Pershing 2 and cruise missiles are already being deployed, surrounding the USSR and other socialist countries with a deadly ring of nuclear weapons that can reach their territories in a matter of minutes.

Not just the small countries, but all humanity is threatened. The bells tolling today for



U.S. occupation troops in Grenada.

Grenada may toll tomorrow for the whole world.

The most prestigious and experienced scientists and doctors assure us that humanity could not survive a global nuclear war. The destructive power of these stockpiled weapons is a million times greater than that of the unsophisticated bombs that wiped out the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in just a few seconds. This is what the Reagan administration's aggressive, warmongering policy can lead to.

Meanwhile, the arms race is already a reality in the midst of the worst economic crisis the world has witnessed since the '30s. And, with the problems of development of the vast majority of the peoples in the world still to be solved, who can feel confidence in a government that acts as precipitately, rashly, and cynically as the U.S. government did in Grenada?

Reagan did not even bother to listen to the advice of a government as closely linked to him politically, ideologically, and militarily as

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### **The United States did not achieve any victory at all . . .**

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the British government.

It is not strange that, in a poll taken just a few days ago, more than 90 percent of the British people were categorically opposed to the United States' having the unilateral prerogative of using the cruise missiles that are being deployed there.

In our hemisphere, just a year and a half ago, a NATO power used sophisticated war

means to shed Argentine blood in the Malvinas. The Reagan administration supported that action. It did not even consider the Organization of American States or the so-called security pacts and agreements, but scornfully pushed them aside.

Now, basing itself on the alleged request of a phantasmagoric organization of micro-states in the eastern Caribbean, it has invaded Gre-

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### **Already there is talk of intervening in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and even Cuba . . .**

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nada and shed Caribbean blood and Cuban blood.

Nicaragua paid a price of over 40,000 lives for freedom, and nearly a thousand more sons of that noble people have been killed in attacks made by mercenary bands organized, trained, and equipped by the U.S. government.

In El Salvador, over 50,000 people have been murdered by a genocidal regime whose army is equipped, trained, and directed by the United States.

In Guatemala, more than 100,000 have died at the hands of the repressive system installed by the CIA in 1954, when it overthrew the progressive Arbenz government.

How many have died in Chile since imperialism staged the overthrow and assassination of Salvador Allende? How many have died in Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil, and Bolivia in the last 15 years?

What a high price our peoples have paid in blood, sacrifice, poverty, and mourning for imperialist domination and the unjust social systems it has imposed on our nations.

Imperialism is bent on destroying symbols, because it knows the value of symbols, of examples, and of ideas. It wanted to destroy them in Grenada, and it wants to destroy them in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Cuba.

But symbols, examples, and ideas cannot be destroyed. When their enemies think they have destroyed them, what they have actually done is made them multiply. In trying to wipe out the first Christians, the Roman emperors

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### **Imperialism is bent on destroying symbols, because it knows the value of symbols, of examples, of ideas . . .**

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spread Christianity throughout the world. Likewise, all attempts to destroy our ideas will only multiply them.

Grenada has already multiplied the patriotic conviction and fighting spirit of the Salvadoran, Nicaraguan, and Cuban revolutionaries. It has been proved that the best U.S. troops can be fought and that they are not feared. The imperialists must not ignore the fact that they will encounter fierce resistance wherever they attack a revolutionary people. Let us hope that their pyrrhic victory in Grenada and their air of triumph don't go to their heads, leading them to commit serious, irreversible errors.

They will not find in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Cuba the particular circumstances of revolutionaries divided among themselves and divorced from the people that they found in tiny Grenada.

In more than three years of heroic struggle, the Salvadoran revolutionaries have become experienced, fearsome, and invincible fighters. There are thousands of them who know the land inch by inch, veterans of dozens of victorious battles, who are accustomed to fighting and winning — when the odds are 10 to 1 against them — against elite troops, trained, armed, and advised by the United States. Their unity is more solid and indestructible than ever.

In Nicaragua, the imperialists would have to confront a deeply patriotic and revolutionary people that is united, organized, armed, and ready to fight and that can never be subjugated. With regard to Cuba, if in Grenada the imperialists had to bring in an elite division to fight against a handful of isolated men struggling in a small stronghold, lacking fortifications, a thousand miles from their homeland, how many divisions would they need against millions of combatants fighting on their own soil alongside their own people?

Our country — as we have already said on other occasions — might be wiped off the face

of the earth, but it will never be conquered and subjugated.

In the present conditions of our continent, a U.S. war against a Latin American people would raise the morale of all the peoples of Latin America and turn their feelings against the aggressors. A bottomless abyss would be opened between peoples who — because they are in the same hemisphere — are called upon to live with one another in peace, friendship, and mutual respect and cooperation.

The experiences of Grenada will be examined in detail to extract the utmost benefit from them for use in case of another attack against a country where there are Cuban cooperation personnel or against our own homeland.

The Cubans who were captured and virtually turned into hostages had an unforgettable experience of what a country occupied by Yankee invading troops is like.

The physical and psychological treatment given the cooperation personnel who were taken prisoner was insulting and a cause for indignation. Promises of all kinds were made to each of them to try to get them to go to the United States. But they were not able to break their steel-like staunchness. Not a single one deserted his homeland.

There was no manipulation of the news, nothing was hidden from the people in our country. All reports concerning the invasion that were received directly from Grenada were transmitted to our population just as they arrived, even though the ones on October 26 turned out to be exaggerated.

As a matter of principle, at no time were efforts made to play down the seriousness of the situation or to minimize the magnitude of the dangers facing our compatriots.

We are deeply grateful to the International

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### **The imperialists must not ignore the fact that they will encounter fierce resistance wherever they attack a revolutionary people . . .**

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Committee of the Red Cross for its interest, dedication, and efficient efforts to identify and evacuate the wounded, sick, and other prisoners and the dead as quickly as possible.

We are also grateful to the governments of Spain and Colombia for the immediate efforts they made in this regard.

In bidding farewell to our beloved brothers who died heroically in combat, fulfilling with honor their patriotic and internationalist duties, and in expressing our deepest solidarity with their loved ones, we do not forget that there are Grenadian mothers and U.S. mothers who are crying for their sons who died in Grenada.

We send our condolences to the mothers and other relatives of the Grenadians who were killed and also to the mothers and other relatives of the U.S. soldiers who died — because

they, who also suffer from the loss of close relatives, are not to blame for their government's warmongering, aggressive, irresponsible actions. They, too, are its victims.

Every day, every hour, every minute — at work, at our studies and our combat positions — we will remember our comrades who died in Grenada.

The men whom we will bury this afternoon fought for us and for the world. They may

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### **We do not forget that there are Grenadian mothers and U.S. mothers who are crying for their sons who died in Grenada . . .**

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seem to be corpses. Reagan wants to make corpses of all our people — men, women, the elderly, and the children! He wants to make a corpse out of all humanity.

But the peoples shall struggle to preserve

their independence and their lives! They will struggle to prevent the world from becoming a huge cemetery! They will struggle and pay the price necessary for humanity to survive.

However, they are not corpses! They are symbols. They did not even die in the land where they were born. There, far away from Cuba, where they were contributing with the noble sweat of their internationalist work in a country poorer and smaller than ours, they were also able to shed their blood and offer their lives. But in that trench, they knew they were also defending their own people and their own homeland.

There can be no purer way to express the generosity of human beings and their willingness to make sacrifices. Their example will be multiplied, their ideas will be multiplied, and they themselves will be multiplied in us. No power, no weapons, no forces can ever prevail over the patriotism, internationalism, feelings of human brotherhood, and communist consciousness which they embody.

We shall be like them, in work and in combat!

*Patria o muerte!*

*Venceremos!*

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# Sandinistas lead economic transformation

*Gear economy toward meeting needs of working people*

By Jean-Claude Bernard

[The following article is taken from the October 31 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a fortnightly magazine published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

Nicaragua is up against a very difficult situation today. The revolution is under direct attack from the U.S. imperialists.

Washington has sent its fleet to threaten the Nicaraguan coasts. It is organizing large-scale maneuvers on Honduran territory. Moreover, it is trying to strangle the country by imposing a full-fledged blockade.<sup>1</sup>

This imperialist offensive is also being waged through the intermediary of the counter-revolutionary forces operating from Honduras and Costa Rica. In addition to the harm these gangs do by their acts of destruction and crimes, they are forcing the Sandinista revolution to give its main attention to defending itself.

To complete the picture, within the country itself, the most concentrated sector of private industry is refusing to invest and consciously doing its bit to further disrupt the economy.

All the overall economic indicators for 1982, which are the latest known, show growing difficulties for the revolution.<sup>2</sup>

While in 1980 and 1981 the Gross National Product (GNP) grew by 10% and 6% respectively, in 1982 it declined by 1.4%.

Following the victory of the revolution in July 1979, the unemployment rate was reduced dramatically. In 1979, it stood at 36%. In 1980, it was cut to 13%. In 1981, it was still kept down to 16%. But in 1982, it had risen to 21%.

In 1982, moreover, consumption of products other than basic necessities dropped by 23%. As against this, consumption of necessities dropped by only 4.7%. While the rate of inflation was 25%, the drop in the buying power of the minimum-wage urban workers was only 14%. For rural working people, it is estimated that the decline in buying power was 19.6%.

Every revolution has experienced such dif-

iculties in the beginning. The imperialists do not accept defeat but mount harassing operations. In the case of Nicaragua, these problems were further aggravated in 1982 by catastrophic floods that interfered with agricultural production.

## Gains of the revolution

Nevertheless, the growing obstacles have not diverted the Sandinista leadership from its orientation of meeting the needs of the workers in the countryside and in the cities.

What should be pointed up first of all is the major efforts made to improve public health and education. In 1982, for the first time in the history of the country, there was not a single case of polio, which represents no small accomplishment.

Between 1978 and 1982, the infant mortality rate fell by a quarter, dropping from 120 per 1,000 to 90 per 1,000. Medical care is free in the health centers, and these centers account for 60% of the visits to the doctor registered in 1982.

In the area of education, the reduction of the rate of illiteracy from 50% before the revolution to 12% today represents a real historic victory.

The number in school has tripled, rising from 500,000 in 1978 to 1,500,000 today. Some 73% of children between the ages of seven and twelve are now in school.

The gainers from these advances have been the immense majority of the population, the working people in the countryside and the cities, who were previously denied access to these social services.

This progress means little for the bourgeoisie and the well-to-do middle strata, who already had access to medical care and to education for their children.

This orientation of meeting the needs of the largest possible number is reflected also in the results obtained in the area of consumption. The year 1982 was certainly a difficult one. But the drop of 4.7% in the consumption of necessities was small by comparison with the drop of 23% in the consumption of other products. This is the effect of subsidies to stabilize the prices of staples such as maize, rice, and beans.

The increase in the prices of necessities was only half that of other products — 12% as opposed to 25%. In fact, the general decline in consumption noted in 1982 hides the significant fact that there has been a very large increase in consumption of the highest-protein foods.

This is a particularly impressive success since in 1979 the diet of the majority of the

population suffered from protein deficiency. For example, per capita consumption of chicken increased by 15% between 1980 and 1982 and per capita consumption of eggs by nearly 25%.

There have been calculations of the relative cost of living in the various Central American countries. By way of comparison, a month's supply of 21 essential products for a family of six costs 36 dollars in Nicaragua. In neighboring Honduras — a prize specimen of Ronald Reagan's "free world" — the cost of this month's supply of staples is double.

All the other Central American countries have a cost of living far higher than Nicaragua. Despite all the difficulties Nicaragua has faced, it has suffered less of an economic decline than its neighbors.

The massive aid in dollars that has been showered on the most privileged layers in the other countries on the Central American isthmus did not prevent a drop of 9.5% in the GNP in El Salvador, 5.9% in Costa Rica, and 1.6% in Honduras. For most of the people in those countries, living conditions are much more difficult.

## The grip of the past

All the steps taken by the national leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) since July 19, 1979, have not, however, been able to immediately overcome the heritage of the past.

That is, Nicaragua is a small country that the former dictator Somoza assured would be dedicated mainly to growing coffee, cotton, and sugar cane, thereby increasing its dependence on the fluctuations on the imperialist-dominated world market.

In such a situation, it takes a long and complex process to eliminate the constraints imposed by ignorance, hunger, and poverty. You have to reorient the whole apparatus of production and exchange so as to give priority to meeting the needs of the greatest number.

This is what is involved in the objective and the work of building "people's power" undertaken in Managua. It involves organizing the power of the working class in alliance with the peasantry, that is, the overwhelming majority of the economically active population.

The direction of the process initiated on July 19, 1979, is clearly toward an overall reorganization of the economy. And this is going hand in hand with the emergence and consolidation of a mass movement representing the interests of the working people in the cities and in the countryside.

At every step, this process has met with fierce resistance by the counterrevolution both

1. See "The Nicaraguan revolution under fire," *Intercontinental Press*, October 17, 1983, page 569.

2. With the cited exception, all these figures come from official data included in the report of the Government Council to the Council of State dated May 4, 1983; from the speech by Sandinista commander Daniel Ortega on the anniversary of the Sandinista revolution on July 19, 1983; and from the report for 1982 by the National Statistics Institute (INEC, Managua).

from within and from without. This is why, far from advancing at a constant and regular rate, this process has been marked by crises and stops and starts. But the outcome of all these crises is a further shift of the relationship of forces in favor of the workers and peasants.

Nonetheless, the bourgeoisie still controls an important part of the productive apparatus and can exert ideological influence through its press and the Catholic hierarchy. And it has not yet given up hope that it can reverse the process.

### Imperialist economic pressure

This process is all the more complex because Nicaragua can only develop on the basis of international exchanges. There has been a steady reorientation of such exchanges since July 19, 1979.

In 1979, 78% of the credits came from international organizations, as against 22% from bilateral contracts negotiated with individual governments. In 1982, this situation was totally reversed. Bilateral contracts accounted for 92% of the credits, as against 8% from international organizations. This is due in part to the full-fledged boycott imposed by U.S. imperialism, which managed to block financial assistance from the international bodies that it largely controls. But it is also a result of the policy adopted by the FSLN and the Government Council for National Reconstruction.

The Nicaraguan government is now better equipped to make bilateral agreements, even with the governments of the capitalist European countries, that meet the priorities it has set for development. For the entire period running from July 1979 to May 1983, cooperative aid from capitalist countries represented 78% of the total, whereas that coming from the "Eastern countries" and Cuba amounted to only 22%.<sup>3</sup>

This pronounced dependence on the capitalist countries can be seen also when you examine the results of foreign trade for 1982. Exports to the "Eastern countries" and Cuba represent 6.3% of the total, while imports from these countries add up to 11% of the total imports. These facts far from support the stereotype promoted by the international press of Nicaragua becoming a "Soviet-Cuban" colony.

Latin America (including the Central American Common Market) accounts for 45% of imports and 16% of exports. The Central American Common Market alone accounts for 18% of imports and 13% of exports.

The U.S. itself still accounted for 19% of Nicaragua's imports and 22% of its exports in 1982. The steps taken by the Reagan administration in the spring of 1982 to block Nicaraguan sugar exports to the U.S. will reduce this.

The still relatively important scope of trade with the U.S. indicates how much any step-up of the American blockade could disrupt the Nicaraguan economy.

Trade with West Europe has been growing

over the most recent period. Exports to the Common Market [EEC] countries, which account for 24.5% of the total Nicaraguan exports, are four times greater than those to Eastern Europe. Imports from the EEC — 14% of the total — are double those from East Europe.

So, the overall reorientation of international exchanges is marked by two features. On the one hand, there is a growth in trade with the East European countries. On the other, there is a realignment of trading relationships among the capitalist countries — with the West European countries (Germany, France, and Italy) and the Latin American countries (mainly Mexico) assuming a larger role.

The importance of trade with Mexico is still more crucial because today it is Nicaragua's major oil supplier. Up to the end of 1982, the 15,000 barrels a day Nicaragua needs were supplied equally by Venezuela and Mexico.

At the beginning of 1983, Venezuela stopped deliveries because of Nicaragua's inability to meet its debts on time. This has to be seen as a direct result of U.S. pressure on a country like Venezuela, which is also deeply in debt.

Since early this year, the 13,000 barrels arriving daily in Nicaragua have come from Mexico alone. And the U.S. has been increasing the squeeze on Mexico, as the *New York Times* has indicated.<sup>4</sup>

So, reorienting Nicaragua's international exchanges is closely related to the diplomatic and economic pressures that can be brought to bear on the country and which represent obstacles in the Sandinista revolutionary process.

This relationship makes the question of the foreign debt and the negotiations on repayment particularly acute. In 1982, repayment of the foreign debt absorbed 45% of the total income from exports. This points up one of the means the imperialists might use to try to strangle the revolution.

The pressure of this debt forced the FSLN national leadership and the government council to reduce imports in 1982 by 25.5% by comparison with the preceding year. The fact they were able to limit the drop in GNP to 1.4% is actually a testimony to the resources of a system that is beginning to reorient the economy toward putting the needs of the majority of the population first.

Like the escalation of the military threats, the increased economic problems, owing essentially to the imperialist blockade and the counterrevolution, are sharpening the social polarization in the country.

Up to now, it is the bourgeoisie and the middle classes in Managua who have been most directly affected by the economic restrictions, which have mainly been put on the importing of luxuries. So, the result of the economic difficulties has been the deepening of the revolutionary process that can be seen today in Nicaragua. It is reflected in the continuation and ac-

celeration of the agrarian reform, as well as in the transformations that are shifting the balance of the mixed economy.

### The agrarian reform

In a country where more than 60% of the economically active population is made up of peasants and agricultural workers, where 75% of exports are agricultural products, and where agriculture represents half of total production, the question of agrarian reform is clearly a decisive one.

Before July 19, 1979, a couple of thousand landowners held 50% of the land, while 120,000 peasants held only 3%. This richest layer of landowners has been hardest hit by the transformations in progress. Under the impact of the expropriation of the holdings of Somoza and his direct associates immediately after July 19, 1979, the percentage of the land held by this top layer of landowners fell from 50% to 13%.

At present the land is divided up as follows: 23% is held directly by the state, 20% belongs to small peasants organized in cooperatives, 13% remains in the hands of the big landowners, and the rest — 44% — belongs to the middle peasants.

The agrarian reform decreed in August 1981 set the maximum individual holding at 350 hectares on the Pacific coast (the most densely populated area) and 700 hectares on the Atlantic coast. A lot of agrarian reforms in other Latin American countries might look more radical on paper. But unlike most of them, the Sandinista agrarian reform has actually been put into practice.

What is more, cultivating land effectively has been made a condition for keeping it. In accordance with the dynamic of the revolution, it has been the mass peasant organizations — the National Union of Farmers and Stock Raisers (UNAG) and the Association of Rural Workers (ATC) — that have made sure that this condition is observed.

Unlike the big industrial plants, elaborate forms of monitoring are not necessary in agricultural operations. The peasants organized in their mass organizations can easily find out whether land has been left to lie fallow, or is being underused with respect to the average productivity in the region.

Thus, the agrarian reform puts all privately held land under peasant control. It provides for turning the expropriated land over to individual peasants or cooperatives. These titles can be inherited, but they cannot be sold. This prohibition is to keep big landed estates from re-forming.

A particularly significant element in the present dynamic of the revolution is that the agrarian reform decree has not only served to institutionalize the situation created by the mass land occupations that came in the wake of July 19, 1979, when Somoza and his cronies left a lot of land abandoned. It also started a movement that, far from running out of steam, is continuing to accelerate. Twice the amount of land was distributed between June 1982 and

3. Figures provided by the International Fund for Reconstruction (FIR), Managua.

4. Information provided by the weekly bulletin of the Nueva Nicaragua news agency, Managua, August 1983.



Michael Baumann/IP

Central market in Masaya. Government subsidies help stabilize prices of essential food items, keeping Nicaragua's cost of living well below those of neighboring Central American countries.

March 1983 as between October 1981 and June 1982.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, between September 1981 and July 1983, titles have been distributed for 210,000 hectares, with 166,000 going to cooperatives and 44,000 to individual small peasants. This process is speeding up. In fact in July, at the time of the fourth anniversary of the revolution, 70,000 hectares were distributed, which represents more than half the amount distributed since the start of the year.

So far, 20,000 peasant families have gotten land through the agrarian reform. In fact, a larger number of peasants have been affected by the ongoing transformations, since it is estimated that about 60,000 are involved in the cooperative movement.

The two mainstays around which the agrarian reform is organized are the lands nationalized "in the domain of people's property" and the lands cultivated by the burgeoning cooperatives. The target is an allotment of 50% to the poor peasants, 25% to the state sector, and 25% to a private sector of market farmers. The share still held by big landowners and middle peasants, more than half the total, indicates how far the Sandinistas still are from their goal.

#### Agriculture harnessed to social need

The change in tempo in recent months does not mean that the goal is already near. What it signifies is that to meet the demands of the revolution's social base in the countryside and to orient agricultural production in accordance with the national priorities it was necessary to step up the pace.

To appreciate the sort of alliance that has been formed between the peasants and the revolution, it is important to note that the targets of agricultural production are not being determined by the interests of the peasants alone.

5. The magazine *Envio*, Managua, August 1983.

The first task the FSLN national leadership set for agriculture was to assure an adequate supply of the staples of the national diet.

This goal is in the interests of the peasants, to be sure, but also of the urban workers. It was not set to suit economic interests of one or another layer of the peasantry. It was adopted to meet the demands of a policy designed to achieve a planned development of the country in the interests of the majority of the working people.

The political choice has already led to tangible results. While the overall level of agricultural production in 1982 was 10% lower than in 1977, the trend was the opposite for the food-staple crops. Between 1977 and 1982, rice production doubled, the bean crop increased by 15%, and the supply of pasteurized milk rose by 70%. At the same time, production of maize, the basis for the main national staple — the tortilla — remained constant.

On the other hand, there was a marked drop in cotton production in 1982, while coffee and sugar cane harvests stayed at the old level.

#### Role of big landowners and state farm managers

The reason for the falloff in cotton is that this crop is cultivated mainly on the big private plantations or state farms. And in the case of the state farms, the administrative teams appointed under Somoza are often still there, since there is a shortage of technically qualified personnel to replace them. These two factors combined to produce poor results, in contrast with the cooperative sector, in which the poor peasants have combined and in the most advanced cases cultivate the land collectively.

In the cooperative sector the social mobilization is much more active than on the private plantations and big state farms. It should also be noted that the cotton and sugar cane crops have been the targets of criminal arson by the "contra" gangs.

So, the agrarian reform underway can only be analyzed as a process that is still far from being completed. Active participation by the agricultural workers and the poor peasants is the key in this area, as it is for the revolutionary process as a whole. The advance of the agrarian reform cannot, in fact, be analyzed separately from the measures taken with respect to other sectors of the economy, in particular foreign trade and distribution within the country.

#### Holes in state distribution network

The state holds a monopoly of foreign trade, and wholesale trade in agricultural products has been nationalized. Thus, the peasants in principle do not have direct access to the market. The trend is rather toward nationalized control of distribution of produce, whether it comes from the private, cooperative, or public sector. Thus, the revolutionary government is tending to acquire the means for allotting agricultural surpluses to those sectors to which it gives priority.

In this area also, even though a clear target has been set, the present situation remains very uneven. Two distribution networks continue to exist side by side, from wholesalers to retailers.

Products subsidized from the state budget are sold only through the public network. In fact, because of these subsidies peasants can buy beans and maize at lower prices than the price they got for selling the same products.

But many sections of the peasantry continue to sell their crops through private circuits, thereby deliberately causing shortages of the products sold at subsidized prices in the 2,600 public stores.

For example, the "Eastern Market" in Managua, the city's oldest market left standing after the 1972 earthquake, is a den of speculators. In August 1983, they were selling rice and beans at double the prices in the public stores. The price for chicken was 80% higher.<sup>6</sup>

The daily press that supports the revolutionary process, *Barricada*, the organ of the FSLN, and *Nuevo Diario*, have been waging an intense campaign against these speculators, who can profit from the shortages systematically created in the public distribution network. The role of the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS, the neighborhood organizations) in combating speculation should be noted in particular.

The weight of the past and the complexity of the problems to be solved become clear when you see that on many levels private distribution networks have been able to tap the public ones.

Nationalized farms growing maize, for example, contribute to speculation by selling their crops to private wholesalers at prices higher than the official ones. Often it is managers left over from Somoza's time who are responsible for this.

Moreover, at all levels of the public distribution network, private traders are in a posi-

6. *Nuevo Diario*, Managua, August 3, 1983.

tion to buy for resale at substantial profits.

In fact, the question of supplying the needs of the majority of the population, especially in the cities, has been the focus of a lot of re-crimination. This is a real source of discontent.

However, the FSLN is by no means trying to put a bureaucratic damper on this discontent. To the contrary, it is trying to use it to get a mass struggle going against the speculators and the enemies of the revolution and to deepen the revolutionary process. The revolution is not something that stands still, or that has already set for all time the level of socialization in the economy.

#### What future for "mixed economy"?

The same observation holds for the industrial sector, which is also under a mixed economy system. In Nicaragua, industry accounts for only about 30% of the Gross National Product. It is very dispersed. On February 28, 1982, there were no more than 96 plants with more than 100 workers, and no more than 97 with between 50 and 100 workers. But these less than 200 plants by themselves accounted for 85% of the country's industrial production in terms of value.

In 1982, it was estimated that the private sector accounted for 60% of industrial production and the public sector for 40%. But this figure is not very significant in itself because it combines small craft production and capitalist production in the full sense of the term.

To assess the dynamic of the present situation, it is more fruitful to look at investment. The main fact that comes out here is that private investment represents no more than 23% of the total, including all sectors of the economy.

The role played in reality by private investment was analyzed as follows in an economic survey by *Barricada* focused on investment in 1979-1982.

"Private fixed investment declined, playing much less of a role in the investment process. Moreover, the capital flight figures reflected in the balance of payments indicate that the private sector is 'decapitalizing'<sup>7</sup> instead of investing.

"Likewise, the demand for long-term credits by the private sector to the national financial system dropped in 1982. If we add to this that the private sector does not get foreign loans, since its economic activities are 100 percent financed by the national financial system, we see a negative orientation on the part of big private capital. It is showing a lack of interest in the effort to achieve national capital accumulation.

"In recent years, the surpluses generated by big private capital have been directed toward non-productive uses. This includes not only consumption but speculation and capital flight."<sup>8</sup>

7. "Decapitalization" is a jargon term coined to cover the two-sided policy of the bourgeoisie of refusing to make investments and taking their capital out of the country (capital flight).

8. *Barricada*, Managua, August 15, 1983.

To deal with this "negative" attitude on the part of big private capital, the revolutionary government is not just making denunciations. It is expropriating or intervening in plants where the bosses are not respecting the terms of the contract made — that is, to produce in accordance with the national priorities and to try to meet the most urgent needs of the population. This means putting a watch on the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie from above. But its behavior is also being monitored from below on the initiative of the workers.

#### A 'Sandinista' boss and the workers

The example of the "labor conflict" that occurred in Managua in early August in the biggest bakery in the city illustrates the sort of initiatives the workers are taking.

This bakery employs 85 workers and the state holds the majority of stock (51%). The manager, who holds the rest of the stock, was a Costa Rican citizen, Chávez Ovare. During the war of liberation, he supported the FSLN and was rumored to be linked to the "Group of the Twelve" (a group of prominent exiles who lined up with the FSLN).

So, this manager had ties to current leading circles and was guaranteed a supply of flour, even in the event of shortages. This did not keep him, however, from being an aggressive boss. In particular, he refused to accept the setting up of a local of the Sandinista Workers Confederation (CST) in "his" business. He went so far as to fire a militia member who was mobilized to defend the revolution.

On Sunday, July 31, 1983, the bakery workers hung a banner across the front of their workplace with a hastily written slogan, "Stop the violations of the workers' rights!"

In response to growing discontent among the workers, the manager decided to close "his" business, claiming that he was having problems with flour shipments. He put up a sign saying, "Closed until August 4," without giving any notice to the workers concerned or to the responsible administrative authorities.

The workers responded quickly and decisively. They appealed to the Ministry of Labor to remove the manager. Within four days they got satisfaction. The manager was ousted, although he kept his stock. He was replaced by a new administrator whose nomination was approved by the CST.

A local of the CST was finally set up in the bakery, and working hours were readjusted. This conflict is particularly significant because it was not between an avowed supporter of the Somocistas and the workers but between the workers and a boss formerly linked to leading circles in the FSLN. The Ministry of Labor rapidly settled the dispute in favor of the workers. This case is a clear indication of the present dynamic of the revolution.

Thus the "mixed economy" system that prevails today in Nicaragua has not established a fixed line of demarcation between the private and public sectors. It represents a transitional economy. The rate at which it evolves depends on the class conflicts that are continuing to

develop between a working class that is building up its strength and capacity for organization and a bourgeoisie that is disputing every inch of ground to defend the economic positions it still holds after having been ousted from political power.

The private sector is obliged to respect the targets set by the national plan, under threat of expropriation. And expropriations are in fact carried out. This constraint gives rise to real differentiations within the bourgeoisie, since certain sectors have an immediate interest in working within a system that guarantees their prices and markets. This is true, for example, for a section of commercial farmers.

Nonetheless, the general tendency is toward a direct takeover of production by the government that came out of the revolution. Most of the big investment projects are being carried through by mobilizing public resources alone. This goes for the schemes to achieve self-sufficiency in energy, as well as to develop transport and food processing.

#### Working people take center stage

What is most important is that, even if they have not yet been able to institute developed forms of workers control, the working people of the cities and in the countryside are strong enough through their mass organizations to keep a watch on all the private producers. In this way, social polarization sharpens as the revolution advances.

The transitional form represented today by the mixed economy is possible only because there is a revolutionary government in Nicaragua that has not reformed but destroyed the Somoza regime's instruments of coercion.

In a book published in July 1983, Jaime Wheelock, one of the nine members of the national leadership of the FSLN, wrote: "The bourgeoisie is used to being the dominant force ideologically, culturally, and socially. And now it is not dominating things. Now it is the workers and peasants, the student leaders, the ATC, the CST, the Sandinista Front that are doing the talking and pointing out the path to follow. And none of these represents the bourgeoisie."

All the potential contradictions that lie in the mixed economy system being followed today were in fact pointed up by Jaime Wheelock when he wrote: "It has to be tested whether the bourgeoisie can produce without power, whether as a social class it can limit itself to playing a productive role, that is, limit itself to exploiting the means of production that it holds and using them to live and not as an instrument of power and oppression."

The whole question is, in fact, whether a social class that is being offered the material possibility to maintain itself as a class can long resign itself to not using its material means as an instrument of political power.

The events that have unfolded since July 19, 1979, show that the ranks of the counter-revolution have been swelled by one bourgeois



faction after another which has preferred to break national unity rather than accept its own defeat.

This is proof that the revolution has not

stopped its advance despite the growing threats from U.S. imperialism nor yielded to the pressures of the bourgeoisie.

The example of steadfastness that the

Nicaraguan revolution gives every day cannot help but inspire the international movement in defense of the Sandinista revolution to show a similar determination. □

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## Nicaragua

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# The revolution's 'great challenge'

## Part III of interview with Commander Jaime Wheelock

[The following is the last of three installments of an interview with Commander Jaime Wheelock, Nicaragua's minister of agrarian reform. The interview was conducted by Marta Harnecker, an exiled Chilean journalist who today lives in Cuba.

[The first two installments dealt with the leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), the classes that hold political power, the roles of the bourgeoisie and the church, freedom of the press, imperialism's aims and stakes in Central America, and the question of elections in Nicaragua.

[The interview was published in Nicaragua in book form, as *El Gran Desafío* (The Great Challenge), published by Editorial Nueva Nicaragua, from which we have taken the complete text. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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## 8. Agrarian reform

"We are carefully seeking the best land for the small producers and the cooperatives"

*Question. Can you tell me the main measures that have been taken in the field of agrarian reform and how they have affected the peasant population?*

*Answer.* After practically four years of agrarian reform we can say, in general terms, that we have completed a quite acceptable process of transformation of the property structure we inherited from Somozaism. At the same time, the drastic revolutionary measures that we have taken have not resulted in a decline in agricultural production. To the contrary, year after year there has been an increase in the recovery and growth of the agricultural sector.

In my opinion, it's not always so easy to combine two such sets of circumstances. It is the result of applying the fundamental political principles of our revolutionary program to agrarian reform and of a program of transformations that has taken into account the socioeconomic conditions that characterize Nicaragua. Nicaragua's agrarian reform is, for that reason, peculiar to it.

I will explain, first, the main political factors.

We worked out a program based on pluralism and the mixed economy, but with a content that is profoundly popular, revolutionary, and anti-imperialist. That is the framework from which all our practical steps in agrarian reform flow. Agrarian reform, therefore, is a means, an instrument for attaining these objectives, and not an end in and of itself. To understand this, it is important to see how its different phases developed.

There was a first phase that I would call anti-Somozaist, in which we recovered all the land that Somozaism had accumulated through robbery, extortion, eviction, etc. Our first agrarian reform law was in fact a decree — the now-famous Decree No. 3 of the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction — that confiscated the Somozaists. It was complemented by Decree No. 38, which extended the measure to Somoza's associates.

That gave us about a million hectares, nearly 20 percent of the land

owned in the country. These properties had to be organized in the form of state enterprises because the great majority of farms were in reality agro-industrial plantations. They included sugar refineries, coffee plantations, and modern rice plantations that were not susceptible either to being distributed among small producers or ceded to cooperatives.

In this first phase there arose what we call the People's Property Sector, which had in particular the task of initiating a process of incorporating agricultural workers into the administration of the enterprises. Formation of this sector gave the state an important control over the strategic section of the economy.

We quickly realized that what we had recovered from Somozaism, given its technological nature and its territorial magnitude, left us rather limited in terms of resolving the problem of peasants without land. To be sure we issued laws forcing landlords to rent out land, and at lower prices — a measure that benefited thousands of peasants, squatters, and small renters. We also initiated a credit policy that was so extensive that, in comparison with the last year of Somozaism, it multiplied by ten the amount of agricultural loans given to peasants.

These measures, however, were insufficient, and we began to work on a more integrated agrarian reform law. The aim of this law, which was to mark the second phase, was to take idle or insufficiently exploited land out of the hands of the big landowners and turn it over to landless peasants, so as to form small units of property, in some cases individually owned but fundamentally cooperative. I would call this the antilatifundist phase. In applying this law we expropriated some 600,000 hectares for the benefit of both the peasantry and the state enterprises.

The overall result of these two phases was a very important change in the structure of agricultural property in Nicaragua. Before the triumph of the revolution, 2,000 landowners owned 50 percent of the land while 120,000 peasants owned barely 3 percent of national territory.

Because we acted fundamentally against the Somozaists and owners of idle land, those 2,000 have been drastically reduced, to the point that today they control no more than 13 percent of the land. The state controls 23 percent, and the cooperatives and small producers another 20 percent. We have succeeded in establishing a vast cooperative movement, made up of more than 2,500 associative groups, including nearly 70,000 peasants.

There is an extremely broad layer of medium-sized producers — made up in its majority of humble peasants, but including some who are relatively well off — that owns more than 30 percent of the land. There are also properties of 100, 200, and 300 hectares that belong to big private landowners. They are modern plantations, generally are irrigated, and have certain characteristics of landed property. But because of their efficiency and their size, they have not been brought under the agrarian reform. Finally, the state owns the national land — that is, land that has not been claimed or parceled up — which amounts to half the total area of the country.

We are working today on the third phase, oriented toward consolidation and rationalization of what has already been accomplished. This phase gives particular emphasis to cooperative development and to answering the demand for land on the part of peasant communities in

various parts of the country.

I spoke first of the political principles because of the importance they have had in guiding — and in the last analysis, conditioning — our program of transformation. Our agrarian reform, while taking into account national unity and the mixed economy, has struck a blow at Somozaism and at ownership of idle land. But it has also left space for private producers if they are efficient and, of course, if they assume a role that is consistent with the revolution. At the same time poor and landless peasants have benefited from a series of policies aimed at helping them and providing them with incentives such as cheap credit, subsidized inputs, advantageous prices for corn and beans, grocery supply centers in the countryside, social and housing programs, rural electrification, health care, literacy instruction, road construction, etc.

To be sure, we have segregated what had to be segregated — the cancer that had to be cut out. We are working within a model of agricultural development in which the state, acting as the spearhead of production and the pacesetter of norms, is backed up by efficient private production, by the cooperatives, by the thousands of peasants, today with land, who are together increasing national production, both for domestic consumption and for export.

That doesn't mean that the job is finished. We have much further to go, not only in regard to the process of transformation of agrarian structures, but also in establishing a new economic development that will have as its axis precisely this agricultural sector. It is certain that this last task is going to be very hard.

First, because the socioeconomic formation of Nicaragua is very uneven. There is a pole of modernization, formed by the extensively upgraded plantations. But this coexists alongside considerable holdovers from the aristocratic economy of colonial origin that functions under a pattern of land use that involves extensive idle terrain. This is especially true in the case of primitive cattle raising of the kind that dominates great expanses of land in the center of the country. Alongside these big cattle ranches there exists a minuscule, subsistence peasant economy that is in a certain sense an annex or tributary to the aristocratic *haciendas*. This peasant community is made up of settlers, squatters, and so forth.

Second, because Nicaragua is a poor country, with weakly developed forces of production and does not have its own technological base for carrying out a project of development based on mechanization and irrigation, which is what we would like to promote.

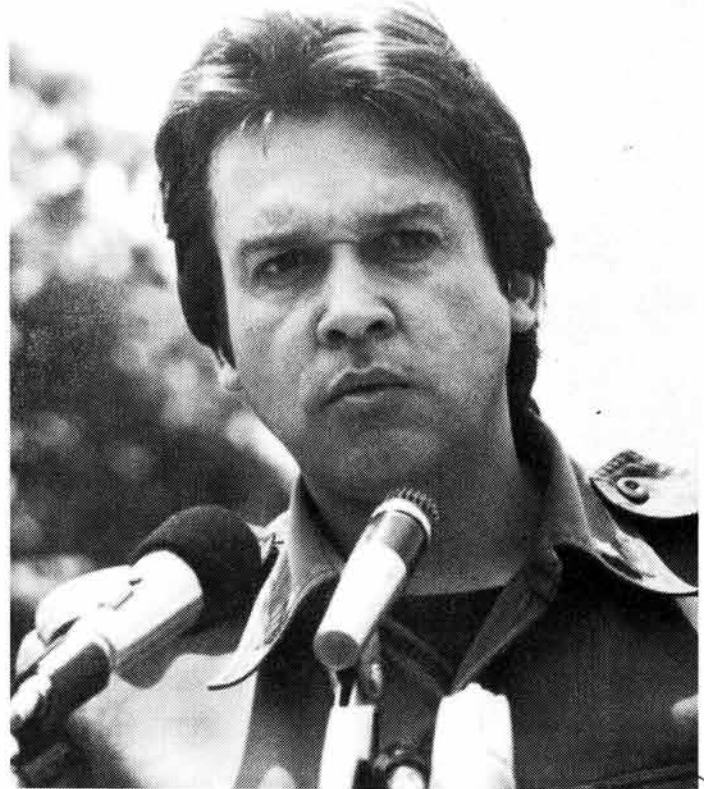
However, on the basis of international cooperation and the support of the socialist countries and of countries friendly to Nicaragua — such as Mexico, the Arab countries, the Netherlands, France, and Spain — we are carrying out projects that could be characterized as ambitious and whose completion will represent a qualitative leap for the country. In the agricultural sector we are carrying out more than 20 projects totalling some \$1.2 billion. These include a sugar refinery, two African palm plantations, four projects for production of blond tobacco, a project to provide 20,000 manzanas of irrigated land for basic foodstuffs, two modern dairy projects that will provide 100 million liters of milk a year, big poultry complexes, rice fields, etc.

We are making all these investments in the midst of an international economic crisis. For us, this is not anything unusual. We have to rebuild what was destroyed and cover the basic necessities that were never covered under Somozaism. Moreover, we have to take into account the future needs of a population that is increasingly demanding.

*Q. The fact that there was a delay in distributing land to the poor peasantry, didn't this give rise to discontent in that social sector and provide a weapon to the counterrevolution?*

A. There was a period between the first and second phase in which we left ourselves, in effect, somewhat exposed in regard to the speed with which land was distributed to the peasants. However, from the promulgation of the agrarian reform law until today, we have distributed hundreds of thousands of hectares of land to the peasants. We are carefully seeking the best land for the small producers and the cooperatives because, in their majority, they are producers of cereals and they need flat, rich land.

Somozaism drove these small producers to poor and marginal land.



Michael Baumann/FP

#### COMMANDER JAIME WHELOCK

Humid, tropical land, which is quite extensive in Nicaragua, would be of no use to them for it serves best for perennial crops. So we are giving the peasants some of the best land on the Pacific coast, where they can attain high crop yields. Of course the counterrevolution has raised as a banner the claim that the revolution is expropriating everything for the state, and that eventually the last peasant with any land left will be affected. But the truth is that we have only hit the big landowners, and among them only the ones who weren't producing. It's also true that some landowners who were producing were affected, but this was done on the basis of previous agreement and cash compensation. And it was done mainly to acquire land destined for peasant production.

If the revolution has benefited any social sector in this society it has been the peasantry, and they have benefited greatly. That is why the great majority of those who defend the revolution, with arms in hand, against the Somozaists are peasants. In the north the Somozaist counterrevolutionary bands have murdered more than 200 peasants, both members of cooperatives and individual producers, and they continue to carry out a campaign of terror to frighten and divide the peasants. Nonetheless, in the midst of regions that are at present genuine theaters of full-scale war, there are functioning agricultural communities that have not stopped work and that are armed to defend their land.

*Q. And if you compare the yields on state land and the land distributed among the peasants, which are more productive?*

A. State production in Nicaragua is characterized by high efficiency and high technology. In almost all the branches of agriculture that we share with big private production, the state has the best yields. That is nothing out of the ordinary, because in underdeveloped societies the size of the holdings of native landowners does not allow the possibilities of development, of mechanization, of intensive use of technology, that an agricultural enterprise managed by the state has. I don't say that to try to glorify state production. In fact I think if you compare Nicaraguan state production with that of some of the transnational enterprises, you'd

probably find they have higher yields. But, if we compare them with big native producers, the state is more efficient, and it can be even more efficient if we reorganize production.

Peasants in a cooperative, or individual peasant producers, work the land provided by the agrarian reform, with the support we have made available in terms of loans, inputs, improved seeds, prices, etc. They have registered a level of production higher than that of traditional peasant production and are moving in the direction of nearly attaining the production levels of the big private producers. This we can see, for example, in cotton.

*Q. While you were speaking about state enterprises with high technology, I was thinking about the problem of how to make high technology compatible with the unemployment that normally exists in an underdeveloped country. . . .*

A. OK, we have some examples. There are certain technologies that were employed here by capitalism to reduce the labor force. We are completely against the use of technology as an instrument for reducing the labor force and, as a consequence, increasing unemployment. We use technology for three purposes. First, to obtain better yields. Second, to create sources of employment on the periphery of the cities. And third, to resolve the problems of labor shortages that we are already beginning to encounter in some sectors of agricultural production.

In the first case, it is absolutely necessary that the production of corn, for example, attain a higher degree of technology. The production of basic foodstuffs in Nicaragua has to be modernized because there are limitations in the amount of land available for both export and food crops. The same land has to be used by the country both for domestic consumption and to meet the need for foreign exchange. We believe that the only way we can obtain both corn and cotton at the same time is to irrigate and sow the same land with both crops, one after the other. At present corn, although the basic food of Nicaragua, is a marginal crop. It is planted in the mountains of the interior with very rudimentary techniques that are in no way suitable from an agro-ecological point of view.

In the second case, we view technology as synonymous with increasing the number of jobs. That is the case, for example, with the banana plantations, which provide employment for some 4,000 people. In the north, where there is little land and much unemployment, raising tobacco has generated jobs for some 6,500 heads of families. This is despite the fact that we have only planted some 1,000 manzanas of tobacco.

In the third case, there are crops such as cotton that have to be mechanized. Cotton requires thousands of pickers, and we are already starting to run short of such labor. The same thing is happening with the sugar harvest.

*Q. That is from the point of view of the peasantry and the agrarian question. But if you look at the country as a whole, aren't there unemployed sectors, originally from the countryside, who would have work if you didn't modernize the cultivation of certain land so much?*

A. I think the answer to this problem lies precisely in agro-industry. That is, using the countryside as the basis for an industrial transformation that will enable us to bring economic development both to the rural population and to the population on the periphery of the cities. From the point of view of unemployment, it is this latter layer that presents the greatest problem. Furthermore, it is a layer not easily subject to change in its occupational structure. There is a resistance on the part of unemployed industrial workers and small artisans to taking up agricultural labor.

In a certain sense, among the urban population agriculture has the connotation of degrading and servile labor. To be sure, it is work that is sometimes hard, as for example cutting sugarcane. It is not easy for us to change the structure of employment. It seems it would be easier if we were to advance the entire structure, developing it toward the top, vertically in other words, and promote it as a source of geometrically progressing employment. A move in this direction, however, requires intensive use of capital, and our economic limitations prevent us from

doing it in all projects. But we are not going to renounce development. We do not want to be a country based on what others may consider "appropriate technology," that is, technology that institutionalizes underdevelopment. At present we are, for example, building a poultry processing plant that is going to be the biggest in Nicaragua. This project was planned with the aim of providing work for 500 families, and for that reason deliberately employs an intermediate technology. What lies behind this is the need to employ the technology most adequate to each concrete case, according to the needs, to the regional particularities, etc.

## 9. Integration of artisans

"We can't force the nationalization of tortilla production. That would be absurd."

*Q. When you visit Nicaragua you realize there are a great number of small producers and small businessmen, what we could call self-employed workers. What is the revolution thinking of doing with this sector? How does it intend to incorporate it into the project for the new society that's being constructed?*

A. The model of capitalist exploitation that imperialism imposed in our country determined that there coexist, alongside the big, high-technology agro-export operations, an enormous sector of primitive, backward, almost subsistence agricultural production. This same process developed in industry. Nicaraguan industry is something relatively new. A certain process of industrialization began in 1960, in keeping with the policy of the so-called "Alliance for Progress" put forward by the United States to try to lessen the impact of the Cuban revolution. It sought to encourage a process of import substitution, related to the creation of the Central American Common Market. Actually this process didn't amount to much more than setting up some rather obsolete plants, brought over from the United States, to mix raw or semirefined materials supplied by the U.S. In reality our fundamental industrial base was, and continues to be, the artisans.

We have vast production by small agricultural producers, along with vast industrial production by artisans. I am going to give you two facts. In agriculture, large-scale production existed in only 2,000 production units. Of these, no more than 400 used some degree of technology, mostly in coffee and cotton production. Cattle raising was extensive, rather than intensive. At the same time there were more than 130,000 small production units, working the land with the most rudimentary means. In industry there aren't more than 120 plants with more than 50 workers. At the same time, there are more than 15,000 small shops with fewer than five workers. Our artisan-based agriculture and industry are overwhelmingly of a local character. All this adds up to demonstrate that this country is heavily under the influence of what you could call a precapitalist economy. The more underdeveloped and backward a society is, the greater the influence of the mercantile-artisan economy. Therefore, in our revolutionary projections, we must adjust to all these artisanal forms, creating development plans that emphasize cooperatives and associations rather than the state. This means, for example, adopting intermediary technologies.

Our present rhythm and models of economic organization are influenced by the way in which productive forces were developed by our country's dependent capitalism. We have to combine two things in the process of change. First, the formation of a sector of state production that brings together the most developed and strategic areas of the economy. Second, the strong presence of an artisan economy, on which we are trying to impress a certain degree of association; for example, the transformation of family farm production into cooperative production.

This artisan economy has communal roots that originate in primitive society. It is based on the participation of the entire community, under very primitive reciprocal mechanisms of cooperation. For example in a locality (one of the many formed by the development of the peasant economy) specialized occupations — barbering, for example — develop aimed more at cooperation than exploitation. The same is true of the emergence of the small, very primitive shop for making tortillas. The feature of "simple" cooperation and specialization is more a product of the communal economy of Indian society than of the development of

capitalism. We can't — in any way — force the nationalization of tortilla production. That would be absurd.

It's important to take into account that the socialist model is a solution for contradictions that are found only in developed capitalist countries.

For a series of reasons, many of them political and others which have to do with hunger and desperation, some peoples have made revolutions on the basis of the existence of the very worst conditions of progress and social development — to try to modify their society greatly and get it on the track of real development. This is our case. Although we may have socialist principles — and we do have them — the solution to transforming our society does not lie in expropriating all the means of production. This wouldn't lead to socialism but rather to its opposite. It could even lead to the destruction and dismantling of society. What we are searching for is a way to combine, on the one hand, a plan in which the starting point will be the strategic and most developed sectors of the economy, and on the other, the organization of a social plan in which cooperative forms of work — even if of a rudimentary character — will predominate.

So a significant sector of self-employed workers and small businessmen exists in our country. But it is the new relations of production created by the revolution that dominate the process of economic development. This domination was achieved by the nationalization of foreign trade, natural resources, the strategic industrial sectors, and the banks. With these steps we have created a system of production and management that is predominant and has hegemony — but that also coexists to an appreciable degree with forms that we could call capitalist and with forms that are backward or precapitalist.

Inside what we call a regime of mixed economy, we have formed various sectors: state property, large, medium, and small private property, and cooperatives. Our tendency is toward having state and cooperative property predominate but at the same time coexist with medium, small, and even large private production. Over time, property relations of backward capitalism will surely become secondary, subordinate. This is our conception of how we must march forward. The pace, however, is determined not only by technological questions but also by political questions. . . .

*Q. And perhaps by what happens in Central America, right?*

A. Right. The situation would be different if a Federation of Central American States existed, with a division of labor, etc.

## 10. Defending our economy

"We want to be an industrialized country that sells manufactured goods; we want to process our agricultural products, can and sell our foods, and make furniture out of our wood."

*Q. Today, when the world capitalist crisis is greatly affecting the underdeveloped countries, could you tell me what Nicaragua's economic situation is compared with the rest of the Central American countries?*

A. Nicaragua has been hit hard by the international capitalist crisis, and this shows up in a reduction in the amount of hard currency available to us. It's one of the countries that is most vulnerable to being hit by the crisis. It's a very fragile country. In the first place, this fragility lies in the fact that Nicaragua was originally built up — after its independence — as a country that was to produce cheap consumer goods for countries that already specialized in producing the means of production (industry, machinery), such as England. We were inserted into the dynamic of industrialized economies that had already reached a very high level of development. And because of this very specialization, they needed food for the former peasants who now were workers producing manufactured goods for the world. They also needed raw materials for these industries. So we began to produce wood, minerals, coffee, sugar, etc. In this international division of labor between producers of the means of production and the producers of consumer goods, our job was the latter. But this international division of labor, which is technical, came to be in a certain sense social, because the remuneration between the two economic sectors was always unfavorable for the producers of consumer goods. So Nicaragua throughout its history lost a great deal

of value and its capacity for accumulation, leaving it a primary country, with what's called a simple development — without possibilities for growth. We . . . what were we? A country of cotton pickers, coffee pickers, and cane cutters, with a small administrative structure of book-keepers.

Previously, the country had a certain layer of artisans, and there were close links between the artisans and the farmers. Local artisans produced for the farmers, and the farmers produced for the artisans, although the artisan production really only consisted of carts, wooden drinking vessels, horse harnesses, hats, etc. It was a local, cottage industry but one that wound up being a genuine industry after all. But when Nicaragua began to devote itself to production of primary materials, its incipient industry was replaced by imports. This brought about our first major insertion in the international division of labor, a situation that produced only underdevelopment and growing poverty for the great majority of urban and rural workers.

Imperialism later realized, following the triumph of the Cuban revolution, that this model had entered into crisis, that it allowed for revolutionary explosion. So it was necessary to make some adjustments. That's how all the ideas about the "Alliance for Progress" developed. In the case of Central America this resulted in their encouraging the Central American Common Market, agrarian reform, and import replacement. So in a manner of speaking, we were to industrialize a bit — instead of just being sellers of cotton and buyers of Colgate toothpaste produced in the United States, we were to sell cotton and at least produce a little toothpaste as well. El Salvador was supposed to produce toothpaste; Guatemala, juices; Costa Rica, tires; Honduras, plastics. And so, what began here was called import-replacement industrialization. But what was import-replacement industrialization? It was simply the acquisition of plants that, while they turned out the final product in our countries, didn't replace the need for the flow of intermediary goods. It's true that now we weren't importing toothpaste, but we were bringing in all the ingredients required to make the product. We were even sent toothpaste we were supposed to package here and label "Central American product made in Nicaragua." That is, it was simply fiction.

What happened and what is happening now? Prices of raw materials our industries need to turn out finished products have risen enormously. Neither the commercial agro-export model established at the end of the last century nor the import-replacement scheme put forward in the 1960s produced well-being for our people. The latter was just a new way to drain hard currency, because all the dollars brought in by agricultural production were taken away by industry.

Nicaraguan industry produces \$80 million in exports and requires \$160 million in imports. It imports more than it exports, and agriculture is eaten alive in the process.

The effects of the crisis on our country were that the prices of all the consumer goods we produced were dirt cheap and the prices of everything we needed to produce these consumer goods were sky high. At the same time, the prices of raw materials for the import-replacement industries had increased a lot. The present crisis is the sum total of the crises of the agro-export and import-replacement models. It has left us a deficit of \$400 to \$500 million, year in and year out, in our balance of payments. And now they're beginning to talk about the "non-viability" of our economies.

The revolution is beginning to develop a new economic model. It is based on the search for a different role in the international division of labor. We can continue producing consumer goods, but it's not the same to produce raw consumer goods as it is to produce them with a certain degree of processing. We want to be an industrialized country that sells manufactured goods. We want to process our agricultural products, can and sell our foods, make furniture out of our wood — this is the deep nationalist sense of the revolution. This can only be done if we become a sovereign nation that doesn't have an economic model contrary to its interests imposed on it from outside.

During the Somoza period the Nicaraguan economy was structured to complement the U.S. economy, based on its interests and not ours — meat for Puerto Rico, wood for building houses in Louisiana, cotton for U.S. soldiers' uniforms in Korea, a sugar industry to make up for the

quota they took away from Cuba. Today, however, with the revolution, Nicaraguans can begin to decide something as basic as *what to produce*. The country can consider other markets, friendly countries, socialist countries, Latin American countries. We can construct a new type of commercial system and trade with those who will give us greater advantages.

One result of the fact that this new model is beginning to be implemented is that the crisis in our country is not as sharp as it is in the rest of Central America. It's true that it shows up in a lack of available hard currency, but we haven't closed plants. We haven't thrown workers out of work. Instead we are moving forward with important development projects of a kind that Nicaragua never before had in its history, projects that provide a lot of employment. As a result of the revolution we have been able to develop a series of cooperative economic relations — not only with friendly nations in Latin America and other continents, but also with the socialist countries.

So this crisis isn't translated into unemployment, or into falling investments, or runaway inflation, as exist in Costa Rica. Because the state — with a package of economic measures — has taken steps to confront the crisis.

What's really in crisis in Nicaragua is the Somozaist model of development. The revolution works in a new model, which is already beginning to respond well. With this model we can begin the march away from poverty, backwardness, and inequality, and we can play a more dynamic, more realistic role in international economic relations — a different role from being the producers of the optional dessert for the industrial economies' banquet — coffee, cacao, sugar, bananas.

## 11. Planning the unplannable?

"It's difficult to plan in a dependent country, in the midst of an international economic crisis and military aggression."

*Q. Concerning this new model — didn't you adopt very hasty measures that you had to revise later on?*

A. In general I believe we've followed an adequate pace with regard to almost all the problems — precisely because of the fact that in our discussions there are always different opinions, and we end up adopting a position that is a synthesis of the various contributions. The result is a balanced opinion of the majority, which in general is the opinion of everyone. So I'd say that the National Directorate is a rather cautious leadership. It's not adventurist or voluntarist. And of course we have certainly made some mistakes. For example, in the beginning here in the [agrarian reform] ministry, we tried to introduce an excessively rigorous planning system, and this brought on some problems. After that, we tried to introduce a rather complex accounting system, and that turned out to be quite difficult too. Efforts to introduce a total planning system didn't work out either, because the society has strong mercantilist traditions that don't easily allow for planning.

*Q. Does this mean that you rejected all economic planning systems?*

A. No. We can develop good planning by beginning with a macroeconomic balance sheet. That's feasible — what to produce, how, how much, where, and for whom. It can be done by drawing up a balance sheet of the existing resources and of those required to guarantee our technical and material needs. By projecting an investment portfolio, introducing accounting measures within it, and distributing the resources among the various sectors of society. This is feasible. I would say we have no problems at this level.

We can carry out detailed technical and economic planning in the People's Property Sector, and we are already doing this in agriculture. In cooperative production, when it's a question of production cooperatives, we also have the capacity to work with technical and economic plans. We haven't done it because for the moment we're working more to organize this sector than to introduce planning into it. But these sectors of private property are subject, in a way, to certain planning mechanisms — land registration, financing, production contracts, etc.

But the extensive sector of artisan production, made up of small industrial producers and the service sector, permits planning of no more than

an indicative nature. In this area we utilize levers of a market nature, such as credit policies and financial incentives through pricing and subsidies. In the beginning we talked about an obligatory plan, but the society wasn't ready for this. On the other hand, the People's Property Sector was just barely being established, and it couldn't be sufficiently planned out either.

In general terms, I believe we've reached a good understanding of the laws of exchange and functioning of an economy that's in an intermediary — transitional, let's say — situation. So it doesn't frighten us if the law of value is mentioned here. The laws of development are, in general, independent of the will of men. The important thing is to recognize this, master the laws, and not try to make them disappear in a voluntarist manner. At one time we, along with other sectors of commercial production or regulation, tried to get rid of the law of value. What actually disappeared was almost all basic foodstuffs. We tried to set a fixed price for beans and force everyone — including the peasants — to sell them at this price so that there would be a bean market at a very cheap price. What happened? Not only did the price rise even higher because of the shortages, but the product disappeared from the market. This was a voluntarist incident inside a system that works by laws of a market nature. We use the laws of the market and in this way — as if they were a cart horse — we pull all the strings we need to pull. We combine an almost-obligatory technical and economic planning with planning that is more of an indicative nature.

Our experience has been that each time we concretize a plan we also have to draw up an emergency plan. Because, besides the military aggression we suffer, in a certain sense our variable factors — since we are such a dependent country — are a function of the international market. We are part of a general market system in which our planning capacity alone doesn't determine whether the plan will work or not. We can draw up a plan based on a set price for the sale of our products — for example \$90 for a bale of cotton. But if these prices are not maintained — something that doesn't depend upon us — if instead of selling at \$90, the cotton sells at \$60, and that has happened with other export products, the plan is shot. It's difficult to plan in a dependent country that has open-



Michael Baumann/IP

Peasants at June 1982 ceremony in Masaya, at which confiscated land was turned over to 212 families organized in cooperatives.

ended international relations. And it's even more difficult if the economic factors, including the international economic crisis, are aggravated by the political problems and military aggression our country suffers.

Nevertheless, we continue to perfect the planning mechanisms. We have a national system made up of the sum total of the sectoral units: finance, agriculture, industry, construction, etc. We have regional planning that reaches as far down as units of enterprises. And we have contingency plans, which are a substantial part of planning in our particular conditions.

Right now the Ministry of Planning is working on an overall system. The will to plan, to bring order and proportional balance to the economy, is being imposed against the tendencies — call them objective, if you like — of the old, anarchic free-exchange society.

## 12. Aggression against Nicaragua

“As I said earlier, the historic struggle of Nicaragua has never been anything other than the struggle of the people against imperialist aggression.”

*Q. The FSLN — supported by the entire population — won a war against Somoza and his army. But today a good part of the National Guard — perhaps half of it — is once again fighting against you, trying to regain the power they lost. Why wasn't the massive flight of these elements stopped? Didn't you foresee their possible return?*

A. Right after the last Nicaraguan war against imperialism, in which Sandino drove the U.S. Marines out of Nicaragua, the United States carried out a political maneuver in which it withdrew its army while maintaining political and economic intervention. During that seven-year struggle with Sandino, the U.S. Army organized an armed force that later — when they left — would become the National Guard. That's why, when we said that the Somozaist regime was the local expression of imperialism, we had put our finger on the historic reality against which the Nicaraguan people had struggled. This is why our revolutionary triumph in fact meant a defeat for armed U.S. intervention carried out, under cover, by the Somozaist National Guard.

In the final analysis, we were not fighting against Somoza, but against imperialism. But to convince our people of the justness of the struggle we had to bring them together to struggle against the immediate and most dangerous enemy. That is, against the concrete, visible expression of imperialism in our country — Somozaism. That is what our people lived with daily — not the abstract concept of imperialism. For a time we made an error in this regard, an error of strategic importance. By not clearly differentiating between these two things, we weren't able to correctly single out the enemy. At one time we said that the principal enemy here was imperialism and that for that reason an armed struggle couldn't be developed in a single country. We said it had to be developed on a world scale, creating one, two, three, four, five, ten Vietnams, and that the war was going to be a people's war throughout Central America. In the context of such a view, it made no sense to fight against Somoza. It was through Carlos Fonseca that we began to carry out all our work on the basis of the peculiarities of the struggle in our country.

So we can say that, while we did not defeat the historic will of imperialism to maintain a grip on Nicaragua, we did win a very important battle by defeating its local army, the National Guard. But this army did not disappear, nor did imperialism's will to try to reconquer lost territory.

Now, what happened after July 19? The National Guard was defeated politically and militarily. We didn't defeat this army by annihilating it physically, but by removing its capacity to attain strategic objectives. The majority of the soldiers of the Somozaist Guard remained alive. Some 6,000 left for El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. They had time to get out. Others simply dispersed, and we were able to capture some 3,500.

In order to obtain an effective force that would serve as the backbone of all its aggressive plans against Nicaragua, the United States then sought out Guard members who had left the country. And just as they

did in 1927, they again reorganized the Guard — arming it, revitalizing it, and reassembling it as the axis of a larger plan.

*Q. The fact that the imperialists would have to resort to the National Guard, to Somozaism — a phenomenon so hated by the people — didn't this demonstrate a great weakness on their part? The fact that they weren't able to obtain the support of other sectors that could have given greater legitimacy to their cause, that they had to wave such a soiled flag. . . .*

A. As I said earlier, the historic struggle of Nicaragua has never been anything other than the struggle of the people against imperialist aggression; the struggle of the Nicaraguan people against the local political, economic, and military expression of imperialism — Somozaism.

July 19 dealt a deathblow to Somozaism but not to the imperialists' plans. On the other hand, as I also mentioned before, no matter how hard the bourgeois groups and reactionary parties here tried to present themselves as an alternative, they had neither the economic and social strength nor the historic opportunity. They had already been completely cornered by the revolutionary forces. Here the bourgeoisie never had the belligerency, strength, and experience, nor does it have the desire, to come back and reconquer Nicaragua. The bourgeoisie left for Miami. Perhaps the bourgeoisie could lend out some of its active agents to be directors of the counterrevolution, as if they were managing a bank — but that's all. Imperialism knows perfectly well that a bourgeois army ready to fight against the people of Nicaragua can never rise up here. That's why they find themselves compelled, against their own interests, to resort once again to that contingent of mercenaries — the National Guard.

*Q. How is it possible that the counterrevolutionaries were able to penetrate so many kilometers inside Nicaraguan territory?*

A. There are three factors that explain why the bands were able to move so far into our territory. First, Nicaragua has a 580-kilometer border with Honduras, and this border area is quite cut off from the rest of the country. There are hundreds of kilometers where communication and transportation facilities do not exist, because the area is too mountainous. In addition, the Nicaraguan side is more underdeveloped than the Honduran side and has a very low population density. It is a region that is not really solidly integrated into the rest of the country.

The second factor is the complete support imperialism has from the Honduran armed forces and government, which have provided the bands supplies, logistics, materiel, border territory, bases, etc. This is another factor I consider fundamental — the fact that they permit a well-trained, well-armed force to penetrate whatever territory they like and carry out combat tasks.

There's a third factor of a more technical dimension. The United States has developed — in the theater of operations by these bands — an intricate network of apparatuses that enable them to know the exact location and movements of our forces. They are constantly photographing our territory, and through radar and other sophisticated techniques they monitor all our movements. This enables the bands to carry out work and infiltrate very deeply at times — wherever they know they aren't going to find our forces stopping them.

*Q. Can it be said that they don't have the support of the local population?*

A. Regarding that, it's necessary to point out that many National Guard members have relatives in the area bordering Honduras. This is taken advantage of by the counterrevolution, which takes these family ties into consideration in forming its bands. In addition, the National Guard officers leading these forces are very familiar with the region, because it was the site of past counterinsurgency action against us. They know each one of the collaborators they had then who we still haven't won away from them — those who ruled the cattle trails, who adhered to the old order. In addition, they have found support among some landowners and rich peasants linked to Somozaism and among some backward sectors of the poor peasantry. But this support isn't a key factor, because we have been able to make them withdraw completely from all sites where they have penetrated. Lately they've been forced to use tac-



Michael Baumann/IP

Part of an armed march of 150,000 in Managua on April 28, 1983. Sign reads: "Mr. Reagan: We don't have missiles, but we do have militias with rifles."

tics more like those of a regular army than of a guerrilla force. That was when they encircled a relatively small area — Jalapa and the surrounding region.

### 13. Backward or forward in popular support?

"There are even certain sectors who are drawing closer to the revolution as they see our country is being attacked."

*Q. One last question — has the revolution lost or gained support among the population? Has there been some erosion of support because of the inability to respond to all the people's expectations?*

A. In this regard, we have many advantages. First, the Nicaraguan people were a people living in poverty, in growing poverty. Each year more people joined the ranks of the poor, the dispossessed. Even middle layers of the population were being incorporated into the ranks of the unemployed. The poverty in the countryside was terrible. The infant mortality rate overall was 130 per 1,000, and in the countryside it was 200 per 1,000. No light, no water, and no more than huts to live in. Almost all women in the countryside were illiterate. In the cities, there was high unemployment, a lot of poverty, and a social niche of relative comfort only for the limited middle-class layers that had developed in Nicaragua.

So I can tell you that the revolution has brought only benefits for the great majority. We have hurt only a minority. Our economic policy favors the middle sectors in the countryside and guarantees stability to urban middle sectors, who are fundamentally dependent on the revolutionary state.

Politically we have the capacity to mobilize 600,000 persons — the great majority of them members of the revolution's mass organizations.

This is quite a lot if we take into account the fact that the economically active population of Nicaragua is 900,000 persons.

But it's not easy to lead a country in the middle of an economic crisis. We have struggled to defend workers' real wages with large subsidies, food imports, maintaining all jobs, subsidizing companies, working 24 hours a day to adequately distribute all the hard currency so that the plants don't close — that is, to defend the people's economy.

Our people know that we've maintained the price of a liter of milk within the reach of every pocketbook: three córdobas — that's five U.S. cents. This at a time when in Costa Rica, for example, milk is sold at a price 20 times higher. Almost all the products of basic consumption are cheap here in Nicaragua. And the family budget — to give you an example — is based on more income now than in the past. In a family that before had only one member working, now four out of five are working, and sometimes five. So family income is much higher.

That's why, even though production is higher than it was in Somoza's time, we have problems with food supply. Many who didn't use to consume are now part of the picture because they now have more income, or more stability in their work, or because we have put more rural stores in the interior, mountain regions. We have brought goods to a population that before now did not consume them. In this sense we have doubled the number of consumers, while production has grown slowly. We produce three times more chicken and three times more eggs. Nevertheless, eggs are still scarce here because the demand is much greater. The population has also grown 20 percent in relation to 1979 figures. And international conditions are not the best for economic growth.

There's discontent. There is uneasiness throughout the population because of food problems. But these problems aren't much different from the inconveniences I see in my own house — when there's no laundry soap, when you have to go looking for it in four different places. This uneasiness, however, does not represent a lack of support for the revolution, because support for the revolution in all fundamental matters still remains. There are even certain sectors who are drawing closer to the revolution as they see our country being attacked. The tests this country is being put through have consolidated that support. Reagan's aggressive policies have actually helped to consolidate the revolution.

Nicaragua is a country that keeps its borders open, its immigration offices working hard, its air lines connected with the United States daily, and its doors open for anyone who wants to leave. It is a country that is functioning perfectly smoothly in the midst of aggression, in a situation of war, in which growing ranks of youth, workers, and professionals are being incorporated, because they feel a great readiness to defend their nation, their revolution. It is a country where there are big private producers who decide to go through all these difficulties because they are Nicaraguans.

Of course if we were to propose that our minister of internal commerce be the candidate for mayor of Managua, he surely would not receive a single vote. But if our people knew that the CIA were preparing to assassinate this very same minister of internal commerce, as it did with [Foreign] Minister D'Escoto, this minister would have the entire population behind him for defense.

Finally, I just want to add one thing. Imperialism thought that by introducing the task forces they were going to produce uprisings and insurrections here. What they actually produced, to the contrary, was a great national mobilization against the bands. Who are the ones fighting the bands? The youth, the working class, the peasants, the intellectuals, everyone. . . .

In addition, they are fighting as a class because the youth participate as an organized force; the same with the peasantry. We don't organize our battalions with indiscriminate levies as they do in El Salvador, or as was done here in Somoza's time, and as all bourgeois armies have done. Rather, we do it through the conscious and voluntary participation of combatants who are organized in one or another of the country's mass organizations.

It is the entire people who are fighting; the same people who produce; the same ones who study. All Nicaraguans must simultaneously carry out the various tasks of the revolution: defense, production, progress, development. This small population must multiply its efforts to confront the historic challenge of carrying this revolution through to the end. □

# Marroquín battles deportation

*Gains support through nationwide tour*

By Steve Wattenmaker

A nationwide campaign to win political asylum for Héctor Marroquín is entering a new and crucial phase. Marroquín, a leader of the Young Socialist Alliance and the Socialist Workers Party, has been fighting for more than six years to prevent the U.S. government from deporting him to Mexico, where he faces political persecution and possibly death.

In early December the Supreme Court will decide another immigration case involving the asylum issue. Based on that decision, the court will determine whether or not to hear Marroquín's appeal. If the Supreme Court refuses to hear the appeal, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) will order Marroquín deported within 48 hours. Since August, Marroquín has toured more than 50 cities, explaining his case to thousands of people. Trade unionists have been especially sympathetic to his fight.

## Fled political repression

As a politically active student in Mexico in the 1960s and early 1970s, Marroquín was part of a generation of youth who were outraged by the social inequality suffered by Mexico, under the heel of U.S. imperialist economic domination.

In Monterrey, where Marroquín was studying, the police carried out murderous repression against student activists. In January 1972 he watched as the authorities gunned down his roommate Jesús Rivera, accusing him of being a guerrilla.

Marroquín was finally forced to flee Mexico in 1974 after another friend, a university librarian, was murdered. Two days after the killing, Marroquín was startled to see his own picture in the newspaper. He and several other students were accused of the murder and branded as members of a terrorist organization that did not even exist.

After consulting a lawyer — and seeing first hand what the police had in store for him if he surrendered — Marroquín fled to Texas.

Marroquín joined the Young Socialist Alliance and the Socialist Workers Party in 1975. At the time he was working in a Coca-Cola bottling plant in Houston and became active in a union campaign to organize the work force.

In September 1977 Marroquín was arrested at the Mexican border, trying to reenter the United States after visiting his lawyer in Monterrey.

Since then he has been fighting the efforts of the INS to deport him. Marxists, the INS has declared, have no right to political asylum. In January 1983 a federal appeals court backed the government's position.



HECTOR MARROQUÍN

Prominent civil liberties attorney Leonard Boudin filed court papers in early April asking the U.S. Supreme Court to reverse that judgement. Meanwhile, the Political Rights Defense Fund (PRDF) began a nationwide drive to gain support for Marroquín's right to asylum.

## Black and Latino support

Part of that campaign was a coast-to-coast tour explaining the case to trade unionists, Black and Latino activists, students, church groups, and antiwar organizations. Major rallies for Marroquín in a score of cities highlighted the tour.

At the massive August 27 civil rights demonstration in Washington, D.C., a steady stream of people — mainly Black and Latino — stopped at the PRDF table to sign a petition demanding asylum for Marroquín. On the eve of the demonstration, he was invited to attend the conventions of two nationally prominent Black civil rights organizations, Operation PUSH and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

In San Antonio, Texas, Marroquín spoke at two masses at Guadalupe Church, the biggest in the city's Spanish-speaking *barrio*. There were more than 250 people at each mass. Afterward, many of them stopped to talk to Marroquín and expressed their solidarity with contributions that totalled more than \$100.

Hispanic members of Congress invited Mar-

roquín to Washington, D.C., at the end of October to fill them in on his case. He spent 30 minutes with the Hispanic Caucus and then talked at length with Congressmen Esteban Torres from California and Robert García of New York. A total of 26 members of Congress have offered their support to Marroquín.

Supporters of Marroquín have organized rallies for him that have attracted a wide spectrum of speakers. For example, in San Francisco he was joined on the platform by James Bell from the National Conference of Black Lawyers and Salvadoran refugee Rosa María Rivera. Rene Schroff, a leader of the Communist Party's youth group, the Young Communist League, told the rally that the YCL was there "to join our voice to all those who have spoken already demanding political asylum for Héctor Marroquín."

## Trade unions back Marroquín

Marroquín's most recent tour made especially important gains in winning union backing for the case. In July he spoke before a full assembly of the 8,000-delegate convention of the National Education Association. The union reaffirmed its earlier endorsement of his asylum fight.

Marroquín was also able to participate in other union conventions. He attended the United Automobile Workers (UAW) convention, and in St. Louis the UAW's political action department endorsed his right to asylum. Delegates attending the United Farmworkers (UFW) convention in Fresno, California, gave Marroquín a warm welcome as did members of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), meeting in New Orleans.

Trade union meetings were a significant part of Marroquín's regular tour stops around the country. He won the endorsement of the Kansas City Central Labor Council and met with members and local officials of the International Union of Electrical Workers, the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, the International Association of Machinists, and other unions.

Marroquín also spoke to workers at impromptu plant-gate rallies in several cities and visited the lettuce and broccoli fields in Salinas, California, to speak to farm workers.

"I am convinced that we can realistically expect to win even wider union support if we really try for it," Marroquín told *Intercontinental Press*. "I'm fighting for my democratic rights and a lot more union people today relate to that because their democratic rights are under attack too, and they realize it.

"I've been singled out," Marroquín emphasized, "because I've been an active unionist, because I'm a socialist, and because I'm doing everything I can to build the movement against U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean.

"For them, that may be a good reason to get rid of me," he said. "But I think it's a good reason for working people to defend my right to stay." □